

Silver Stars to Haydenettes

By Devin Wang



I had my first exposure to synchronized skating when I joined the Silver Stars back in 2003. Being a part of a team allowed me to skate, travel, and compete with some of my best friends instead of against them. Back then, synchro (as it is commonly referred to by) was just another aspect of skating that was new, fun, and exciting. It was not until we had qualified for Nationals as a Junior level team and was able to sit in the stands to watch all of the other levels compete that I had a real grasp of how much more competitive synchro was in the Midwest and East Coast. The Senior level division was the most exciting to watch as they were able to do lifts in the long program. It only goes to show that synchro combines freestyle (when there used to be jump and spin blocks), ice dancing (quick turns and footwork), and pairs (group lift) all into one sport with 16 bodies skating at the same time. Throughout the remainder of high school, I

continued to skate with the Silver Stars recreationally and we had qualified for Nationals once more my Senior year. At Nationals, I took note of the Collegiate division and scouted out schools that had teams that I could have potentially skated for once I decided where I was heading to college.

I ended up deciding to go to Boston University as an Athletic Training/Physical Therapy major. BU has their own synchro team and competitive intercollegiate figure skating team; however I

tried out for Team Excel, through the Skating Club of Boston, and made their Junior and Collegiate teams. I figured if I wanted to really give synchro a shot, why not skate both teams!? Cross-skating to both teams was a very challenging but rewarding experience. I quickly had to adjust to the learning style and quickness of East Coast skating but was challenged more than ever having to learn 3 programs for one season. I spent 4



days a week skating with Excel with practices lasting at least 2.5 hours each – something I was not used to skating at home. By the end of the season, Team Excel Junior placed 9th at Nationals and Team Excel Collegiate placed 6th. I was thrilled that I was able to be on a competitive skating team while being in college. My second season on Team Excel Collegiate was even more rewarding than my first year. We were less than 2 points away from medaling at Nationals, finishing 5th. However, I was not pushed as hard or challenged as much during my first season with only having one program to skate (I aged out of Junior) instead of 3. I was ready to move forward in my synchro career and tryout for the world-renowned Haydenettes, a Senior level team out of Lexington, MA.

During my second season on Team Excel Collegiate, I became friends with a few girls on the

Haydenettes through mutual friends and school. I explained my frustration with not being challenged by Excel and they encouraged me to tryout for the Haydenettes, current 20 time US National Champions and three time World Bronze Medalist. The tryout process was unlike anything I had ever done before. There are two dates in late March/early April for “Skills & Drills” followed by the tryout in the evenings. It is encouraged that you attend both but it is not



mandatory. At “Skills & Drills” half of the current Haydenettes team was present to demonstrate basic skating drills that they do at practices so that those who are trying out become familiar with what they will be evaluated on at the actual tryout in the evening. These drills included basic stroking, double three turns, twizzles, counters, rockers, brackets, edges, choctaws, mohawks, step sequences, spread eagles, ina bauers, and spins. It was very overwhelming to learn everything all at once and remember the tempo, sequences, and style that they perform. For the actual tryout process, there were girls trying out for the Haydenettes and their Junior level team, the Lexettes, at the same time. We were all given numbers and asked to skate the drills we learned in the morning in columns, row by row until we were told to move on to the next drill. It was a very nerve wracking process as I had known this year there were not that many roster spots to make the team compared to previous years with 15 returning skaters. After the tryout process was complete, I had a talk with the head coach and director of skating, Saga Krantz, who offered me a chance to participate in “Spring Training” to evaluate me more and give me a chance to skate with the girls on the team to deem if I am a good fit or not.

Spring Training began in the first two weeks of May where there were 22 girls brought in for only 20 roster spots on the team. We continued to do basic skating skills by ourselves and slowly worked our way into doing team elements in lines and eventually blocks. This gave Saga the chance to see if the new skaters were able to learn and keep up with the returning skaters

or if some of the returning skaters needed to work on skills themselves. In the final week of May, the Haydenettes hosted “Elite Camp” for skaters 12 years of age and older who have passed their Senior Moves to come skate with the team for a weekend



working on more drills, turns, and step sequences. We had also brought in a special guest coach, Anne Schelter, who coaches Canada’s Nexxice. After 3 days with Anne and Saga, we had the first half of June off and resumed practice followed with a week-long “Synchro Summer Experience Camp” for skaters 8-16 years old as counselors. At Sychro Summer Experience Camp, we skated our first show program with the 20 roster skaters for the 2012-2013

competitive season. It was exciting to be able to get my first real experience skating with the team in a no-pressure situation that was fun and more rewarding for the campers to enjoy. Upon completing the camp, Spring Training was officially over and I was given a spot on the Haydenettes 2012-2013 Senior Team.

We had the entire month of July off before we kicked off our season the first weekend of August in Waterville Valley, NH for boot-camp to choreograph our long program. We came back home even more excited to get the season going and continued to have weekly practices 3 to 4 days a week. Now that our season has official begun, we have learned that we are going to represent Team USA at the French Cup in Rouen, France late January/early February, and will also be competing at Nationals vying for a spot on the World Team that will be held at Boston University's Agganis Arena April 2-6, 2013. My journey up to this point has been life changing and I could not have asked for anything else. I am blessed to receive support from my coaches and friends at the rink from home. I am truly grateful for this opportunity to represent Team USA and continue my skating career even in college. Best of luck to all competitors in every discipline this season!



2013 Season Update:

Since the season has started we have performed in shows and competitions in Connecticut, the Tree Lighting at Bryant Park in NY, Massachusetts, Michigan, and France. We will also be on the **Today Show March 15th**, on the 8:30-9 am segment! So be sure to tune in!

www.haydensynchroteams.com
<http://www.2013synchroworlds.com/>

