

James F. Underwood

James F. Underwood, 63, of Worcester, died Thursday, December 31, 2009 at Tufts Medical Center in Boston after a brief illness.

He leaves his wife of 39 years, Priscilla A. (Thompson) Underwood; four children, Jamie Underwood and his wife Claudine of Boylston, Tommy Underwood, Amy E. Underwood and Brian J. Underwood, all of Worcester; a granddaughter, Natalie Underwood of Boylston; a sister-in-law, Cathy Munyon of Berlin; two brothers-in-law, Thomas Thompson and his wife Mary of Calabash, N.C. and James Thompson and his wife Christine of Young Harris, Ga., and several nieces and nephews. His brother, Robert Underwood predeceased him.

Jim was born in Clinton, son of Francis "Unkie" and E. Josephine (Rogers) Underwood. He grew up in Berlin and has lived in Worcester for many years.

He was a member of the first graduating class of Tahanto Regional High School in Boylston in 1964. He later graduated from Atlantic Union College in Lancaster and took graduate courses at Fitchburg State College.

Jim was a graphic arts teacher at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School in Marlborough where he taught for 30 years, retiring in 2004. Since 2004, he has worked at the Automobile Assn. of America office in Auburn.

Before his teaching career, he was a journalist and sports editor for the Leominster Enterprise and the Clinton Item. He also worked at Colonial Press in Clinton and Davis Press in Worcester.

Jim had a deep involvement in sports. He was an organizer of Worcester Youth Soccer. He coached and initiated the soccer program at Tahanto and the women's soccer team at Anna Maria College. He coached women's basketball at Becker College and several sports at Worcester State College. For his 25 year contribution to the Bay State Games, he was inducted into their Hall of Fame in a ceremony at Fenway Park.

He also enjoyed bowling and golf. He participated in the Auburn Senior and the Shrewsbury-Westboro Mixed bowling leagues, and the Berlin Twilight and the Assabet Teachers golf leagues.

Jim was the chairperson of the St. Mary of the Hills Festival for ten years. He loved spending time with his family especially his granddaughter Natalie. He also thrived in the company of his many friends, including his golfing buddies.

Jim's family wishes to thank the staff of the UMass-Memorial Medical Center Heart Clinic for the care they provided Jim, and especially Dr. Meyer and Maggie for Christmas.

Calling hours are Tuesday, January 5, 2010 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Athy Memorial Home, 111 Lancaster St., Worcester. The funeral will be Wednesday, January 6 from the funeral home with a Mass at 10 a.m. in St. Mary of the Hills Church, 630 Cross St., Boylston. Burial will be in Pine Grove Cemetery, Boylston.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the James Underwood Memorial Scholarship Fund, in care of Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School, 215 Fitchburg St., Marlborough 01752.



A Merrier Christmas for Mike Madden

By Kathy Kurtz Ferrari
Staff Writer

12/24/09

What a difference a year makes. Last year at this time, Milton High School soccer coach Mike Madden was looking at the upcoming holidays as an invalid, after waking up partially paralyzed from surgery to relieve back pain in October 2008. But after months of grueling physical therapy, doctors' appointments, hard work, and prayer, Madden is back on two strong legs, resuming as normal a life as possible. "Things are going great. It's a little different, and still a little painful, but overall it's going pretty well," said Madden, just a few weeks after resuming his job with Verizon. His job requires a lot of walking in and around Boston, and he admits he does wear leg braces "to be on the safe side," but being able to get back to work was one of his goals. "It's a little bittersweet, because it's painful. But it's the same job, doing the same stuff. So far it's going OK," he said with satisfaction.

His family – which includes his wife, Heidi, and children, Ryan, Savannah, Josh, Annabelle and Michaela – has seen an overflow of support from the community during his health ordeal. Heidi had just given birth to Michaela shortly before the surgical incident that left her husband unable to walk.

Meal deliveries, snow shoveling, baby sitting and rides to appointments were among the many overtures received by the family. Fund-raisers for the Maddens have been held throughout the year, as well. A secret Santa arrived at the Madden doorstep last Christmas bearing gifts for the family.

"It's so hard to thank everybody," Madden explained, as he reflected on all the help received from friends, neighbors and others. "The most important thing that I tell my kids is to give back, because of what has happened to us. I keep telling them it's important to carry over to others because of all that was given to us."

To answer that call, the Maddens have adopted several causes, including supporting the Home for Little Wanderers and My Brother's Keeper. Madden also has an affiliation with Bi-County Collaborative, an organization that helps special-needs students.

Before the accident, Madden's name was synonymous with Milton soccer, not only because he is the high school coach but because of his commitment to the sport. He runs a popular summer soccer camp for youngsters and he coaches several other teams, including the Eastern Massachusetts Football Club and the Bay State Games South East Team.

The season recently ended for the high school team, and Madden was thrilled to be back on the field. The team enjoyed a successful season, just missing qualifying for the state tournament.

"It was fun to be back," Madden said. "It gave me something to do every day, and it was busy. We had a great season."

He said the team is full of young players, with a small group of seniors with whom he has become very close. His club soccer begins in January, and he is "chomping at the bit" to get started.

And at this time of year, Madden and his family want to send their message of thanks for all they have received over the past year.

“And I am thankful for every step I take,” Madden added.



Sports notebook

Tue Jan 12, 2010, 12:54 PM EST

Bay State Winter Games 2010

Registration for the 2010 Bay State Winter Games is now open, as the annual Olympic-style amateur sporting event celebrates its 25th year in Northern Berkshire County. From Friday, January 22 to Sunday, January 24, 2010, individual competitions in alpine skiing and figure skating, and team competition in masters ice hockey will take place. Since its inception, the Berkshires have played host of all the events in the Bay State Winter Games. Athletes participating in the Winter Games represent over 200 Massachusetts communities, and range in age from 8 to over 60. “We are very excited about celebrating the silver anniversary of the Winter Games in 2010,” said Kevin Cummings, Bay State Games Executive Director. “Since 1985, the Winter Games have showcased thousands of winter sports enthusiasts from Massachusetts; some of whom have gone on to compete in the Winter Olympics, including figure skaters Nancy Kerrigan, Paul Wylie and Tiffany Scott, and alpine skiers Krista Schmidinger and Nikki Stone.” The 2010 figure skating competition will take place at the Lansing Chapman Rink on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown, MA, and features both ISI and UFSF competition for males and females. Masters ice hockey will be played in two divisions, age 40 plus and 50 plus, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Arena in North Adams, MA. Alpine Skiing, with scholastic, open and masters divisions, will be held at Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield, MA. On Saturday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m., the Bay State Skate Figure Skating Show will take place at Williams College. The show will feature Bay State Games gold medal winners, regional figure skating champions and a special feature skater. Tickets for the event are \$10 and can be purchased at local Berkshire businesses or by contacting the Bay State Games’ office. All other skating competitions are free of charge for spectators. For more information regarding the Bay State Winter Games including schedule of events, how to become a volunteer, and to register, please visit www.baystategames.org, e-mail info@baystategames.org or call the Bay State Games’ office at (781) 932-6555.

The logo for North Adams Transcript, featuring the text "North Adams Transcript" in a white, serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

Welcome back, Bay State Games

To the Editor:
01/19/2010

http://m.thetranscript.com/transcript/db_13041/contentdetail.htm;jsessionid=0E7DEB1781DF29E0D67168DCB1224555?contentguid=BRk3ci4t&detailindex=1&pn=0&ps=5

The Bay State Winter Games will celebrate its 25th anniversary on the weekend of Jan. 22-24. It will once again be a wonderful weekend of events in Berkshire County, from figure skating at the Williams College rink and men’s ice hockey at the rink in North Adams to alpine skiing at Bousquet.

Nearly 1,000 athletes and their families and coaches will come to the Berkshires, many to stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants and enjoy all the great things that our part of the commonwealth has to offer.

In 2001, a Babson College study examined the economic impact of the Winter Games on our community and determined that the financial gain in this one weekend is more than \$1 million. There is the further benefit of our county residents being able to enjoy watching winter sports played at a high level and to see some future stars in different sports.

The Winter Games continue to come to the Berkshires every year because the executive director, Kevin Cummings, is dedicated to bringing this event all the way across the state to us. In the past, other communities have approached the Bay State Games about moving the Winter Games to other venues that would be closer for athletes from the eastern part of the state. Kevin has been steadfast in his commitment to Berkshire County, and the Winter Games continue to bring its many benefits to those of us who are proud to call this area our home.

This weekend, please come to the competitions and skating show on Saturday night to support the athletes and say a well-deserved thank you to Kevin Cummings.

Barbara Cece
Williamstown
Jan. 14



Bay State Winter Games celebrates 25 years

By STEPHEN DRAVIS
01/20/2010

http://www.advocateweekly.com/ci_14230586

Tegan O'Neill of Stamford, Vt., has been participating in the Bay State Games since 2003. The senior at Miss Hall's School will skate in her last Games this weekend. (Photo by Mike Tureski/SportsPix)

Williams College holds its homecoming celebrations in the fall, but the school will be the site of a different kind of reunion this weekend when the Bay State Winter Games returns for its 25th edition in Berkshire County.

Talk to those who have been around the ice skating competition, and the word that keeps coming up is "family."

"The Bay State Games really is my home competition," Stamford, Vt., skater Tegan O'Neill said. "I've been part of it since 2003. My club hosts it, so I'm there all weekend volunteering. My teammates are all competing. It's like a family atmosphere to me.

"I've been going to Bay State Games as long as I can remember. When I was first learning to skate I went and watched the competition and volunteered," she said. "It's kind of sad that this is my last year (competing), but I think it's a good ending."

O'Neill, 17, a senior at Miss Hall's School in Pittsfield and a member of North County's Christmas Brook Figure Skating Club, is scheduled to compete at around 2:30 p.m. on Saturday afternoon in the junior unrestricted freestyle competition sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating.

She will be back on the ice Saturday evening as one of the featured skaters in the Bay State Skate, the signature event of the three-day festival of winter sports that also includes downhill skiing at Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield and masters ice hockey at the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink in North Adams.

At the 7:30 p.m. show Saturday, O'Neill will be joined by gold medalists from this year's games, past winners like herself, the Christmas Brook production team and the reigning State Games of America senior ladies gold medalist, Jamiee Fernald of Braintree.

Like O'Neill, Fernald has been coming to the games for as long as she can remember. She started attending as a young fan with her mother, a coach who continues to mentor the Merrimack College freshman to this day.

Fernald, 19, won five out of a possible six golds in the BSG senior ladies long and short programs from 2007 to '09, and she was a fourth place finisher at last year's New England Regional.

Although she has a long competitive resume, Fernald said there is something special about the family atmosphere at the Bay State Games.

"I just like the whole vibe of it," she said. "I like where it's located in Williamstown. The people have always been so nice and welcoming to me."

'I haven't missed a minute'

As young as O'Neill and Fernald were when they were introduced to the Bay State Games, the event itself already was well-established when they arrived.

Barbara Cece of Pittsfield, on the other hand, has been there from the beginning.

"I have not missed a minute of the 25 years, except when I went to a press conference that Surya Bonaly was doing at the Williams Inn, and I went to North Adams once to view one of the other activities," Cece said. "Other than that, I haven't missed a minute."

In the early days, Cece got involved with the BSG through her daughters, both skaters with Christmas Brook. But she did not stop helping when they stopped competing.

"I stayed with it even when both my daughters went off to college," Cece said. "There were a number of years when I was the only one of the family who was coming."

Today, daughters Laura and Jenna are coaches with Christmas Brook while their mom continues on as competition director for the figure skating venue, a role she has served for a number of years.

"I start the events, I make sure things are running smoothly and that every post is filled," said Cece, who was inducted into the BSG Hall of Fame in 2002. "I get the results, I post the results, I keep it running and handle any kinds of emergencies."

