

# PACIFIC COASTS PACIFIC COASTS

Fears of Seattle Skating Club members that the newly-repaired City Center Arena would not be ready evaporated as the 1977 Pacific Coast Championships opened on schedule January 13.

In the premiere event, 10 girls scrambled for the vacant Senior Ladies title. Jeanne Chapman's slight figure lead disappeared as she, Suzie Brasher and Tai Babilonia skated flawless short programs, leaving Jeanne and Suzie tied for first. Teresa Foy was third and Tai, tenth in figures, pulled to sixth. Less than three-fourths of a point separated third and eighth; as the long free style began, it was anybody's ball game.

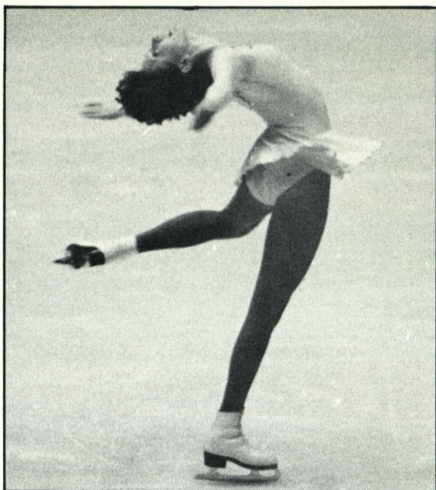
Teresa drew first spot, skating a musical program that included two double Axels, outstanding footwork, beautiful ballet moves and spins. She did not deserve to drop to fourth.

Many in the middle group of girls vying for third showed their nerves as, one by one, they took tumbles that spoiled dreams of a trip to the Nationals. Perhaps world level experience helped her, only Tai did not bow to pressure. A beautiful, musical skater, her program included high, light double jump combinations, fine spins and a lovely developed spiral. She won the Johnsen Memorial Trophy for free skating and the bronze medal.

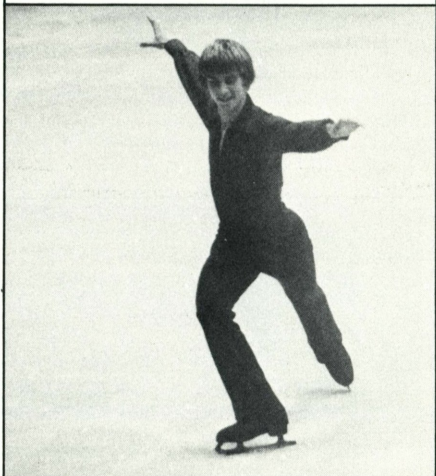
But the title was between Jeanne and Suzie, who both skated excellent numbers. Jeanne included all the standard double jumps through double Axel and an interesting reverse Bauer move.

Suzie, the champion, is a 16-year-old high school sophomore from Salt Lake City. Her perfect program featured a double Lutz/double toe loop and a fine spread eagle/back spiral/double Lutz.

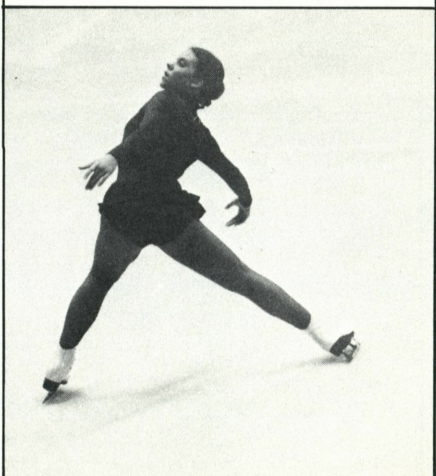
John Carlow led all the way in Senior Men's with Randy Gardner and Scott Carson battling for second. Randy's five-minute program included an unusual interpretive section with high



Senior Ladies - Suzie Brasher



Senior Men - John Carlow, Jr.



Junior Ladies - Lori Benton



Senior Pairs - Tai Babilonia & Randy Gardner

butterflies and exciting jumps, earning him the silver medal. Scott performed solidly to land the division's best triples and tie Randy for second in free style.

Skating to a Greek medley, John's championship performance included a triple Lutz and outstanding combinations. While his free program needs polishing, he has great audience rapport and a flair for musical interpretation.

Crowd-getters and crowd-pleasers, National Pair champions Tai and Randy did not need to qualify. That they chose to was a plus for the host club that benefitted from strong media interest in their participation and for the spectators who were thrilled to see them skate.

Their new moves included a double-split twist and side-by-side double Axel/double toe loops. Their lifts have great height and extension; they well deserved the standing ovation and, inevitably, overshadowed other pairs.

Double Axels helped Tracy and Scott Prussack pull from third to secure the silver medal with the bronze going to the brother-sister team of Hal and Lyndy Marron.

Speed, vitality and flow characterized the Gold Dance winners, Michelle Ford and Glenn Patterson, as they maintained a unanimous lead. Combining a touch of humor with unique moves, Spanish music and Michelle's audience appeal, they waltzed off with the title. Dee Oseroff and

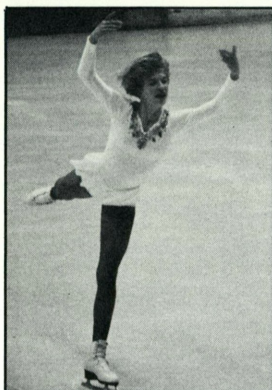
Craig Bond, with a difficult free program, picked up the silver medal, and Hal Marron and his other sister Cathy won the bronze.

