

BEDFORD SKATING CLUB HOSTS

LIZ MANLEY CLINIC

The weekend of April 26, 27, the Bedford Skating Club held a clinic that featured the 1988 Olympic medalist Ottawa's Elizabeth Manley. Since winning the silver medal (Gold in free style) at the Olympics Liz has been active for many years in ice shows mainly in the US. She has just moved back to Ottawa in 2007 and started to coach.

There were separate on-ice and off-ice sessions for Juniors, Intermediates, Seniors, and Adult skaters. Coaches and parents were invited to all sessions.

Liz Manley is a small bundle of extraordinary energy. She stressed both in sessions on-ice and in her off-ice talks both days the importance of perseverance against all odds. She shared her personal moments of despair and her determination to fight for everything you really want in life.

In addition to stroking classes with Liz the clinic featured former Canadian Dance Champion Marie Bowness who also worked on edges and turns and power stroking.

The off-ice program featured many relevant information and fun sessions. Professional Sports Dietitian Angela Dufour gave a most practical presentation of a skaters' diet. Particularly in an athletes' diet one must know not just what to eat, but when to eat for the greatest effectiveness. Angela dealt with fluid intake and how to snack properly.

Physiotherapist Jill Robertson, a former figure skater, says she deals with too many injuries that were preventable if only the athlete had been doing the proper exercises to make the body strong and flexible in just the right places. She gave the skaters 5-6 exercises which if performed 4 times a week would achieve this goal. Physiotherapy treatment is time consuming for skaters and parents and in most cases unnecessary if only the athlete was physically prepared for the skills they were doing on the ice.

The skaters were treated to an interesting theatre class under the guidance of Alexis Milligan. Every skater told me afterwards "I had so much fun". Alexis started by talking about showing "purpose in their movement." Through a series of games and telling a story without words (Tableau) skaters worked in groups and learned how to commit to movement. The class was a great way for all to work in teams which is so unlike the sport of figure skating.

The skipping class was given by instructor Heather Shay. Although we all skipped as kids, skipping has come along way. She showed them different steps and once some basic techniques are learned this can be a most inexpensive way to train aerobically and without requiring a lot of space.

Personal trainer D'Arcy Warnica gave the fitness class. She showed skaters you don't need a huge space to work out and get fit. Fitness is always fun in a group, and working with a partner in a circuit training format can be motivating. D'Arcy presented exercises relevant to strength training for our sport. The idea of having a fitness training buddy (even once a week together) might help motivate skaters to work out. D'Arcy was energetic and demonstrated all the exercises.

This was the first time that the Bedford Skating Club had hosted a skating clinic, and under the guidance of Lana Henderson put on a most comprehensive, exciting and motivating clinic.

In my 30 years of coaching I have attended numerous clinics and seminars and this is the first time I felt a clinic offered a perfect off-ice package which was truly relevant to a skater.

The weekend wrapped up with a get-together in the Lebrun gym. We are relived Elizabeth Manley's fabulous long program skate from the Calgary Olympics. At the end of the routine the full room broke into applause. Many of us felt just as strongly as we did that night in February 1988 as we watched the story unfold on our TV sets.

Congratulations to Ann Jessome, Bedford Skating Club President and her executive team of volunteers for hosting the fabulous Liz Manley.

WE LOVE YOU LIZ!

Louise Loriaux-Mathers
Bedford Skating Club
Club Programs Manager