

Skating in Synch

UNH team heads for Eastern championships

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While other students were connecting with friends and catching up on sleep during break, members of the UNH synchronized skating team were on campus, and on the ice.

“The team comes back to campus for J-term,” says synchronized skating club team captain Jaclyn Robidoux '15. “We usually practice three times a week, with two hours on the ice each practice. We also do team workouts and off-ice practices, where we run through our program without skates.”

So if you happened by the Whittemore Center Arena at, say, 5 a.m. or 10 p.m. on a recent sub-zero evening like we did, you might have caught a glimpse of the team skating to “Jungle” — chins up, legs extended, all smiles.

They're preparing for the Eastern Sectional Championships this weekend in Lake Placid, New York. It's the first major competition of the season, with the top collegiate teams vying for a qualifying spot in the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships. That's familiar territory; every year since 2001 the UNH team has qualified for nationals.



Synchronized skating is one of [31 club sports teams](#) at UNH. Robidoux, a senior [marine, estuarine and freshwater biology](#) major, says the fact UNH had a team was “definitely a determining factor” in applying to UNH. “Since the option of

synchronized skating isn't available at every school, UNH's team definitely makes the school stand out for skaters wanting to continue their sport in college," says Robidoux, who has been synchro skating for 16 years.

The season begins with tryouts in early September, and practices start soon after that. Even after the competition season winds down in February, the team practices and performs at exhibition events and recruitment weekends until the end of the school year. As captain, Robidoux runs the off-ice practices where the team works on steps and counts. She also runs the drills and skill exercises at the beginning of each on-ice practice.

Robidoux says that before taking the ice in Lake Placid this weekend, the team will do one of its customary pre-performance rituals — singing the UNH fight song. As for Robidoux herself, "My only ritual is a good luck kiss from my mom, who still never misses a competition."

[Find the team on Facebook](#)

Meet the coaches



AMANDA WERNER, UNH
SYNCHRONIZED SKATING
CLUB TEAM COACH

In 2007, Amanda Werner was skating for the national champion University of Miami varsity synchronized skating team when it became the first U.S. synch skate team in history to podium at world's. She left London, Ontario, with a silver medal and a bunch of experience that she now brings to synchronized skaters at UNH.

Werner, who works as director of the Colonial Figure Skating Club in Boxborough, Mass., has been coaching UNH's synchro squad for the last five years alongside

assistant coach Kelly Richall '06, a UNH synchro skate team alumna and current member of the coaching staff at Colonial.

At sectionals this weekend, the squad will compete against eight other teams, including Boston University and UMass Amherst. If they qualify, they'll compete at nationals in Providence, Rhode Island, in late February.



KELLY RICHALL '06, UNH
SYNCHRONIZED SKATING
CLUB TEAM ASSISTANT COACH
AND ALUMNA

What are their chances for getting to nationals? "They're good," says Werner.

Talk the Talk

Every sport has its lingo, and synchronized skating is no exception. Jaclyn Robidoux '15, captain of the UNH synchro skate club team, shares some of the most common terms here.

Kiss and cry – The area where skaters stand to receive their program scores immediately after skating in competition

IJS – The International Judging System used in the collegiate division of synchro (The system combines technical scores — scores based on how accurately parts of the program are completed — and judges' scores — scores that mark how entertaining and visually appealing the program is — for each team's program)

Series – Two or more turns that every skater must complete without changing feet or putting a foot down (Correctly completing series turns of a certain degree of difficulty contributes to the team's technical score.)

Run through – Performing the entire four-minute program during a practice, as opposed to working on sections or pieces

Off-ice – Practices held off the ice where skaters work on coordinating timing, steps and performance choreography

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