Almost nothing separated the top five Junior Ladies before their long free skate. The champion is 15-year-old Lori Benton, a San Diego high school sophomore, who skated melodically and with great feeling to *Swan Lake*. She included an unusual back stag/forward lunge/double flip and a back spiral/double Axel. Of all the skaters, she was, to this observer, the most delightful to watch. Vicki Heasley, a peppy athlete with high jumps, pulled into second, closely pursued by Staci Loop, the only junior girl to include a triple.

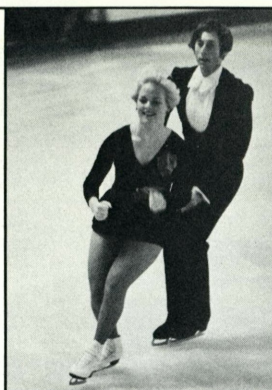
While the Junior Ladies were outstanding, the Junior Men, with the exception of the winner, were disappointing. Their music droned on, their presentations were sloppy, they needed pushing. The only exception was Robert Wagenhoffer, who skated stylishly to *New World Symphony* selections, included five triples and a soaring flying-open Axel/sit spin. He well deserved his standing ovation.

Junior Pairs was won by last year's champion, Danelle Porter, and her new partner, David Hicks. Interesting choreography featured a shoot-the-duck through his legs and a guillotine twist lift. Strong single skating ability helped Vicki Heasley and Robert Wagenhoffer

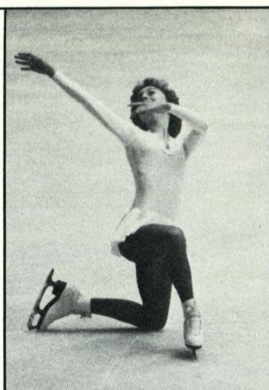




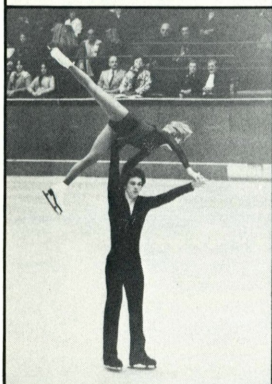
J.L. Sawyer



M. Ford & G. Patterson



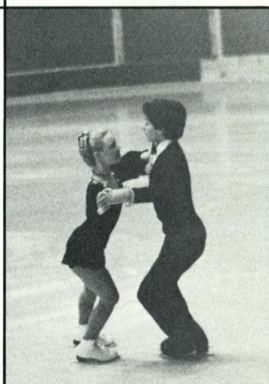
J. Newell



D. Porter & D. Hicks



R. Wagenhoffer



D. Tindall & W. Harris

win the silver, while Maria De Domenico and Larry Schrier, third, showed considerable potential with good, flowing lifts.

Karen Berson and Gary Forman, maintaining their lead throughout, won Silver Dance.

Three of the finest athletes surfaced in Novice, that springboard for excellence. In the ladies', 14-year-old Jill Sawyer, with much improved figures, took a solid lead. She secured her title with a perfect program of amazing content: a high-as-the-bangboards clean triple Lutz, a triple Salchow and a one-foot Axel/tap/double Axel/loop/double loop combination. Second place went to tiny Lynn Smith, skating a difficult musical program that included an excellent triple Salchow and two beautifully executed double Axels in combination. Deann Tindall, most interesting spinner of the week, was third.

Poise and pizzazz marked the Novice Men's performance of 13-year-old Brian Boitano who held on to his figure lead with an exciting program that included two triples. The tiny brother-sister team of Craig and Cara Gill led a northwest sweep in Novice Pairs. Bronze Dance placements remained constant with the title going to Deann Tindall and William Harris.

Light, sparkling free skating by Joyce Newell pulled her from second to the Intermediate Ladies' crown with figure leader Sally Odekirk

runner-up. Polished Lisa Hill was third, narrowly beating out diminutive Rosalyn Sumners, who pulled from ninth to fourth with a second in free style.

Of special interest in this division was the skating of 16-year-old Sharon Dror. A "profoundly deaf" young lady, Sharon's solid skating included two double Axels and earned her fifth place. Her patient coach, Ron Plank, has a few signals to help her pace herself; otherwise, she is on her own. Sharon reads lips to "hear" her lessons; she was an inspiration to all.

In Intermediate Men's Scott Williams pulled from third to win the title with John Filbig moving up from fifth for the silver and the figure leader, Bob Bowles, gained the bronze.

One cannot conclude this report without mention of the music selected by some skaters and/or their coaches. "Skating in harmony with music of the skater's choice" is part of the definition for free skating, but very few skaters or dancers are capable of interpreting some of the strident cacophony of sounds selected. The resultant angular, twisting positions do nothing to enhance the skaters' presentations.

—Nancy Aitken

**PHOTO CREDITS:** All Photos: by WILLIAM UDELL with the exception of Tai Babilonia & Randy Gardner by MARGARET WILLIAMSON