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A Fresh LOOK

→ THE CENTURY-OLD
**SKATING CLUB
OF BOSTON** GETS
AN UPDATE



A Fresh New Look

The Skating Club of Boston continues its century-long run in new facility while continuing to support figure skaters. // by RYAN WILLIAMSON

AS THE THIRD-OLDEST SKATING CLUB IN THE U.S.,

it might be safe to assume that the Skating Club of Boston has started to show its age.

However, that assumption would be completely false.

The club is going on 108 years of serving those in the skating community. Recently, this historic club got an injection of youthfulness with a new facility, giving the skaters more opportunities to develop and enjoy the sport of figure skating.

A Storied History

Just two skating clubs in the U.S. have operated continuously longer

than the Skating Club of Boston. The Philadelphia Skating Club and Humane Society has been around since 1849 and nearby Cambridge Skating Club was founded in 1897.

In 1912, the Skating Club of Boston was formed by a group of skaters known as the “Back Bay Skating Club.” With many of them enthusiastic about the sport, they decided to form the Skating Club of Boston and began building the Boston Arena. It was one of the first indoor ice facilities in the U.S.

Just six years after incorporating as a club, the first Boston Arena was burned down in a fire. Members skated outside

while a new Boston Arena was built, eventually opening in 1920.

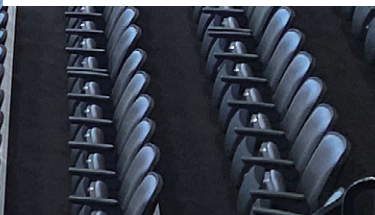
As the club and its facilities grew and changed, so too did its relationship with figure skating. The club helped the launch of U.S. Figure Skating while hosting the inaugural New England Championship in 1943. That later became the regional championship where skaters now compete in order to advance to the national championships.

A Focus On the Figure Skaters

While many ice facilities house and support figure skaters, few put an emphasis on it quite like the Skating Club of



WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT OUR FACILITY IS IT'S A FACILITY PUT TOGETHER FOR FIGURE SKATERS. IT'S BUILT AROUND FIGURE SKATING WITH A LITTLE BIT OF HOCKEY MIXED IN.



Boston. The majority of the facility's ice sheets are set up for figure skating. While there is some hockey that takes place, the focus remains on figure skating.

Someone who understands that firsthand is CEO and Executive Director Doug Zeghibe. He grew up going to this club, has worked events, and spent countless hours at the facility.

"Our core business is getting people to join the club and practice and compete as figure skaters," Zeghibe said.

There is a wide range in skill level and interest in figure skaters who are part of the club. There are those who are just looking for the sport to be something fun that he or she does at the recreational level. However, there are some aspiring to Olympic dreams, too.

"Whatever type of skating you want

to do, you can do it here," Zeghibe said. "We have those who are doing it recreationally and 10-12 who are looking to do this at an Olympic level."

As for Olympians, Skating Club of Boston alumni include 1956 Olympic champion Tenley Albright, 1992 Olympic silver medalist Paul Wylie and the duo of Marissa Castelli and Simon Shnapir. Castelli and Shnapir are two-time U.S. national champions and helped Team USA to a bronze finish in the team event at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.

Taking Things Up a Notch

In the midst of the club's success, there started to be calls for a new, modern Skating Club of Boston. Zeghibe said these conversations go back nearly 20 years.

In the past five years, the push for this new version of the club really began to go. It started with bringing Zeghibe on in a professional role and surrounding him with professional staff, such as club director Jon Jepson. Previously, the facility relied mostly upon volunteers.

"We're a non-profit that had a board that used to be more focused on the operation," Zeghibe said. "Now, with the staff we brought in, our board is more strategic."

After many starts and stops, the project got underway on May 13, 2019. Thus, began the building of a facility estimated to cost more than \$30 million in Norwood, Massachusetts, a suburb outside of Boston.

