

# Best friends, different countries, same podium

Canadian gold medallists in ice dancing credit American best friends

By MATTHEW LITTLE  
Epoch Times Staff

If you are going to lose gold, it is some consolation if some of your best friends walk away with it.

Best friends took the top two podium spots in a historic ice dancing final that saw North American skaters displace the old Russian guard.

Seven of the nine gold medals handed out in ice dancing since it was included in the Olympics had gone to the Soviet Union or Russia with one going to each of Great Britain and France.

On Monday, Canadians Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir made history for Canada by claiming gold in the event, but it was also a historic moment for North America when the Canadian pair's good friends and training partners Meryl Davis and Charlie White took silver home to the U.S.

The two pairs train together in Michigan under Russian-born coaches Marina Zueva and Igor Shpilband.

Also at the training camp is U.S. pair Tanith Belbin and Ben Agosto, who would have scored bronze if not for the Russian duo of Oksana Domnina and Maxim Shabalin.

Charlie White said it was easy to share the spotlight with some of his best friends.



YOUNG STARS: Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir became the youngest pair to receive gold medal in ice dance.

MATTHEW LITTLE/THE EPOCH TIMES

"To have one of your very best friends with you on the podium with you at the Olympics is an amazing feeling," said White.

"We're so proud of what we were able to do out there, to come so prepared and be able, under the pressure of the Olympics, skate three amazing programs is such a joy, such an accomplishment. And then to have your best friends out there with you too is just the icing on top of the cake."

"To have this experience and to be a part of it is so rewarding and we are so grateful," added his partner Davis.

The IOC has started using a new judging system that focuses on the technical merits of figure skating rather than the

subjective impressions that used to guide the previous judging system.

That change has been advantageous to North American skaters and looks to have changed the dominance the Russians once enjoyed.

Davis said with the new judging system has allowed some of the North American teams to be recognized for what they had done so well for many years.

"And I think that it really benefits not only North American teams, but specifically Charlie and myself."

Scott Moir took the site of his pairs top score calmly, almost relaxed as he realized he and partner Tessa Virtue had just one gold.

"It felt like everything was happening in slow motion, I wanted to be way more excited than that, but it just happened," he said.

"We knew we were ready, we were in confident in that. It was just about skating together and skating from our hearts and enjoying the moment," said Virtue.

"So proud to be Canadian and to do it for the nation, this is absolutely Canada's medal."

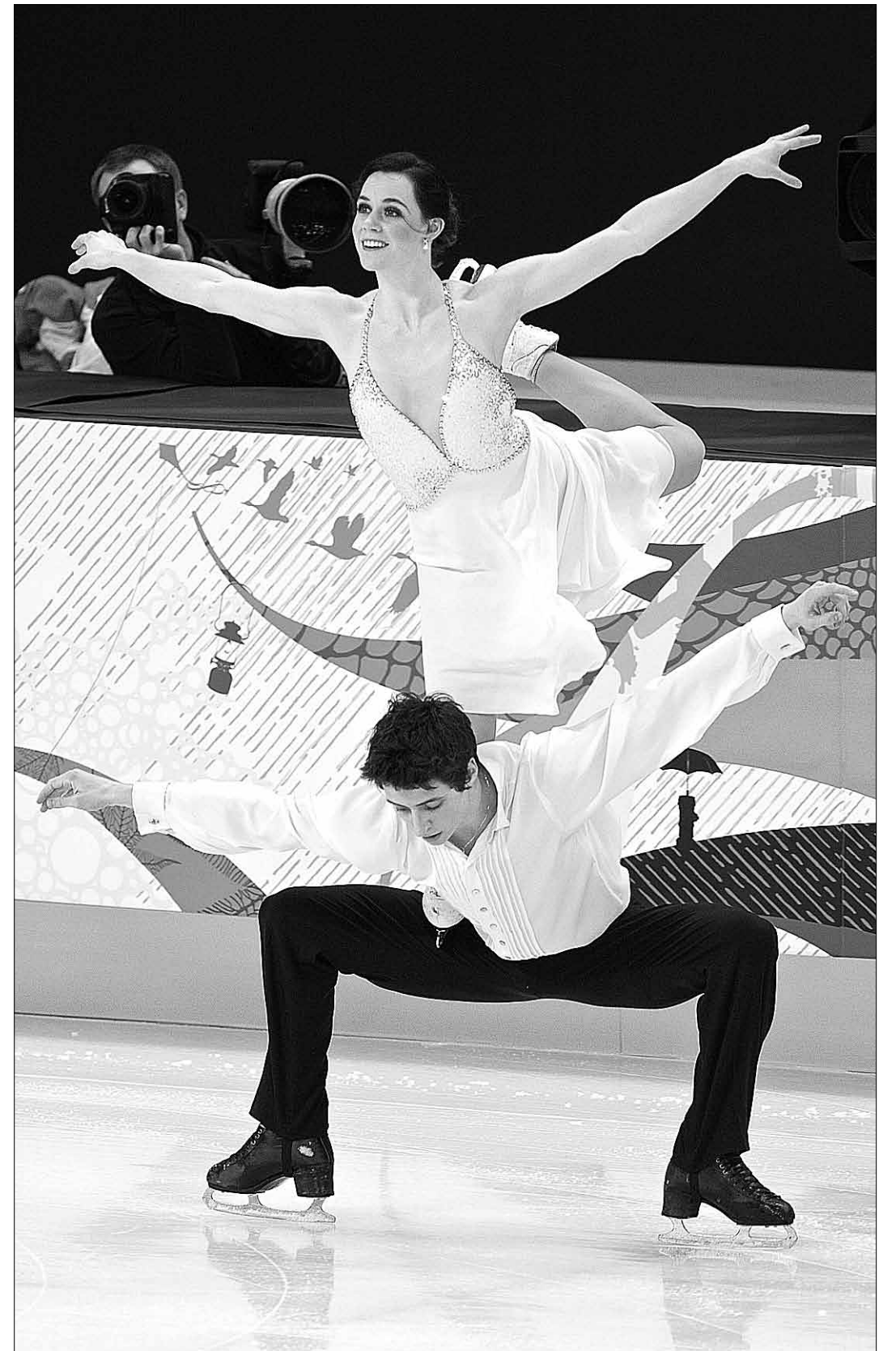
But the gold was all the sweeter, the pair said, when they got to share the podium with their best friends.

