

Skaters rise to the occasion

# Super Sectionals

By Colin Gibson  
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All the glamour, glitter and glory of figure skating was on display this past Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday as Georgetown's Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena hosted the 1976 Central Ontario Regional Sectionals. One hundred and fifty-two skaters from over 48 centres in the Central Region took part in the four-day event that was highlighted on Saturday night by a magnificent display of free style skating from the incomparable Toller Cranston.

The Sectionals are regarded as the first and possibly most important step in a figure skater's career and in effect, what is reflected on the ice is the result of months and years of hard work on the skater's part.

Success in the Sectionals means a chance to compete at the Divisional level. From the Divisionals a skater goes on to compete in the Canadian Championships and the next step of course, is world competition.

With this in mind and the resultant pressure that builds up, it is amazing that the young skaters can do a turn around the ice, whirls and jumps notwithstanding. Talent and courage came to the fore during the 1976 Sectionals and no one who took in the event went home disappointed.

The four best skaters in the Novice, Junior and Senior

categories advance to the Divisionals, to be held at Laval, Quebec, December 11 to 14 and from there, the top three Seniors, and four Novices and Juniors may carry on to the Canadian Nationals to be held in London, January 14 to 18, 1976.

Pre-Novice skaters do not advance further than the Sectionals but the competition proves of inestimable value. In the Pre-Novice Ladies event, Pamela Thompson, of the Upper Canada Skating Club placed first, Carol Hume of the Toronto Cricket Skating and Curling Club was second and Diana Rankin, also of the T.C.S.&C.C. was third.

In the Pre-Novice Men's category, Tim White of Barrie was the top skater, Shaun McGill of the Credit Valley Club placed second and David Dunstan of the Toronto Leaside Club was third.

In the Pre-Novice Dance, Dawn White and Kent Grace of Woodbridge were first, Tricye Wainman and Dale Thomson of the New Oakville and Leaside Clubs placed second and Denise Sorel and Keith Miller of the Woodbridge Club came in third.

The four Novice Ladies who will advance to the Divisionals are in order of placing; Nancy Buys, of the New Oakville Club, Kelly Johnson, of the Upper Canada Club, Michelle Simpson, of the Elmville Club and Patricia Graham of the Richmond Hill Club.

In the Novice Men's category, Divisional

representatives are, in order of placing, John Belec, Unionville Club, Brian Orser, Midland Club, Jack Frizell, Upper Canada Club, and Michael Simunek, North York Club.

The Novice Dance winners were Kris Barber of Glen Williams and his partner, Patricia Fletcher of Scarborough. They skate for the Upper Canada Club. Joanne French and John Thomas of the Silver Blades and Woodbridge Club placed second. Third place went to Becky Clapp and David Dunstan of the Leaside Club, while fourth spot went to Wendy Birch and Danny Sorley of the Upper Canada Club.

In the Junior Ladies event, the winners in order of finish were Deborah Albright of the T.C.S. & C.C.C., Vicky Stowe, of the T.C.S. & C.C.C., Elizabeth Purdie of the Upper Canada Club and Karen Felesko of the T.C.S. & C.C.C.

The Junior Men's winner and the skater who put on the most spectacular free skating display, was 17-year-old Vern Taylor of the T.C.S. & C.C.C. Second place went to Gary Beason of the Granite Club. Third place went to Peter Mellon of the Stouffville club and fourth place went to Michael Shinniman of the Upper Canada Club.

The Junior Dance was won by Kathy Savage and Andy Piuta of the Woodbridge and Pine Points Clubs, while second place went to Lynne Ann Pike and Robert

Helghington of the Stepenville and East York Clubs.

In the Junior Pairs category, Judy Sackett and Paul Martini were the only competitors.

In Senior Ladies, Heather Kemkaren, whose skating was topped only by the Junior Mens winner, Vern Taylor, placed first. Heather, as well as the second and third place winners, all skate for the T.C.S. & S.&C.C. Judy Bowden was second, Deborah Albright was third, while Angela Watson of the Upper Canada Club placed fourth.

In the Senior Men's category, Kenneth Polk, of the T.C.S. & C.C.C. was first, second place went to Kevin Robertson of the Granite Club, while third place went to Sandy Moore, also of the Granite Club.

The Senior Dance winners were John Dowding and Lorna Wighton, representing the T.C.S. & C.C.C., while second place went to Judie Jeffcott and Keith Swindlehurst of the Inver Canada Club.

In the Senior Pairs event only one couple competed, they were Marie-Ellen Souche and brother, Bernard Souche of the Thornhill Club. It will be quite some time before Georgetown is once more asked to host the Central Ontario Regional Sectionals, they are shifted to different sites every year, but the 1976 Sectionals were a resounding success in all aspects and will no doubt remain in the minds of those who viewed the event for years to come.



