



Hans Brinker and Gretel glided along on Amsterdam's canals

Skating on Ice

Ice skates have gotten a sleek new look since the days when Mary Mapes Dodge's fictional Hans Brinker glided along canals in 19th century Holland.

Despite the higher quality of today's skates, one thing hasn't changed — the importance of proper fit. Without proper fit, even the most talented skaters face a challenge in staying on their feet.

"There's really no such thing as weak ankles," said Joan Blatch, a Detroit-area figure skating instructor, "just bad fitting skates."

"If your skates are too big, your feet will just slide around. You'll spend your time skating on your ankles, then probably say 'phooey' and give up. You get what you pay for when buying skates. The key to buying is knowing what you want, then getting to know how to find it."

Each form of skating — figure, hockey and speed — has different skates for special competition. In each case, the boot and blade are designed with precision.

Figure skaters wear different
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