

THE BIRTH OF WINTER OLYMPIC SPORTS: LONDON, 1908

by James R. Hines

An act of nature, the eruption of Vesuvius, the volcano in Campania on the Gulf of Naples, caused severe damage, leading the Italians, scheduled to host the fourth holding of the modern Olympic Games, to announce that for financial reasons associated with the costs of rebuilding they would be unable to host the Games scheduled for Rome in 1908.¹ Thus, an eleventh-hour decision was made to move the Games of the fourth Olympiad to London. Summer Games were not held in Italy until 1960, although the Winter Games were held in Cortina d'Ampezzo in 1956.

Moving the Games to London had an unexpected but direct effect on the development of winter Olympic sports. It resulted in the inclusion of figure skating sixteen years before the first Winter Games were held in Chamonix, France, in 1924. Figure skating, the only winter sport contested before World War I, was possible in London owing to the availability of indoor artificial ice. Presumably, such facilities were not available in Stockholm four years later. When the Games resumed following the war, at Antwerp in 1920, artificial ice was available. Figure skating was again contested, and ice hockey was added.

London was an appropriate place for figure skating to become an Olympic sport because England was the birthplace of figure skating.² The United Kingdom can boast of publishing the first book on figure skating, forming the first skating club, and establishing the first national governing body for the sport. But the style of skating developed there during the nineteenth century, called the English style, was unlike that practiced on the Continent, in Scandinavia, or in North America, and it was in those countries that the sport as we know it today evolved. On the Continent, especially in Vienna, a style of skating, soon to be

called the International style, developed, the style ultimately adopted by the *International Skating Union*.³ By the end of the nineteenth century, the rigid English style, characteristic of the Victorian era generally, was rapidly becoming passe.

Skating in the British Isles through most of the nineteenth century was primarily a sport for men, especially the nobility, the aristocracy, and the clergy. It was a recreational activity, one that was purposely noncompetitive. By the 1870s, however, women in England and elsewhere were skating in increasingly large numbers, and during the 1890s, couple skating became exceedingly popular throughout the skating world.

As early as 1879, the *National Skating Association* (NSA) in England called for an international governing organization for skating.⁴ Thirteen years later, in July 1892, the *Nederlandsche Schaatsenrijders Bond* hosted the first ISU Congress, held at Scheveningen, the Netherlands.⁵ Five countries participated; three others sent letters of interest.⁶ The result was the formation of the *Internationale Eislauf-Vereinigung*, the oldest extant international organization for a winter sport. Its translation, the *International Skating Union* (ISU) has been employed since English was adopted as the official language in 1947.⁷

The first World Championship was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1896. Gilbert FUCHS of Germany, one of just four competitors, became the World Champion.⁸ No British skater competed in St. Petersburg, but two years later, in 1898, the

Annie Hübler and Dr. Heinrich Burger (l.) and Madge and Edgar Syers (from: British Olympic Council, *The Fourth Olympiad Being the Official Report. The Olympic Games of 1908, London 1909*, plates after p. 287)

Championship was held in London, and for the first time a British skater, H. Charles Holt, competed and British judges officiated.⁹

One would presume that Great Britain's long tradition of non-competitive English-style skating affected its skaters interest in and ability to compete successfully in the International style, but attitudes were changing. By the early 1890s, British skaters were arguing the benefits of the International style, and there were many converts. Among the most influential were two major writers on the sport, Edgar SYERS and Herbert YGLESIAS, both of whom were active members of the *London Skating Club*. Within a relatively short period of time, British skaters were practicing, and competing in the International style. Some diehard English-style skaters made their disgust known, but they were in the minority.¹⁰

International competitions under ISU rules included two events, compulsory figures, commonly called "school figures," and free skating.¹¹ Greater emphasis was placed on compulsory figures, which counted sixty percent of the total score. Initially, there was only one discipline, singles skating for men. No rule precluded women from competing, as it was beyond comprehension that a woman would consider participating in a man's sport. But in 1902, Madge SYERS of Great Britain had the audacity to enter the World Championship held that year in London. She placed second to the legendary Ulrich SALCHOW of Sweden.¹²

Women in competition was a major topic of discussion at the biennial ISU Congress, held the following year in Budapest, but because the subject had not been included on the agenda, no gender-specific legislation could be enacted. Continuing her one-lady crusade, SYERS entered the European Championship in 1904 but withdrew after the compulsory figures owing to injury. At its next Congress, held in Copenhagen in 1905, the ISU, under pressure from the NSA, established a separate championship for ladies. Becoming the World Champion, however, remained in the domain of men as it does today.¹³

