

CENTRAL ONTARIO SECTIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Organizers pleased with outcome

Long, hard work pays off



Playing
The Field

By Dan Ralph
Herald Sports Editor

Orser finds figures challenging

To the untrained eye, the figures portion of a figure skating competition can be confusing. Just why are the skaters doing those circles, turns and loops?

However, those circles, turns and loops are as important as any free skating movement. For instance, the figures in this week-novice ladies meet held here were worth 50 per cent of a skater's mark.

The judges are looking for consistency," said five-time Canadian senior men's champ Brian Orser, who was a judge in the novice ladies figures. "They look for someone with nice presentation and flow in their turns and circles."

When explaining to a non-skater what the figures are, Orser uses playing the piano.

"Figures are the basics of skating," he said. "You lay figures on the ice that put the emphasis on turning, circling and looping."

Many young skaters despise the thought of spending hours a day trying to perfect their figures. For many, figures are boring and uninteresting. Not so for Orser.

"I like the figures," he said.

"To me they are very challenging."

There isn't any shortcut method of getting good figures, Orser said. There is only one way: hard work.

"It takes a lot of practice," Orser said. "I spend three hours a day five days a week on figures, and four hours a day before a competition."

"You've got to be real picky about them. Even the best in the world have to work on figures. There is always something you can find wrong about them."

"The biggest mistake I found with the novice ladies was their blades didn't run smooth. The run of their blades weren't right, which might have been due to nervousness."

Nervousness was something which used to hurt Orser when he did his figures at major competitions. But now thanks to being able to deal with pressure he no longer has that major problem with his nerves. **BRIAN ORSER**

"In the past I used to have a hard time under pressure. But we brought in the big name judges I'd get nervous in front of to practise and simulated the real conditions of a big competition. I practised being nervous."

In the past two years Orser's figures have improved dramatically. In the 1984 Olympics where Orser won the silver medal, he was seventh after the figures. A year later at the World championships he improved that mark to a fourth place finish.

"It has been a long time coming, though," he said.

Being a figures judge at figure skating competitions has helped also.

As a judge I see things differently. When I see people doing the same mistake time after time it frustrates me, so when I go into my training Monday I make sure I don't make the same mistake," said the 23-year-old.

After his Olympic silver medal win at the '84 Games, it would seem Orser would try for the gold in the '88 Olympiad. After all, the Olympics are being held in Calgary, and it would seem only fitting the best male skater in Canada would compete in his native country.

But Orser isn't committing himself to the '88 Olympics.

"I hope to be there, but I won't commit myself. I'll finish this year (compete in Canadian and World events) then decide if I'll stick with it for another two years. I've got some exhibitions after the Worlds, so I'll make an announcement likely in May," he said.

That isn't to suggest Orser's desire and love for the sport have diminished. Orser said he still enjoys skating, but is involved in some marketing, and added he could turn pro with an organization like Ice Capades.

As for this year Orser is looking towards the Canadian championships which will be held in North Bay in February. Just because he is the defending champ doesn't mean Orser is dismissing all other competitors in the national event. He remembers five years ago when an unknown 19-year-old Orser knocked off reigning champ Brian Pokar.

"You never know who's coming up," Orser said. "I can't let what happened to Brian Pokar in 1981 happen to me."

Organizers of this weekend's Central Ontario Sectional figure skating meet feel all the hard work involved in staging a competition such as this paid off in a big way judging from the comments they received.

Co-chairmen Jane Hoddinott and Marg Garrison said after Sunday's competition they were happy with the assistance they received from the community. In total about 150 volunteers helped out.

"It was definitely worth the effort," Garrison said. "Everyone did just a super job."

"We're so proud of (the people of) Georgetown," Hoddinott added. "We couldn't have done this without their help."

The competition itself began Thursday with compulsory figures at Memorial Arena. Friday the free skating events started at the Alcott Arena, and both ice surfaces were used throughout.

"One concern we had was the ice conditions," Garrison said. "But it turned out to be no concern at all. The arena staffs did a great job."

Both Garrison and Hoddinott said the Georgetown Figure Skating Club worked hard the past six months organizing the event. Both said it was a lot of work, but added their efforts didn't go undetected.

"A lot of people said how good it was and how nice it turned out," Garrison said.

That isn't to suggest the Club would readily organize and hold the '88 Sectionals.

"Hosting this once every year is a wonderful idea," Hoddinott said with a chuckle.

Georgetown last hosted an event like this in 1975.

Many skating dignitaries were in Georgetown for the competition. Five-time Canadian senior men's champ Brian Orser did some judging while Brian Pokar, Lynn Nightingale and Donald Jackson made appearances throughout the four days the event was held. Also, former Toronto Maple Leafs coach Red Kelly was here to watch his daughter compete.

But the icing on the cake came when Georgetown's Darren Kemp electrified an enthusiastic audience Sunday en route to winning the junior men's division.