Cece is one of eight volunteers who have been involved in the Bay State Winter Games all 25 years of its existence. The list includes Carl and Marilyn Faulkner of the Williams Inn, the college's Gary Guerin, Judy Giamborino of the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce, International Skating Institute commissioner Katy Hayden and volunteers Marcia Sarrouf and Dale Waterman.

'It always inspires me'

Occasionally, all that dedication brings unexpected rewards.

"My favorite memory was (1992 Olympic silver medalist) Paul Wylie, who has been here twice, came to my home," Cece said. "The year after he won his medal (in Albertville, France), he was here in my living room watching a tape of the opening ceremony and he was doing commentary for us about behind-the-scenes things that happened."

Other stars who have graced the Lansing Chapman ice for the Bay State Skate include Nancy Kerrigan (who also competed in the Winter Games), Bonaly and Peter and Kitty Carruthers.

O'Neill, who is skating by virtue of earning the 2009 Bay State Games Future Leaders Scholarship, said that skating in the Bay State Skate is different from competition - but not necessarily any easier.

"I was really surprised and excited to find out I won (last year) and got to skate in the show," O'Neill said. "It was just an amazing opportunity.

"In competition, you're skating for yourself and trying to do the best you can. For the show, I was trying to please the audience, so it's a little bit of a different sort of thing - not necessarily more nerve-wracking than a competition, but it's a different experience."

Whether competing, performing or just sitting in the audience at the rink or on the slopes, the Bay State Winter Games is a unique experience and a shared experience for those who come back each year.

"The Bay State Games family is really just that," Cece said. "It feels like a family to me. I'm very close to all of the staff and the Christmas Brook families, many of them with younger children than mine, but I was still close to them even when mine were not competing anymore and were off to college."



Sports and a business bump

By Meghan Foley, New England Newspapers
01/21/2010

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/local/ci_14235065

Hundreds of amateur athletes and their families will descend upon Northern Berkshire for the 25th Bay State Winter Games on Friday -- an event that boosts the local economy and offers hours of sports competition over the course of three days.

Peter Cohenno, spokesman for the Bay State Games, said that between 750 to 1,000 athletes are expected to compete this year.

"The last few years as the economy has turned south, we've seen our numbers increase, and that has been a good thing," Cohenno said. "If you look at most figure skating competitions across the country, they've lost 10 to 15 percent of their participants in the last two years."

Cohenno attributes increased participation to the fact the event is close to home for many athletes and to the event's expansions over the years. Athletes compete in figure skating, masters-level ice hockey or alpine skiing.

Figure skating is held at Williams College's Chapman Rink from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. The Bay State Figure Skating Show is 7:30 p.m. on Saturday; doors open at 6:45 p.m.

Masters ice hockey, at the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans Memorial Rink in North Adams, runs from 2:15 to 11 p.m. on Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 10:15 p.m. on Saturday, and from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield hosts alpine skiing, with races beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday and running through mid-afternoon.

The athletes and families visiting North Berkshire bring with them money to spend. Carl Faulkner, owner of The Williams Inn, estimates that \$100,000 or more is spent in the area during the Bay State Winter Games weekend.

The games have a "fantastic" impact on the local economy, with most of the participants and their families going to local restaurants and sandwich shops for meals, and staying at local motels and hotels for an average of two days, Faulkner said.

"At a bare minimum, everybody buys a tank of gas," said Faulkner. "You can't drive out here, and then turn around to drive back to eastern Massachusetts without buying a tank of gas."

While the Bay State Winter Games gives a short-term economic boost to the area, it also helps the local economy over the long-term.

"It shows people from eastern Massachusetts where western Massachusetts is, and sometimes they're inclined to come back in the summer," Faulkner said. The visitors also become "goodwill ambassadors" for the region when they tell their friends and family about where they have been, he said.

Barbara Cece, a longtime volunteer at the Games, said the event brings a high-quality, multiple-sport event to North County, and gives the local Christmas Brook Figure Skating Club an opportunity to run a competition.

"I really feel we're ambassadors for the local area for all the people who come here for the games," she said.

As commissioner of figure skating, Cece said she makes sure all the skating events start on time, run smoothly, and that every athlete has a quality experience.

"It feels like a lifelong commitment," she said.

Cece's daughter, Laura Wood, competed in the Bay State Games from age 10 until she was 18 as a member of the Christmas Brook Figure Skating Club. As a result, Wood said, "I've formed many relationships with people over the years."

Wood has also had the opportunities to meet national- and Olympic-level skaters.

"I remember meeting Paul Wylie and Nancy Kerrigan. It was a big event. They came to my parents' house for dinner," she said.

While Wood no longer competes in the games, she continues to volunteer and this year is co-coach of the Christmas Brook Production Team, which puts on the figure skating show.

Dale Waterman has been volunteering with the Bay State Winter Games for 25 years, and has the self-declared title of official professional volunteer.

"I recruit the volunteers locally," Waterman said. This year's volunteer response has been incredible with more than 50 people already signed up, she said.

"I think people have a real sense of community in this area, and want to help," she said.

Volunteers will handle duties such as registering participants, working the merchandise tables, resetting gates on the alpine ski run, and keeping time and scores at the hockey games.



2010 Bay State Games Annual winter event turns 25

**By Howard Herman, Berkshire Eagle Staff
01/22/2010**

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/sports/ci_14243485

The Bay State Winter Games is celebrating its 25th anniversary this weekend in Berkshire County. Kevin Cummings, the executive director of the Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation, has been at all 25.

He said he knew the Winter Games would be special.

"Right from the get-go, there was something about holding the games [in Berkshire County]," he said. "You had a sense it was going to have legs."

Make that legs, arms, ski poles, figure skates and hockey sticks. Those all factor into the Bay State Winter Games becoming a success in the county.

The games kick off this morning at 8 a.m., with figure skating competitions at Lansing Chapman Rink on the Williams College campus. The figure skating competition will continue through Sunday night.

"The figure skating has been the one event that has been the cornerstone of the [Bay State Winter Games]," Cummings said.

Alpine skiing will take place on Saturday at the Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield, while the Masters ice hockey tournament will be held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Rink in North Adams.

The annual Bay State Skate figure skating show will take place Saturday at 7 p.m. at Lansing Chapman Rink. Tickets are \$10, and the show is the only event where a paid admission is required.

It's not the 26th annual event, because there was no competition in 1988 due to a lack of funding.

While the Bay State Games currently has Alpine skiing, figure skating and Masters hockey on its schedule, those aren't the only sports that had been on the roster. In years past, Nordic skiing, snowboarding and speed skating were part of the weekend schedule. A lack of competitors, conflicting competitions, or -- in the case of nordic skiing -- the vagueries of snow cover put those events on the shelf.

It's a fairly low-key silver celebration for the festival, and Cummings said a financial shortfall caused it.

"We had some pretty big plans we wanted to do for this year," he said. "We lost \$350,000 in state funding -- \$150,000 last year and the rest this year."

The loss of state funding means a steeper price for the athletes.

"We had to raise fees to make up for the shortfall," he said, before adding that "the increase in fees hasn't hurt the participation."

That's an understatement. There are 450 skaters registered, the most in recent memory. Cummings anticipates more than 100 Alpine skiers, and there are 14 hockey teams registered -- also the most in many years.

Cummings, former director Doug Arnot and Dalton native Carrie Crane led the effort to expand the amateur sports festival from an annual summer games to a winter games.

"It's very hard to believe it's been 25 years," Cummings said. "Even from the first year, Nancy Kerrigan competed and Kim and Krista Schmidinger competed. They went on to the Olympics."

Arnot, who helped found the Bay State Summer and Winter Games, is now the director of venues and competition for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

The Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation is also handing out three Berkshire Hero's Awards. The awards were started in 2008 and given to Berkshire County citizens and organizations who have contributed to the success of the games. This year Al and Barbara Cece and their family, Judy Giamborino and Williams College are receiving the honors.

The Ceces have been fixtures at the Games since 1985, mostly helping with figure skating. Giamborino, currently the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce's executive director, ran the Vietnam Veterans Rink for 10 years. Williams has played host to the figure skating competition and the skating show since the event began.

One slight wrinkle for the figure skaters is that the Williams College women's hockey team has a 7 p.m. game Friday night against Middlebury, which has forced the Bay State Games' schedule to change.

Traditionally, the figure skating started at 2 or 3 p.m. on Fridays and went until 10. This year, competition begins at 8 a.m. and will end at 4 p.m., so the rink can be prepared for the hockey game. The rink will be reset for figure skating after the Ephs and Panthers play hockey.

"When we were looking at dates, the only date [at Williams] that was open was during the Martin Luther King weekend," Cummings said, adding that businesses involved with the Games were looking to have the sports festival on a different weekend.

"We came up with a weekend where we had to work around that one event," he continued. "It's a little bit of a logistical challenge, but we'll get it done."

The newest wrinkle for the Games this winter is the expansion of Alpine skiing.

For years, Alpine skiing has been a high school-age athlete only activity. But because of potential conflicts with other racing leagues, the MASF opened up the competition. This year, there will be a middle school division, along with open and masters divisions.

"There's been a lot of interest in the middle school division," the director said.

The staff will be headquartered in the Williams Inn, where they all moved on Thursday. The executive director said they're primed and ready to go.

"I'm speaking with a lot of folks. I think people are excited," Cummings said. "The participants are excited, and the hotels are gearing up."

Bay State Games Mark 25 Years in Berkshires

Staff reports

Friday, January 22, 2010

<http://www.iberkshires.com/story/33713/Bay-State-Games-Mark-25-Years-in-Berkshires.html>

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. — Nearly a thousand athletes will compete in hockey, skiing and figure skating over the next three days in North Berkshires as the Bay State Winters Games celebrates its 25th anniversary of providing a competitive outlet for amateur athletes.

Competitors from across the state took to the ice beginning Friday morning with figure skating for U.S. Figure Skating and the International Skating Institute at Lansing Chapman Rink at Williams College and Masters hockey at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink. The first run for Alpine skiing launches at 9:30 Saturday morning at Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield. The games wind up on Sunday with the finals in hockey at 2 p.m. and figure skating at 6.

For more information and a schedule, go to www.BayStateGames.org.

The games also features the popular Bay State Skate figure skating show on Saturday night at 7:30 p.m. at Lansing Chapman. The emcee for the evening is WNAW's Mike Garland and 2008 Berkshire Idol winner Kristina Clark will sing the national anthem.

Along with the local Christmas Brook Production Team, performers include Tegan O'Neill of Stamford, Vt., a Miss Hall's senior and Bay State Games Future Leader Scholarship winner who picked up a gold medal last year in novice freestyle at the games; Scituate High sophomore Christine Donahue, a district freestyle champion, and Maddey Juliano, a Hanover High freshman and State Games of America Intermediate gold medalist.

"The people of Northern Berkshire County have always viewed the Games as an opportunity to showcase the best that the region has to offer and we are extremely grateful for their support," said Executive Director Kevin Cummings in the 2010 games' silver anniversary program. "Their hospitality and the natural beauty of the area have combined to bring a special atmosphere and charm to the Winter Games."

Back in 1985, some 400 amateur athletes made their way to the Berkshires to compete in the winter version of the Bay State Games. Created by then Executive Director Douglas Arnot and Dalton native Carrie Crane, the Berkshires were selected because of the quality of the facilities in the area and the willingness of the region to support the event.

There've been more categories over the years — cross country and speed skating, youth hockey, ski orienteering, snowboarding, sled dog racing and curling — and games have hosted athletes of all abilities and ages ranging from 8 to 63.

Some, such as Nancy Kerrigan, Tiffany Scott, Phillip Dulebohn, Krista and Kim Schmidinger and Karen Cashman, have gone on to compete in the Olympics.

In 2008, the Games began to honor the people and entities that have supported the competition over the years. This year's Berkshire Heroes are Barbara and Al Cece and their daughters Laura and Jenna and son, Derek, who've been fixtures at the Winter Games since its beginning. Also being honored are Judy Giamborino, executive director of the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce and former longtime manager

of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink, and Williams College, which has hosted the figure skating for 25 years.