SYERS became in 1906 the first Lady World Figure Skating Champion, and she repeated the following year.¹⁴ Her success must be viewed as an anomaly. Only two other British ladies competed during the first six years of competition, and both placed last.¹⁵ During that same six-year period, just three British men competed in the World Championships, and they too placed last.¹⁶ Other than SYERS, British skaters, neither men nor women, had medal winning success in International competition prior to the Olympic year and for several years thereafter, but enthusiasm among them existed in abundance. It seems probable that the possibility of including figure skating as an Olympic sport was a hot topic of conversa-

tion among skaters as well as officers and members of the *London Skating Club* and the NSA soon after the *British Olympic Association* (BOA) accepted the offer to host the Games of 1908 in London.

That offer came during the 1906 Games in Athens following the announcement by Eugenio Brunetta D'USSEAUX, the Italian member of the *International Olympic Committee* (IOC), that Italy would be unable to host the Games in 1908.¹⁷ Lord William DESBOROUGH, the British member of the IOC and a competitor in the épée team event, was immediately approached regarding any interest England might have in hosting the Games. King Edward VII, also in attendance at the Games, was consulted, and his support seemed probable. Upon returning to London, DESBOROUGH placed the proposal before the BOA, which then consulted with and received positive responses from the governing bodies of various sports practiced in England. On November 19, 1906, seven months after the proposal had been made in Athens, the BOA sent a letter of acceptance to the IOC and appointed the *British Olympic Council* (BOC) to plan for and manage the Games in London.

Minutes of a meeting of the BOC held on December 20, 1906, just a month after its formation, report that "a discussion took place regarding the possibility of holding Olympic Skating Competitions in the winter of 1907-8." It is the first mention of including figure skating as an Olympic sport. One would suspect that the genesis for the idea came from skaters who were competing internationally and that it would have been promoted by their established organizations, specifically the *London Skating Club* locally and the NSA nationally, but that may have happened only indirectly.

William Hayes FISHER (later Lord DOWNHAM), a member of the BOC, was also the President of the NSA. The first mention of Olympic skating in NSA minutes appears in a meeting of its Figure Skating Committee held on March 21, 1907, a full three months after it was discussed at the BOC meeting. Chaired by Henry Eugene VANDERVELL, the "father of English figure skating," a discussion took place regarding "the suggestion of holding Figure Skating Meetings in connection with the Olympic Games to be held in London during the summer of 1908." Support in the resulting motion was worded cautiously: "The figure Departmental Committee were in favor of holding figure Skating Meetings in connection with the Olympic Games if such Meetings could be arranged" Four days later, March 25, at an NSA Council meeting, FISHER stated that the "committee of the Olympic Games which are to take place in London next year were anxious that skating should be included in them." A resolution adopted unanimously required that "a small committee be appointed to co-operate with the British Olympic Games Committee in promoting an International Skating Competition." FISHER

was undoubtedly encouraged by others to champion the cause of including skating events at the London Games, but from the earliest BOC planning sessions, he appears to have been the primary protagonist.

The term "skating," not "figure skating," is used consistently except in the minutes of the Figure Skating Committee. The NSA was established in 1879 specifically to regulate speed skating. Figure skating was added two years later, and VANDERVELL was appointed Chairman of the Figure Skating Committee, a post he held until his death in 1908.¹⁸ Indoor, today short track, speed skating as well as figure skating was considered initially for inclusion at the London Games. This is made clear by the BOC minutes for November 11, 1907, which report that the medals needed include four of each color for both figure skating and speed skating. Just months before the Games were to begin, planning was progressing for the inclusion of both sports.¹⁹

The NSA appointed an Olympic organizing committee at its March 25 meeting. Included among its members were James Henry JOHNSON and Edward Frederick BENSON, important names in the history of figure skating.²⁰ JOHNSON and his wife, Phyllis, won silver medals in pair skating at the Games and proceeded to win World titles in 1909 and 1912. They also wrote the first important article on pair skating, a discipline then in its infancy.²¹ BENSON, the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, was a respected novelist and a skater in the English style.²² He published in 1908, the year of the Games, an important book on English-style skating.²³ BENSON, was a holdover from the old style and states in his Introduction:

*"Of that interesting and beautiful form of skating known as the Continental or International style, it is not proposed to treat at all, firstly, it may be said, because the writer does not know anything whatever about it."*²⁴

English-style skating was considered for possible inclusion at the London Games but probably not seriously. The BOC minutes for June 6, 1907, report that "competitions in English style should be omitted." English-style skating was not a competitive sport in the nineteenth century, although by the early twentieth century, competitions were held. More important, no country outside of the British Isles practiced English-style skating. It seems unlikely that serious consideration would have been given to a uniquely British style of skating that was not compatible with disciplines contested internationally.

