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Figure Skating in the Great Lakes State



HEARTS OF GOLD

Former Hockettes help Adrian College varsity skaters make a national splash

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THE BLADE WAS
FOUNDED IN MAY
2006, DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF
SKATING MOM
ANNE FRACASSA
OF WARREN

Welcome to the
Anne Fracassa
Memorial Dog Park

"She committed her life to
the welfare of all animals!"

ADRIAN COLLEGE MEDALS IN EVERY COMPETITION IN '07-08



BLADE PHOTO / NFOCUS PHOTOGRAPHY

Adrian's synchronized skating team medaled in all four of its competitions. Front row, left to right, are Dayna Winczner, Anna Palovcik and Amanda Nemeth. Middle row, left to right, are Rachel Hasse, Brandi Heath and Quinn Tyminski. Back row, left to right, are Angela Bakies, Ashley Bakies and Danni Yurek.

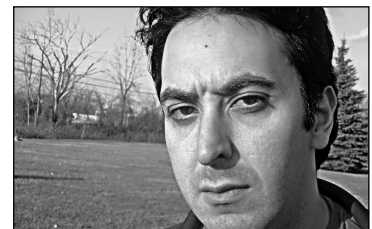
THE ADRIAN COLLEGE synchro team went from nowhere to a top contender on the open collegiate scene in 2008. It doesn't hurt that it is a varsity team, making it just the second fully sponsored synchro team in the nation.

The team took the gold at the Dr. Richard Porter Classic and finished second in the three other competitions it skated at. This was quite a feat considering most of the skaters didn't even know one another one year prior to competing.

On top of that, the nine-member group ran the gamut in experience level. One never skated synchro before while two others — Amanda Nemeth and Rachel Hasse — were on the national cham-

pion Ann Arbor FSC Hockettes the season before. Due to its strong bond, the hodgepodge of talent made for a potent combination.

"We got close really quick because we see each other 24/7," said skater Quinn Tyminski, 19, a sophomore exercise science major at Adrian College.



KEVIN
KOLOIAN

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IN OUR COVER PHOTO of the Adrian College synchro team, we show you the skaters who took a gold medal at the Dr. Richard Porter Classic. Skaters on the fledgling collegiate team are, front row, left to right, Brandi Heath, Rachel Hasse, Amanda Nemeth, Danni Yurek and Anna Palovcik. In the back row, from left to right, are Coach Lindsay Matthews, Ashley Bakies, Quinn Tyminski, Angela Bakies, Dayna Winczner and Coach Lindsay Patterson.

ADRIAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"We are in each other's classes and were lucky to have a ton of ice time. So we were able to grow and come together as a team very quickly."

Coach Lindsay Patterson, along with Assistant Coach Lindsay Matthews, teamed to keep the students focused despite the fun of college life. This isn't a stretch for them because they were students themselves a few years ago.

"Our coaches are still young and like to have fun like us," said Angela Bakies, 19, a sophomore with an undecided major. "But at the same time, they make sure we accomplish things at practice."

The idea for the team was brought about by the school's president, Jeffery Docking, in 2006. Since the college was bringing in ice sports like men's and women's hockey, he thought it would be a great idea to have figure skating on campus.

It just so happened that the U.S. Nationals championships were being held in Grand Rapids that year, so the president, the outgoing athletic director and the new athletic director went to see what it was all about.

They were taken aback by how many teams there were from other colleges and decided right there that Adrian needed a synchro squad.

At the time, Patterson had just graduated from college with a degree in graphic design and was looking for work.

Her mother, Kim Patterson, who coaches her old the collegiate team, got an e-mail saying that Adrian was looking for a coach.

Like other jobs, Patterson had to come up with a five-year plan for the Bulldogs. She landed the spot fairly quickly, though. After about a month talking on the phone, she was offered the coaching position and immediately began recruiting.

Starting a college synchro team from scratch is nothing new to Patterson. While she was attending the State University of New York at Potsdam, she helped formed EDUSkates.

The collegiate team featured skaters from four small upstate New York colleges.

"My experience with that team helped me quite a bit when it came to advertising and how to sell people on something new and upcoming," said Patterson, 25.

The recruiting process was the hardest part of pulling the team together.

"It was a little difficult because we

THE 411 ON ADRIAN COLLEGE

ANGELA BAKIES: 19, major undecided, sophomore at Adrian College.

