

THE PITTSBURGH SHORT TRACKER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Heart Of A Lion</i>	2
<i>Club Rentals</i>	2
<i>Dicks Lacks</i>	2
<i>Nationals</i>	3
<i>Meet Announced</i>	4
<i>New Skates</i>	5
<i>New Faces</i>	6

Special points of interest:

- Be sure to check the website for practice times and information.
- If you are experienced at fundraising please talk to a club officer. We have some projects in the works and are always looking for some fresh input.
- Dale Opeka and Richard Thorpe unanimously voted onto club board! Welcome Dale and Rick!
- If you use club rentals and are planning to attend a practice session at a rink other than Mt. Lebanon be sure to give equipment manager Bryan Krueger at least 2 days notice.
- If you have any ideas for the summer newsletter please submit them to Heidi Krueger or John Watton by May 30th.
- The late spring and summer practice schedule will be posted somewhere around April 15th. Remember that the National Team will likely be taking some downtime during April. Don't worry they'll be back soon for you all to chase!
- Keep an eye out for club news in the local and national media. If you see or hear something let us know so we can get copies.
- The dates for speedskating summer camps will be announced by the end of May.

COLE KRUEGER WINS NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

The Pittsburgh Speedskating Club is proud to announce that Cole Krueger won the North American Juvenile Mens Speedskating Championship. This year's North American Championship was held in Kamloops British Columbia. Cole and his father, Bryan attended the event from March 24th through March 26th. Cole secured the overall title with victories in the 777m and the 1000m. Perhaps the most exciting part of the event was the fact that Cole broke Olympian F. Gauvin Tremblay's record in the 1000m with a 1:35.7. Tremblay just skated in the Torino Olympics. However, this record has stood since Tremblay skated Juvenile almost six years ago! Way to go Cole! By winning this event Cole has secured U.S. Speedskating's

Category 1 Status and all of the perks and benefits that go with it. Cole was also pleased that he skated a personal best in the 500m with a 46.73. Of his victory Cole said he was pleased, but the best part was representing the U.S.A. "All the team stood in the corner waving the flag and cheering me on in the 1000m Super Final. Normally a lot of these guys are my competitors, but the minute we crossed over the border something changed and it didn't matter as long as the U.S.A. stood on top of the podium!" Cole also said that seeing the smile on Coach Jang's face was a great highlight. Coach Jang told Cole that he had "skated the perfect race" in his 777. Cole experienced two other things for the first time in his life. He was so surprised when the Canadian crowd booed him after he won the 1000m and jet lag! He thought the booing was funny, but the jet lag was not. Good luck to Cole in the future!



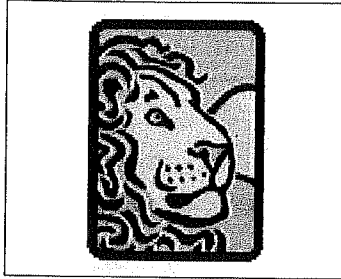
Krueger wins the North American Championship in Kamloops British Columbia!

NEW COMPETITIVE COACH ON THE WAY!

National Team Coach Jimmy Jang met with our Club's President and her husband Bryan while they were attending the U.S. Nationals in Verona Wisconsin. Coach Jang explained that it is his plan to come to Pittsburgh sometime in the middle of May with our new competitive coach. Coach Jang has two coaches in mind for this position and has not made the final decision yet. Coach Jang also told the Kruegers that it is his intention to be in Pittsburgh once a month to oversee the teams training and progress.

THE HEART OF A LION

This year was a very busy year for 1st year Pee Wee Ross Opeka of Peters Township. He started speedskating just 6 short months ago. In late December Coach Jang advised his parents, Dale and Rene, that even though he was 3 to 4 years younger than most of the other competitors that would be there, that Ross should compete at the Pony Level at Nationals. Well, compete he did! Although he didn't advance out of a heat he was never lapped and never finished lower than 11th in any distance. Ross showed the competitive spirit and spunk that has come to characterize his skating. It is hard to imagine that he still has another 3 years in this division at Nationals! Apolo look out! Ross is coming after your records! He showed great heart competing for the sole purpose of learning and gaining experience. Ross you are our HERO!