The NSA also regulated roller skating, a sport that was tremendously popular in the later nineteenth century and one that was practised internationally, but no mention of roller skating was found in the minutes of either the NSA or the BOC.

Six weeks before the NSA formed its Olympic planning committee, Edgar SYERS, secretary of the



Madge Syers (Private Collection Hines)

London Skating Club, was named to the BOC. As a writer and champion of the International style and husband of a World Champion skater, one can presume that he added substantial support to FISHER'S efforts to include skating at the London Games.

FISHER volunteered at a meeting of the BOC on March 11 to "bring up the matter [of including skating] at the next meeting of his Association" and to "report their suggestions at the next meeting of the Council." The chronology of events suggest that FISHER, a speed skater, was the primary catalyst at least initially for including skating at the Games, that he probably enlisted the support of SYERS, an influential voice for figure skating, and then obtained official support from the NSA.²⁵ Armed with that support, FISHER'S positive report to the BOC at its meeting on March 22 resulted in approval for including skating events at the London Games.

The BOC, at a meeting on March 27, discussed the concept of a cycle of "winter sports," meaning specifically those sports traditionally played in the fall and winter: football, rugby, field hockey, lacrosse, and skating, to be held "about Easter 1908." Seven months later, however, on November 1, it was "provisionally decided to contest the winter sports not in the spring previous to the summer sports but rather in the fall, specifically in October, following the summer events."²⁶ The final schedule for the London Games included racquets, jeu de paume, and polo held respectively in April, May, and June. Other events, not including the indicated winter sports, were

held in July.²⁷ The winter sports, which spanned two weeks, commenced with rugby on October 19 and ending with field hockey on October 31.

Figure skating events were held over two days, October 28-29, at *Prince's Skating Club* in Knightsbridge, a private facility opened in 1896 primarily for skaters in the English style. Its long and narrow ice surface, 52 by 200 feet (16 by 62 meters), was unusual but ideally suited for combined skating in the English style, which requires about 625 square feet for each group of four skaters.²⁸ Sixteen groups could be accommodated simultaneously. The rink was narrow by today's standards. Olympic skating surfaces are 30 X 60 meters.

The agreement with *Prince's Skating Club*, which was negotiated by the NSA, provided full use of the venue for a period of three weeks, a necessity "in order to enable competitors to obtain a fortnight's practice before the competition." This included the entire staff but not the band. Rent for exclusive use of the facility was set at £200 weekly. Coupled with other expenses estimated at £200, the total cost was projected to be £800. By agreement between the BOC and the NSA, the projected expenses of £800 were to be divided equally with any additional expenses to be covered by the NSA.

Income was to be divided in units, the first £200 going to the BOC, the second £200 to the NSA, and so forth with any excess over £800 to be divided equally. Income was less than anticipated. The final report of the BOC's finance committee, tendered on February 25, 1909, states

"that in view of the fact that the NSA's accounts show that on the agreement between themselves and the BOC the latter are entitled to receive the sum of £297 12s, but that in that case, a loss of £191 7s 9d would fall upon the NSA, it was decided to subtract the amount of said loss from the sum due to the BOC, leaving a payment of £106 4s 3d due to the latter."

Four figure-skating events were contested at the London Games: men, ladies, pair skating, and special figures. Madge SYERS had become the first Lady World Champion in 1906. She successfully defended her title in 1907 but did not compete in 1908. Later that year, in her last international competition, she added Olympic gold to her laurels. Six ladies competed against Syers in those three competitions.



Anna Hübler and Heinrich Burger of Germany (Coll. Hines)

Jenny HERZ of Austria, twice the World silver medalist, retired in 1907, a year before the Games. Lily KRONBERGER of Hungary, twice the World bronze medalist, did not compete at the Games, but earlier that year, she won the first of four consecutive World titles. Elsa RENDSCHMIDT of Germany who twice placed fourth at the World Championships, won the Olympic silver medal and then retired. Dorothy GREENOUGH-SMITH, of Great Britain, who placed last in her only World competition, won the Olympic bronze medal and then retired. The consistency of these skaters and their rankings is remarkable, especially when it is noted that no judge officiated in more than one of the competitions.