RAVES AND ROSES, Toller Cranston drew both on Saturday night at the Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena. Before the capacity crowd that had eagerly anticipated his performance all evening, Toller performed with his usual brilliant style. His ballet-like on ice movements were complemented by figure skating manoeuvres that left the crowd here with Toller, was extremely pleased with his performance.

## Co-operation the key

From the organizational and operational point of view, the 1976 Central Ontario Regional Sectionals, held last week at the Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena, couldn't have gone better.

Co-operation was the key word between the various people involved, from the Central Ontario Region's executive, the Georgetown Figure Skating Club and the employees of both the arena and the town's recreation department. This sentiment was echoed by the heads of the respective groups and, because of it, Georgetown, and the Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena in particular, basked in the rosy glow of a job well done.

"Just super, tremendous all round effort," was how Shirley Marsden, the Championship Chairman of the Central Ontario Section, described the running of the four-day event and in effect, this summed up everyone's feelings.

Bob Howard, the head of the Georgetown Central Ontario Section Committee, was equally as pleased and Pat Sheehan, the facilities superintendent for the recreation department,

summed up his impression of the various group's participation in one word, "fantastic."

The glamour of the Sectionals attracted the spectators but, had it not been for the behind the scenes work, both in the months leading up to the event and during the actual four days of skating, it is doubtful that the Sectionals would have been so well received.

Well received and well handled they were, roughly 4200 people crowded into the Gordon Alcott arena during the four-day competition.

Buses were chartered from Orangeville and it's safe to say that most of southern Ontario was represented and there might even have been a few spectators from our neighbor to the south. A Buffalo, New York, woman called the arena on Friday night requesting information and tickets. She was given the information but told that tickets could be guaranteed. No one knows if the woman arrived but it is quite possible.

The snack bar at the arena has never been busier and the counter people along with all

the other staff members of the Gordon Alcott arena are to be heartily congratulated on a job well done. Staff workers worked double shifts and even longer during the event and their hard work paid off as both the arena itself and the all-important ice surface received very favourable comments from those concerned.

The actual running of the Sectionals was to have been a joint Central Ontario Sectional Committee and Georgetown Figure Skating Club venture but as it turned out, the people from the Georgetown Figure Skating Club proved so capable, that a lot of the Central Ontario Sectional Committee were able to arrive late and leave early.

From the parking facilities outside, to the inner workings of the arena itself, things ran smoothly and all those people involved, too numerous to mention, deserve a tremendous amount of credit for the success of the Sectionals. Because of them, Georgetown has gained a tremendous amount of stature as a community able to capably host large scale events and in the long run this can only serve to benefit the area people.

## Don Jackson among special spectators

The main attractions during the Central Ontario Regional Sectionals were, quite naturally, the figure skaters themselves. However, for those spectators with a wandering eye, celebrities, apart from those on the ice, abounded.

One very interested spectator, who admittedly has a soft spot in his heart for Georgetown, was the former Canadian and World Mens Singles Champion, Donald Jackson. Mr. Jackson has friends in Georgetown and, in fact, skated an exhibition during the official opening of the Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena. Several years ago, he performed during the Georgetown Figure Skating Club's carnival.

In 1962 Don Jackson capped his amateur figure skating career by winning the World Championship in spectacular fashion. The championships were held in Prague, Czechoslovakia and leading up to the free skating part of the program, Mr. Jackson found himself slightly back of the front runners. He realized that to capture the world crown he would have to attempt the near impossible and in true championship fashion, did just that.

He successfully completed a triple lutz, the first time ever that this maneuver had been performed in actual world class competition and in so doing received seven perfect 6.0 marks from the judges. No singles skater had ever, or has since, received such marks.

Today Mr. Jackson is still involved, to some extent with actual figure skating and he is in the process of opening up his own figure skating shop in Toronto. It will be called, Donald Jackson's, and will cater strictly to figure skating needs.

This week Mr. Jackson will return to the scene of his 1962 triumph as he journeys to Czechoslovakia to perform four exhibitions and participate in a television program there. A true

champion and gentleman in every sense, Mr. Jackson was a most welcome guest at the Gordon Alcott arena.

Mrs. Ellen Burka, in her capacity as coach, was present and her figure skating credentials are impressive indeed. Toller Cranston is her most famous pupil but she has also coached Val and Sandra Berez, former Canadian Champions and of course, her daughter, Petra Burka, a World Champion in the 1960's.

Mrs. Burka appears to have another champion on her hands in the form of Miss Heather Kemkaren, the Senior Ladies Singles Sectional winner.