*"What do you mean I'm
done? I want to skate
more!"*

Ross Opeka

WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE RENTAL EQUIPMENT

We have it on good authority that our new custom skate cabinet will be finished by the end of April or early May. Many thanks to Joe Pivrotto for all of his time, effort and talent! We are so fortunate to have a rental skate inventory, many clubs do not. Speedskates have to be maintained by hand and this is such an awesome undertaking that rinks will not purchase speedskates. Our club's equipment manager, Bryan Krueger, is looking forward to having the new cabinet. Our rentals are currently stored in plastic boxes where the blades can and do hit each other. We want to take good care of our equipment so that people can try speedskating without having to purchase equipment or use hockey skates. However, it is important to remember that our rental skates are for introductory purposes only. Once a skater has achieved a certain level of speed they will need their own skates.

DICK'S JUST DOESN'T HAVE IT!

In case you haven't noticed we are all part of a rapidly growing, but none the less fringe sport! It's great to be unique! Well, if you need stuff other than kneepads, shinguards, or leather batting gloves Dicks just can't help you. Never fear, here are the names and numbers of the two speedskating equipment dealers that the club has used for years. They are honest, knowledgeable and really nice guys.

John Dimon- 518-523-1729

Mario DiBartolo- 1-800-266-9285



Hey! I know who to call!

2006 U.S. NATIONALS

This year we had 5 skaters skate times that qualified them for Nationals. Sufficed to say Pittsburgh announced it's presence with a SHOUT! With three top 5 finishes, our club has earned some bragging rights. The progress our skaters made this year is astounding. 9 year old Evan Opeka who has only been speedskating for 6 months made his presence known by finishing overall 4th in the country in the Pony Division. Opeka took time off his personal bests in chunks not slices! John-Henry Krueger finished overall 3rd in the country in his first year as a Midget! Maddie Watton finished 7th overall in the country in the Juvenile Women's Division, and skated personal bests in several distances. Cole Krueger finished 3rd overall in the Juvenile Men's Division amid some really bad breaks (but hey, that's short track). We are so proud of our National Team and we thank Coach Halden for all the time he spent helping them to prepare.



Our National Team did us all proud!

KEEP DECEMBER 30TH OPEN

Our club was so pleased to receive word that the Manager of the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center had approved our request to hold the 2006 Pittsburgh Holiday Open at The Center! This meet will have divisions for all levels of skaters both children and adults! Pittsburgh is known for its well organized meets. Holding a meet in your own city, at your own rink, is a blast! If everybody helps out a little then it isn't a burden at all. IT'S GREAT FUN! Club President Heidi Krueger & Coach Bob Halden are the meet co-chairmen.

"It is so much fun to have a meet at home around the holidays. Grandmas and Grandpas get to see the kids skate"

YOUR OWN SKATES!



Wow! My own skates!

As previously mentioned in this newsletter our club rental skates are for the purpose of introducing skaters to the sport of short track speedskating. They have center mounted blades that are not bent and are made to accommodate a great variety of foot sizes and shapes. Therefore they do not fit as snugly as a boot should. So, when is it time to purchase your own equipment? 1) When a skaters speed and skating ability surpass the equipments design or 2) when a skater determines that this is the sport for them and want equipment of their own. Either way make sure to talk to one of the coaches before making a purchase. Often there is quality used equipment available at a very reasonable price. If you have questions please ask. We would love to help!



The Watton Family
4987 Simmons Circle
Export, PA 15632

We're on the web
www.pittsburghspeedskating.org



ANOTHER NEW FACE

It doesn't take long to pick 9 year-old Ean Eshelman out of the crowd. He's the one smiling, with the rosy cheeks racing around the rink, and like everybody else, trying to improve his form and stay low. Ean started speedskating at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center just this season. This has been quite a year of firsts for Ean. Ean got his own speedskates in February and he went to his first meet in Columbus Ohio in March. Ean said the best part of the Arnold Schwarznegger Meet was "just hanging out with the team!" Ean attends Baldwin/Whitehall Elementary where his favorite subject is science. His favorite other hobbies are boating and swimming. His favorite color is yellow and his favorite all time movie is The Apple Dumpling Gang. His favorite speedskater is Apolo Ohno and the thing he likes best about speedskating is the challenge of going fast and being with the team. When we asked Ean what his goals were for the next season he said, "Get better, go faster and I can't wait until the next meet". Ean, we will do everything we can to help you achieve your goals!



We are happy to have Ean as part of our club and team!