The first World championship for pairs was contested in February 1908, two years after the first championship for ladies but just eight months before the Olympic Games. The champions, Anna HUBLER and Heinrich BURGER of Germany, proceeded to become

World Championship, 1906	World Championship, 1907
Madge SYERS (GBR)	Madge SYERS (GBR)
Jenny HERZ (AUT)	Jenny HERZ (AUT)
Lily KRONBERGER (HUN)	Lily KRONBERGER (HUN)
Elisa RENDSCHMIDT (GER)	Elisa RENDSCHMIDT (GER)
D. GREENOUGH-SMITH (GBR)	Gwendolyn LYCETT (GBR)

Olympic Games, 1908
Madge SYERS (GBR)
Elsa RENDSCHMIDT (GER)
D. GREENOUGH-SMITH (GBR)
Elna MONTGOMERY (SWE)
Gwendolyn LYCETT (GBR)



Ulrich Salchow (from: BOC, Olympiad, plate after p. 287)

the first Olympic pair champions. Their career included just three outings in international competition, and they were never defeated. In addition to the 1908 titles, they reappeared in 1910 and claimed a second World title.

Probably because the discipline was so new, there were only three entries in the pairs competition in London. The silver medalists were Phyllis and James JOHNSON whose international record includes one bronze, two silver, and two gold medals.²⁹ They were the World pair champions twice, 1909 and 1912. Bronze medalists at the Games were Madge and Edgar SYERS in what was their only international pairs competition.

The men's events at the Games provided the largest number of competitors, seven skaters representing four countries. One might have expected more, since international competitions for men had been held annually since 1891, the year of the first European Championships, but only twice, in 1892 and 1893, did the number of contestants at the European Championships surpass those at

the London Games, eight each year. The World Championships had never surpassed and only twice equaled the number of men who competed at the Games. Thus, participation at the London Games was outstanding.

Swedish skaters dominated figure skating in the early years of international competition, a phenomenon clearly reflected in London. Three men swept the medals.³⁰ Ulrich SALCHOW, already a six-time European and seven-time World Champion, became the sport's first Olympic Champion.³¹ His name is known to all followers of figure skating as the inventor of the SALCHOW jump, one of the most artistic jumps in figure skating.³² Following his competitive career, SALCHOW served the ISU as president from 1925 to 1937. Completing the medal sweep in London were the silver medalist Richard JOHANSSON and the bronze medalist Per THOREN.³³

John KEILLER GREIG and Albert MARCH of England, placed fourth and fifth. Irving BROKAW, the Champion of America in 1906, placed sixth. No other North American skater competed at the Games, and none competed at the World championships before World War I. Horatio TORROME, the only Argentinian to ever compete in an ISU or Olympic figure skating competition, placed seventh. Although he represented Argentina, TORROME resided in London and was an active member of the *London Skating Club*.

Interest among competitors and the success of the London Games is evident. When figure-skating was included again twelve years later in Antwerp, the numbers increased in all disciplines, especially pair skating, but not extensively. A similar increase occurred for the first official Winter Games at Chamonix in 1924.

	Ladies	Men	Pairs	Special Figures	Total
London, 1908	5	7	3	4	18
Antwerp, 1920	6	9	8		23
Chamonix, 1924	8	11	9		28

Figure skating events in London began with the compulsory figures events on Wednesday, the ladies in the morning and the men in the afternoon. The other events were held on Thursday, special figures in the morning, and free skating in the afternoon in the order ladies, men, and pairs.

The compulsory figures were selected from the established schedule of the ISU, eleven for the ladies and fourteen for the men. Each figure carried a value of twelve, eighteen, or twenty-four points based on its degree of difficulty. Only one-foot eights and counters were skated by both the ladies and the men. The ladies skated one "paragraph" figure, the three-

change-three, while the men skated two of them, the more difficult loop-change-loop and bracket-change-bracket.³⁴ With one exception, all figures were done on both feet.³⁵ Each figure was skated three times without pause, called "triple repetition."

The free skating, which counted forty percent of the score, was of four minutes duration for the ladies, five for the men. Skaters were judged on the difficulty of their programs and the variety of figures included in them. Judges looked for "harmonious composition, sureness, carriage, movement, etc." Long flowing spirals and a few spins connected by dance steps provided the primary content of the programs.³⁶ Jumping was not yet considered a necessary part of free skating.