So drop one of the skating rinks or head to Bousquet to watch some of the best amateur athletes in state — you might see some of them again in a future Olympics.



Bay State Games kicks off in northern Berkshire

By: Sabina Kuriakose

It's an Olympic-style sporting event in Berkshire County. The Bay State Winter Games kicks off Friday in northern Berkshire. Our Sabina Kuriakose tells us how organizers and local businesses are gearing up.

Video: http://capitalnews9.com/capital-region-news-12-content/top_stories/493863/bay-state-games-kicks-off-in-northern-berkshire

WILLIAMSTOWN, Mass. -- Organizers are gearing up for what many call Massachusetts' version of the Winter Olympics. It's the 25th annual Bay State Games, with sports like figure skating, ice hockey and alpine skiing.

"We've had over two dozen figure skaters and other winter games athletes who have come out here to the Berkshires and then gone on to Olympic fame, such as Nancy Kerrigan," said executive director Kevin Cummings.

Officials say despite the down economy, the games are doing better than ever. It's a cheap way for fans and athletes to get their fill of their favorite winter sports.

"We're seeing a big increase in participation because it's a local event, not require a lot of travel expenses," said Cummings.

Local business like the Williams Inn look forward every year to the revenue brought in by the Bay State Games.

"It means every little sandwich shop, restaurant gets young people eating for two or three days. It means they're sleeping in every lodging establishment that has rooms in the area," said Williams Inn owner Carl Faulkner.

"The economic impact of this event on this area is \$1 million just for the weekend," said Cummings

Another benefit to Berkshire County? Grabbing the state spotlight.

"It really gives a lot of recognition to the athletes in this area, as well as the organizers in this area who put on great events, and some of the facilities," added Cummings.



Bay State Winter Games ready to get underway

The Lowell Sun
01/22/2010

http://www.lowellsun.com/ci_14245786?source=rss

AMHERST -- The Greater Lowell area will be well-represented at the 25th silver anniversary of the Bay State Winter Games scheduled this weekend at several Western Massachusetts venues.

Area athletes will be participating in selected sports including figure skating, alpine skiing and ice hockey.

Wilmington High student Rachel Zeppi will participate in the BSG Figure Skating Show scheduled Saturday night at the Williams College Rink in Amherst.

Zeppi is the 2010 New England Regional Intermediate Ladies Division silver medalist. In 2009 she won the silver medal in the New England Regionals Juvenile Division and was a Junior Nationals competitor representing the Skating Club of Boston.

A high honors student at Wilmington, Zeppi is also a church youth group worship team songstress who will major in math and physics at college.

Tickets to the show are \$10 and can be purchased online at BayStateGames.org or at several Northern Berkshire locations. Check the web site for more information on Zeppi and the Games.

Following are the hometown, name and age of many area BSG competitors:

Acton: Kristen Phillips, 12. Billerica; Kelley Perrotti, 13; Kellie Smith, 13; Robert Wilson, N/A. Boxboro: Benjamin Becker, 17; Kathryn Terranova, 13; Lauren Vicik, 16; Emmy Witt, 8. Burlington: Emily Theurer, 17. Carlisle: Karolyne Shieh, 14; Chloe Vilain, 18. Concord: Vanessa Ryan, 12; Virginia Ryan, 10; Jack Wakelin, 9; Jessica Wakelin, 12. Littleton: Corrine Losch, 14. Lowell: Dana Forehand, 29. Pelham, N.H: Annie Kandel, 13. Westford: Jennifer Beattie, 14; Alexis MacDonald, 15; Cristina Pickersgill, 11.

Boston Business Journal

Let the game begins

Thursday, January 21, 2010

http://boston.bizjournals.com/boston/blog/mass_roundup/2010/01/let_the_game_begins.html

The Northern Berkshire region is looking for an economic boost when hundreds of athletes come to the area tomorrow for the 25th Bay State Winter Games, the Berkshire Eagle reports.

Between 750 and 1,000 athletes are expected to compete in this year's games, which will be held at sites in Williamstown and North Adams, according to the Eagle.

Bay State Games Mark 25 Years in Berkshires

Staff reports

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NORTH ADAMS, Mass. — Nearly a thousand athletes will compete in hockey, skiing and figure skating over the next three days in North Berkshires as the Bay State Winters Games celebrates its 25th anniversary of providing a competitive outlet for amateur athletes.

Competitors from across the state took to the ice beginning Friday morning with figure skating for U.S. Figure Skating and the International Skating Institute at Lansing Chapman Rink at Williams College and Masters hockey at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink. The first run for Alpine skiing launches at 9:30 Saturday morning at Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield. The games wind up on Sunday with the finals in hockey at 2 p.m. and figure skating at 6.

The games also features the popular Bay State Skate figure skating show on Saturday night at 7:30 p.m. at Lansing Chapman. The emcee for the evening is WNAW's Mike Garland and 2008 Berkshire Idol winner Kristina Clark will sing the national anthem.

Along with the local Christmas Brook Production Team, performers include Tegan O'Neill of Stamford, Vt., a Miss Hall's senior and Bay State Games Future Leader Scholarship winner who picked up a gold medal last year in novice freestyle at the games; Scituate High sophomore Christine Donahue, a district freestyle champion, and Maddey Juliano, a Hanover High freshman and State Games of America Intermediate gold medalist.

"The people of Northern Berkshire County have always viewed the Games as an opportunity to showcase the best that the region has to offer and we are extremely grateful for their support," said Executive Director Kevin Cummings in the 2010 games' silver anniversary program. "Their hospitality and the natural beauty of the area have combined to bring a special atmosphere and charm to the Winter Games."

Back in 1985, some 400 amateur athletes made their way to the Berkshires to compete in the winter version of the Bay State Games. Created by then Executive Director Douglas Arnot and Dalton native Carrie Crane, the Berkshires were selected because of the quality of the facilities in the area and the willingness of the region to support the event.

There've been more categories over the years — cross country and speed skating, youth hockey, ski orienteering, snowboarding, sled dog racing and curling — and games have hosted athletes of all abilities and ages ranging from 8 to 63.

Some, such as Nancy Kerrigan, Tiffany Scott, Phillip Dulebohn, Krista and Kim Schmidinger and Karen Cashman, have gone on to compete in the Olympics.

In 2008, the Games began to honor the people and entities that have supported the competition over the years. This year's Berkshire Heroes are Barbara and Al Cece and their daughters Laura and Jenna and son, Derek, who've been fixtures at the Winter Games since its beginning. Also being honored are Judy Giamborino, executive director of the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce and former longtime manager of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink, and Williams College, which has hosted the figure skating for 25 years.

So drop one of the skating rinks or head to Bousquet to watch some of the best amateur athletes in state — you might see some of them again in a future Olympics.



Arnot talks about start of Games

By Howard Herman
01/23/2010

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/sports/ci_14251494

The voice on the other end of the telephone was very familiar, but it was one I hadn't heard in years.

Doug Arnot was checking in from his new post in London, where he is director of Venues and Competition for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. He was calling to chat about his baby, because without Arnot the Bay State Winter Games would not be here -- or anywhere.

"I absolutely can't believe" it's been 26 years since the Games started, Arnot said, "and I find it very frightening. Who was the young guy who did that stuff?"

Arnot spent 10 years as the director of the Bay State Games, both the summer and winter varieties.

"To be honest with you, I was pretty optimistic about the Winter Games from the start. The reason was really, to be very fair, the people in the Berkshires," Arnot said Friday. "There were a lot of very highly motivated people, and it was my sense that it was something that was statewide that the people in the Berkshires could own and have a lot of pride in it.

"I really kind of banked on that pride from the outset."

Many of the people Arnot dealt with during his time with the Bay State Games are still actively involved in helping to make the Winter Games a success.

The Summer Games, established in the Boston area, have had numerous homes -- from Boston College to Northeastern to UMass-Boston, and now to various locations around greater Boston.

It was that success that stuck with Arnot when the idea for the Winter Games came along.

"We had the Summer Games off the ground and were comfortable enough to say that we might try something else," Arnot recalled. "We were a very small group of people doing a very big job with the Summer Games. Some people looked at us cross-eyed when we talked about the winter. If we were truly going to be an Olympics for Massachusetts, then we had to address the winter athletes too. We thought it was time, and just gave it a whirl."

The Bay State Games started in 1982 amidst Proposition 21 2 budget cuts and difficult times in the state. Communities were not working together and split along socio-economic ways.

"When I started the Bay State Summer Games, I thought I'd do this for a year. After five years, I thought that should be about it, and when I hit 10 years, I thought I better move on," he said. "The interesting thing is I didn't get involved in the Bay State Games in order to get involved in the sport and event business. I really got involved because I believed very deeply in two things -- one is the notion that sport can be a very positive aspect in kids' lives, and two, in a unique way sports can bring the communities of Massachusetts together."

After 10 years running the Bay State Games, Arnot bid the Bay State adieu. Since then, his passport has been stamped more than once.

He has been the executive vice-president of the FIFA World Cup that was played in the U.S. in 1994, managing all the venues and operations. Then he went to Atlanta and was the managing director for all the venues for the 1996 Olympics. After Atlanta, he was in Sydney to work on the Summer Olympics and was managing director of operations for the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City in 1998.

Annot was also the director of venues for Chicago's bid to host the Summer Olympics in 2016 that went to Rio de Janeiro.

Annot has been in London since Oct. 24, 22 days after the vote. As director of Venues and Competition, he runs everything but the marketing aspects of the Olympics. His biggest challenges are transportation and security.

But everything comes back around to the sporting event that is being held this weekend in Berkshire County.

"When I saw your name on the e-mail, it brought back a lot of memories of people who really stood up and did something for the community in an exceptional fashion," he said. "I've never forgotten the effort and the dedication of those people."



County fares well early at Bay State Games **Three athletes with ties to the Berkshires win medals.**

Berkshire Eagle Staff
01/23/2010

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/sports/ci_14251492

Three athletes with Berkshire County ties took medals during the first day of competition at the 25th Bay State Winter Games, winning the area the full array of medals.

With figure skating the only sport awarding medals on Friday, three local athletes made their mark on the ice at Williams College's Lansing Chapman Rink.

In the day's first event, Pittsfield residents swept the gold and the silver, with Jana Wood taking first and Emily Rice finishing in second place in the Female Juvenile-Restricted/ Test Track competition. Later on, in the fifth event, Clarksburg's Lauren Lampiasi won a bronze medal in the Female Novice -Unrestricted/ Well Balanced.

Beauchesne back in figure skating groove



Marc Vasconcellos/The Enterprise: Rachelle Beauchesne of Brockton holds skating medals that she won in the past. Beauchesne is competing in the Bay State Winter Games this weekend.

ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

Jan 22, 2010

<http://www.enterpriseneeds.com/sports/x1685420034/Beauchesne-back-in-figure-skating-groove>

BROCKTON — Rachelle Beauchesne started ice skating when she was 11 years old. Today, she'll compete with the top amateur skaters in the state at the Bay State Winter Games.

The 27-year-old Brockton figure skater, who came back to the sport four years ago, will be competing today and Sunday at the annual state amateur athletics competition, held this year in Williamstown in the Berkshires.

"This is actually my first time at the Bay State Games," Beauchesne said. "I started competing USFSA (United States Figure Skating Association) recently, so it was kind of a natural progression."

Beauchesne first got involved in figure skating after watching the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics.

"I had seen all the Olympic skaters and decided I wanted to do that," Beauchesne said.

Her parents signed her up at Asiaf Arena in Brockton soon after and a skating career was born.

Sort of.

She skated up until her senior year of high school, mostly for fun. Beauchesne admitted she wasn't very good and left the sport at the age of 17.

Six years later, at the age of 23, the Westfield State College graduate decided to return to the sport, thinking that she could earn a secondary income teaching youth figure skaters.

