



# FIGURE SKATING

## Origin

Skates were first a means of transportation on the frozen channels and rivers in the Netherlands. The first iron skates were used in the mid 1200's. Skaters performed figures designed by themselves but it was not until the late 1800's when figure skating really began to develop and spread to Canada and United States. As a skater, American Jackson Haines (1840-1875), is considered to be the founder of the modern figure skating. He introduced music and developed skates. After his invention it was possible to do spins and jumps. His lack of popularity in his country prompted him to go to Europe where he was an immediate success. The first international com-

petition was held in Vienna in 1882 won by Leopold Frey. The International Skating Union (ISU), founded in 1892, now comprises figure skating and speed skating. The first World Championship for men was organised in St Petersburg (Russia) with four skaters in 1896! Women were able to participate in the World Championships ten years later in Davos (Switzerland). Pairs had their first World Championship in 1908. Ice dancers had to wait until 1952.

## At the Olympic Games

Figure skating was the first winter sport to become part of the Games of the IV Olympiad in London in 1908 with ladies, men's and pairs events. Figure skating was also part of the

Games of the VII Olympiad in Antwerp in 1920. Ice dancing was on the programme of the Winter Games in 1976.

## Salt Lake City Olympic venue

Located at 1,305 metres (4,281 feet), the Salt Lake Ice Center, within the Olympic Square in downtown Salt Lake City, will host the figure skating. The venue, opened in 1992, features a six-story indoor facility. Home to the basketball teams, Utah Jazz (men) and Utah Starzz (women), the Salt Lake Ice Center can accommodate more than 15,000 spectators. It is the largest arena within the five-state radius of Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming and Colorado.



*Ice skater Michelle Kwan.*