ASHLEY BAKIES: 22, exercise specialist major, senior at Bowling Green State University.

RACHEL HASSE: 20, biology major, sophomore at Adrian College.

BRANDI HEATH: 19, communications major, freshman at Adrian College.

AMANDA NEMETH: 19, major undecided, freshmen at Adrian College.

ANNA PALOVCIK: 19, journalism major, freshman at Owens (Ohio) Community College.

QUINN TYMINSKI: 19, exercise science major, sophomore at Adrian College.

DAYNA WINCZNER: 21, elementary education major, junior at Siena Heights University.

DANNI YUREK: 19, fashion merchandising major, freshman at Adrian College.

weren't established yet and a lot of skaters from good teams didn't want to go to a team that they never heard of before," Patterson said.

But she found some brave souls to come and skate in the team's first season. The fact that Adrian had a successful season makes Patterson think experienced skaters will be much easier to recruit.

The team is on the lookout for new skaters right now and the search will continue year-round. At every competition Patterson attends, she brings fliers and literature on the school.

"Now because there is a whole slew of colleges that have teams, kids can choose where they want to go," Patterson said. "A big plus for us is that we are just the second varsity team in the United States, meaning that we are pretty much fully funded. Parents really like that."

Under its varsity status, coaches, hotel rooms and travel arrangements are all paid for, which is a huge burden to take off of parents.

With its highly coveted distinction, Patterson said there is no reason that the team shouldn't be skating at the collegiate level next year.

To move up it must consist of at least 12 full-time students who have all passed juvenile moves tests.

"Our goal is to become a huge competitor and we've already broken into it this year," Patterson said. "I would love to finish in the top three at Midwesterns. Then, hopefully, finish top five at Nationals."

Kevin Koloian is a staff writer for the Blade. Write to him at bladenewspaper@aol.com or call (313) 425-1946.

Introducing ... Judge Deb Stuart

DEB STUART JUDGES: Figures, freestyle and pairs.

HOMETOWN: East Lansing.

BEGAN SKATING: Growing up, the first president of U.S. Figure Skating, Claire Ferguson, was Stuart's neighbor and introduced her to the sport at the age of 7. "I used to dance all of the time on my porch with my little record player in my ballet skirt. She saw that I enjoyed dance and thought I might like skating."

SKATING HONORS: Triple gold medalist in figures, freestyle and dance.

COLLEGE: Has a bachelor's degree in youth leadership and master's degree in therapeutic recreation and rehabilitation services from Michigan State University.

EXTRA SKATING: Been a member of the U.S. Figure Skating Special Olympics and Therapeutic Skating Committee for the past 11 years. She is also involved in independent research dealing with youth with and without disabilities in the Inclusive Learn to Skate program at the Summit Ice Arena outside of Lansing.

AMBASSADOR OF THE SPORT:

Before it moved to Flint, Stuart was the director of Therapeutic Recreation Leisure Services at the Michigan School for the Blind. There, she helped start an ice-skating program for children with disabilities. "That was very meaningful to me because a number of the youths from the Lansing Skating Club would come out and volunteer their help. Their attitudes were very influential to the students. It was rewarding seeing both the volunteers and the children with disabilities relate and grow from the experience."

PIONEER: Coordinated the establishment of nationally accredited programs in therapeutic recreation for East Carolina University and Southeast Missouri State University, as an assistant professor.

IMPORTANCE OF JUDGING: "The testing programs are useful because they allow skaters to excel at their own rate. Skating is very developmental and



BLADE PHOTO / WENDY CLEM

A lifelong member of the Lansing Skating Club, judging is just one of the ways Deb Stuart has stayed connected to figure skating.

judging is a way for students to see their progress."

FAVORITE THING ABOUT JUDGING: "Getting the joy of watching kids enjoy skating."

FAVORITE COMPETITION: Michigan Special Olympics.

HOBBIES: Cross country skiing, swimming, liturgical dancing and volunteering her time as a member of the East Lansing Meridian Lions Service Club.

FAVORITE COLOR: Purple.

FAVORITE TV SHOW: *Globe Trekker*.

FAVORITE MOVIE: *Rain Man*.

FAVORITE MUSICIAN: Sergei Rachmaninoff.

FAVORITE BOOK: "Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life."

COMPETITION PHILOSOPHY: "Every skater has something unique that they enjoy about skating and I try to promote that through my involvement with the sport."

— Kevin Koloian