"When I first came back, I had no intention of competing whatsoever," Beauchesne said. "It was just a side job I could do for decent pay. When I got back on the ice, I couldn't do anything. I was afraid to jump."

After six months of skating, she was back in the swing of things. Her sister encouraged her to start competing again, so Beauchesne looked into it. Now, she takes private lessons in Natick and belongs to the FMC skate club in Taunton.

"Coming at it with an adult's perspective, you've grown up, you've matured, it's different," Beauchesne said. "Going out there and performing, and enjoying being out there on the ice ... I love what I do."

This afternoon, she will compete in the Ice Skating Institute Artistic Level Four event, which is more of a recreational level of competition.

On Sunday, she will compete at the USFSA level, the national amateur organizing body sponsoring the competition.

Beauchesne competes at the Adult Bronze level, open to skaters over the age of 21. There are several different levels denoting skill at the Bay State Games, with gold being the highest.

Beauchesne believes she has improved a lot over the past four years, and does not see a higher level of competition as being out of the question.

"I think that Adult Gold (level of competition) is a definite possibility," she said, "which means I could be landing doubles, but it will take a couple of years."

The Bay State Winter Games, Massachusetts' premier Olympic-style amateur athletics competition, will run until Jan. 24 in the Berkshires.

Nearly 1,000 athletes will compete in figure skating, alpine skiing and hockey. Famous athletes of previous Bay State Winter Games include Olympic silver medalist figure skaters Nancy Kerrigan, Paul Wylie and Peter and Kitty Carruthers.

The Bay State Winter Games began Friday with the following area competitors earning medals.

Female Intermediate-Unrestricted / Well Balanced:
Hanover's Casey O'Brien took home a silver medal in the event.

Female Junior-Unrestricted / Well Balanced:
Katelyn Rota of Holbrook won the gold medal.

Female Artistic Solo 1 age 9-10:
Jayda Jones of Randolph won the silver medal.

Female Artistic Solo 3 age 9:

Chloe Byrne of Bridgewater won the gold and Elana Sargent of Lakeville took the silver.

Female Artistic Solo 5 age 10:

Paris Baker of Abington won the gold.

Female Artistic Solo 4 age 8:

Kathleen Gordon of East Bridgewater won the gold.

Female Artistic Solo 4 age 11:

Lily Green of Brockton won the silver.

Female Artistic Solo 4 age 12:

Anna Comperchio of West Bridgewater won the gold, Olivia Morris of Pembroke won the silver and MaryKate Clark of Brockton took the bronze.

Female Artistic Solo 4 age 15:

Chelsea Flaherty of Bridgewater won the silver.

Female Artistic Solo 5 age 11:

Nikki Montanaro of Whitman won the silver and Nicole Keeley of Pembroke claimed the bronze.

Female Artistic Solo 5 age 13:

Danielle Donovan of Abington won the silver.

Female Artistic Solo 6 age 13:

Ashlee Wright of Pembroke won the silver.

Female Artistic Solo 6 age 16:

Amanda Kirshkaln of East Bridgewater took the bronze.

Female Artistic Solo 7 age 17:

Brianna Byrne of Bridgewater won the gold.

Female Artistic Solo 8 age 12:

Nicole Perry of Raynham won the gold and Caroline Gordon of East Bridgewater claimed the silver.

Bay State Games bring spike to shops



Scott Stafford / Berkshire Eagle Staff
Michele Gietz, owner of Where'd You Get That?, and...

By Scott Stafford, Berkshire Eagle Staff
01/23/2010

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/ci_14255970

WILLIAMSTOWN -- With hundreds of Bay State Games figure skaters, along with some of their family members and friends, competing at the Williams College Lansing Chapman Rink Friday and Saturday, Spring Street merchants were seeing a welcome bounce in foot traffic and cash flow.

The Bay State Winter Games, hosted by the Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this weekend in Berkshire County with figure skating in Williamstown, a hockey tournament at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink in North Adams and a ski competition at Bousquet in Pittsfield.

As a result, local coffee shops, sporting goods stores, pharmacies, delis, clothing stores, restaurants and hotels were noticing an upswing Saturday.

"It's important to have the Bay State Games in the Berkshires," said Michele Gietz, owner of the Where'd You Get That?, the toy store on Spring Street.

"It brings people from the east side of the state coming to the Berkshires -- some of whom may have never been here before. And it's happening on a non-holiday weekend in January, when there wouldn't be anything happening here otherwise."

The skating rink is located just east of Spring Street, a short walk from the popular commercial district. In fact, to get to much of the nearby parking, those using the rink have to walk through Spring Street to get to their cars.

During Saturday's activities, families and groups of skaters and their friends could be seen walking, chatting and laughing, passing by the usual locals and college students. Some stopped at the table on the sidewalk where Girl Scout cookies were being peddled.

"It's definitely helped our business," said an employee of a retail store who wished to remain nameless. "They come in spurts, but we're seeing lots of people in their skating outfits. We put more people on the schedule to handle it."

Ed Conroy, longtime pharmacist at Harts' Pharmacists on Spring Street, said the rise in people walking down the street is noticeable.

"It creates traffic and brings people in, so it couldn't hurt," he said.

Workers at the Goffs Sports and Nature's Closet noticed more customers coming in between athletic events at the Winter Games.

"A lot of figure skaters have come through," said Katelyn Brazeau, a sales person at Goffs.

"The afternoons have been the busiest from the Games," said Jennifer Karampatsos, manager at Papa Charlie's, which primarily caters to Williams College students. "But this weekend we've noticed more families and more out-of-towners."

Boston Business Journal

Local shops win out at Bay State Games

Monday, January 25, 2010

http://boston.bizjournals.com/boston/blog/mass_roundup/2010/01/local_shops_win_out_at_bay_state_games.html

Merchants in Williamstown, North Adams and Pittsfield saw a pronounced uptick in foot traffic over the weekend, thanks in no small part to the athletes and spectators in the area for the Bay State Games, the Berkshire Eagle reports.

The Bay State Winter Games, hosted by the Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation, celebrated its 25th anniversary this weekend in Berkshire County, the Eagle notes.

County dominates in skiing



Samantha Gooch of Pittsfield makes her way to a first-place finish in the girls' Grade 11-12 division Saturday at Bousquet Ski Area. (Caroline Bonnavier Snyder / Berkshire Eagle Staff)

By Chris Carlson, Berkshire Eagle Staff
01/23/10

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/sports/ci_14255898

PITTSFIELD -- Samantha Gooch said the racing team at Bousquet Ski Area is "one big family."

After Saturday's Alpine ski competition at the Bay State Winter Games, you can bet that it's a happy one as well.

Competitors from Berkshire County, accustomed to skiing on the mountain, dominated the competition by winning 21 of the 30 gold medals, including a podium sweep in the Grade 7 and 8 boys competition.

"It's more than just [being used to the mountain]," Gooch said. "Bousquet has a decent reputation for having a good ski team. We do a lot of training, we have awesome coaches. We give each other huge support. It's like a big family."

The day's top performer, Pittsfield High School's David Graziani, turned in the fastest time on each of the two giant slalom runs to win the Grade 11-12 boys event. The high point was not only beating his age group, but all 100 skiers on the mountain Saturday.

"I like competing with my coach," Graziani said, referring to Peter Dunham, who raced in the Age 19-34 men's division.

Despite a 1.26-second lead after the first run, Graziani breezed down the hill with such speed that his high school coach, Bob Geller, sat in the scorer's shack hoping he'd let up late in the race.

Graziani, though, kept flying down the course, turning in the day's fastest run the second time down as well.

"When I inspect the course, I know where I'm going to stay tucked and where I'm not," Graziani said. "I just stuck to that."

Graziani's effort followed his first win in a scholastic race this year and showed he's returned to form after suffering a broken ankle in October. He said he worked through a small bobble in his first run in a tricky area where every skier seemed to struggle, and then had an ideal run his second time down the hill.

Graziani was one of six winners from Berkshire County. His girls counterpart from PHS, Gooch, won the Grade 11-12 girls race, while Taconic High School's Eamon Connor won the Grade 9-10 boys competition. The other local gold medalists included Pittsfield's Trent Pfeiffer (Grade 7-8 Boys), Dalton's Louise Brogan (Female Age 35-50) and Pittsfield's Scott Raymaakers (Men's Age 35-50).

Gooch has been on the cusp of winning all season, finishing just behind the top girls in the county on a weekly basis, and then competing on the ultra-competitive Tri-State Alpine Ski Race Association circuit on the weekend. She's been a Bay State Games participant the past three years, losing a ski during her first effort and placing second last year before breaking through.

"It gives kids that might not be good enough to win Tri-State races a chance," Gooch said. "You're also in age groups, so you're competing against people that are the same age, the same level as you."

Gooch briefly thought her winning hopes had been dashed, when she briefly skidded out during a tough spot during her second run 10 gates from the finish. Gooch, though, had built up a lead of more than a second in her first run and held on to defeat Mount Greylock's Kristina Chesney in a close finish. Gooch finished in 1:28.59, while Chesney clocked in at 1:29.13.

"I thought I blew it," Gooch said. "I just tried to hold on and then get going and finish as fast as I could."

The third Berkshire County high schooler to collect a win, Connor was competing in the event for the first time. A high school and Tri-State racer, Connor said he tried to keep the same mentality as he does during his other race weekends.

"Any time I race, I'm serious about it," Connor said.

It showed. He finished almost three seconds ahead of his nearest competitor.

Also new to the race this year was an entire age group. In order to draw more participants, the Games were open to kids in Grades 6 and 7 for the first time.

Pittsfield's Trent Pfeiffer took advantage, winning by less than two-tenths of a second over second-place Bryce Schuler in the day's most competitive contest.

Pfeiffer didn't discover he had the opportunity to compete until late in the registration process. When he learned he'd have a Tri-State race on the same mountain today, he couldn't pass up the opportunity for a preview.

"I figure it was a good practice for [today]," Pfeiffer said. "I feel pretty confident."

Pfeiffer (1:30.84) came from behind after finishing his first run second to Stockbridge's Bryce Schuler (1:31.03) by more than three-tenths of a second.

Kevin Cummings, the executive director of the Bay State Games, said the addition of the younger kids was successful, boosting the number of ski competitors from 83 in 2009 to 100 this year.

The youngest age groups were also the most popular, with 16 girls and 12 boys that competed.

Cummings also believes that the addition will help foster a family feel. At least five sets of parents and children competed Sunday, including the Pittsfield duo of Eric and Scott Raymaakers.

Eric, a sophomore at Pittsfield High School, earned a bronze in the Grade 9-10 boys class, while Scott finished first for the second consecutive year.

Like most teenagers, Eric inspected the race beforehand with his friends, but he paused to wish his father luck, rehashed the race afterwards over pizza bites in the lodge restaurant and marveled at the speed at which Dad sped down the mountain.

"I like it," Eric Raymaakers said. "It's really fun to compete against someone from your family. I do congratulate him, but I eventually want to beat him."



Nature's Closet joins Spring Street

By Scott Stafford, Berkshire Eagle Staff
01/23/2010

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/ci_14255996

WILLIAMSTOWN -- The newest addition to the Spring Street commercial district, the first retail tenant after a \$4 million expansion of the building that once housed the Hopkins furniture store, was opened in time to serve shoppers visiting town for the Bay State Winter Games.

Nature's Closet, an outdoor specialty clothing and accessories store that opened on Jan. 14, moved to Williamstown after eight years in Bennington, Vt.

According to Steve Hinchliffe, the store owner, said his move to 61 Spring St. has been working out quite well.

"We decided that Williamstown might be a better fit for us with the students and the college community here," Hinchliffe said. "And so far, business has been good and everyone has been very receptive."

Being the lone retailer hasn't bothered him, and neighboring merchants have been welcoming, he added.

