Roller skater McGuire, 18, to retire

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

Tim McGuire, one of the greatest performers in roller skating history, two-time world and national champion, fresh from the triumphant defense of his men's singles title at the National Sports Festival in Colorado Springs, has announced his retirement at the age of 18.

McGuire, a 1982 graduate of Rochester Adams High School, will compete for his third consecutive national title next weekend in Fort Worth, Texas, and will go for his third straight world crown in October, also in Fort Worth, before hanging up his skates. He already has three straight Sports Festival championships to his credit.

"I've had my fill of skating," said McGuire simply. "I've had no social life, no school activities. But skating's been worthwhile. There's been a lot of world travel and new friends. Good experiences. And it taught me how to set a goal and go after it. But I've gotten out of it what I wanted, so now I can leave it with a clear head.

"It's hard to leave if you haven't already reached your goals. But I have. I set high standards as far as men's figure skating goes. My techniques and jumps set high standards for the guys coming up to equal or break."

McGuire added that there are plenty of other reasons for retiring at a tender age. His knee is bothering him and won't stand much more of his four-hours-a-day, six-days-a-week practice regimen; he wants to go to Oakland University and major in pre-med after taking a year off from school to devote to his skating, which involves a series of jumps and spins set to music; and he'd like to develop a more well-rounded social life.

Former Bloomfield Hills Kingswood field hockey star aiming for the Olympics. Story on page 4C.

Then there was the matter of complacency. "It's hard to come back each year and put in the same effort," admitted McGuire, a personable, articulate young man who comes across, not as a prima donna, but as having his head screwed on extremely straight.

"When you are on top, there's no one to go after, while the other guys are saying, 'I gotta get him.' This year I'm working hard, but not as hard (as before). I'm not picking up any new content; I'm just maintaining what I did.

"Basically, I've had enough. I don't have a lot of friends outside of skating. When I get into college and out of skating, I'm going to readjust, meet new friends and get back to the real world."

THOUGH McGUIRE has dominated his sport, he was very late getting into skating compared to other world-class performers, 10 as opposed to 6 or 7. His dad, Fred, an electrical engineer, had once skated competitively and began taking his family to local rinks on family nights.

"My dad could still do some of the things he did when he was younger," said McGuire. "I tried to do them, too.

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Tim McGuire

Farmington skaters shoot for gold at the world games

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Speed roller skating isn't the most popular sport in the world. It's not a professional sport. It's not an Olympic sport. It's not even a widely accepted recreational sport.

But that hasn't deterred four Farmington Hills residents from becoming some of the best speed skaters in the world.

Chuck Jackson, Rob Dunn, Renee Stone and Dawn Thomas have found success and fulfillment from the physically demanding and unappreciated sport of speed roller skating.

Rob Dunn (left) and Chuck Jackson go for the gold

The four were among eight skaters coached by Virgil Dooley, former coach at Bonaventure Roller Rink in Farmington, that competed at the National Sports Festival in Colorado Springs, Colorado last month.

DUNN AND JACKSON, who share an apartment in Farmington Hills each won gold medals at the festival. Dunn was the overall winner in the men's senior division. He took first in the 1,500-meters and second in the 3,000. Jackson won gold in the 1,000 meters.

Thomas, 16 years old and a senior at North Farmington High School, placed third in both the 1,000- and 500-meter races. Stone, 18, placed second in the 500. Stone is living the summer with Thomas and her family.

Participating in the National Sports Festival was just about as close as any of the four will get to competing in the Olympic games. Not because they aren't talented enough, but because roller skating is not an Olympic sport.

"There were so many people at the festival," said Thomas. "We were treated really well. It was an Olympic-type setting, especially with the opening ceremonies. It was really neat."

"Yeah, they treated us so good we almost didn't want to come home," Stone said.

A SPEED SKATER'S Olympics is the World Championships held in a different country every year. All four Farmington Hills skaters will be competing for the opportunity to compete in the World Championships at the National Speed Skating Finals Aug.8-14 in Texas.

Forty-two skaters coached by Dooley will be competing for national honors. Steve Marion and Chuck Tolan from Farmington will join the other four area skaters at the nationals.

Those who win at the nationals earn the right to compete for world honors. The worlds will be held in Argentina in November.

A world title is the only prize not captured by Dunn. The 24-year-old has won three straight national titles and will be stalking his fourth Aug.7. No other skater has won four straight national titles.

He has finished second in world competition twice and third once. He has yet to win gold at the worlds.

