

# ON THE EDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE SPEED SKATERS

July/August 1989

We have been able to determine through informal census and voluntary comments that all agree that the Sunday speed sessions are both beneficial and fun. Actually, there wasn't a need to ask in order to make this determination. Stand back and just look at our skaters. In the past year, about 17 have bought new adjustable skates, many are the custom molded type. We have a very high percentage of women skaters who are interested in racing, which is not necessarily the case across the country. It would be impossible to select the single most improved skater in our bunch because all have made tremendous strides in their individual technique and endurance. Watch the ten to twelve kids as they learn to do starts, cross-overs, crouches and training drills; and they are loving it! We have been able to get to this point without a true formalized system of management and fund raising. Thanks to the personal generosity of Coaches Jim Minami and Ferd Shaffer, who give up their personal opportunities to skate in order to teach others. They are grossly underpaid. All they receive is our thanks, and not often enough.

The benevolent management style of our Club has allowed skaters to attend, or not attend, depending on their personal situations, without having to be concerned about the financial wellbeing of our Club. The cost of the ice is a fixed matter (until the price goes up). All we can do is buy more or less time, and pass the cost on to our skaters. Sometimes, this works. If we have 21 paying attendees at a speed session, the Club can afford to pay the ice bill, and that's all. Remember, the mats were made with spontaneously donated funds and volunteer labor. More often than not, we don't take in enough money at each session to break even. It isn't unusual for Mary Wong to 'lend' the Club enough money to cover the ice costs while we figure out how we can 'scrape up' the deficit. We have been agonizing for almost a year about formulating a system of pricing the sessions, as well as the necessity of charging dues to cover costs other than ice such as the production of Logo T shirts for sale (funded by a personal loan, so far), repair and replacement of mats, additional ice time, parts for the construction of a lap counter and a digital time clock, additional loaner skates for new or prospective skaters, etc..

A plan has been developed and a formula devised to keep us skating, but we won't clear any profit for the above listed extraneous items. Here's the new system for Sunday speed sessions:

For the sake of this example, let us assume that there are four weekends in each month. Looking back, we actually 'missed' four weekend sessions over the past year. Beginning August 6, 1989, skaters will have the option of paying \$30 per month in advance for Sunday speed sessions of one hour and fifteen minutes, or \$10 per session on a 'pay-as-you-skate' basis. As stated, this will not yield a 'profit' for the Club, but will get us on a cash basis with our accounting and eliminate the obligation to those who 'prop-up' our finances each month. The \$30 monthly skating charge will entitle the skater to attend each weekly session but is not refundable in the event the skater does not attend. Remember, the ice costs the same whether five or fifty of us show up.



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The exceptions to the above will be skaters under the age of 14 years of age, who will pay \$15 per month or \$5 per session, and first time skaters, who will get their first session for free, as before.

Changing the birthdate on your drivers license won't cut it. Remember to bring your check for the appropriate amount to the session on the 6th. Obviously, the Club can't afford to finance those who 'forget' or just want to pay 'next time', etc.. This isn't a business venture. Far from it. We are just a social club with fixed expenses!

It would be beneficial to the Club if members so inclined would pay for a few or six months in advance. (No discounts given) We are talking about generosity here, folks. As a matter of fact, the Club would welcome and benefit from voluntary contributions to the general fund, thereby allowing us to make more mats, etc.. Benefactors wanted; no experience necessary. To those who have been behind-the-scenes donors, an official 'Thank you'. To all others, thanks in advance. Additionally, this will allow those skaters who have asked, 'What can I do to help the Club, even though I seldom attend sessions.' an easy way to salve their consciences and help the Club efforts with one stroke of their pen.

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FLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASHFLASH

Sara Laufer, who resides in the Sacramento area, has suggested that there may be enough interested speed skaters in the Sacto-Stockton area to warrant the formation of a new Club there. How exciting! If we can get some of those skaters interested in doing what we have done, we will have some readily available competition for upcoming race meets as well as promoting speed skating in Northern California. Who knows, maybe one day there will be a Northern California Speed Skating Association!

Here's the plan. We convoy to Stockton (location of the rink) and put on a demonstration of our regular speed sessions and possibly a few one or two lap races. By doing this, we can give these people actual ideas about how to start and organize a speed skating club and their own speed sessions. This will save them a lot of start-up time. We can also share with them any other ideas we have regarding training, racing, equipment, suppliers, etc.. Greg Wong (perpetual party animal) thought it would be a great excuse for a picnic. This motion passed overwhelmingly 2 to 0! Get ready. Sharpen 'em up, iron your tights and wash your laces, we'll be heading for the Oak Park Ice Rink on Saturday August 26. The session will take place between 4:15 and 6:00 P.M. with an ice cut in the middle. See below for picnic details. Following are Sara's directions to the ice rink from the Bay Area.

