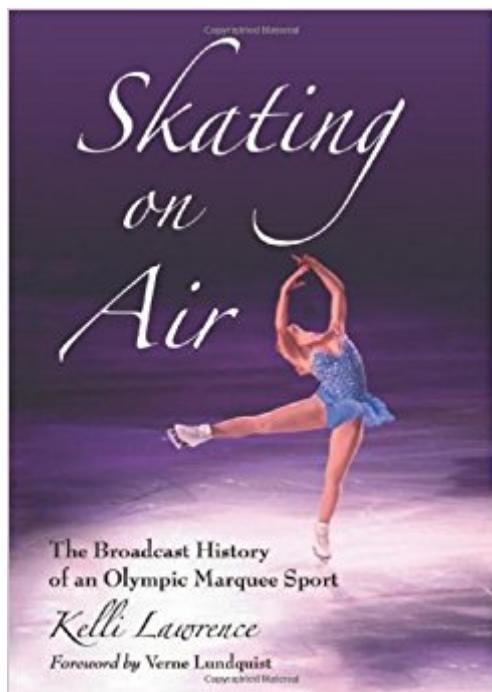


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# Skating On Air: The Broadcast History Of An Olympic Marquee Sport



## Synopsis

Of all winter sports, none is so widely watched and commented upon by the media as figure skating, which is often considered the Winter Olympics' centerpiece. This critical text examines the ways in which media attention has gradually altered and affected the sport, from the early appearances of Sonja Henie, to skating's gradual audience growth via television, and to the ramifications of the scandals in the 1994 and 2002 Olympics. The topic is illuminated by more than 30 interviews with commentators, skaters, producers, directors and others. In addition to numerous photos, illustrations show the compulsory figures for which "figure skating" got its name, as well as a sample of the charted-out "camera blocking" for TV directors. Appendices include collected anecdotes from early broadcasting experiences; a profile of broadcaster Jim McKay; and commentary from Carol Heiss on her 1961 musical *Snow White and the Three Stooges*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Kelli Lawrence, an award-winning freelance writer and producer, has published in *Skating*, *PSA Magazine*, and several other publications. She lives in Indianapolis.

Great book for skating fans and spectators. I really enjoyed the behind the scenes of how skating competitions were televised. The book highlights the sport in early days and how the skating world and sports television influenced each other as skating began to be featured on television. Kelli highlights how the compulsory figure portion of the competition, as well as the short program where

shaped by the growing skating television audience. There are also great tidbits about "the whack" with Nancy Kerrigan and the resulting television coverage and Olympics. I also found it interesting to learn about how much Dick Button was involved in skating's broadcast history. He wasn't just a commentator, he was often behind negotiating with the skating's governing bodies for the rights to broadcast. While the book explores international skaters, the focus is on American broadcasts, and touches on some Canadian broadcasts. It may have been interesting to have some of the international perspectives, that also influenced the sport. Overall great book for fans of skating and former skaters!

If you grew up watching Figure Skating on television, you will love reading this book. Ms. Lawrence goes into the genesis of putting skating on the big screen with Sonja Henie, winner of 3 Olympic Gold medals in the 1930's and thus becoming a Hollywood Movie Star, to putting skating on the small screen to million of viewers in their living rooms. The author tells us of the first televised Winter Olympic Games in Cortina, Italy in 1956 when a torchbearer tripped over -egads- a TV camera cable; the first "live, in color, via satellite" Winter Games of 1968 in which Peggy Fleming was the lone American Gold Medalist; the 1972 Sapporo Games in which a smiling Janet Lynn fell in a sit spin and won bronze along with the hearts of millions; the 1994 Nancy Kerrigan assault which skyrocketed skating popularity; the Kwan years of 1994-2006 - my favorite - in which ABC dominated the Nationals & Worlds TV coverage -thank goodness - but not the Olympics which went to CBS in 1994 & 1998 and NBC in 2002 to the present; and the fallout after the judging scandal in Salt Lake City in 2002, resulting in the New Judging System & subsequent decline in popularity, at least in the U.S. Ms. Lawrence kept me fascinated throughout this book with interviews with skating legends such as Scott Hamilton and Janet Lynn, skating commentators Verne Lundquist & Terry Gannon, and ABC Sports producer/director Doug Wilson along with many producers & directors from CBS, NBC & ABC. A thoroughly delightful and informative book for all skating fans, young and old alike.

This is one of the best books I've read on skating in years. It isn't simply that it is refreshing and informative to read about skating from the perspective of the individuals involved in televising it. It's also that it is very well researched and written. Of particular interest to most readers will be the reflections on skating by sports broadcasters, such as Verne Lundquist, who are known primarily for their work on other sports. This book also gives important insight into the reasons behind the gradual elimination of school figures for skating competition. All-in-all, this is a great book and a

must-read for skating fans!

An information filled history and breezy read. Strongly recommend for folks who like to watch skating, they will find it informative and fun.

This book gives us many insights into ice skating that I have not found in other books. the quotes from people in the know, all the little things that can't be covered on TV. It's a very interesting book.

I recently read this book. It was very well written without being an extremely long book. I am avid fan of figure skating so I was excited to purchase this book. It was easy to read.

I have not read this book yet, but did look thru it and enjoyed what I saw. It arrived in a timely manner and in good shape.

This book is for anyone whose heart used to beat faster at the words, "Spanning the globe to bring you the constant variety of sport...the thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat". On the screen, we saw Peggy at the Olympics in her chartreuse dress, Janet Lynn's grace after falling in Sapporo, the media frenzies over Nancy and Tonya and the Salt Lake Olympic judging scandal. This is a great behind-the-scenes look at how events such as these unfolded during the golden age of skating on TV. Some of my favorite parts were learning about the innovations the ABC, CBS, and NBC broadcast teams invented to cover figure skating, why Nationals, Worlds, and Olympics coverage changed from one network to another, and how various broadcasters began their jobs. This book also really clarifies why skating coverage has waned on television. I enjoyed the many tidbits from Susie Wynne, Traci Wilson, Janet Lynn, Doug Wilson, and Terry Gannon (to name just a few of a large cast of characters), as well as all the Dick Button anecdotes. The book isn't overly gossipy and certainly is about broadcasting as much as skating (this is reflected in a number of the black and white photos). It is exceptionally well written and I found it fascinating.

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