"There is a very special friendship between Meryl and Charlie and Tessa and I," said Moir.

"Training with them everyday and pushing each other really helps us. I don't think either of us would be where we are without the other, we help each other on our bad days and even push each other a little bit more on the good days so to have each other out there on the podium side by side, it's amazing."

He said the other couple showed no signs that they were disappointed not to have won gold themselves.

"They're just such great friends, and they gave us the best hug and they're so happy."



GRACE: Canadian ice dancers Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir skate to their gold medal at Pacific Coliseum.

MATTHEW LITTLE/THE EPOCH TIMES



FAMOUS: Jon Montgomery speaks with the foreign press after his gold medal run in Whistler, Friday.

MATTHEW LITTLE/THE EPOCH TIMES

## Jon Montgomery brings skeleton gold home

By MATTHEW LITTLE  
Epoch Times Staff

WHISTLER—Canada struck gold in men's skeleton after Jon Montgomery laid it all on the ice to catch up with leader Martins Dukurs of Latvia last Friday.

In skeleton racing, each slider gets four runs down the track and the times are added together for a final total. Whoever's final total time is the smallest wins.

With a solid start, Dukurs looked poised to take gold when his time showed a lead over Montgomery. Montgomery said he was biting his nails as Dukurs completed his run, watching the numbers showing that Dukurs had a shorter time.

"It feels stupendous, outrageous, unbelievable, all those things rolled into a big ball and its bearing down on me pretty heavy. I don't even have words to describe it," said Montgomery.

But as the Latvian rounded each corner, that lead melted away.

"I started to realize that there was a possibility I could win this race on his exit to corner seven. He went late into nine, and from that point,

bit by bit, those minus numbers got lower and lower until all the sudden he was in the plus range at the end and I lost my mind."

When the final time for Dukurs popped up, it showed he had taken .07 seconds longer than Montgomery to complete his runs.

It was probably corner 16 that delivered Montgomery his gold. The last corner of the track had presented a challenge to many of the day's racers, men and women both, who struggled to navigate past it without bumping against the wall.

Skeleton sleds are steered by pushing the shoulders down to press the skates into the ice, slowing one side to steer, or more minor adjustments can be made by dragging one foot or shifting weight. But steering slows the sled and tough patches require a careful balance of control and speed.

Dukurs said he never managed to figure out that corner.

"All trainings I was fighting with this curve, I was losing close to tenths in every race."

"That was my, how to say, black curve."

