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Mennen Arena to host synchronized skaters

JANUARY 28, 2009

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The largest synchronized skating regional championships in the more than 50-year history of the sport will be held at William G. Mennen Sports Arena in Morris Township Jan. 29-31.

ADVERTISEMENT More than 2,000 skaters on 138 teams from Maine to Florida will compete during the Eastern Synchronized Skating Sectional Championships.

Sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating, the Eastern sectional is one of three regional championships around the country. Teams that place in the top four within select divisions during the competition will qualify to challenge teams from the Midwestern and Pacific Coast regions at the U.S. Synchronized Team Skating Championships in Portland, Maine, March 3-7.

"The event is on course to far exceed our expectations," said Pat Lynch, a board member of the host club, Skating Club of Morris, and chair of the Eastern championships. "When we announced that the Easterns would be held here in Morris Township a few months ago, we expected that it would draw 2,000 people in total. Despite the depressed economy, we are overjoyed that 2,000 skaters alone will be competing, and a few thousand others will be watching."

Lynch said this year's Easterns will be even larger than last year's Midwestern Synchronized Team Skating Sectional Championships, which brought 135 teams to Franklin, Tenn.

Daily tickets to the event, which can be purchased at the Mennen box office during the competition, will cost \$20 for adults and \$8 for senior citizens and children 5-12. Children under 5 will be admitted free. A three-day adult pass will cost \$35.

Synchronized ice skating, during which from eight to 20 athletes skate together to music in precise formations, is a popular and growing discipline within U.S. Figure Skating. Approximately 525 synchronized teams are registered with the Colorado Springs, Colo.-based association.

Founded in 1975, the 230-member Skating Club of Morris is one of the largest clubs in the Eastern section of U.S. Figure Skating. Operating out of the three-rink Mennen Arena, the club offers a variety of team and individualized programs for beginning to advanced skaters of all ages. The club's own 60-member synchronized team, Precisely Right, will skate in four divisions during the Eastern competition.

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