

# History of Figure Skating in Mount Pearl

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Prior to there being an arena in Mount Pearl, those who wanted to do figure skating in 1976-77 had to travel to St. John's and skate with the Prince of Wales Club. Barbara Predham, one of the founding members of the Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club states that she, and a couple of other skaters, approached the Minor Hockey Association that was based in the Smallwood arena for ice time when the facility was first built. Barbara claims that her group of dedicated individuals sat on the front steps of the old arena (then, a new arena) determined not to move until they were promised an hour or two of skating time, and this worked. They were invited to come inside by the Minor Hockey Association and then asked about the members of their executive. Barbara and her dedicated group of individuals had not discussed the matter, thus there, while demanding to have their ice time, the Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club appointed their first executive. Now, this wasn't the most glorious of appointments as Barbara states: "We just sat around and said 'okay, what do you want to be?' - 'Well I'll be Treasurer' - 'Okay, and what about you?...'".

Evidently, this was a tremendous step for the Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club; they were now skating at an arena in their community and had a very dedicated group of individuals now appointed as their executive. The National Association for Skating played a huge part in the development of the Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club, and through their guidance, the club became the biggest and most successful club in all of Newfoundland at the time.

When figure skating first started, there were mandatory figures; "you did your figures first and then your free skate competition". Figures (which are not a part of the competition today) were a segment of the competition where all athletes had to perform a perfect figure 8 on their own patch of ice. The competition was a fluid process; as soon as one athlete was done their figure the next was performing theirs. This was problematic for the Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club because they did not have the luxury of having a zamboni to smooth out the ice in between competitors; this is where the barrels came in. "As the girls continued on after their figures, Tony Fowlow would be combing [the ice] with the barrel, smoothing out the ice before somebody else would start". The barrel system was basically moving a barrel of hot water and ice over the patch of ice. A prehistoric zamboni if you will. As you can see, the successes today were built up from a rocky but tremendously fun and exciting start. Indeed, Barbara states that when they were first told that the figure competition required a patch of ice, the first executive of the Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club called the Canadian Figure Skating Association to order patches of ice... they didn't know they had to make their own!

The Mount Pearl Skating Club now is based out of the Glacier in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, Canada. They offer a variety of skating programs for all ages including PreCanSkate, CanSkate, StarSkate, Syncroskate, Adult Learn to Skate and Competitive Skaters.

The Mount Pearl Skating Club has over 500 members and is welcoming skaters at all levels!

Source:

Barbara Predham, one of the founding members of the Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club