

MINUTES
of the
MEETING
of the
ADULT SKATING COMMITTEE
of U.S. Figure Skating

Thursday, April 15, 2004
Lake Placid, New York

Item 1. Maggie Harding, chair, welcomed all attendees to the 10th annual U.S. Adult Figure Skating Championships 2004. She introduced the members of the Committee in attendance, and special guests Rhea Schwartz, Phyllis Howard, and Paula Smart.

Ms. Harding urged everyone to fill out the surveys included in the registration packets; and promised e-mail contact if there were any questions or concerns.

Item 2. Phyllis Howard and Rhea Schwartz presented the current status of the Adult World Championships proposed by Sr. Cinquanta of the ISU. Sr. Cinquanta's and the ISU's philosophy is to "foster the development of figure skating", which includes not just the regular-track skaters, but adult skaters as well. A working committee has been established regarding adult figure skaters. There is currently in place a speed skating masters program, which is a separate organization.

Sr. Cinquanta's goal is to coordinate rules, establish communication, and have a common ground for adult figure skaters. He also is requesting that we, as adults, examine the new judging system, should it be adopted by the ISU. Rhea is chair of the working group which also includes Paula Smart, past Adult Skating Committee chair, Barbara Standke, chair of the Mountain Cup, and a Swiss dancer and synchro skater, Wolfgang Schtumner.

Sr. Cinquanta has also stated he wants a proposal for Adult Worlds on the agenda of the June 2004 ISU meeting. The aim is late spring after adult nationals; location is Europe. It will be governed by ISU rules. The age structure may be slightly different, and U.S. Figure Skating test rules will not go internationally. A potential for establishing levels will be a point system as a built-in qualifier.

Item 3. Ms. Harding introduced Tony Conte, Eastern sectional vice chair and Nancy Vega, who have been working on the potential amendment of adult MIF changes, which the committee recognizes is necessary.

Mr. Conte and Ms. Vega reported on the many comments received from the suggestion box at 2003 U.S. Adult Championships, and also reminded the group that adult MIF were not required until September of 2002. Prior to that time the moves were optional rather than being tied to free skating tests. Now, both tests are required to progress up the ladder, similar to the regular-track testing.

Many things were analyzed, including the number of re-takes with corresponding initial attempts and the difference in span between silver and gold on passing. The tests are parallel to regular track, but yet challenging. It was mentioned in the suggestions that silver and gold are too tough. The gold moves, in particular, are questioned due to the fact that they include pre-juvenile, juvenile, intermediate, and novice moves. A spirited discussion was held about the potential of making the adult moves completely parallel to regular track, with the lesser adult overall passing average coming into play at test time.

No decision was made at this time, and Ms. Harding requested that all who had questions, comments, or issues should contact either herself, Mr. Conte, or Ms. Vega.

A footnote to the discussion is that the overall quality of adult skating has improved for many people. We'd like to tweak the moves tests so that the improvement will apply to all adult skaters.

Item 4. The 10-year average for the U.S. Adult Championships shows 758 starts annually. 2004 has 740 starts. The question of turning the U.S. Adult Championships into an all-qualifying competition is presented only as a discussion point. Ms. Harding indicated that for some LOCs it was too bulky, given the problems of practice ice, officials required, and the question of the need for a three-sheet facility to host the event.

Sectionals could potentially have qualifying events at each test level. Subsequently, the U.S. Adult Championships would have the appropriate championship events, but open events as well, and skaters who qualify for championship would not be permitted to skate in the open events, thus allowing those who were unable to do sectionals to have an event for competition at the U.S. Adult Championships. In addition, the question of interpretive events being either qualifiers or opens was raised.

The crucial question is, "how can we make the competition more manageable and still continue to attract new skaters?"

A footnote to this discussion was the statement by Rhea Schwartz as being completely opposed to adult nationals becoming an all-qualifying competition; many attendees at the meeting were in agreement. Rationale is that for many adult skaters, adult nationals is the only competition they attend, and it's not just to compete, but to attend the biggest family reunion in the country! Again, there was much agreement.

Item 5. Ms. Harding followed up with the potential of moving the time frame of the U.S. Adult Championships from spring to summer, and possibly combining it with the U.S. Collegiate Competition as a possible means of streamlining and saving money on both competitions.

In line with streamlining, the ABC contract with U.S. Figure Skating is up for renegotiation, therefore budget cuts will most certainly be in the offing, and the entire U.S. Figure Skating will be looked at for money-saving measures.

Item 6. The committee is discussing a possible restructuring of the age levels to allow young adults to compete. Another suggestion is to allow young adults who are 18 to begin adult testing to prepare for the U.S. Adult Championships, and allow them to begin to compete at age 21. Another comment offered was that by making these age level changes, the U.S. Adult Championships may become more unwieldy. Food for thought and further discussion.

The bottom line of this suggestion is that the committee wants to get the 18-25 year olds ready to join us at the U.S. Adult Championships. There is a gap of time that we are losing skaters.

Item 7. Adult sectionals over the past three years have averaged a profit of \$7,800. They are working well, and there are few negative issues related to them. If anyone is interested in bidding for a future sectional, please obtain a bid packet from Gail Sombati, Midwest sectional vice chair, or from U.S. Figure Skating headquarters. Gail had worked with headquarters to make the bid packets more understandable.

Ann Dougherty is the golden girl for information about running the U.S. Adult Championships. The criteria is a two-sheet facility plus one nearby for practice ice. The committee is still hoping to move the U.S. Adult Championships from section to section each year to provide new venues, and to facilitate travel for everyone all over the country. Thanks also to Ann, the new grant for the U.S. Adult Championships is \$25,000 (up from \$18,000). Ann is also very willing to consult with any club on how to run a successful and profitable U.S. Adult Championships.

The Adult Committee budget is quite lean, but thanks to electronic communication, discussions are much easier to hold with the cost being minimal.

Question and Answer

1. Discussion about Moves in the Field changes
2. Discussion about Moves in the Field judging
3. Discussion about gold skaters jumping to novice vs. intermediate since there is a novice move in the gold MIF test
4. Further discussion about aligning adult MIF with regular-track MIF
5. Discussion of adult MIF quality – there is a document on the web site regarding adult moves: expectations, common errors, and a comparison chart. This is also a part of JET; the point structure is in the rulebook.
6. Discussion about cutting skaters over 50 even more slack than now.
7. Discussion about interpretive: showcase versus dramatic/artistic; the request was again made to separate the two. Also, there seems to be confusion among the judges – the skaters need to know what they want; what they're looking for.
8. Regarding budgetary matters and allowing young adults to compete at age 18 – the suggestion was made to allow testing to begin at 18, but still require a minimum age of 25 for competition.
9. Discussion about Theatre on Ice – this is a different set of wheels.
10. ISU adult age levels start at 30
11. Education of judges with specificity to adult skating

12. What about having synchronized events at the U.S. Adult Championships?