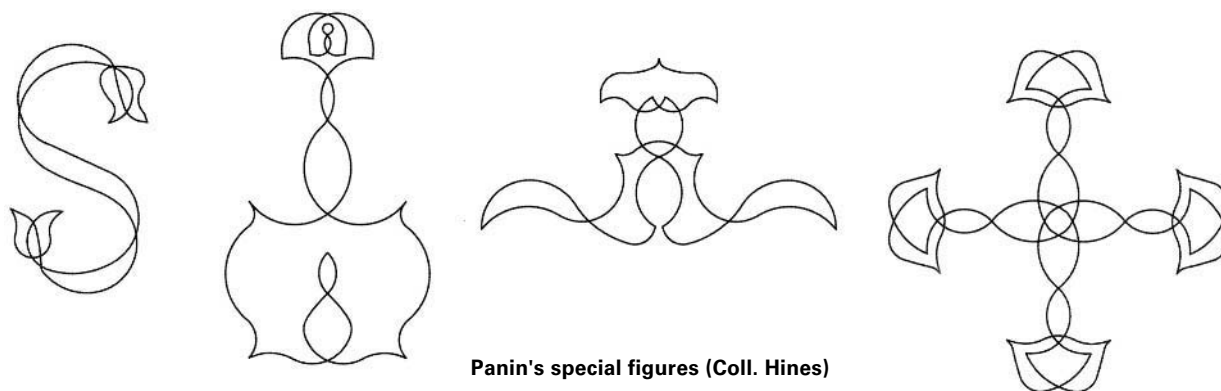
Compulsory figures were not required for pair skaters. They presented only a free-skating program of five minutes duration.³⁷ In addition to the same qualities of skating expected of singles skaters, "accuracy of timing" was considered of paramount performance in pair skating. Spirals in many variations were the most effective moves. The more athletic and theatrical moves associated with pair skating today, such as lifts and death spirals, were unknown in the prewar era. Side-by-side spins were seen but not pair spins. Pair skating was interwoven with ice dancing and remained so until after World War I. Major changes occurred in the 1920s, when more athletic movements resulted in pair skating and ice dancing becoming separate disciplines.³⁸

The fourth discipline contested in London was special figures, soon to become a forgotten art. They were not included at the Antwerp Games in 1920. Competitions for special figures, which were not regulated by the ISU, were held as separate events under locally established rules. They continued through the 1920s with some of the greatest skaters of that era keeping the discipline alive, especially three-time Olympic Champion Gilles GRAFSTROM.³⁹ Special figures were complex closed geometric designs done completely on one foot. The fascination for them resulted from the intricacy of the designs traced on the ice. Many were associated with specific skaters, but new designs appeared continually.

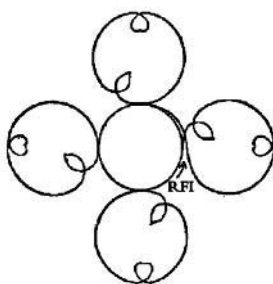
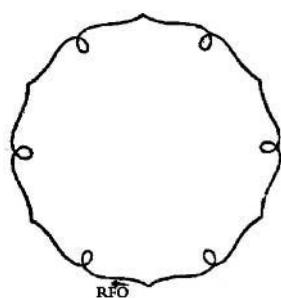


Nicolai Panin of Russia (Private Collection Hines)

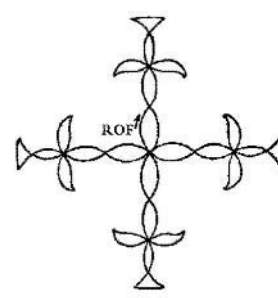
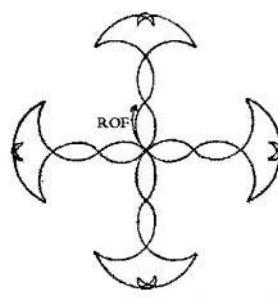
A criticism of special figures, which contributed to their demise, was the contortions of the body and resulting jerkiness required to create them, but that was a paradox. Edgar SYERS, a strong promoter of the International style, noted that even the most difficult special figures could be executed with precision and grace. He reported that Nikolai PANIN of Russia, the Olympic Champion, was "mathematically precise in his tracings and his positions and movements were never in the least awkward or jerky," and he continued, saying that PANIN skated with his "body and head erect [and that] he found it only necessary to glance occasionally at the maze of curves and turns which his skate described with such consummate



Panin's special figures (Coll. Hines)



SPECIAL FIGURES SKATED BY MR. E. HALL-SAY.



