

I Was Hooked

When my neighbour and former classmate called me at The Mountaineer a couple of months ago to talk about a new TV program, I was curious to see how CBC was going to pull this one off. I started watching the Battle of the Blades out of curiosity more than anything. Kurt Browning has always been very entertaining and since he was co-hosting the program I thought maybe this would be one CBC program I could tolerate.

If you are unfamiliar with the Battle of the Blades, it was a show that paired up a retired hockey player with a previous female Olympic/amateur figure skater to perform a pairs figure skating program. I'm told that it was very similar to the show "So You Think You Can Dance," which allowed the viewing audience to vote on which participants they felt should be allowed to continue to the next week's competition.

Every Sunday all the skaters would perform their program and then Monday night one couple would be voted off.

I remember what it was like to have one child in figure skating and two in hockey. There was always bantering about how clumsy hockey players are and how dainty and prissy figure skaters are. I know such bantering wasn't just in our home, it was pretty much universal, so I was skeptical the Battle of the Blades program could bridge the two.

The first program had eight pairs performing the figure skating routines they had rehearsed with the help of figure skating coaches. They all did better than I expected, but the hockey players were visibly out of their element. Ty Domi did pretty well, but he didn't wear figure skates for his performances as the other hockey players struggled with those troublesome picks.

Yes, some of the hockey players could only be given an 'E' for effort and some of the figure skaters were a little rusty, but it was fun to watch. I could certainly feel for the female partners who were dropped during the rehearsals as well as for the ex-hockey players who did the dropping.

As usual, Kurt made me laugh and I enjoyed that first program so much, I just had to watch every Sunday and Monday night. By the way, I can't stand reality shows and I don't usually watch CBC for anything other than Hockey Night In Canada, but they managed to hook me with this show.

Each pair was skating in hopes of winning a sizeable donation for the charity that was closest to their hearts, so people could phone in their vote based on supporting that charity even if they didn't care for the skating program or the skaters who performed it.

I didn't actually vote until the last couple of weeks, but was thrilled that Craig Simpson and Jamie Sale' won the competition. I hope this will be an annual event, I'd like to see Willie Plett and Jim Peplinski don the picks.

Bernadine is a Mountaineer columnist and can be reached at rmhclass@awna.com