In just more than a year, this three-sheet facility was built with plenty of bells and whistles. Beyond just the ice sheets, there are other parts that make this facility a head-turner.

It starts with an open lobby concept that allows users to see into the rinks.

The main sheet is the performance center. It's an Olympic-sized sheet that



RINK BREAKDOWN

180,000 SQUARE FEET

2
NHL-SIZE RINKS
200' x 85'

1
OLYMPIC-SIZE RINK
200' x 100'

OPENED

2020
SEPTEMBER

LIGHTING
IN ARENA | **LED**

SEATING CAPACITY

4,350

East/Hockey Rink: 350

Performance Center:
2,500 (purely figure skating)

West Rink:
1,500 (purely figure skating)

TENANTS:

The Skating Club of Boston, Norwood High School, The Marilyn P. Kasputys Center Branch of the Micheli Center for Sports Injury Prevention, Home Ice

SPECIAL FEATURES:

→ The Marilyn P. Kasputys Branch of the Micheli Center for Sports Injury Prevention offers in-house injury prevention and treatment services for athletes of every sport. This includes on-site radiology, ultrasound, physical therapy, sports nutrition and sports psychology services and strength training. The facility also includes a high-altitude training room to prepare competitive skaters to compete at altitude while training at home.

FUN FACT:

The Skating Club of Boston is one of three figure-skating clubs in the country to own their own facility. This facility was designed and built by figure skaters for the primary use of figure skaters.

RINK FLOORS
CONCRETE

LOCKER ROOMS

9

The newly-added off-ice workout facility is designed for both off-ice training and medical treatment.



can hold up to 2,500 spectators in upholstered seats.

The second figure skating rink can seat up to 1,500 spectators. Like the main sheet, this one is designed specifically for figure skaters. The third sheet is NHL-sized and can be used for both figure skating and hockey.

“What’s unique about our facility is it’s a facility put together for figure skaters,” Zeghibe said. “It’s built around figure skating with a little bit of hockey mixed in.”

One of the off-ice facilities that sparked excitement for those involved with the project comes in the Marilyn P. Kasputys Branch of The Micheli Center for Sports Injury Prevention. This space is more than 4,000 square feet designed for athletes to execute off-ice conditioning and get medical treatment.

One feature of this area in particular is the high-altitude training area.

“You can dial in an altitude of about anywhere in the world,” Zeghibe said. “You can dial it up to what the altitude is in Colorado Springs and simulate training in that altitude to prepare before going there for a competition.”

The off-ice dance center will also benefit those skaters with 1,600 square feet to move around.

As for the spectators, the club lounge will be a space where guests can see



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what's happening in both of the figure skating exclusive sheets of ice. There is room for as many as 500 people to dine while spectating. There is space for dining, lounging, eating and drinking.

Other key features include the Club Library and Academic Center. During the coronavirus pandemic, this area is being utilized by kids doing distance learning. They can do their schoolwork in this area and then go to the rink for practice time.

Opening and Adapting

On Sept. 7, the Skating Club of Boston held a private ceremony to celebrate the first skate at the new facility in Norwood. With all in attendance masked, Maxim Naumov kicked off the event with the first skate. He is a 2020 U.S. junior champion figure skater.

While the facility opened amidst the pandemic caused by COVID-19, it has been a place for skaters in the area to continue their passions. Like most facilities, the club has implemented measures such as temperature taking, social distancing, no spectators and more.

"We've been so cautious and so prepared with our health screenings," Jepson said. "There was an adjustment period, but we are getting some normalcy with skaters on the ice."

Despite that, the team has helped usher in a new era in Norwood. That's come while the community around the club's new facility arrives with a figure skating mission in mind.

"Norwood is a really big hockey community," Zeghibe said. "But they've really embraced the club and figure skating. They've shown that they love all sports."

While many facilities may put their focus on hockey, the Skating Club of Boston remains a place devoted to figure skating. With more than a century of experience in the books, the club lives on with a youthful look. ★