



# In the Loop

A Publication of the San Diego Figure Skating Club

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## Ballet's Influence in Skating

Many figure skating moves and techniques are based on ballet. The following is a brief overview of common terms and positions with which skaters should be familiar.

**Rond de Jambe** – A rotary movement of the leg. It can be done in a number of ways, such as on the floor with knee straight, or in air with a circular rotation of the knee from bent to straight.

**Plié** – A bending of the knees with hips, legs, and feet turned outward.

**Arabesque** – A position in which the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg extended in a straight line to the rear. The position of the arms and the height of the raised leg may vary.

There are certain set positions in ballet for the arms and particularly for the feet which give the ballet dancer a particularly pleasing aspect as well as providing a starting point for particular moves and interchanges. The following discussion describes a few of the more basic principles.

Skaters who have a background in ballet should be able to transfer the positions and principles from ballet to skating.

### Foot Positions

There are five basic ballet foot positions that are common to all teaching methods. These positions are based on the 'turning-out' of the feet. The feet point either in opposing directions either in a straight line, or offset with one foot in front of the other.

## From the Editor's Desk

### Sectional Championships at SDIA

We hope SDFSC club members and their families will support our skaters at the Pacific Coast Sectional Championships being hosted by our club on November 14 – 17.

The SDFSC was awarded this competition because of our reputation for organizing and hosting well run competitions. That reputation comes from the support of member volunteers when our club hosted previous competitions. There are going to be many jobs to fill so we will need to identify additional volunteers.

There are many positions that need to be filled by volunteers to make the Pacific Coast Championships an enjoyable experience for competitors and officials.

Becoming a volunteer is a good way for skaters and parents to see the competition without having to purchase a ticket.

Please be thinking of how you can help and send your name and areas of interest to –

sds skate@sbcglobal.net

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## *Trip to Lake Placid, NY*

Years ago I skated Junior Pairs in the Eastern Sectional Championships held at Lake Placid. The competition was an experience in an unbelievable winter wonderland.

Every season at Lake Placid is one to enjoy, especially if you time your trip to skate to coincide with a competition. When I heard Kassy and Justin were entering the summer dance competition at Lake Placid, I asked Suzan Cioffi, Kassy Kova, and Justin Ross to write about their experiences. Hope you enjoy reading about their trip.

The Editor

### **Date book... Lake Placid, Aug. 07**



Crystal clear bubbling brooks.... Verdant mountains ..... Picturesque little Olympic Village ..... Beautiful and lithe young ladies and their svelte partners stroll along peering inside the quaint little shops that line the main street and side-stepping the rough-and-tumble rugby players who are sharing the village with them this week.... Humm... it must be Lake Placid in early August where almost all American ice dancers gather for their first major competition of the season, the Lake Placid Ice Dance Championships.



***Downtown Lake Placid***



***Fountain in Town Center***



***Entrance to World Arena***



The site of both the 1932 and 1980 Olympics, this tiny village is transformed into America's Ice Dancing Mecca for the first four days of August each year. Teams converge on this historic site from all across the United States with a sprinkling of Canadian ice dancers to spice up the mix.

Here, America's ice dance teams get a first chance to perform their newly-minted Freedance programs on hallowed Olympic center ice before a large and adoring crowd; eagerly absorb the assessments and tips provided in one-on-one critiques with many of the same judges who will decide the final pecking order at national championships just a few months from now; size up their team's competition for the year; and breathe in pure inspiration from the air replete with the beauty, power and creativity that is the essence of this very unique sport.

With a total of only about 100 American ice dancing teams spanning the levels of Juvenile through Senior teams in the entire United States, competitors on their second trip to Lake Placid quickly develop a familiarity with many of the faces.

To most in this small group of athletes, being in Lake Placid feels as if they have died and gone to hog heaven. Their eyes drink in the incredible beauty of one delicate ice dancing dress after another, with soft pastel hues swishing in time with the rhythm of the 'waltz du jour'.

Competitors are elated to be in a fairy tale land where large and boisterous audiences "ooh", "aah" and feverishly applaud intricate Freedance lifts and spins, instead of waiting quietly for a freestyle jump that never arrives. For a very special week it is their world, and ice dancing reigns supreme!

The Freedance programs are a Jelly-Belly-wild assortment of themes and music. There are red-hot Tangos, and smooth cool blues, tantalizingly sexy sambas and playful jive. You see Freedance programs where girls are twisted into every outlandish position humanly possible, wearing a smile that is tight with concentration and tinged with the discomfort of pulling a blade up to touch the back of her head while teetering on one of her partner's knees!

Boys balanced low on one thin blade of steel while elevating their sprite to the heavens with one arm, like an offering to the Gods. You are moved, you are thrilled, and at the end you are exhausted, having depleted all of your energy trying to reign in your wild heart as it somersaulted uncontrollably around in your chest during your team's seemingly endless 150 seconds on center ice.

When it's over, some competitors celebrate, some cry, but all are permeated with the knowledge that they needed to be here; needed to experience the season's first ritual trial by fire to lay the groundwork for the next few months of training and preparation.

For some, a final stroll along Main Street and ice cream at the favorite spot; for others, a party or gathering among friends. The village offers its last warm embrace to all who came and tried their best.

