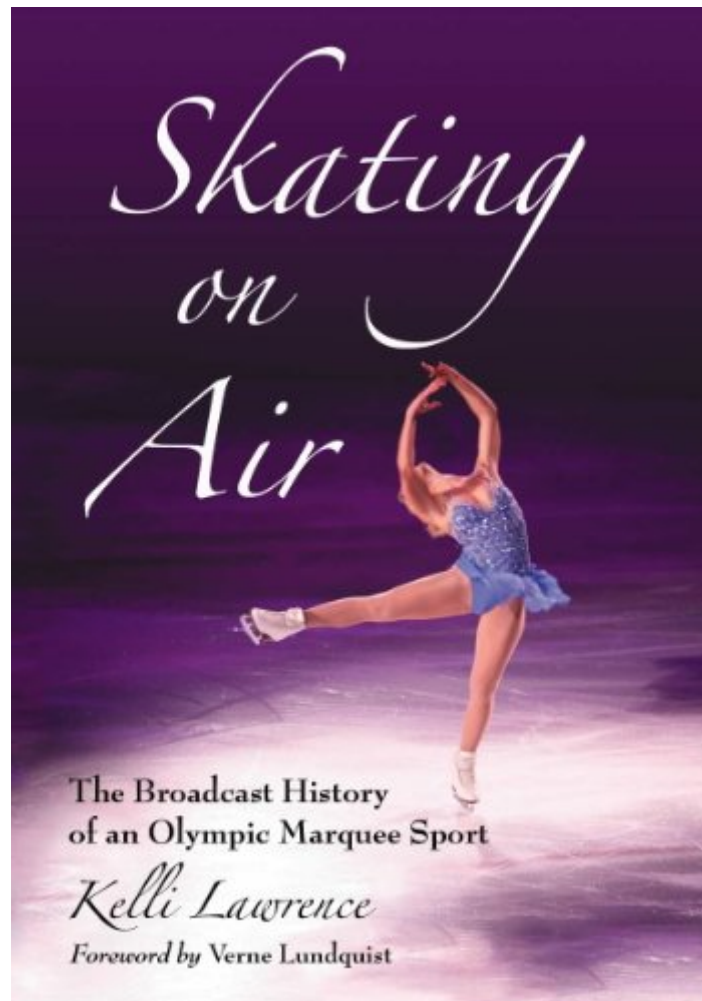


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# Skating On Air: The Broadcast History Of An Olympic Marquee Sport



## 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

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.

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!

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 were 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!

I was fortunate enough to read parts of this book, backstage, at a community production of "Annie".

Kelli was in the cast and had carried in a copy of "Skating On Air" for another cast member to read. Being an avid fan of ice skating as seen on television I had to look at the book. What fun to read the backstage items and the inside information about a beautiful, graceful sport. The book is very well done. If you enjoy televised ice skating (in my world, who doesn't?) you will love this book. It does bring back memories of going to see the Ice Capades and Holiday on Ice, and the thrill I got getting to watch Sonja Henie, live and in person, in one of her last tours. Those days are long past but I loved the splendor of those productions. Should you get the chance to meet the author, you will enjoy talking to her. She is a lovely lady. Oh yes, I did buy the book and she autographed it for me.

I guess I was expecting something dry and academic, but this book was not like that. It was a fun read and very interesting. I have been following figure skating for 20 years (though not super intensely) and for me there was a lot of new information here. I enjoyed it a lot, and I realize that's because the way I have experienced figure skating has been overwhelmingly--\*through television\*. So to learn more about that and the people involved was like hearing new stories about old friends. An unexpected adventure and a bit of a nostalgia trip.

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