

Masters speed skater maintains edge, takes second at international meet

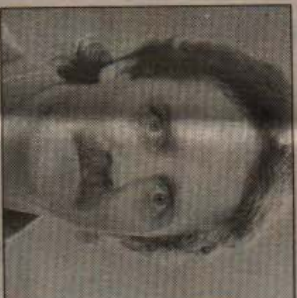
You might have noticed during coverage of the Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games, speed skaters don't have a whole lotta pals on the ice.

It follows, then, Don Ego is wise to be on good terms with his blades after finishing second at the recent North American Masters Speed Skating championships in Milwaukee, Wis.

'(The Jets) motto is Life on the Edge and, if you take care of your edges, they'll take care of you.'

Those blades are Mr. Ego's, or any speed skater's, best friends.

Mr. Ego, a 66-year-old Newmarket resident who has been a member of the Newmarket Jets Speed Skating Club for five years, placed among the top three



John Cudmore
CUDDY SHARK

skaters in five of six races — runnerup at three distances and third at two others — to nail down second place based on cumulative scoring.

"I started out on hockey skates and saw a guy on speed skates and it just seemed smoother," said Mr. Ego, who placed seventh at the 2001 masters world championships in Quebec City. "Technique is everything."

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Mr. Ego said he was "spellbound" by the speed skating success of Canada during the Olympics, in part as a fan of the sport and also because he has shared the ice with the Gagnons and Turcottes of the sport at various training camps, including a five-day session at Ste-Foy, Que.

"I've seen them sweat and how much effort they put into it. They are impressive cats to be around," Mr. Ego said.

"They're all so receptive and open as long as you are serious about skating."

"I was so impressed with the openness and that they would share their knowledge. It was the most fun I've had legally in a long time."

It's a bit of a fraternity, this speed skating.

One in which the big stars don't mind sharing knowledge or spending time with those who will never experience the thrill of

Olympic competition.

As Mr. Ego pointed out: "Everyone has a common goal and that's to get to the other end."

It's all about PRIDE

Carlos Newton's most recent ultimate fighting triumph came at the expense of Brazil's Pele, an opponent considered that country's top 185-pound category fighter, in Pride 19 Bad Blood.

The fight, which took place before 25,000 fans at the sold out Saitama Super Arena in Tokyo, can be seen Sunday night on Viewers Choice.

Mr. Newton, by the way, is to be featured on a couple of soon-to-be released video games.

An April release is scheduled for the Pride Ultimate Championship for Sony PlayStation 2.

The Newmarket resident is also in an Ultimate Fighting Championship game to be released in May.