"ROB DUNN is the most successful skater I've coached," said Dooley, who has been coaching for more than 30 years. "He's not a super natural athlete, but he's a tremendous worker. And through his hard work, he has become one of the best."

Dunn grew up in Mount Clemens where his father owned a roller rink.

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DEBORAH BOOKER

Protecting his ground

Troy-Birmingham catcher Pat Hughes blocks Farmington's Mark Green from reaching the plate during a Legion game last week at Athens High School. For a complete American Legion baseball wrap-up, please turn to Page 5C.

Chris McCosky

The voice of summer

HIS VOICE, RESONANT, resounds throughout my most cherished memories. His is truly the voice of summer.

"Well, this big crowd here is ready to break loose. Three men on, two men out. Game tied 1-1 in the ninth inning. McDaniel checkin' his sign with Jake Gibbs. The tall righthander ready to go to work again — wind up, and the pitch . . . He swings, line shot, base hit rightfield! The Tigers win it! Here comes Kaline to score and it's ALL OVER! Don Wert singles, the Tigers mob Don. Kaline has scored, the fans are streaming onto the field, and the Tigers have won their first pennant since Nineteen Hundred and Forty-Five. (Sounds of ecstacy audible in the background.) Let's listen to the bedlam at Tiger Stadium."

I was 10 years old when Ernie Harwell described the scene at Tiger Stadium that hot and glorious night in 1968. It was one of the happiest nights of my life. The memory of that night, and Harwell's description, are indelibly etched in my mind.

Who can't remember the joyous summer of 1968? Who of my age group can't remember listening to the radio during school? Why did the teachers let us get away with that?

REMEMBER WHEN Denny McLain won his 30th game? They were losing 4-3 in the ninth to Oakland. Reggie Jackson had hit two homers off him. Things looked bad, but 1968 was magic. The Tigers tied the score. And then . . .

"Man on first, man on third. One man down. Two-two the count on Willie Horton. Here's the set by Segui, the pitch — swung on, a drive to left! That'll be the ballgame! It's over the head of Goeger. McLain wins his 30th. Here comes Stanley into score . . . Denny McLain is one of the first out of the dugout racing out and Horton is mobbed as the Tigers come from behind . . ."

Great stuff. To this day, goose bumps don my arm and tingles race down my spine when I rehear those memories.

I finally met the man who owns the voice in all my memories. It was last Wednesday at Tiger Stadium, the place where most of my memories are generated.

THE MAN IS a member of the baseball Hall of Fame. He resides in Farmington Hills. He's making a movie. Those were the professional reasons for doing the interview.

He is the voice of my memories. He has been an integral part of my summer routine for my entire life. I just flat-out wanted to sit and talk baseball with him. Those were the real reasons for doing the interview.

Ernie Harwell is the type of person who you want to count among your friends though you've never really met him. It seems like you've known him all your life because he's always been a part of your life.

And I think he's aware of this. I've not interviewed too many "celebreties." Of those I have interviewed, none have made me feel as relaxed and at ease as Harwell. He acted as if he had known me all his life.

We talked about the movie, "Tiger Town." It seems my fondness for 1968 is shared by movie writer and director Alan Shapiro. He has written a fictitious movie based on the thrills of 1968 and the life of Al Kaline. Shapiro, by the way, is a native of Bloomfield Hills and a graduate of Andover High School.

AND AS WELL they should, Harwell, along with his 1968 broadcasting partner Ray Lane, will do play-by-play and interview scenes in the movie.

"The hero is based on Kaline's baseball career. I'm the announcer," said Harwell. "Alan Shapiro was a fan back in 1968, and he knew I was the announcer back in those days."

So, he asked if he and Lane would take part in the movie. Harwell's play by play will serve to move the movie along from scene to scene. He will also be seen interviewing Billy Young, the Kaline-like hero portrayed by Roy Scheider.

"I've really enjoyed it. It's been fun. I've met actors before but I've never really done a scene with any," Harwell said.

The voice of Harwell is not a stranger to the cinema. It was Harwell's voice you heard announcing the 1963 World Series in the movie "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." Harwell's voice also played a major role in the made-for-television drama "Aunt Mary."

HE ADMITS that "Tiger Town" is a little special.

"I feel gratified by the fact that they picked me (to be in the movie). It's nice to be included in something that celebrates the Tiger '68 team which it is, in a sense, though it's fictionalized. It's a tribute to the Tigers. It's a great thing to go back and remember," he said.

For many years, Harwell lived in Florida during the off-season. He's not fond of basking in the limelight. "I sort of just like to stay home and relax," he said.

Two years ago he bought a house in Farmington Hills and lives there now year-round.

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