Media from the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail, CBC TV, and Barrie TV, were attendance as well as representatives from six Halton area newspapers. Another famous coach present at the Sectionals was Mr. Sheldon Galbraith. Mr. Galbraith coached Barbara Ann Scott, the 1948 Canadian and World Womens Singles Champion and, as with Mrs. Burka it appears that he has another potential champion under his wing. He is presently coaching Vern Taylor, the Men's Junior Sectional Champion who thrilled the crowd on Sunday with his spectacular free skating exhibition.

Three judges who took part in the Sectionals are internationally known and they include Dorothy Leamen, David Dore and Bill McLaughlin.

Various other well known figure skating celebrities were in attendance and an additional pinch of glamour was added on Sunday in the form of Miss Toronto, Barbara Berezowski. Miss Berezowski is no stranger to figure skating as she and her partner were last year's Canadian Senior Dance Champions.

For all those who attended the Sectionals, celebrity or otherwise, Georgetown laid out the red carpet and proved the perfect host.



PAT FLETCHER of Scarborough and Kris Barber of Glen Williams drew cheers from the spectators during the Central Ontario Sectionals whenever they took to the ice. As crowd favourites, they were under perhaps more

pressure than their fellow competitors but they weathered it in style, capturing first place in the Novice Dance category.

## And now it's time for club competitions

The Georgetown Figure Skating Club will be holding its annual Club Competition this coming Monday at the Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena. The competition is expected to get underway at 4:45 p.m.

Competing in the National Badge Tests will be Sharon Stone and Debbie Gilbert.

In the Girls Beginner Free Skate, Gail Shanks, Kim Thompson, Carol Snow, Jo Anne Searle, Susan Kelly, Kim MacLeod, Leah Smeaton, Charlene Grummelt and Cathy Smeaton will be taking part.

The Mixed Dance will see Teri Lamb and Rod Sparkes as well as Sandra and Stephen Percival performing.

In the Pre-Juvenile Ladies event, the skaters will be

Karen Sparkes, Leslie Pritchard, Lana Ellison and Sue Ewen.

Hugo Dittfach and Tom Simpson will compete in the Boys Beginner Free Skates.

The Juvenile Ladies event will feature Michelle Dittfach, Janet Shepherd, Kelly Barber, Tracey Moores, Carol Anne Lovell, Lynn Fisher, Janice Snow and Sally Murphy.

Laura Yerxa, Cyd Sherry and Kirsten Mogg will try for Pre-Novice Ladies honours.

The Boys two-minute Free Skate will feature Eddie Howard and Mark Shaw, while Sherry Smeaton will perform in the Girls Interpretative and Cathy Wild and Renee Pilote will be skating in the Novice category.

## Local skaters shine

As befits the importance of such an event, the competition at the Central Ontario Regional Sectionals was keen. The Georgetown area had four, plus an adopted skater, competing and while they all performed to the best of their respective abilities, for the most part, our skaters were just slightly out of their depth. This is not meant as a slight on their abilities, rather a reflection of the talent competing in the Sectionals.

Kris Barber, of Glen Williams and his partner, Patricia Fletcher of Scarborough-Pat was adopted by the Georgetown crowd-skated away with first place in the Novice Dance section of the Sectionals. The final part of their program, performed on Sunday, was warmly received by the crowd.

Lealle Tonna of Georgetown performed well in the Junior Ladies category and finished seventh in a field of 11 skaters. Many of those in attendance felt she deserved better marks, but as the saying goes, "Ours is not to reason

why, etc....". Young David Watson of Georgetown finished eighth in the Pre-Novice Men but for the most part it was just a case of nerves that proved David's undoing. He was aware that he was behind leading up to the free skating part of his program and this pressure, plus the fact that he was skating in front of a hometown crowd proved a little too much to bear.

David is a very promising young skater and no doubt will go on to bigger and better things. It is to be hoped that he isn't too harsh with himself and concentrates on future trials.

Cindy McGilloway of Acton placed fifth in a field of 12 skaters in the Pre-Novice Ladies event and saved the best for last as she performed a fine free skating exhibition on Sunday. She is another promising young skater who shows definite talent and who no doubt will figure prominently in future Sectionals.



JOHN DOWDING of Oakville and Lorna Wighton of Toronto won the Senior Dance magnetism won over the capacity crowd and they were very popular winners indeed.



DONALD JACKSON, seen here going over the Sectional's program was a most welcome part of Saturday night's Central Ontario Regional Sectionals. Mr. Jackson was the 1962 Canadian and World Mens Singles Champion and over the years has contributed considerable time and energy to the development of young skaters. From left to

right are Tony Corbett, past president of the Georgetown Figure Skating Club, Brian Peart, publicity director for Georgetown's Central Ontario Section Committee, Ron Snow, president of the Georgetown Figure Skating Club, Don Jackson and Bob Howard head of Georgetown's Central Ontario Section's Committee.