"This weekend we saw a lot of business from the Bay State Games," Hinchliffe said, "so we're very excited."

The building expansion project was completed last summer. Along with Nature's Closet facing Spring Street, the 26,000-square-foot building offers four other retail spaces available for lease along the south side. A drive/walk way along the south side offers a pedestrian feel to the alcove, with three glass-front retail spaces.

The Purple Pub will be housed in the rear of the building, once the right operator is found to run the already established college hot spot.

There is also office space on floors two, three and four. The fourth-floor office features a private deck on the roof.

"I think we'll have company in here very soon," Hinchliffe said. "It's a great building."



Hockey Veterans Play Hard at Bay State Games

By Ryan Holmes
iBerkshires Sports

Sunday, January 24, 2010

<http://www.iberkshires.com/story/33723/Hockey-Veterans-Play-Hard-at-Bay-State-Games.html>

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. — The members of the Olde Crabs looked neither old nor crabby prior to Sunday's Over 50 game in the Bay State Games' Masters Ice Hockey final.

Despite playing three games in a two-day period, the Olde Crabs looked surprisingly spry before their final game against Axiom/Bradway Financial. The Crabs looked more like excited kids than grown men going through the grind of playing four games in a span of just over 48 hours.

"There's not a lot of hitting," Crabs player Jack Foley said. "There's a little bumping and grinding, but that's about it. It's all about fun.

"The knees are probably what hurts the most after a weekend like this."

Foley is a four-year member of the Olde Crabs, a team from Danbury, Conn., which has won the Bay State Games twice in the past five years. The Masters Ice Hockey tournament is open to any team, regardless if its members are from Massachusetts or not. Foley and fellow team organizer E.C. Hoffman, a 15-year veteran of the team, said the location of the Bay State Games is a big draw to the Crabs participating in the event.

"It's a three-hour drive from Danbury, so the proximity is good," Hoffman explained.

After five years of participating in the Bay State Games, the Olde Crabs are seasoned veterans when it comes to making a good weekend out of the event. They usually stay at the Holiday Inn and always enjoy a team dinner on Saturday night. With 14 teams competing in the Masters Tournament, there is an easy way to explain why restaurants like the Freight Yard Pub and The Hub were so crowded on Saturday night.

But Foley insists the weekend is really about hockey, and the friendships you make on and off the ice.

"We're trying to stay in shape, and it's fun," Foley said. "You make a lot of good friends from it, and you stay in touch with them."

Hoffman said the Crabs play in about six or seven tournaments a year, traveling to such places like Ottawa, Ontario, Syracuse, N.Y., and Bethlehem, Pa. They also host their own tournament in Danbury, with all of the proceeds being donated to charity.

The Crabs weren't very charitable this weekend, however, outscoring their opponents 16-4 in their first three games before Sunday's final. Although there are different teams with different skill levels, Foley said most of the players just like competing against each other, regardless if the scores get out of hand or not.

"You're supposed to have fun," Foley said. "Sometimes the scores get out of hand, but overall its a gentlemen's game and everyone is here to have fun."

One team that was on the wrong side of the scoreboard was the Berkshire Nordiques. The local team founded by Mark Pasquariello of Windsor was competing in its first-ever tournament over the weekend. The Nordiques got off to a rough start, losing their first two games in the Over 40 Division by a combined score of 18-1. That didn't derail the Nordiques, however, who came back strong in a 3-2 loss to Reils Rentals on Sunday morning.

"Everyone who plays on our team plays in some fashion or another in [Berkshire] County," Pasquariello said. "These are all guys that we play with or play against during the season."

"I think the skill level in general of the first two teams we played was much higher than ours. I don't think it was so much that this is the first time we've been playing together. I don't think that was as much of an issue as we're just playing much better players. There were some guys that we played this weekend that you can tell play a lot. They're faster and more skilled."

Pasquariello echoed the same sentiment as Foley and Hoffman when he said the most important aspect of the weekend was having fun. He was, however, pleased to see his team improve its play in Sunday's final game, even if it did come in loss.

"We got killed the first two games, but the third game was competitive," Pasquariello said. "It was a good, hard-fought game until the end. We got caught on a line change and that allowed them to score their third goal. There was nobody on defense, myself included."

Pasquariello was also excited about the play of goaltender Paul Donovan, the oldest player on the Nordiques roster this season.

"Paul Donovan played exceptional for us in goal," Pasquariello said. "He could have played on any of these teams this weekend."

Donavon is a doctor of sports medicine at North Adams Regional Hospital, so there is a chance some of the players he was playing against over the weekend could be patients in his office sometime soon.

Don't count on Hoffman being one of those patients, however. Asked when he thought he would hang up his skates for good, Hoffman answered, "When they steal my bag and I can't find it before the game."

The Olde Crabs took the silver, losing 8-1 to Axiom/Financial in the final game Sunday morning.

iBerkshires.com

Images From the 2010 Bay State Games

Saturday, January 23, 2010

Photos: <http://iberkshires.com/story/33720/Images-From-the-2010-Bay-State-Games.html>

Bay State Games on Ice

The 25th annual Winter Games have brought nearly 1,000 amateur athletes from across the state to compete in North County. Master's hockey is chasing the puck at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Rink in North Adams while figure skaters are spinning across the ice at Lansing Chapman Rink in Williamstown.

North Adams Transcript

Locals take to the ice for Bay State Masters Hockey



The Berkshire Blizzard's Nick Whitman, center, of Williamstown, watches his team play AXIOM/Bradway Financial on Friday night at the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans Memorial Rink in North Adams. The rink hosted the Masters Hockey tournament over the weekend during the 25th Bay State Winter Games. (Gillian Jones/North Adams Transcript)

By Patrick Ronan
01/25/2010

http://www.thetranscript.com/ci_14262093?source=most_viewed

NORTH ADAMS -- Who said you can't head over the hill wearing a pair of skates?

Fourteen hockey teams took to the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans Memorial Rink this weekend to compete in the 25th Bay State Winter Games. The Masters Hockey competition featured two age divisions -- Over-40 and Over-50 -- and nearly half the teams had strong ties to Berkshire County and its surrounding areas.

Peter Haviland, 62, of Stamford, Vt., is the captain of the Berkshire Blizzard. He has competed in every Bay State Games since the Masters Division was added in 1989.

When asked if the Blizzard had ever medaled, Haviland took a stab at it:

"We won the bronze medal in -- I don't know, I can take a guess -- maybe 1998," he said. "That's not why we come out. We do it because it's fun. We're not going to seek counseling if we lose."

Tell that to the Shamrocks, a perennial favorite in the annual round-robin tournament. On Saturday night, the Shamrocks lost a 4-3 heartbreaker to the Greenfield Blades. The Shamrocks pulled their goalie out of net during the final minutes, needing a victory to stay in the hunt for Sunday's 40-plus Gold Medal Game.

With 2 seconds left in regulation, the Blades scored an empty-netter and handed the Shamrocks their second loss in as many days. The defending champions in the Over-40 division were off to an 0-2 start and their hopes for a repeat were dashed.

Shamrocks captain Mike Daly, who also happens to be the president and CEO of Berkshire Bank, was noticeably dejected as he left the rink Saturday night.

"I don't have much to say," Daly said. "It was great. We had a good time. Last year we won it, this year we didn't do so well. We'll be back next year."

Call it the Shamrocks standard.

"They are sort of the gold standard in the area," Haviland said last week. "If you want to face the best, you face the Shamrocks."

North Adams City Councilor Mike Bloom plays for the Shamrocks, as well. Because he turned 50 last April, he also suited up for the Over-50 Blizzard. That left Bloom with back-to-back games to play Saturday night.

If you're a high school or college athlete who complains about a double-header or double-session practices, don't go to Bloom for sympathy.

"I feel really good," said Bloom, who was engaging in lively conversation with family and friends following his double-header.

"This was my third game of the day, my fifth of the weekend, and I still have one more [Sunday] morning."

The Masters Hockey rules are a bit different than high school or college hockey. There is a "no checking" rule, and the periods last only 11 minutes. Also, much to the dismay of the players, slap shots are not allowed.

"It's a silly rule," Haviland said. "We have to take half of a slap shot, which means the stick can't go above our knees. There's nobody out there that hasn't been hit with a good slap shot, but they make the rules, and we stick by them."

Rough play isn't a concern in Masters Hockey; after all, these are grown men who have long since outgrown their days of juvenile aggression.

A player will argue with a referee sparingly, and very rarely do competitors trade light jabs after a whistle is blown.

Tim Nichols, of Pittsfield, was one of the officials over the weekend. He typically calls games at the youth and prep levels.

"It's a lot cleaner than the youth and high school games," Nichols said. "These guys are a lot more respectful. They understand the game and the mechanics. They're not out there to kill each other. They want to pass the puck around and score."

The Games mean something different for every player. Rick Nasman, 48, of Lenox, said he plays to see "if he still has it." His team, the Over-40 Oil Express, won the opening game of the tournament Friday by a lopsided score of 10-1 over the Berkshire Nordiques.

A nine-goal victory might inflate the ego of an up-and-coming player, but Nasman was just happy to be spending his weekend on the ice.

"Playing here at the Bay State Games, you do pick up your game a notch because it is competitive," he said, "but it's more about having fun and sharing the camaraderie with the guys."

That brings us back to the Shamrocks, a club that expects to win come late January in the Berkshires. Matt Rutledge, of Pittsfield, said one of the best parts about the Games was getting together with old friends.

The Bay State Winter Games, at least in Masters Hockey, is like a reunion with sticks and pads.

"The nice thing about this whole thing is that I'm skating with the same kids that I played against in high school," Rutledge said. "Some of these guys I played with in the youth leagues. I feel bad for the boys who can't skate anymore."

As for his Shamrocks falling short of the championship?

"You can skate away from a loss," Rutledge said. "But it doesn't feel good."



Winter Bay State games continue

By: Web Staff
01/23/2010

Video: <http://capitalnews9.com/capital-region-news-12-content/headlines/494056/winter-bay-state-games-continue>

WILLIAMSTOWN -- The Winter Bay State Games continue this weekend at Williams College in Williamstown. The games kicked off Friday and will continue through Sunday.

A number of events were featured Saturday, including figure skating, hockey, and skiing. Figure skating and hockey will continue through Sunday.

The Summer Games kick off this July.

North Adams Transcript

Local figure skaters rake in medals



Tegan O'Neill, of Stamford, Vt., delivers a gold-medal routine in the Junior Unrestricted Freestyle flight Saturday afternoon at Lansing Chapman Rink in Williamstown. O'Neill has won eight medals in seven appearances at the Bay State Winter Games. (Patrick Ronan/North Adams Transcript)

By Patrick Ronan
01/25/2010

http://www.thetranscript.com/sports/ci_14262028?source=email

WILLIAMSTOWN -- Speechless is not a word commonly linked to teenage girls.

But that's exactly what Drury senior Tiffany Gundler was on Saturday afternoon when she caught glimpse of the judges' scores.

The 17-year-old figure skater was awarded the silver medal in the Pre-Juvenile Unrestricted Freestyle flight during the 25th Bay State Winter Games. The three-day skating competition took place at the Lansing Chapman Rink on the campus of Williams College.

"Her jaw dropped," said Jenna Dickinson, Gundler's coach.

Gundler, who believes she's the only competitive skater at Drury High School, said it was a surreal moment to see her name next to the words "silver medal."

"I looked up on the board and I was speechless," she said. "Then I started hugging everybody."

Gundler was one of six skaters from the Adams-based Christmas Brook Skating Club to earn medals over the weekend.

Tegan O'Neill, of Stamford, Vt., won the gold in the Junior Unrestricted Freestyle on Saturday. The 17-year-old senior at Miss Hall's School in Pittsfield said the 25th edition of the Games may have been her last.

"It's the perfect way to finish," said O'Neill, who was also awarded the Bay State Games Future Leaders Scholarship, worth \$2,000 toward her college education.

