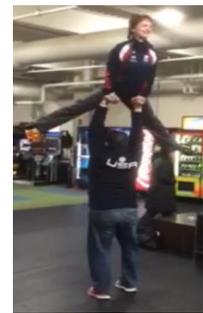


Try Pairs, Nearly 45 skaters got a chance

Knowing that skaters often see pairs on TV and think, “huh... I wonder if that is my calling,” the Pairs Committee decided to give them the opportunity to try. During the Midwestern and Eastern Sectional Championships, nearly 45 skaters came together for an hour off the ice and then an hour on ice in order to see what it is like to be a pair skater. “Often times, skaters only see the huge throws and dynamic lifts on TV and think I can’t possibly do that. They never see how it begins and how much fun it can be,” commented Pairs Committee Chair, Troy Goldstein. The off-ice portion included being lifted by some of our top Pair skaters from the past decade, including John Coughlin and Rockne Brubaker in the Midwest, as well as Mark Ladwig, Jeremy Barrett and David Botero in the East, and even lifting with Shantel Jorden. “Just being in the air was exciting for me. It’s something I had never experienced,” commented a Midwest participant.



The two programs were slightly varied to gain some insight on best practices moving forward. In the Midwest, besides lift technique with John and Rockne, the skaters rotated during the off-ice portion experiencing key core strengthening exercises for lift positions led by Alena Lunin and Stefania Berton, as well as partnering, tracking, death spirals, and unison exercises by Deveny Deck and Troy Goldstein. In the East, they worked on flexibility, partnering and core strength. In addition, they held a question and answer session. Scott Cudmore, Wendy Enzmann and Marc Weitzman brought significant pair insight to the skaters on what it means and takes to be a pair skater. “The feeling that you get from having a partner to go on the journey with is just not matched for me in any other discipline or sport,” commented John Coughlin.



On-ice, skaters attempted everything from single throw jumps, side-by-side spins, pair spins and stroking. “I was shocked at the feeling I got tracking another person while stroking, have to say it was pretty powerful feeling,” commented a skater from the East. Mark Ladwig, who was instrumental in developing this program with the Pairs Committee, commented, “just seeing skaters who maybe had never seen a pair in person actually getting to step into the shoes of a pair skater for the first time is special and then to watch them as their eyes light up the first time they got to be lifted and thrown.”



Having the opportunity to try pairs is only the beginning; the Pairs Committee plans to focus on gaining traction within the discipline through programs like these and working

to expand this to several non-quals across the country, a spring/summer pairs camp for teams who have come together and even building out additional programs to drive interest.

At all three sections, pair teams received feedback from some of the top officials in the sport prior to Nationals. "I think this is key to our sport, to better our athletes and have them as prepared as possible," commented Gale Tanger, ISU Technical Controller, who partnered with David Kirby, a member of the ISU Technical Committee at Midwesterns to deliver the insight.