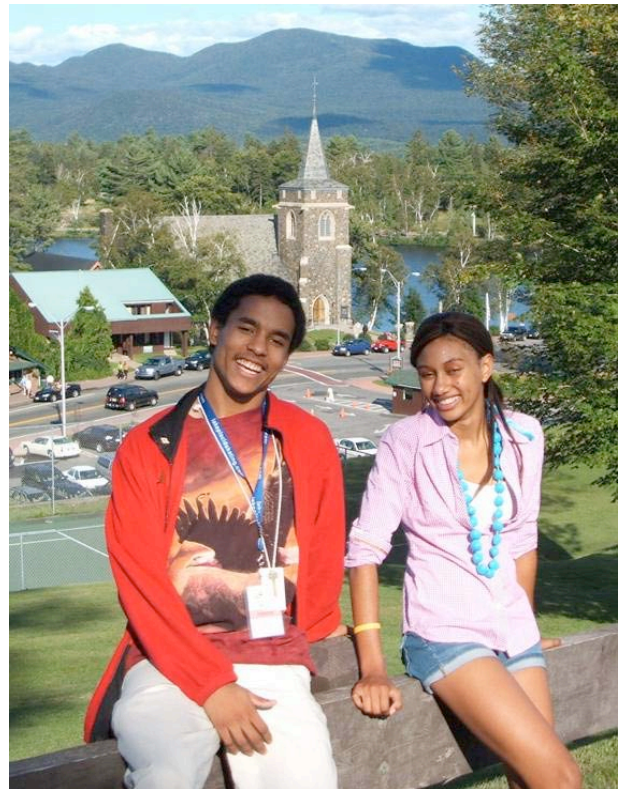
A sunny Sunday morning; bags are packed, and Goodbyes waved. Competitors drive off leaving the village tranquil and quiet. It fondly awaits their return next summer.

Suzan Cioffi

### *Dance Competitions at Lake Placid*

Competition for Intermediate-level ice dance teams got underway Thursday with the Compulsory Dances. After a 6<sup>th</sup> place mark for their first dance, the 14-step, Kova & Ross took smoothness and elegance to the max, earning them their first-ever, First Place finish for the Foxtrot, in a competitive field of nine teams from across the United States. Their light and flowing American Waltz earned Kova & Ross a 3rd place finish.

When all three of the compulsory dance scores were combined, Kova & Ross' placement was 4th overall in a field of nine, and one half points below the bronze medal, a marked improvement over their 2006 results.



***Kassy and Justin  
relax after skating***





*Kassy and Justin make their freedance look easy.*

Kova & Ross showcased their new Freedance program in the final competitive event, the Intermediate Freedance, Saturday night. Set to a jazzy piece, "Black Machine" paired with a rhythmic slower section from the same film (Dance with Me) "Tu Corazon", and a quick-paced snippet of "Yello" to end with, the program was well received by the judges, earning them high marks for interpretation of music and presentation, and an 8th place finish in a field of twenty teams that included two Canadian teams.

The energetic program included a fast-paced rotational lift with a change of position and a catch-foot, a combination spin, a second lift with Ross in a low position and Kova balanced on his knee with her blade pulled up to touch her head, an eye-catching hydroblade move near the end of the program and good ballroom dance technique and creative choreography evident throughout.

**Photos by Suzan Cioffi**

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### *Dancing Without a Partner*

Finding a dance partner is difficult. There just are not as many boys as girls who skate and even fewer who dance. USFSA dance judge Claude Sweet recommends that everyone learn to skate dance first as a solo dancer.

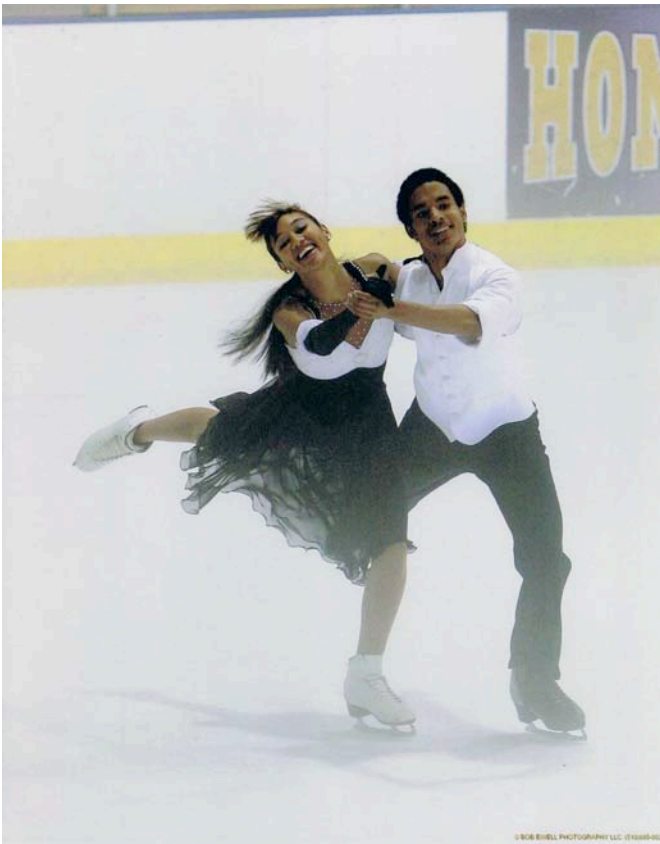
New dancers should first learn the correct technique of turns and steps, memorize the rulebook dance patterns, and learn the timing of the individual dances PRIOR to attempting to perform the dances as a team.

There is a solo dance test track that allows skaters to test without finding a partner or having a coach act as a partner for the test.

Anyone who plans on acquiring a gold medal in dance MUST become a skilled solo dancer. At the gold level the ability to solo is part of the mark when taking a standard dance test.

The ability to skate to the musical tempo and develop presentation skills is as important as doing triple revolution jumps is to a junior free skater.

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**Deep edges and great unison in the Foxtrot awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place.**