O'Neill, who had the day's biggest cheering section, full of family and friends, won her second gold Advertisement
Quantcast
in as many years. She has won eight medals in seven appearances at the Games.

She made the jump from Novice to Junior this winter, which added 45 seconds to her routine.

"Three minutes and 45 seconds doesn't seem like that long, but [in figure skating] it's like doing a sprint for 3 minutes and 45 seconds," she said.

"It's a challenge."

A skater who was certainly ready for a challenge this weekend was Clarksburg's Lauren Lampiasi. The 15-year-old took home the silver medal in the Novice Unrestricted Freestyle on Saturday, just one day after winning the bronze in the Novice Unrestricted Short flight.

Lampiasi was representing the Skating Club of Boston, but she spends a lot of time training with Christmas Brook and the Pittsfield Figure Skating Club.

She looked like a natural on the ice, but her skating wasn't the only thing drawing accolades. As Lampiasi was leaving the rink for the day, a female spectator got the skater's attention and did her best Joan Rivers impression.

"Love the dress," the woman said. "Now that's Hollywood."

Gundler felt anxious in the moments leading up to her routine, specifically about the double salchow toward the end of the 3-minute skate.

The double salchow is an advanced jump that requires the skater to take off from the back-inside edge of one foot, then make two rotations in the air. The landing takes place on the back-outside edge of her other foot.

"It went really well, a lot better than I expected," Gundler said.

Gundler plans to attend Rochester Institute of Technology next fall, and will study engineering.

Sunday was a big day for Christmas Brook skaters, as well. Vincienzci Alicandri, 9, of North Adams and Mackenzie Rougeau, 12, of Adams, each won a bronze.

Ayla Senecal, 10, of Hoosick Falls, N.Y., won a medal in each of the two skating associations -- the Ice Skating Institute (ISI) and United States Figure Skating (USFS). She won a bronze on Friday, then captured a gold on Sunday.

On Friday, Tegan O'Neill's younger sister, Zia Mae O'Neill, locked up a bronze medal.

Schools: Career night for Palazini

**By Staff reports
MetroWest Daily News
Jan 26, 2010**

BAY STATE WINTER GAMES

Several athletes in the Daily News coverage area had top-ranked finishes at the 25th Annual Bay State Winter Games, held from Jan. 22-24 in the Northern Berkshires.

In USFSA figure skating, Rebecca Jacobs of Natick won the gold, and Elisabeth Christ of Hopkinton won the silver in the female juvenile free skate.

In ISI figure skating, Meghan O'Brien of Millis won the gold in the female artistic solo 1 (ages 9-10) skating event and in the female freestyle 1 (ages 8-9), and Severine McElrath won the gold in the female artistic solo 4 (age 13) skating event. McElrath also won the bronze in the female freestyle 4 (ages 13-15).

Also taking home gold medals in ISI figure skating was Emily Wickles of Natick (female artistic solo 4 - age 11).

Ruth Lee of Marlborough took home the gold in the female freestyle 6 (ages 15-17) figure skating event.

Elizabeth Pier of Sudbury won the gold in the freestyle 3 (age 10) skating event, and Elise Borken of Medfield won the gold in the female freestyle 4 skating event (ages 13-15).

Sara Cuozzo of Natick also took home a gold in the female freestyle 5 (age 12) skating event.



Local skaters strike gold

01/26/2010 06:36:10 AM EST

Six local residents collected gold medals this past weekend at the 25th annual Bay State Winter Games.

Bay State Games

Jennifer Beattie of Westford led the way with two gold medals.

SKATING

Lowell

Dana Forehand: 1st in Female Adult-Silver.

Carlisle

Karolyne Shieh: 1st in Female Novice-Unrestricted/Well Balanced; 5th in Female Novice-Free Skate.
Chloe Vilain: 7th in Female Pre-Juvenile-Restricted/Test Track.

Boxboro

Kathryn Terranova: 9th in Female Juvenile -- Free Skate. Emily Witt: tied for 10th in Female Pre-Preliminary-Restricted/Test Track Group 1. Benjamin Becker: 1st in Male Juvenile-Restricted/Test Track. Lauren Vicik: 4th in Female Novice-Free Skate. Isabelle Terranova: 4th in Female Pre-Preliminary-Free Skating Group 2.

Westford

Cristina Pickersgill: 3rd in Female Pre-Preliminary-Restricted/Text Track Group 2. Alexis MacDonald: 8th in Female Intermediate-Free Skate. Jennifer Beattie: 1st in Female Freestyle 7 Age 14-16; 1st in Female Preliminary-Free Skate Group 2.

Acton

Kristen Phillips: 1st in Female Pre-Preliminary-Restricted/Test Track Group 3.

Concord

Jessica Wakelin: 8th in Female Pre-Juvenile-Free Skate. Virginia Ryan: 2nd in Female Pre-Preliminary-Free Skating Group 1. Vanessa Ryan: 5th in Female Preliminary-Free Skate Group 1. Jack Wakelin: 1st in Male Preliminary-Free Skate.

Billerica

Kelley Perrotti: 2nd in Female Intermediate-Restricted/Test Track.

Kellie Smith: 8th in Female Pre-Preliminary-Free Skating Group 3.

Burlington

Emily Theurer: 1st in Female Senior-Free Skate.

ALPINE SKIING

Billerica

Lindsey Wilson: 3rd in Female High School Grades 11-12.

Globe South Sports Dancing or skating, girl just wants to have fun



Nicole Perry, 14, of Raynham. (Michael Tureski/Sportspix)

By Justin A. Rice
Globe Correspondent / January 28, 2010

Nicole Perry will not choose between her two passions, figure skating and dancing.

"Everybody asks me that question," said Perry, a freshman at Bridgewater-Raynham Regional who captured a gold medal at the Bay State Winter Games this past weekend in Williamstown.

"I'd probably quit both. Everybody asks me that when I say I dance. I couldn't choose. I honestly couldn't."

And both of her coaches, John Mucko and Roland Bessette, believe Perry's background in competitive dance is what makes the young skater so graceful on ice.

"Nicole is known for her artistry," said Mucko, who has worked with Perry at the Pilgrim Skating Club in Pembroke for nine years. "She's just a true performer. Technically, she's just clean, and she's a strong skater."

"Having that dance behind her really enhances her performance level as well as her artistry. She's just in a class all of her own."

From a logistical standpoint, however, there are only so many hours in the day. Perry also skates out of the Bourne Skating Club and with the Elite Skating Club in Raynham and dances with Studio C Dance Academy in Taunton.

The honor-roll student says she spends about 11 hours a week on each endeavor.

“For me that’s what makes her so grounded,” Mucko said. “She has two things she loves in life and devotes equal time to each of them. Would I like to see her on the ice seven days a week? That would be great, but she has other things that keep her grounded, and that’s what makes her what she is.”

Besette, who also chairs the US Figure Skating Program Development committee, couldn’t agree more.

“Everybody likes to win, but our goal is to constantly keep skating challenging and fun,” Besette said. “With her balance between dance and skating, she’s able to enjoy what she does in skating. You always get more when someone enjoys what they’re doing rather than when it becomes a job. Everybody’s goals are different. Everybody trains differently as well. For right now this is what makes her happy.”

Besette said competing in all forms of dance, including hip-hop, jazz, and ballet, helps her more than if she just focused on one technique such as ballet. He said Perry’s range allows her to interpret and move more freely to music than most skaters.

How far can Perry go?

“That’s something only Nicole can answer for herself,” said Besette. “If her goals are to be good at what she’s doing and be competitive, and she’s reaching it, then fine. If she decides at some point when she gets into a higher level that [skating more] might make a difference, that’s okay.

“She obviously has lot of talent, and a lot of it will depend on what she wants. If we start putting on too many demands, especially at that age, she’ll quit and we’ll lose her forever. At some point if she decides ‘I want to do more with skating,’ she’ll be able to make that decision.”

The 14-year-old might have to make that decision soon. At the Bay State Games, Perry won gold in the artistic solo and finished fourth in the intermediate free skate.

Over the summer she captured two gold medals and a bronze at the 2009 State Games of American held in Colorado Springs.

Perry, who also performs theater on ice, was invited to perform in the Bay State Skate Figure Skating Show for the third straight year last weekend.

“It went great,” she said of the show. “There were lots of people watching. It’s always fun. This year was the 25th anniversary, so it was a bigger show with lots of awards.

“I love doing the show. I definitely want to keep doing it.”

Perry, who recently attended a national competition with her dance troop in Sturbridge, Conn., said sometimes scheduling conflicts do arise between dance and skating.

“We try to work it out,” she said. “I do my best to do both. They try to make me choose, but I’m not going to.”

And as far as her skating career is concerned, Perry just wants to take it as far as she can go - without giving up dance, that is.

“I don’t want to say Olympics because everybody says that,” she said. “But I’ll work as hard as I can to get as far as I can but have fun doing it. Because if you’re not having fun, why do it?”



Gold in those hills

January 28, 2010

http://www.boston.com/yourtown/scituate/articles/2010/01/28/bay_state_games_south_area_gold_medal_skaters/

Area figure skaters who captured gold medals this past weekend at the 25th annual Bay State Winter Games held in the Berkshires.

Chloe Byrne, 9, Bridgewater (Artistic Solo 3)

Paris Baker, 10, Abington (Artistic Solo 5)

Kathleen Gordon, 8, East Bridgewater (Artistic Solo 4)

Anna Comperchio, 12, West Bridgewater (Artistic Solo 4)

Madelyn Driscoll, 11, Milton (Artistic Solo 5)

Emily Argiro, 13, Norwell (Artistic Solo 5)

Nicole Brow, 13, Braintree (Artistic Solo 6)

Brianna Byrne, 17, Bridgewater (Artistic Solo 7)

Helen Edwards, 18, Braintree (Artistic Solo 7)

Nicole Perry, 14, Raynham (Artistic Solo 8)

Katie Graham, Sharon (Adult-Masters Intermediate)

Kelsey Girard, age 12-13, Rockland (Freestyle 1)

Jada Howard, age 8-9, Brockton (Freestyle 3)

Meghan Sullivan, 11, Hanover (Freestyle 3)

Alexis Nixon, age 12-13, Hanover (Freestyle 3)

Mackenzie Russell, 12, Norton (Freestyle 4)

Jillian Neault, 11, Avon (Freestyle 4)

Lindsey Marshalka, 11, Scituate (Freestyle 5)

Alexandra Leppo, 16, South Easton (Freestyle 5)

Middleton skaters win Bay State Winter Games medals



Courtesy Photo
Middleton residents Alexandra Iovanna and Geneva Griffin

By Anonymous
GateHouse News Service
Jan 28, 2010

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/middleton/sports/x1090826974/Middleton-skaters-win-Bay-State-Winter-Games-medals>

Middleton — Middleton residents Alexandra Iovanna and Geneva Griffin recently participated in the 25th anniversary figure skating competition for the 2010 Bay State Winter Games held in Williamstown.

The Bay State Games are sponsored by the Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation. Iovanna skates with the Colonial Figure Skating Club of Boxboro and earned a gold medal in the Pre-Juvenile division.

Griffin skates with the North Shore Skating Club in Reading and earned a silver medal in the Pre-Preliminary division. The girls are both 10-year-old students at the Howe Manning School in Middleton and began their figure skating careers when they were 3 years old.

Both figure skaters have been invited to compete in the national figure skating competition at State Games of America to be held in San Diego in 2011.

iberkshires.com

Photo Gallery: http://www.iberkshires.com/media_viewer/new/index_large.php?ss_id=1594&p=0

Swampscott skater wins gold at Bay State Games



Courtesy photo
Joshua Barish at the 2010 Bay State Games

**By Anonymous
Swampscott Reporter
Jan 28, 2010**

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/swampscott/highlight/x1920344987/Swampscott-skater-wins-gold-at-Bay-State-Games>

Swampscott — Swampscott figure skater Joshua Barish, 10, son of Paul and Lori Barish, competed Jan. 24 at the Bay State Games, popularly known as the “Massachusetts Winter Olympics,” in Williamstown.

