

(Continued from Page 54) skates for free style and dance. Speedskaters have indoor and outdoor skates. In hockey, goalies use skates that are made differently than those of other players.

In Hans Brinker's day, Dutch children often just strapped wood skates onto their shoes. Arch support wasn't a concern. That's unfortunate, said Ms. Blatch.

"In the case of figure skates," she said, "look for leather or vinyl boots with blades that are screwed into a leather sole. They provide the best support. Avoid blades that, are riveted on."

Ms. Blatch added, "If you want good fit, go to a place that specializes in ice skates. I recommend sporting goods stores or pro shops at ice rinks, not department or discount stores. It astonishes me how well some children do on skates with absolutely no arch support."

A good pair of stock figure skates costs between \$30 and \$50 for children and between \$40 and \$60 for adults, she said.

Parents should shun doublerunner skates for their children, said Mike Walden, long one of the Detroit area's leading authorities on speedskating and bicycle racing.

ing.
"You can't learn how to skate using double runners," Walden said.
"They just slide on ice. They don't strengthen your ankles any.

"I'd say children four and five can learn how to skate with singlerunner skates. We've got some even younger, but they're exceptionally coordinated."

Avoid skates that pinch your toes, advised Walden.

"You've got to be able to pull the boot right over your foot for tightness," he explained. "You also need toe clearance and some lacing room, but skates generally should be right to size."

Good hockey skates cost between \$20 and \$30 a pair. Walden said and better built ones start at \$40 a pair and range up to \$100 a pair.

"The more active your child," he said, "the more you should consider going into better built skates.

"Normally, you should be able to get three or four years of use from better built skates. But if your child obsigrows them after one year, you may be able to sell the skates for \$15 or \$20. So it costs you only \$15 a year to equip your child with skates."

Stock figure skates that cost \$40 a pair new will bring at least \$10 or \$15 used, Ms. Blatch said.

Both Walden and Ms. Blatch noted:

That they prefer to see children and adults in a good pair of

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