# Canada wins unprecedented gold and silver in women's bobsleigh

By HELENA ZHU  
Epoch Times Staff

VANCOUVER—Taking the lead in all four heats, Canadians Kaillie Humphries and Heather Moyse seized the first gold medal ever in bobsleigh for Canada on Wednesday at Whistler Sliding Centre. They clocked a total time of 3:32.28.

The duo erupted into excited cheers after driving Canada into gold with 53.23 seconds in their final run. Earlier in third run, the pair broke the track record with a time of 52.85 seconds.

While Humphries, 24, and Moyse, 31, made Canadians proud, their teammates Helen Upperton and Shelley-Ann Brown received a silver medal for Canada with a total time of 3:33.13 seconds.

Canada won its 14th and 15th medals, placing fourth overall, in the medal standings.

American racers Erin Pac and Elana Meyers steered to bronze medal with a time of 3:33.40 seconds, 1.12 seconds behind the gold medalists.

In Olympic bobsleigh, four heats are held over the course of two days. Like luge and skeleton, bobsleigh grew out of sledding. Yet today's competitive bobsleigh is more state-of-the-art. The Olympic bobsleigh is built with a rounded fiberglass nose and four highly polished steel runners.

The two-person bobsleigh event joined the Olympic Games program in 1932. Women started to compete in bobsleigh in 2002 at Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games.

After pushing the bobsleigh as fast as possible for about 50 metres, the racers would jump into the bobsleigh for a seated fast drive down the track.



VICTORIOUS FINISH: Kaillie Humphries and Heather Moyse of Canada complete their fourth run to finish in first place and win gold in the women's bobsleigh.

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

## Canada knocks Russians out of Olympics with 7-3 rout

HOCKEY CONTINUED FROM P1

Speaking through a translator, Russian coach Vyacheslav Bykov congratulated the Canadian team for going on to the semifinal.

"Unfortunately our Olympic Games are over for the hockey team and I apologize to all our fans," said Bykov.

"It was a very strong team today playing against us and we couldn't [deal] with the pressure of the Canadian team."

He said they tried different ways to deal with the Canadians but nothing worked. Canadian defenseman Shea Weber took Russian star Alexander Ovechkin out of the game.

Babcock gave the Russian coach credit for the discipline he brought to his team and credited his own team's success to the momentum they gained by scoring early.

"We knew we were in for a tough battle here today," said Babcock. "We got the momentum early and

were able to carry it. Sometimes you get good puck luck, pucks bounce off their sticks to ours and we shot it and we had some tap-ins that way. We feel fortunate to be moving on."

Oddly enough, Canada may have benefited from placing lower in the standings after the round-robin games that included a disheartening loss to the American team last Sunday.

LOOKING BACK

The Canada-Russia rivalry is rooted in the 1972 Summit Series when the two countries' best players faced off over eight games.

It was a special contest because of the lopsided matchups that plagued other international competitions, including the Olympics.

With NHL players absent from Olympic competition until 1998, Canada had to field second-tier players against the Soviet Union's best. The Soviets skirted the restrictions

by giving their top players—who played full time as professionals—nominal job titles or as players of the Soviet army.

In the Summit Series, Canada for the first time was able to put its top players on the ice and in a moment that captured the attention of the nation, claimed victory over a hard fought eight games. Canada won four, lost three and tied one game.

The rivalry has continued through the years, providing stellar matches in the Canada Cup and other international competitions. In the 2006 Turin Olympics, it was the Russians who sent Canada home packing in the quarterfinals.

Today the Canadians, and the thousands of fans who packed Canada Hockey Place, were all too happy to return the favour.

As the clock wound down, the raucous crowd could be heard chanting. "Na na na na, na na na na. Hey hey hey. Good bye."

### WINNING WEDNESDAY

Not only did Canada rout its nemesis Russia in men's hockey Wednesday night, Canadian women brought home four Olympic medals that day:

- Kaillie Humphries and Heather Moyse took gold in ladies' two-man bobsleigh; Helen Upperton and Shelley-Ann Brown snatched silver in the same event.
- Jessica Gregg, Kalyna Roberge, Marianne St-Gelais and Tania Vicent took silver in the ladies' 3000 m short-track speed skating relay.
- Clara Hughes took bronze in the ladies' 5000 m long-track speed skating event, her Canadian record-tying sixth Olympic medal.

Overall, Canada may not have "owned the podium" as it hoped this Olympics. But the seventh gold earned Wednesday brought it into a first-place tie for total gold medals with the U.S. and Germany.