

## **A Partial History of The Skating Club of Lake Placid**

The Skating Club of Lake Placid operates under the auspice of US Figure Skating. Presently our membership is almost 300 skaters ranging in age from 3 to over 80. We provide year round skating programs to the local community. The skating club, in collaboration with ORDA, often hosts national and international figure skating events. In the 1920s the Sno Birds, a winter sports group sponsored by the Lake Placid Club, held competitions outdoors on flooded tennis courts. The courts were first flooded for winter use in 1921.

In the early 1930s four Lake Placid girls began competing and skating in Sno Birds shows sanctioned by US Figure Skating. They were Clara Wilkins, Sadie Pelky, Helen Carter and Lorraine Bryant. Clara and Sadie left early on to skate in professional shows, while Helen and Lorraine stayed in on. Helen to compete and win the senior ladies title before she too joined a show. Lorraine stayed in Lake Placid and became our own "Ice Princess." During the war Lorraine was called upon to help entertain the service men at the Lake Placid Club, which was serving as a rehabilitation center.

The Sno Birds hosted the annual meeting of the USA and Canadian figure skating and speed skating associations. It was during one of these meetings that the United States Figure Skating Association (USFSA) was formed. During those early years the USFSA included Canada. Eventually Canada formed its own association.

Long before the first indoor rink was built in the 1930s, figure skating in Lake Placid was a popular sport not only due to the influence of the Sno Birds but also to the availability of outdoor skating on Mirror Lake.

In 1931 the Organizing Committee for the 1932 Winter Olympics and the town of North Elba began the construction of the Olympic Arena in the village of Lake Placid. The contractor, H.L. Garren, stayed on to manage the arena for almost 20 years. For the first time in winter Olympic history, the figure skating competitions were held indoors. Never before had any part of a winter Olympics been held under a roof.

Lake Placid was the place where modern competitive figure skating first really caught the nation's attention. It was the first to hold competitions indoors and the first in North America to offer a summer skating program.

In the summer of 1932, Lake Placid became the site of the first summer ice session in the

country. At this time the Adirondack Skating Club was formed in order to allow the club to sponsor competitions, ice carnivals and testing under the sanctions of the USFSA. In 1936 the name was changed to the Skating Club of Lake Placid.

Lake Placid is one of the USFSA's early members. From its beginning the club was instrumental in sanctioning and sponsoring many competitions, shows and other events. Ice dancing weeks attracted many skaters for social ice dancing as well as for competition. During the hard years of the Depression and World War II the income generated by these well attended skating events helped our community survive.

The Skating Club of Lake Placid has sanctioned and sponsored many "firsts" throughout its history. Following is a partial list.

1932 First Winter Olympic games in the USA  
1932 Firstsummer ice season  
1932 First summer operetta (carnival)  
1935 First ice dance conference  
1936 First judges school  
1938 First Eastern Sectionals  
1939 First open summer competition  
1943 First in the USA summer figure and dance tests  
1970 First international competition in the USA, Kennedy Games  
1972 First FISU world games  
1975 First Ludinton training session for pairs  
1979 First Norton Skate Flaming Leaves  
1981 First Skate America

Many other prestigious events were sponsored and sanctioned by the Skating Club of Lake Placid but were not firsts.

US National figure skating competition 1965  
Eastern Sectional Championships 1938, early 1950s, 1969, 1962, 1973, 1985  
North Atlantic Regional Championships 1972, 1979, 1982, 1984  
Precision (now called Synchronized) Skating Championships 1983, 1985  
Empire State Games 1981, 1982, 1983  
Adirondacks 1974, 1976, 1978  
Yearly summer free skating and dance competitions