

Figure skaters take part in seminar with an Olympic medal winner



By Brian Lockhart

Young figure skaters from around the region had a unique opportunity to meet and learn from a Canadian Olympian during a seminar hosted by Skate Canada Shelburne at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex on Saturday, March 2.

Olympic silver medalist, Elizabeth Manley, was in town to work with young skaters to help hone their skills and offered some advice.

Manley won silver in the 1988 Calgary Olympics and was the first Canadian female to successfully land a triple-double combination in competition.

Manley is currently a skating coach at the Granite Club in Toronto.

While skaters were a little awe struck with meeting Manley in person, it was all business on the ice.

Skaters were divided into two groups with each having a session on the ice with Manley and an off ice session with a coach.

Organizers, Karen Dopson, and Bill McCutcheon, partnered with Skate Canada coach Jared Melanson, to bring the event to the local arena.

Melanson, a former competitor and professional skater, knows Manley from his work at the Granite Club.

"Our coach Jared is responsible for bringing Elizabeth Manley to our seminar today," Ms. Dopson explained. "We created a poster and sent it out to most of the clubs in a 100 kilometre area. It was for Star Skate level skaters. We had dry land training off ice, while one group was on the ice, coach Jared had the other group upstairs doing the dry land training."

Over 40 skaters registered for the event with participants arriving from all around the province. In addition to skaters from Shelburne, participants arrived from Orangeville, Brampton, Mississauga, Collingwood, Barrie and several other areas.

"It was open to any skate club in Ontario," Mr. McCutcheon said. "The dry land training also gives them a chance to practice takes offs and things like that."

Coach Jared led the skaters through some dry land training before joining the group on the ice.

"Liz has had two hours with each group," he explained. "She's worked on jumps, spins, a lot of basic skating exercises. She's

touched on a little bit of everything from the big tricks as well as the point A to point B stuff. She's had two sessions so she's been on the ice for four hours today. In a typical coaching day, four or five hours isn't crazy. We have a range of skill levels here.?

While the skaters had the opportunity to work on their skills and learn more about techniques in the sport, Ms. Manley also took some time to sign some autographs and speak to participants, which made the day just that much more exciting.