Take I-580 East through Hayward to the I-205 Junction. Take I-205 through Livermore and the windmill farm over the pass to I-5 North. Stockton is about 10 to 15 minutes north of the I-205/I-5 junction. Exit at March Lane from I-5 North and turn right off the freeway. Go about two miles to Pacific Ave. and turn right. Go past University of the Pacific (it will be on your right) to Alpine Ave., and turn left. The rink is off Alpine Ave. about one and a half miles from the Pacific



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and Alpine intersection. It is located in a park on the left side of the street (AM/PM Mini Mart on the right). Turn left on Alvarado into the park and continue for about 200 yards (184.6 meters). The rink will (should) be on the left. Park anywhere...there is a lot on the other side of the rink, or use street parking in front, if available.

Our contact at the rink is Dave. His phone number is (209) 941-8432. If you aren't clear about these directions, or if you just plain aren't clear....he will be able to help with directions and suggestions, etc.. If you are still in need of assistance or can't reach Dave, call Sara Laufer at (916) 646-4232 (business) or (916) 334-6118 (home). Sara says, 'Don't call after 10:00P.M., or I'll get really mad.' I believe her, and you should also. She never surrendered her AK-47.

It might be smart to put this in your car or skate bag now to avoid any lapses of memory. You are attending, aren't you? Remember, the more of us that show up, the more impressive the demonstration, and the less embarrassed your fellow Club members. This will not cancel the regularly scheduled Sunday session of the Club at Fashion Island.

The starting ~~time~~ of the picnic is to be announced. We want to allow everyone time to arrive before beginning the traditional outdoor meat burning ritual, to be followed by individual and group physical foolishness, supine recovery period and some skating songs before the actual session begins. Remember the plight of the Donner Party.....bring your own food and potables!

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Those of us who wait at the mail box for the arrival of The Racing Blade, official periodical of the Amateur Skating Union, in addition to being covered with ivy and cobwebs, are also aware of the Summer Training Camps conducted by the A.S.U. at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Mi.. These have been preserved on videotape by video-master Jerry Search (1987 and 1988 sessions) and are available from him. Those who have seen or own these videos know how intense and beneficial these camps are.

Three of our Club members will be attending one of these camps this summer. Nancy Graves, Seth Weiman and Johan Nowack will be leaving for a most thorough, total immersion instructional period of both on and off ice training. The off-ice segment is taught by Daine Holum, former Olympic Gold Medalist and persoanl coach of Eric Heiden; and the on-ice portion will be instructed by Andy Gabel, one of our top Short Track skaters. They should return to us in unrecognizable form. Their thighs probably won't fit in their jeans any longer, they will walk in a crouch and they will like be leading the Diemonts in sprint laps. Well, actually, we expect great improvement and possibly, some lessons and tips, not to mention wild stories of treating aching muscles and bruised tail sections. Do they have hot tubs in the heartland? Good luck and a lot of fun to our pals...we'll meet your plane when you come back.

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What about Greg Lemond, huh? Just when you thought he was totally out



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of it, here he comes, burning the French in Paris! 2200 miles and a victory margin of 8 seconds!! Speed skating is a North American invention, we can't continue to allow folks to come here from Europe, Asia, Australia, etc. and continue to kick our butts. Train harder. Don't quit. Breed and train more speed skaters!

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Having just mentioned Johan Nowack, we recently learned that he has a secret weapon. No, not his thighs or his collection of Louis Vuitton gear. It's a family motto that he has sewn into all of his racing suits. He said his father passed it on to him as part of the oral tradition of their family...his hereditary obligation. The words are in Dutch and are the war cry of the Netherlands Speed Skating Team. Unclear about what they actually mean, the pronouncement of these words seems to give a boost to his efforts. Ask Johan to explain the mystery and meaning of 'Tonda Pootza'. It is non-sectarian.

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We still have a supply of the second edition of our now famous G.G.S.S. T shirts. Remember, they come in long sleeve crew neck style in 100% Cotton, and are available in silver gray and the black 'Stealth Team' model. They cost a mere \$12 each (compare with trashy T shirts at \$15), and are the sole source of revenue for our Club. Buy them as gifts, car rags, shoe shine rags, skate rags, weekend apparel skating togs..... but, buy them! Imagine, some of our members have the unmitigated gall to show up for a speed session wearing something other than the latest in T shirt chic. The nerve!! No more excuses...get out that check book, dig deeper than when it comes time to leave a tip at McDonald's, and buy a few in assorted sizes. They are just as good as bath robes for overnight guests in your home, just more interesting to look at. Adult sizes only S - M - L - XL. See Mary Wong or Nancy Graves.

