

Twin City Figure Skating Association

RINK LINK

March 2000

2000 State Farm U.S. Figure Skating Championships

The 2000 State Farm U. S. Figure Skating Championships were held February 6-13, 2000, in Cleveland, Ohio. Four Minnesota skaters competed this year at the national championships. Congratulations to each of them on their successful year and best wishes for their continued success!

Katie Lee, St. Paul FSC, competed in the Championship Ladies division (sp19, fs17, final 17). Katie is the 2000 Midwestern Sectionals Senior Ladies Champion as well as the 2000 Minnesota State Senior Lady Champion. She trains under the coaching guidance of Debbie Karl at St. Paul FSC. This was Katie's first-ever trip to nationals and as a senior lady she found it a bit awkward to be competing against skaters she had only seen on television. "I was thrilled just to make it to Nationals, and I had a blast meeting people. It was incredible to skate in an arena like the Gund Arena in front of thousands of people, and it was definitely a great experience!" She says she would like to make it to Nationals again and improve her ranking.

Outside of skating, Katie enjoys dancing, shopping, and e-mailing friends from around the country.

Heidi Pakkala, Braemar-City of Lakes FSC competed in the Championship Ladies division (sp13, fs15, final 15).

Heidi is a seventeen year old senior at Holy Angels School in Richfield, MN.

"This was my first trip ever to Nationals and it was a really good experience for me. My coaches, Kathleen Gazich and Dede Disbrow and I were not exactly planning on qualifying for this year's championships; instead we went into the Midwestern Championships with hope of setting ourselves up to qualify next year. I placed second at Midwestern Sectionals, and from there I tried to prepare myself to compete with the best this country has to offer."

"It was exciting and a bit overwhelming to be competing against skaters she had watched on TV for the past few years, but she enjoyed her opportunity to "live out her dream."

"Practice was a blast! There were many skating fans, judges, coaches and parents who all sit and watch your practices. Everyone is very interested and appreciative of all the skaters, which is helpful when you are out there practicing. The audience makes you want to do your best."

"As for next year, my coaches and I have already began to make improvements. I plan to attend college and also continue training at Braemar. I am looking forward to this coming season and hope to qualify once again for Nationals."

Danny Clausen, St. Paul FSC, competed in the Championship Men division (sp11, fs14, final 13).

Danny is 22 years old and a senior at the University of St. Thomas. He will graduate in May with a degree in Biology. He was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska.

Spending time in the outdoors, camping and fishing are what he most enjoys.

Competing in Cleveland was Danny's second trip to Nationals in the Senior Mens' division. His coaches are Ann Eidson and Ted Engelking.

"My favorite part of the entire week at Nationals has always been the moment, in the main arena, when I take the initial walk from underneath the seats, out to the ice for the very first time. I love to look into the stands, up at the lights and realize that I am actually going to compete at Nationals. This moment captures the anticipation, nerves, excitement, and pride that come along with competing in a National championship. I love it!"

Benjamin Miller, St. Paul FSC, competed in the Junior Men division (sp2, fs3, final 3)

Ben is an 11th grader at St. Paul Central High School. Ted Engelking and Ann Eidson have coached him since he was 7 years old. He was drawn to skating in 1988 while watching the National Championships. Ben also received the Chevrolet Scholastic Honor Team Award while at Nationals this year.

"My favorite part of Nationals was getting to see my friends from all over the country, and skating well and winning the bronze medal."

Ben has been chosen to represent the United States this year at the Gardena Spring Trophy, held in Ortisei, Italy!

Congratulations to these skaters on their successful year!