Barish won two first-place medals, one for his United States Figure Skating Association program and one for his Ice Skating Institute program, qualifying him to represent Massachusetts at the 2011 State Games of America in San Diego.

Under the tutelage of his coach, Christine Hopkins of Swampscott, Barish worked hard to earn these honors, his proud parents said.

Hanover sisters take unconventional path to Bay State Games gold

By Drew Bonifant
The Patriot Ledger
Jan 29, 2010

<http://www.patriotledger.com/sports/x1685423260/Hanover-sisters-take-unconventional-path-to-Bay-State-Games-gold>

QUINCY — Conventional wisdom would tell you that winning a gold medal requires months of competitive practice and a clean bill of health.

Rachel and Stephanie Spitz of Hanover have shown that the complete opposite can work, too.

The sisters skated to gold medals at the Bay State Games, held Jan. 22-24 at Williams College. Rachel won in the 15-17 Female Freestyle 8, while Stephanie won the 13-14 Female Freestyle 6.

“It was really good (to win),” said Rachel, who, along with Stephanie, competes for the South Shore Skating Club. “There’s a show they do after, and the freestyle winners get to be in it. I was there two years ago and this year. That was really fun.”

The South Shore also had gold medal winners in Paris Baker (Abington, 10 years old, Female Artistic Solo 5), Madelyn Driscoll (Milton, 11, Female Artistic Solo 5), Emily Argiro (Norwell, 13, Female Artistic Solo 5), Nicole Brow (Braintree, 13, Female Artistic Solo 6) and Helen Edwards (Braintree, 18 old, Female Artistic Solo 7).

Lily Barrett of Norwell also won a silver medal in the 13-14 Freestyle 6, and Scituate’s Marisa Marshalka took a bronze in the 15-17 Freestyle 8.

The Spitz sister’s gold medals were accompanied by some extra drama.

Rachel’s second Bay State gold (she won the Freestyle 7 in 2008) came after a break from competition.

“I was probably less nervous (in 2008). I was a little more confident in my program,” she said. “I had been doing a lot of competitions two years ago, so there weren’t many nerves.

“But I hadn’t competed in over a year.”

Stephanie’s experience was different, though just as surprising. She sprained an ankle at a basketball practice a day earlier, putting her ability to compete in the Games in question.

But after testing the sore ankle the day of the competition, she realized her hopes at a first gold medal at the Games were still intact.

“I was really surprised (to win). I didn’t even know if I was going to skate,” she said.

“But I thought I would warm up and see how it felt, and at the last minute, I decided I could skate.”

Two big questions entering the competition, two answers, two golds. Not a bad way to respond, and set up the competitive figure skating future.

“It definitely adds confidence for whenever I’m going to skate again,” Rachel said.

Stephanie said she'll be back in the Games, and that the two will have plenty of work to do to defend their medals.

"We just need to work really hard, and keep trying," she said. "This is one of my favorite competitions."

WICKED LOCAL MARSHFIELD

Olivia Gaeta was born to run



Courtesy Photo

Olivia Gaeta is one of the top cross country runners for her age in the nation.

**By Ryan Wood
GateHouse News Service
Jan 27, 2010**

If Olivia Gaeta could run in her sleep, she probably would. The 13-year-old Furnace Brook Middle School seventh grader hasn't stopped running since she turned 3 years old.

Ten years after her first race, which took place on the Marshfield High School track as part of the Marshfield Road Runners Summer Track Series, Gaeta has evolved into one of the nation's leading runners for her age. In late November, Gaeta ran in the USA Track and Field Junior Olympic Cross Country Championships in Las Vegas where she clocked a time of 12 minutes, 20 seconds on the 1.86-mile course.

Out of the 228 runners, the best runners in the nation, Gaeta placed 67th at the national meet, and she received a medal for her performance.

"I was really nervous in Reno," Gaeta said. "I was nervous before (the race). And then on the line, I always get nervous, but once the gun goes off, I don't get nervous, and I just run. For me, I'm always scared that I'll get a bad start."

A member of the South Shore Fireboltz, a youth running club for 8- to 15-year-olds, Gaeta runs cross country, indoor track (where she also competes in the long jump), and outdoor track. Her specialties on the track are in both the 400 and 800 meter races.

"She's amazing. She started with us four years ago as a cross country runner and then got into track and field," South Shore Fireboltz Coach Heike Tuplin said. "Track is where she's strong. I think she's a phenomenal 400 and 800 meter runner. Her times are very competitive."

Very competitive, indeed.

At the Junior Olympic qualifier meet in New Hampshire last fall, the top 25 runners advanced to the regional meet. Gaeta was sick, but mustered up enough energy to place 23rd to move on to regionals. There, she finished eighth out of 108 runners, and in so doing advanced to the national meet in Reno.

"I didn't expect to do that well," she said.

At the national race in Reno, Gaeta said she ran really well despite the snowy conditions. She used her long stride to gain an advantage over the other runners.

"I'm really tall. That's how I do well," she said. "It was so icy, and after 400 to 500 meters, there was a narrow path. If you don't get in front, you're going to have a bad race."

It was Gaeta's first trip to the Junior Olympic national meet. Two years ago, she raced in a national AAU meet in Virginia Beach, where she placed 29th out of a pack of more than 100 runners.

"Junior Olympics is way more competitive," Gaeta said. "You have to train a lot. I train five to six days a week. In the winter, I'm at the gym. I do a lot of core training and weight classes. I really go for the legs and abs. For the long jump, you need really strong legs."

For indoor track, Gaeta and the South Shore Fireboltz run at the Reggie Lewis Center in Boston and at Harvard University. Having Invernizzi Construction as a sponsor allows the kids to participate on the team at no cost. The running club features runners from Marshfield, Pembroke, Plymouth, Cohasset, Scituate, Hingham, and Weymouth. The spring/summer track program begins in April and runs through the first week in August.

The cross country program begins the third week in August and ends with the Hingham Thanksgiving Turkey Trot. Runners compete in both the AAU and USATF Junior Olympic program both in track and cross country. Approximately 45 to 60 athletes religiously train for the track program and 25 in the cross country program.

This year, two members of South Shore Fireboltz qualified for this year's USATF National Junior Olympic Cross Country Championships in Reno. Gaeta qualified for nationals by placing eighth in the USATF Regional Junior Olympic Cross Country Championships, held in Augusta, Maine. This was her second trip to nationals. Her first nationals were at the AAU National Junior Olympic Cross Country Championships, held last year in Virginia Beach. Audrey Betts from Weymouth also qualified for nationals by placing fifth in the regional meet.

The South Shore Fireboltz train at Hingham High School during track season and at Wompatuck State Park during cross country season. The team trains Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday nights and competes in various local, regional, and national competitions.

“She has a lot of potential,” Tuplin said. “She’s one of seven diehards that come faithfully in rain, snow, sleet, no matter what. She comes to me as an athlete and asks how she can get better. She’s the type of athlete who really works to get better.”

Gaeta competed last summer at the Bay State Games, running the 400, 800, and long jump. As a 12-year-old at the Games, she won a bronze medal in the 11- to 14-year-old age bracket.

“It was really fun,” Gaeta said about taking home the bronze. “It felt good.”

Two weeks ago, Gaeta competed at the Reggie Lewis Center, and in the 13- to 14-year-old age bracket, she came in first place in the long jump with a personal best leap of 15 feet, 6 3/4 inches, and she won the 400 and 800, both in record times of 1:05.99 (400) and 2:43 (800). At the Mayor’s Cup this past fall at Franklin Park, Gaeta placed fourth overall in the girls group.

During winter track season, Gaeta works out at a club in Marshfield, doing some weight training. Also to stay in shape, Gaeta plays soccer at the South Shore Field House in Pembroke. She also runs on the treadmill, all in an effort to prepare herself for the outdoor track season, which begins at the end of March.

“The really competitive runners come early to get more training in,” she said.

The team practices three times a week to prepare for AAU meets, Junior Olympic events, the Bay State Games, and meets that are hosted by her running club.

“Usually in the winter, I’m a little out of shape because I don’t run (as much),” Gaeta said. “But I’m in really good shape for cross country. We run so many 5Ks.”

Next weekend, Gaeta and three of her South Shore Fireboltz teammates will run at an indoor track meet in Boston, one that will be attended by Olympic athletes.

“I’m really excited because I want to see the really good runners watch me,” she said. “I’ll probably be a little nervous.”

Gaeta, who looks up to 2008 Olympic bronze medalist distance runner and Marblehead native Shalane Flanagan, has a number of goals in mind, and she’s doing everything in her power to reach them.

“I really want to run for my high school,” she said, noting how she often goes to high school meets to pick up tips from older runners. “I go to some of the meets at the high school. I like to watch Chelsea Savage (of Pembroke). I like to watch the 400-meter relay. I use tips that help me in the future. I like to watch the olds kids run, and I like to watch it on TV. And I want to go to college for track and field and cross country.”

At this pace, there’s nothing that’s going to stop Gaeta from reaching her goals.



Massachusetts Players Coming to the Cape

Posted by Dave

With the temperature outside sitting in the mid-teens and a steady windchill around zero for much of the day, it is hard to believe that the college baseball season gets underway in less than three weeks. Well, at least in some parts of the country it will. For those of us in the northeast and other outposts where global warming seems like just a rumor, it will be another two months before we see a game on a local field.

Let's fire up the hot stove and take a look at some of the Massachusetts players who will be playing in the Cape League this summer. With four teams not yet posting their rosters, there may be even more locals than we are presently aware of who will be displaying their talents on the Cape. Keeping in mind that we are waiting for Falmouth, Harwich, Chatham and Orleans to post their rosters, having six players signed to permanent contracts before the season starts seems like a pretty high number. That number may go up when we hear from those four teams and there will likely be other locals who sign as temps and end up earning permanent contracts.

Here is a mini-profile on the Bay Staters:

Mike Dowd (Brewster / Franklin Pierce). 5'9"; 205 lbs. Bats: R. Throws: R. Sophomore catcher from East Bridgewater. Four-time All-Catholic Central League selection at Cardinal Spellman HS. While starting 53 games for the Ravens as a freshman, Dowd hit .380 to go along with 7 HR and 43 RBI, earning ECAC Division II Rookie of the Year honors. Other honors included ECAC Division II All-Star First Team, Northeast-10 Conference Co-Freshman of the Year, All-Northeast-10 Conference First Team Selection and Daktronics All-America Honorable Mention. His .450 mark lead the Northeast-10 in on-base percentage. Finished tied for second in the conference in hits (78), tied for third in hit-by-pitch (14), fourth in batting average and total bases (116), tied for fourth in doubles (15) tied for fifth in runs scored (47), and placed seventh in slugging percentage (.566). Dowd will face a challenge for playing time behind the plate with the Whitecaps who also have Robert Brantly (UC-Riverside), Jeremy Schaffer (Tulane) and Tyler Ogle (Oklahoma) on their roster.

Michael Yastrzemski (Cotuit / Vanderbilt). 5'10"; 168 lbs. Bats: L. Throws: L. Freshman outfielder hailing from Andover. Played high school ball at St. John's Prep. Any baseball fan of a certain age knows this legendary name. Grandson of Captain Carl, Hall of Famer, and major league baseball's last Triple Crown winner in the Impossible Dream season of 1967. Son of the late Mike Yastrzemski who also played in the Cape League. Michael was drafted by the Boston Red Sox in the 36th round of last year's MLB Draft but opted to attend Vanderbilt. Would have been drafted much earlier if not for an ironclad commitment to the Commodores. Some projections showed Yastrzemski as a fifth round talent. Also played for the powerful Andover American Legion team. Batted .368 with a .505 OBP and was 9 for 10 in stolen base attempts for the St. John's Prep team that lost in the Div. 1 North finals last year. He finished his high school career with a .374 average.