SPECIAL FIGURES SKATED BY MR. ARTHUR CUMMING.

(from: BOC, Olympiad, plate after p. 287)

ease."⁴⁰ PANIN, the Olympic champion, was recognized as one of the greatest practitioners of special figures.⁴¹ The only other competitors in the event were Arthur CUMMING and George HALL-SAY, both representing Great Britain. They claimed the silver and bronze medals.⁴²

Four special figures were skated by each competitor. In order to consider their "merit," specifically their difficulty, sketches of them were submitted to the BOC at least one week before the competition.⁴³ Up to six could be submitted, but the skaters were required to specify the four to be skated the day before the competition. The judges established collectively a predetermined mark for each figure relative to its degree of "difficulty and novelty." A second mark was assigned by each judge individually for the quality of its execution when the figure was skated. The sum of the two marks yielded the score for each figure.

A total of twenty-one skaters from six countries competed in the four disciplines at the London Games. Eleven represented Great Britain. Others included four from Sweden, three from Germany, and one each from Argentina, Russia, and the United States. Countries were limited to three entries in each event, but only Great Britain in the ladies' events and Sweden in the men's events entered the maximum number. Still, the number of skaters who participated was excellent when compared with other international figure skating competitions in the prewar era.

The referee and judges, were nominated by the NSA from those recognized by the ISU. Unlike today in which there is a different referee for each discipline, one referee served throughout. George Herbert FOWLER, the NSA's representative on the ISU Council, served in that capacity. The judges, five for each event, represents a veritable "who's who" of figure skating in the early twentieth century. Seven judges representing six countries provided reasonable assurance that fair and impartial judging would occur. Four of them had been international competitors. Most of the judges officiated in multiple disciplines: three in all disciplines, one in three disci-

plines, and two in two disciplines. Legend tells us there was controversy over the judging of the men's compulsory figures, but documentation to support that is lacking. PANIN withdrew after the compulsory figures, allegedly because SALCHOW had won by a split decision of three judges to two, but the official and probable reason was illness.⁴⁴ YGLESIAS, who was tied for last place following the compulsory figures, also withdrew.

Great Britain furnished two judges, Harry Faith who judged the ladies and pairs events and Henning GRENANDER who judged the men and special figures events. Faith served the NSA as Acting Honorary Secretary following the unexpected death in 1907 of Henry ELLINGTON, an active participant in planning for the Games. Faith completed ELLINGTON'S term, and in recognition for a remarkable job was awarded a special medal by the BOC. GRENANDER was the 1898 World Champion representing Sweden, but he later settled in London and became active in the skating community.

Other judges included Gustav HUGEL of Austria, George SANDERS of Russia, Hermann WENDT of Germany, and Edvard HORLE of Sweden, HUGEL was the most decorated. His impressive ten year competitive career included three World titles.⁴⁵ SANDERS won the bronze medal at the first World Championship in 1896 but is remembered primarily as one of the great practitioners of special figures. He wrote the article on special figures included in BROKAW'S *The Art of Skating*.⁴⁶ WENDT served from 1921 through 1928 as President of his federation, the *Deutscher Eislauf-Verband*, and HORLE served from 1905 through 1909 as Secretary of his club, the *Stockholms Allmanna Skridskoklubb*.

The official closing ceremony for the Games in London was held on July 28 following the summer games, but only 86 of 110 events had been decided by that date. Separate medal ceremonies for the winter sports were held following the competitions for each individual sport. On Thursday evening, October 29, following the free-skating events, the *London Skating Club* sponsored a ball at Prince's Restaurant for "foreign representatives and others,"

and on Friday, the NSA held a banquet at *Holborn Restaurant* where the figure-skating medals were presented by Mrs. Hayes FISHER.

The Games of the fourth Olympiad officially ended on October 31 with the completion of the final hockey match between England and Ireland. That evening, a banquet, chaired by Lord DESBOROUGH, was held in HOLBORN Restaurant for officials and any athletes still in London. About 450 persons were in attendance. Many laudatory toasts were made that evening. Among them was one by Ulrich SALCHOW, winner of the gold medal in the men's figure skating. On behalf of Sweden, he noted that *"his countrymen were more than satisfied with the splendid arrangements made, especially in connexion with the skating competition."*⁴⁷

October 28 and 29, 1908, are important days in the history of figure skating as it became the first winter sport to join the Olympic movement, thus expanding dramatically the scope of the Olympic Games. Whether the eruption of Vesuvius was the reason or the excuse for moving the Games of the fourth Olympiad from Rome to London, the move accelerated the introduction of winter sports into Olympic competition. The timing and location was ideal. Great Britain with its long and distinguished history and leadership role in the development of figure skating had the established organizations, specifically the NSA and the *London Skating Club*, necessary to successfully manage such a major undertaking as well as the practical experience of having successfully hosted two previous World Championships. In addition and equally important, London had an outstanding venue, Prince's Skating Club, in which the events could be held.

