

Ahlgrens figure well in skate club's success

Coaching couple
integral part of
Stouffville Figure
Skating Club

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

They're a team. Both on and off the ice.

Hans and Judy Ahlgren are an integral part of the Stouffville Figure Skating Club, providing group and private instruction since the arena's opening in 1985. They offer a similar service at Uxbridge as well, where they now live.

A native of Sweden, Hans ascended the ranks to eventually becoming a Scandinavian junior champion before turning professional with Holiday on Ice. World tours took him to such places as China, Japan and Germany.

Judy's early achievements are equally impressive. With partner John Bailey, they were Canadian junior ice-dance champions, later winning a silver medal on the world stage in Vienna, Austria, in 1967.

With so much in common, Hans and Judy were destined to meet and marry.

They have a son, Lars, 22, attending the University of Toronto and a daughter, Emily, 20, enrolled at the University of Waterloo. Both are figure skating gold medallists.

In the role of teachers, Hans



Judy Ahlgren and her husband, Hans, have been coaches with the Stouffville Figure Skating Club since 1985.

and Judy work with students from pre-school to adult, including Stouffville's club registrar Theresa Carr and social convenor Patti Skelton.

COACH FULL-TIME

Each age level has its own distinctive relationships, they say, with no level excelling over another. But, Judy admits "when a small child looks up at you with sparkling eyes and smiling face after completing an intricate manoeuvre, it's magic."

Hans and Judy are full-time instructors with a gruelling schedule extending over six days a week

including Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in Stouffville; Wednesdays and Sundays at Uxbridge plus portions of Mondays at both.

The two club memberships are about the same, just under 300.

The regular season extends from early September to mid-May. At Uxbridge, however, a spring and summer school is offered, something Stouffville doesn't have.

"It's sorely missed," Hans says.

Attaining gold medal standing is the couple's prime goal for students in any one of four categories: free-skate, dance, skills and interpretive. Over the years, several

have obtained two, but the accomplishments of Stouffville's Lauren Warner places a special emphasis on determination and commitment, they say.

Warner won triple gold with individual medals in interpretive, skills and dance, something few if any Stouffville skaters have ever done.

What made Warner's accomplishment so significant, says Judy, was her comeback at age 15 to gain a third gold credit.

"She epitomizes resolve," Judy says, "much the same as athletes in other sports who refuse to accept second-best. They pick themselves up, dust themselves off and carry on," she notes.

Hans and Judy work in close cooperation with other members of Stouffville's coaching staff, which includes Jean Barclay, Lynda Khanna, Cindy McNeil, Janet Williams, Julia Wilson, Danny Sorley and Brett Schrader.

DIRECTS ICE SHOW

In addition to instructing, Hans directs the semi-annual Springtime Ice Revue in Stouffville and a similar one held annually at Uxbridge.

Although the season is well under way, newcomers are still welcome, Judy says, particularly at the beginner level.

Despite their longevity of service, this husband-wife team gives no thought to retirement.

"We love it too much," Judy says.

"It's our life," agrees Hans.

Spirit tamed by Tigers

The young Stouffville Spirit was schooled by the veteran Aurora Tigers Thursday night.

The Tigers (33-1-0-0) won 5-1 over the Spirit (21-12-1-0) at the Stouffville Arena. Aurora is ranked No. 1 in the Canadian Junior A Hockey League.

The Spirit is the youngest team — average age 17.3 — in the North Conference of the Provincial Junior A Hockey League. The Tigers, the two-time defending conference champs, are the oldest, with 17-20-year-olds on their roster.

Cale Tanaka scored for the Spirit, which trailed 2-0 after one period and 5-1 after two.

The Spirit was outshot 35-27.

Former Spirit players Sean Scully and Jamie Minchella scored for Aurora.

ON ROAD TONIGHT, TOMORROW

The Spirit plays the South Conference's Thornhill Major Islanders tonight at the Thornhill Community Centre, then visits the Newmarket Hurricanes Sunday night at the Ray Twinney arena in Newmarket.

Newmarket (26-6-1-0) is in second place in the North. Aurora is in first and Stouffville third.

The Spirit hosts Couchiching Thursday and the Oshawa Legionaires Saturday before breaking for the Christmas holidays. Both games start at 7:30 p.m. at the Stouffville Arena.



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