Jack Leathersich (Orleans / UMass-Lowell). 6'; 185 lbs. Sophomore LHP from Beverly. While at Beverly HS, set school records for strikeouts and career wins. Bay State Games gold medalist. As a freshman at UMass-Lowell, Leathersich started 10 of the 13 games he appeared in. Compiled a 7-4 record with a 2.18 ERA and pitched 3 complete games. Held opposing batters to a .226 avg. Named the NE-10 Freshman Pitcher of the Year. Also honored as NE-10 All-Star First Team and the All-Rookie Team. Leathersich was named the top prospect in the Valley Baseball League by PG Cross Checker last summer.

Keith Bilodeau (Wareham / Maine). 6'4"; 175 lbs. RHP from Sagamore who is returning to the Gatemen for a second summer. Perfect Game Baseball ranked him as one of the top-100 prospects in the country

coming out of Bourne HS. As a freshman for the Black Bears, Bilodeau went 1-7 with a 4.28 ERA while the opposition hit .298 off him. In 18.2 innings over 12 relief appearances for the Gatemen, was 0-1 with a 1.93 ERA.

Steve Perakslis (Wareham / Maine). 6'1"; 185 lbs. Freshman RHP from Abington. Played for his father, Steve Sr., as Abington HS won the 2009 Division 3 state championship. Perakslis played shortstop when he wasn't pitching. As a senior, he went 10-0 with a 0.26 ERA while striking out 95 in 62 innings. Was a major contributor offensively for the Green Wave with a .522 avg. and 5 homeruns. South Shore League All Star. Boston Globe and Patriot Ledger All-Scholastic. Very aggressive pitcher with a fastball in the low 90's, curveball and slider.

Joe Flynn (Wareham / Franklin Pierce). 6'1"; 210 lbs. RHP from Plymouth who was a four-year starter at Plymouth North HS. Boston Globe Player of the Year as a junior and senior. As a junior in 2008, helped lead his team to the Division 2 state championship. Compiled a 10-2 record with a 0.68 ERA and 141 strikeouts last year. Playing shortstop when not on the mound, Flynn batted .385 with 6 homeruns and 28 RBI to help bring the Blue Eagles back to the state championship game. Pitched brilliantly in the state final, allowing only one earned run and two hits while striking out 13 as Auburn beat Plymouth North, 2-1. Career record of 33-4 in high school. Has been a close friend with soon-to-be Gatemen teammate Steve Perakslis for many years.

In addition to those six players, Spencer's Kevin Mortimer (Trinity College) has been offered a temp contract to play for Falmouth this year. Mortimer was the bullpen catcher for the Commodores in 2009 who was activated for the last three games of the season. Mortimer made the most of his limited opportunity, going 1 for 3 while throwing out a potential base stealer. Mortimer batted .372 while playing in 21 games as a freshman at Trinity last year.

If anyone knows of more Massachusetts players who will be playing on the Cape this year, please let us know.



First slalom goes to Mounties

Berkshire Eagle Staff
02/02/2010

PITTSFIELD -- Depth was dominant in the first slalom Alpine ski race of the high school season.

The Mount Greylock boys won their fourth straight race despite a slip from Connor Krell, their top racer in the first half of the season, while Monument's girls overcame a 1-2 finish from Lenox to win their third.

Nicole Sonzogni won for the fourth consecutive race, finishing in 41.20 seconds, while teammate Erin Barry finished second for the third time this season in 42.90.

The Spartans won out with their depth, placing all six of their skiers in the top 15. Natalie Akers was fourth in 47.81 seconds, while Courtney Freadman (sixth) and Alexa Pfeiffer (eighth) joined her in the top 10.

Kelsey Marzotto finished out Monument's scoring by taking 11th place.

Pittsfield's Samantha Gooch took third, while Taconic's Alyssa Latimer was fifth, rounding out the top five.

Sonzogni and Barry helped Lenox to a second-place finish, the Millionaires' best of the year so far, but the school still finished behind Monument 205.05 to 209.97.

In the boys race, Pittsfield's David Graziani continued to come on strong, taking first place for the second straight week and becoming the season's first two-time winner. Graziani, slowed by an injury earlier in the season, has now won two straight races, with a Bay State Games gold medal sandwiched in between.

Graziani finished in 39 seconds, .42 faster than Greylock's Kent Hanson. Hanson, though, led Greylock to the team win in 182.70 seconds. The Mounties had Nick Krant (seventh) and Collin Delano (eighth) in the top 10, with Eli Burnham rounding out the team total in 14th. Greylock needed each of their efforts to continue its perfect season, because the Mounties had two skiers that didn't finish.

Taconic finished in second place in 185.88 seconds despite the absence of Tony Cruz, the Braves' top skier in the first half of the season, who is injured.

Eamon Connor led Taconic by taking fifth in 42.44 seconds. Five teams were represented in the top five, with Pittsfield's Connor Graham in third and Lenox's Jimmy Zuber in fourth.

WICKED LOCAL MEDFIELD

Medfield Roundup

**By the Sports Staff
Feb 04, 2010**

Blake Middle School seventh grader Elise Borkan won a gold medal for her individual figure skating performance (Freestyle 4) at the 2010 Bay State Winter Games held at Williams College in Williamstown last weekend. The win qualified Borkan for the State Games of America in San Diego in August 2011.

In addition to winning the Freestyle 4 competition, she also added a silver medal for her Artistic program.

Borkan is a member of the Franklin Blades Skating School.

WICKED LOCAL DOVER

Dover-Sherborn Sports Notes (Feb. 4)

**By Anonymous
Feb 03, 2010**

McElrath earns Gold at Bay State Winter Games

Severine McElrath of Sherborn brought home the gold medal in figure skating, female artistic solo, age 13, at the Bay State Winter Games on Jan. 22.



Graziani and Sonzogni win

Berkshire Eagle Staff
Thursday, Feb. 04

PITTSFIELD -- Pittsfield's David Graziani and Lenox's Nicole Sonzogni continued their dominating performances, as both earned individual wins in Wednesday's slalom at Bousquet Ski Area.

But neither skier's team won, as Mount Greylock used its depth to take first in the boys standings with a score of 176.13, and Monument Mountain won the girls at 196.87.

Greylock placed five of its six skiers in the top 11 of the boys race. Connor Krell led the Mounties, finishing third in 41.29 seconds. Zach Hanson finished seventh at 43.86. Finishing ninth through 11th were Hayden Kuhn, Eli Burnham and Nick Krant, who finished in 45.05, 45.93 and 46.83 seconds, respectively.

Graziani won his third consecutive race, not including his gold medal at the Bay State Games.

Sonzogni's continued dominance marks her fifth consecutive first-place finish. But, only she and teammate Erin Barry -- the second-place finisher, more than a second behind Sonzogni at 42.39 -- managed to crack the top 20 for the Millionaires.

The Spartans, though, had five skiers in the top 15, with Natalie Akers leading the way in fourth place. Alexa Pfeifer finished in 48.31, good for seventh, and Courtney Freadman came in at 48.65, in ninth.

Samantha Gooch was Pittsfield's top skier on the girls team, taking third -- more than 3 seconds behind Barry at 45.89. Greylock had a strong contribution from Kristina Chesney, who finished fifth at 46.83 seconds, and St. Joseph's top finisher was Emma Peplowski (14th, 53.83).

For the boys, Monument Mountain's Andy Ringler gave Graziani a run for his money, finishing just 0.3 seconds behind the Generals' top skier at 39.33. Lenox's Jimmy Zuber came in just ahead of Monument's Tyler Summers for fourth place in just 42.38 seconds. Eamon Connor led Taconic in sixth place, and Joe Martin was St. Joseph's top skier in eighth place.

Reader Forum for Barre Gazette readers

Lloyd golden at Bay State Games **North Brookfield resident wins second gold medal**

By Tim Peterson
Turley Publications Sports Correspondent

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Figure skating will be one of the sports in the spotlight during the next couple of weeks at the XXI Winter Olympics games being held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Frank Lloyd isn't one of the members of the American Olympic figure skating team this year, but the North Brookfield resident did win a gold medal at the 2010 Bay State Winter Games, which was held at Williams College in Williamstown last month.

"Every time that I skate at a competition, I'm always trying to improve my routine," said Lloyd, who also took home gold medal at the 2008 Bay State Winter Games. "When I first became a figure skater, I used to hurt every day, but now I'm in much better shape."

At the Bay State Games, Lloyd competed at the bronze level, which is the entry level in adult figure skating. The other three levels are called silver, gold and master.

"Every skater has to pass a test before they're able to move up to the next level," Lloyd said. "The higher you go, the more involved it becomes. The judges expect you to do more skills during your performances. I just want to be a solid bronze level skater before I move up to the next level."

Lloyd practices three days a week at the Horgan Rink in Auburn and at the New England Sports Center in Marlborough. He's probably not going to be competing at the Winter Olympics because he's 47, but he still can dream about it just like the rest of us.

"I'm not setting any limits for myself in what I'm able to do," said Lloyd, who also lived in Sturbridge for more than 10 years before moving to North Brookfield. "I'm just trying to do the best that I can every time that I'm out there skating."

He also hopes more people will get involved in adult figure skating in the future.

"Anybody can do it, but it does take a special kind of person to follow through with it," Lloyd said. "It's just a good way to stay in shape."

Lloyd, who put on his first pair of ice skates when he was 3, grew up in Southbridge. He graduated from Southbridge High School in 1980. He played several different sports while he was growing up, but ice hockey was always one of his favorites.

Before Proposition 2 1/2, Southbridge and several other local high schools, including Shepherd Hill, Bay Path and Tantasqua, also had varsity ice hockey teams. Lloyd was a forward on two District hockey teams at Southbridge High School. When he was a sophomore, the Pioneers finished the season at 11-3.

After graduating from high school, he continued playing hockey in several different adult leagues until he was 34.

"When I walked away from playing hockey, I knew that I wasn't going to play the sport ever again," Lloyd said. "It was time for me to move on and do some other things in my life."

Lloyd is also an independent business owner and a certified fitness trainer.

He first became interested in figure skating a couple of years ago while doing rehab on his left knee following an ACL surgery.

"I have a couple of friends who are figure skaters and they just encouraged me to try the sport," Lloyd said. "It just fit into my lifestyle and it's a good way for me to keep involved in a competitive sport."

After competing in the 2008 Bay State winter game, Lloyd qualified for the Adult Nationals, which was a four-day event held in Lake Placid, N.Y. He finished in eighth place in that event.

"Just being able to skate at an Olympic ice rink was a major accomplishment for me," Lloyd said. "I'm planning on going back there again in the future."

The next skating event that Lloyd will be competing at is the second annual Colonial Adult Winter Challenger, which will be held in the middle of March at the Nashoba Valley Olympia in Boxborough.

iBerkshires.com

Williams Recognized as 2010 Bay State Games Hero



Tuesday, January 26, 2010

WILLIAMSTOWN, Mass. — Williams College received the 2010 Berkshire Hero's Award from the Bay State Games on Saturday, Jan. 23, at the Lansing Chapman Rink at Williams College.

The award was presented for recognition of 25 years of support by Williams College. The college has hosted the games since their inception.

A college employee, Robert Bleau, security officer, Campus Safety and Security was chosen to accept the award on behalf of the college. Bleau was chosen to receive the award on behalf of the college since he was celebrating 30 years at the college this week.

Hicks named 'Athlete of the Year'



Bay State Games Executive Director, Kevin Cummings, presents Hicks with the award at the 2009 Massachusetts Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Convention in Worcester.

The National Congress of State Games & Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation selected Amy Hicks of Needham as their 2009 Bay State Games Athlete of the Year. The award was based upon her 20 years of participation in the State games, number of medals won, sportsmanship, attitude and effort, overall participation and achievement in synchronized swimming, track and field and her positive manner in which she represents the spirit of amateur athletics in the state games movement.