Included in a report following the conclusion of the figure skating competition, one commentator wrote:

*"If control over the muscles, graceful movement and a complete equilibrium of physical resources can ever be said to have been attained in the Olympic programme, it was to be seen in this competition; and the skating events should therefore take very high rank in any serious comparison between the various items in the Olympic Games of 1908 and previous years. The fact that these events call for not only strength but skill, both delicate and precise, not merely for natural ability but for patient and prolonged practice, and that these qualities can be exemplified by competitors of varying ages, of both sexes, and of many different nations, is, I think a recommendation possessed by very few sports to a similar degree."*⁴⁸
The insight expressed in that statement suggests, perhaps prophetically, the fact that today figure skating is the most popular winter Olympic sport, especially with television viewers. Its balance of

athleticism and artistry is unique and it appeals to a wide-ranging audience. The Games of the 1908 Olympics were tremendously successful and can boast several firsts, but perhaps most significant, London, the birthplace of figure skating, is also the birthplace of winter Olympic sports."

Endnotes

- 1 There may have been other reasons. See: MALLON, Bill/BUCHANAN, Ian, *The 1908 Olympic Games: results for all competitors in all events with commentary*, Jefferson, North Carolina 2000, pp. 2-3.
- 2 HINES, James R., *Figure Skating: A History*, Champaign, Illinois 2005, pp. 23-40.
- 3 In England, the International style was referred to as the Continental style.
- 4 The *National Skating Association* was formed in 1879 specifically to govern speed skating. Although figure skating was added less than two years later, the call was for an international body to regulate speed skating.
- 5 The name of the association changed to *Koninklijke Nederlandsche Schaatsenrijders Bond* in 1923.
- 6 Sixteen delegates represented the five countries, Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, and the Netherlands. Letters of interest came from Norway, Russia, and the United States.
- 7 For this article, *International Skating Union (ISU)*, the current name, is employed.
- 8 The other competitors were Gustav HUGEL of Austria, second, George SANDERS of Russia, third, and Nicolai PODUSKOV of Russia, fourth. HUGEL and SANDERS served as judges at the London Olympic Games.
- 9 Henning GRENANDER of Sweden became the World Champion with Gustav HUGEL, second, Gilbert FUCHS, third, and H. Charles HOLT, fourth. GRENANDER and HUGEL served as judges at the London Olympic Games.
- 10 Still today, a small group of skaters, reported to be about thirty, keep the English-style alive. The English style is recognized by rigid carriage of the body with a straight and locked skating knee. For a more expansive explanation, see: HINES, Skating, multiple mentions.
- 11 Compulsory figures remained a part of competition for men and ladies through 1990.
- 12 SYERS was an outstanding skater, but it should be noted that there were just four competitors at the World Championship in 1902. Those placing third and fourth, Martin GORDON of Germany and Horatio TORROME of Great Britain, were not top skaters. It was GORDON'S first World Championship effort. He competed also in the championships of 1904-1906 to last place finishes. It was TORROME'S only World Championship effort. He competed also at the London Games and placed last. SYERS, an all-round athlete, was also a national diving champion.
- 13 The title ISU Ladies Figure Skating Champion was employed through 1923. Beginning in 1924 it changed to Lady World Figure Skating Champion. We characteristically use the latter title for all champions from the beginning. Likewise, the title ISU Pair Figure Skating Champions was employed through 1923, and since 1924, it has been called World Pair Figure Skating Champions.
- 14 Although the word "women" is preferred today, in figure skating, "ladies" has always been used and is correct. Thus, the title is "Lady World Champion."
- 15 They were Dorothy GREENHOUGH-SMITH in 1906 and Gwendolyn LYCETT in 1907.
- 16 They were H. C. HOLT in 1898, Edgar SYERS in 1899, and Henri TORROME in 1902. The only other man from Great Britain to compete at the World Championships before World War I was Arthur CUMMING who placed fifth in a field of six in 1912.