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#### MANNERS

Neither Emily Post nor Amy Vanderbilt have yet produced a book covering ice etiquette, so your 'board' has addressed this glaring need with a few reminders:

Considering that we have at least three and possibly four levels of skating ability in our group, we must all be alert for what lies ahead as we fly or stumble around the oval. Novice skaters that are just learning to do cross overs should try to stay on the perimeter of the track to avoid being a hazard to faster skaters who need to skate a tight track.

When practising starts, remember to leave the outside of the track free for those who are skating laps, etc..

With the exception of the young skaters in the care of Ferd Shaffer, it will be a new rule that no skaters will be allowed to sit on the ledge of the wall that goes along the mall side of the ice rink. This is a big wreck just waiting to happen. Without belaboring the issue, this is



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a dangerous place to rest, tie your skates or talk to spectators. If you are languishing along this ledge, it might be you who causes the accident if an inexperienced, out of control skater has a 'mishap'. Please tie your skates at center ice, or rest off of the ice on a nice, comfortable bench.

Use only the ice entry doors on the office side of the ice rink. Take time to look for oncoming traffic before setting foot on the ice. Few situations are more dangerous to a fast skater on a turn than someone crossing in front of them at slow speed. Kids are particularly at risk in this situation. Speak to your young skater and suggest that he or she ask for adult assistance when entering and leaving the oval.

Freeway courtesy rules apply on the ice. Slower traffic to the right. Be aware of the location, speed and line of travel of the other skaters around you. Learn to tell the skater ahead of you of your intention to pass by telling him or her that you will be going by on the 'right' or 'left', or 'inside'/'outside'.

Respect the track time of other skater groups, ie: If you are in the advanced group and want to skate laps at the same time the novices are using the track, be sure to stay well to the outside, or possibly wait until they are back in the center of the ice. 'Fly-by' passes can really distract a young skater's concentration, not to mention the elevation of the fear factor.

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Have you noticed, it is generally the same group of folks that assist in getting the mats on the ice and in place.....and the same ones who take everything off the ice and back to the storage area? Please try to take a more active part in the logistical work that needs doing. We can always use volunteers to take home a pair of our loaner skates to sharpen. Get more involved.

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We are still 'short' more than a few pair of loaner skates that have been 'borrowed' for the purpose of public session use. Some of these skates and skaters haven't been seen in weeks (maybe months). To those of you who fit the above mentioned profile, think about the skaters who are waiting for you to return them so that they might have the experience of trying speed skating. Because we are a loosely structured group, and because we eschew too many rules and regulations, it was thought to be over-kill to document the loan of these skates, and require the borrowers to post a deposit. Well, that desire to be trusting has turned around and bitten us on the face. If you are the custodian of a pair of these black beauties and aren't skating wit us every Sunday, please restore them to the storeage carton for use by others. You will still be able to use them at sessions, but in the event you don't show up, they will still be of service to someone else. Thanks. (P.S. Remember about Sara's AK-47)

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Does anyone out there have any skating for sale, trade or donating?

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This is the place to make it known. Just note the make, size, color, condition, and other pertinent details of this equipment and hand the note to Gabe at the next session. Are you in the market for used items as listed above? The same applies to you. His benevolence, the editor, will accept any reasonable request for inclusion. No personals, please.

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Jan Diemont will be leaving us soon, (sob). At the end of the summer, he will be departing for Marquette, Michigan for enrollment at Northern Michigan University (Skate U.), and will be competing on the Eastern Circuit during the fall and spring. Looking good, Jan. Keep 'em sharp, and keep looking forward, we'll see you when you sneak home.

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Okay, okay, we haven't even had our warmest part of the summer yet, and some are already talking about organizing a trip to Butte, Montana at the opening of the outdoor season. Wanna try outdoor skating, but don't know where or when? If you are interested in a one week's sojourn to the lovely open pit copper mine known as the Grand Canyon of the North, let's talk. Outdoor technique is 'the technique' in terms of skating purity. Once you skate outdoors, you will improve the fine points of your technique, develop finesse. Think about it. It's only in the talking stage. If you think you might be interested or want to know more about outdoor skating or beautiful Butte, talk to John or Jan Diemont or Gabe.

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This space is intentionally left blank so the Postal Carrier can't sneak a peek at the classified information you have just read. Sshhhh.

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