"That really made it nice that someone from Georgetown did well," Garrison said.

In total, four area competitors took part. Along with Kemp, Campbellville's Kevin Parker won the senior men's title while Andrew Hoddinott competed in the novice men's and Dayna Cammick took part in the pre-novice ladies competition.

"We're proud of all our skaters," Hoddinott said.

"I think this brought all of the people working on this much closer," Hoddinott said. "I think that was the best part of it."



PIPING IN-Guests and dignitaries are led by a pair of bagpipers at Saturday's opening ceremonies. The event was held at the Alcott Arena. (Herald photo)



GOLDEN SMILE-Campbellville native Kevin Parker is all smiles after winning the Senior Men's competition. Here he poses with his trophy and ribbon. Parker was the senior men's defending champ, and will be off to Whistler in January for the Divisionals. (Herald photo)



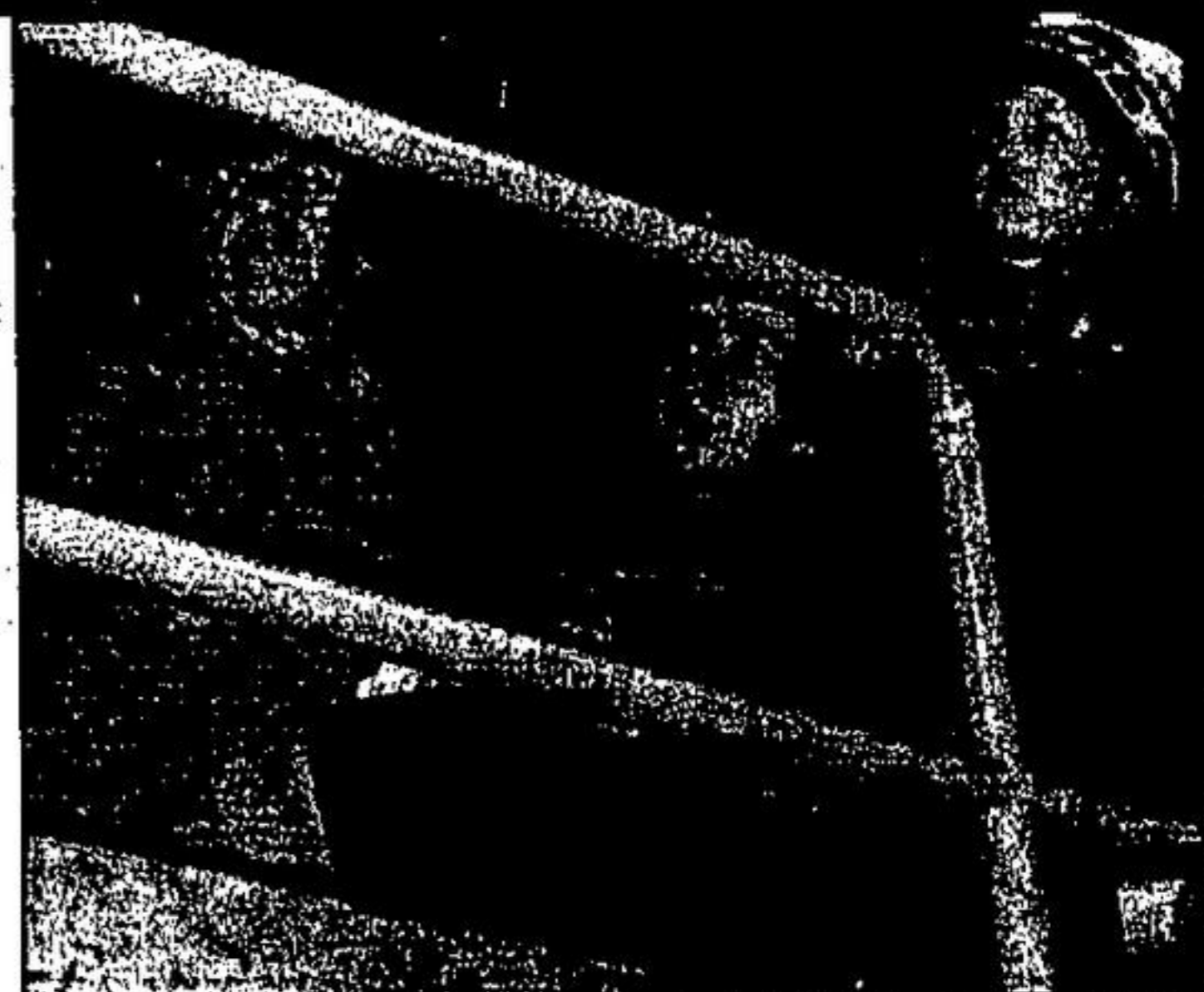
SKATERS' OATH-Georgetown Figure Skating Club members Andrew Hoddinott (right) and Dayna Cammick read the skaters' oath at Saturday's opening ceremonies. Not only did the two skaters speak at the opening ceremonies, both competed in the four-day competition. (Herald photo)

WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

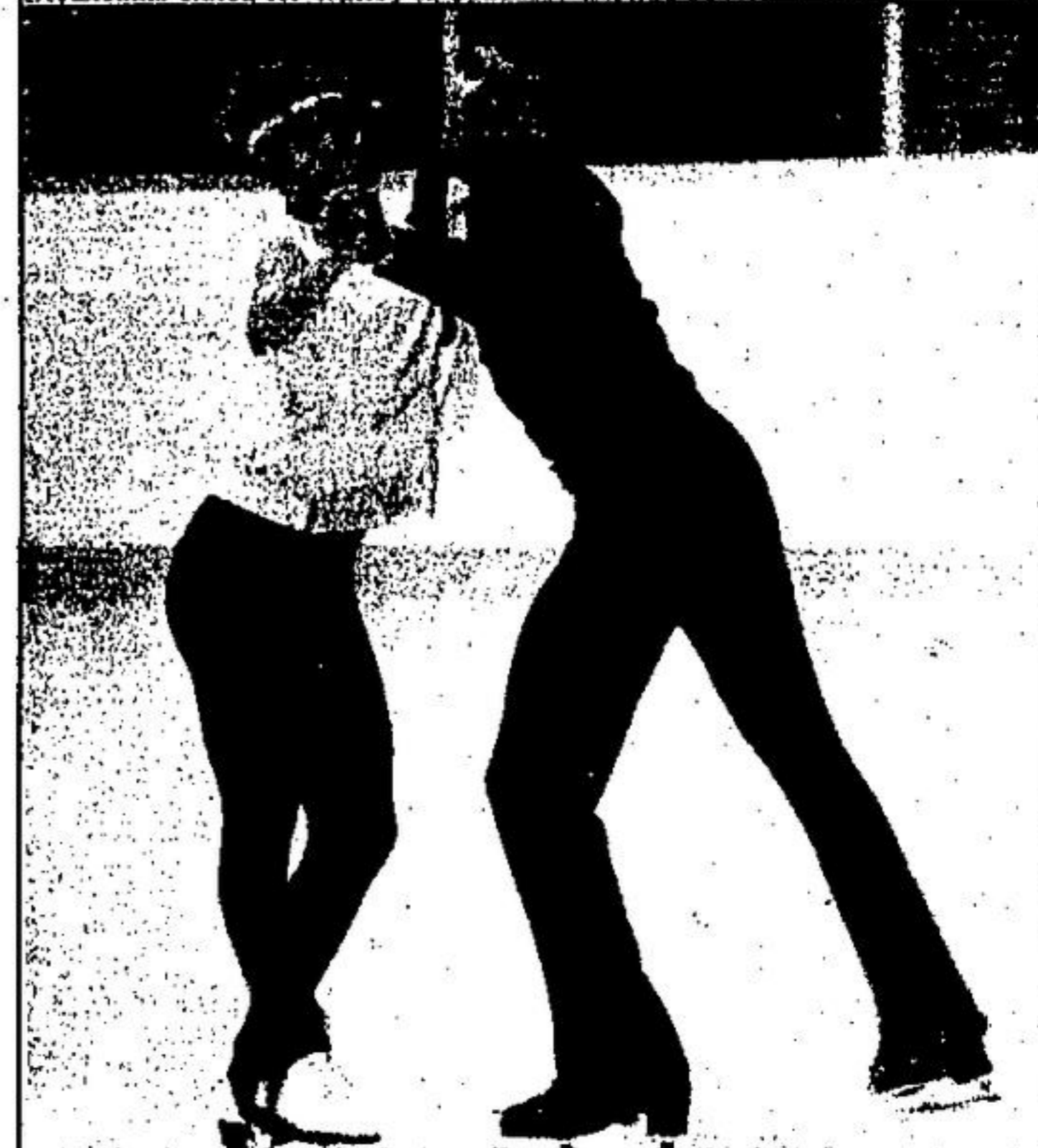
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LOOKING ON-Parents and children alike had a keen interest Sunday in the final skating events that were held at the Alcott Arena. A capacity crowd was on hand Sunday to watch the best skaters in all divisions try to qualify for the Divisionals slated for Whistler in January. (Herald photo)



GUEST SKATERS-Karyn and Rob Garosino were the guest skaters for the weekend competition and performed both Saturday and Sunday for the audience at the Alcott Arena. The Calgary duo is rated number two in Canada, and had just come back from a competition in Japan where they finished second. (Herald photo)

ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



Running back Tim Racinsky (21) of the Georgetown District High School Junior Rebels is this month's Herald Athlete of the Month. Racinsky rushed for 125 yards in the consolation championship game, won 20-10 by Georgetown. The Herald congratulates Tim and the Rebels on their play this season.

(Herald photo)

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