- 17 The 1906 Games are sometimes referred to as the "Interim Games," because of their placement between the Games of 1904 and 1908. The correct name, however is the "Second International Games in Athens."
- 18 VANDERVELL'S death came on September 13, just a month before the Olympic figure skating events.
- 19 Speed skating became a World championship sport in 1893, three years before figure skating, but it did not become an Olympic sport until the Games at Chamonix in 1924.
- 20 Other members of the committee included Frank G. FEDDEN and Guy M. CAMPBELL.
- 21 Their article, "Pair-Skating" is published in: BROKAW, Irving, *The Art of Skating*, New York 1910, pp. 122-129. Pair skating became a World Championship sport in 1908. The first competition was held at St. Petersburg, Russia, on February 16, eight months before the Olympic skating events.
- 22 Most famous of his literary works is *Dodo*. Others include: *Queen Lucia*, *The Rubicon*, *As We Were*, *Spook Stories*, *King Edward VII*, *Mr. Teddy*, and *Queen Victoria*.
- 23 BENSON, Edward Frederick, *English Figure Skating: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Skating in the English Style*, London 1908.
- 24 *Ibid*, 3.
- 25 Hayes FISHER was from the Fens north of London where extensive expanses of waterways provided ideal settings for traveling on skates. Speed skating became tremendously popular. A Hayes Fisher Cup was offered initially for amateurs, later for professionals.
- 26 Boxing was later added to the list of winter sports.
- 27 The yachting events ended on August 12. One other related sport, motor boating, held only once in Olympic competition, was contested in August.
- 28 Combined skating was the primary activity in the English style. A group of skaters, most often four, arranged equal distance apart around an outer circle approached a center multiple times tracing a series of like figures, collectively creating complex geometric figures on the ice. For a further description, see: HINES, *Skating*, pp. 35-36.
- 29 In addition to two World titles and Olympic silver medals, the JOHNSON'S other medals included silver at the World Championships in 1908 and bronze at the World Championships in 1910.
- 30 The only other sweep of the medals in Olympic figure skating was by three American men in 1956: Hayes JENKINS, gold, Ronald ROBERTSON, silver, and David JENKINS bronze.
- 31 No man has equalled his record at either the European or World Championships which ultimately included nine European and ten World titles. Sonja HENIE won six European and ten World titles. Irina RODNINA with two partners won eleven European and ten World pair titles.
- 32 The Salchow jump requires a leap from a backward inside edge to a backward outside edge landing on the opposite foot.
- 33 Richard JOHANSSON competed at the European Championships once and the World Championships five times between 1905 and 1914. He never medaled, but he placed fourth three times. Per THOREN competed at the European Championships five times and the World Championships four times between 1905 and 1911, accumulating one gold, one silver, and three bronze medals.
- 34 Paragraph figures are those requiring two tracings of a pattern to complete the figure before returning to the starting point.
- 35 The ladies did the "double three" beginning only on a right back inside edge.
- 36 The maximum points available for men were 264 for compulsory figure and 168 for free skating for a total of 276, for women 168 for compulsory figures and 108 for free skating for a total of 276.
- 37 The short program required for pair skaters today was not implemented until 1964. Prior to that time pair skating was decided totally on the free skating.
- 38 Ice dancing did not become a World championship sport until 1952 or an Olympic sport until 1976.
- 39 GRAFSTROM was the Olympic champion in 1920, 1924, and 1928. In a fourth Olympic bid, he placed second behind Karl SCHAFER in 1932.
- 40 SYERS, Edgar and Madge, *The Art of Skating (International Style)*, London 1913, p. 33.
- 41 PANIN was a pseudonym. His actual name was Nicolai KOLOMENKIN.
- 42 The scores are revealing: PANIN 219 points, CUMMING 161 points, HALL-SAY 104 points.
- 43 They were forwarded through the NSA to the judges who were "to consider beforehand the merits of the figures."
- 44 The three to two split suggests a closer competition than what actually occurred. The total points were 1172.5 for SALCHOW to 1147.5 for PANIN. SALCHOW received three first and two second place ordinals. PANIN received two first, one second, and two fourth place ordinals.
- 45 HUGEL'S World titles came in 1897, 1899, and 1900. Upon retirement from competitive skating he lived in Switzerland and is listed as a judge from that country.
- 46 BROKAW, *Skating*, pp. 85-109.
- 47 MALLON, 1908, p. 15.
- 48 COLEMAN, Michael, "Skating in the Happiest Possible Manner," in: *Ice and Roller Skate* (November 1974) 21.