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Developmental Internationals Provide Opportunity for First Team USA Experience

by Juliet Newcomer

[2007 Developmental Internationals Results Summary \(PDF\)](#)

[2007 Developmental Internationals Backstage Photos](#)

(8/24/2007) - Twenty-nine skaters had the chance to represent the United States in competition as part of the first Developmental International program, and they took full advantage of the opportunity. Counting each segment (compulsory dance, short program/original dance, free skate/free dance) as separate events (as many events were not combined), Team USA had 37 starts and brought home 16 gold, 10 silver and two bronze medals.

The Skate Canada Provincial Championships – large nonqualifying competitions in Canada similar to the events in the U.S. such as the Liberty Summer Competition and Skate Detroit – were used as the platforms for this program. Three U.S. teams were sent in total.

Masha Leonov (junior ladies), [Marissa Castelli & Simon Shnapir](#) (novice pairs), Una Donegan & Andrew Korda (novice dance) and Kate McDermott & Colin McManus (novice dance) represented the U.S. at the Quebec Summer Championships in Boucherville, Quebec.

DeeDee Leng (junior ladies), Jon Felder (junior men), [Madison Chock & Greg Zuerlein](#) (junior dance), Bryna Oi (novice ladies), Gretchen Donlan (novice ladies), Agnes Zawadzki (novice ladies), Alexander Zahradnicek (novice men), Daniel O'Shea (novice men), Victor Travis (novice men), Brynn Carman & Chris Knierim (novice pairs), Chloe Wolf & Rhys Ainsworth (novice dance) and Megan Evans & Nathan Truesdell (novice dance) represented the U.S. at the Skate Canada Central Ontario Summer Skate in Thornhill, Ontario.

[Carolyn-Ann Alba](#) (junior ladies), Emily Young (junior ladies), Victoria Hecht (novice ladies), Joshua Santillan (novice men) and Taylor Hermerding & James MaMoody (novice pairs) represented the U.S. at the BC/YT SummerSkate in Burnaby, British Columbia.

Not only did the skaters perform and place well, but they also had fun and learned a lot about what to expect at an international competition. Complete with a team leader and teammates, the goal was to provide the skaters with an introduction to a true international experience.



Masha Leonov
Photo by Jennifer Hartley

"This experience for the skaters was absolutely awesome! There was certainly a wonderful camaraderie within the group, and there was a different level of pride while competing as part of Team USA," said Tanya Travis, mother of Victor. "If the goal was to give the skaters a sense of what it feels like competing as a team for their country and stirring up excitement of continuing to work down a path to compete in other international competitions, I would say it was successful."

This program was developed by the Athlete Development Committee as a way to replace the North American Challenge Skate. Skaters who competed at the 2007 State Farm U.S. Championships at the novice level or who finished first, second or third in intermediate at the 2007 U.S. Junior Championships were given the opportunity to compete last weekend at one of three Canadian nonqualifying competitions. Skaters who met these qualifications and who had already competed in a true international or two previous North American Challenge Skate events were not eligible for the competition.

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