



The Crystallettes Senior Synchronized Skating team from Dearborn Michigan was training hard to prepare for their international competition when skater Casey Josz snapped her leg and dislocated her ankle during a practice on ice at the DISC on Sunday, February 5th. Though by far the most tragic was one of many of a series of hurdles for the team to overcome and travel on to Neuchâtel, Switzerland to win Gold in the Neuchâtel Trophy synchro competition. Casey underwent surgery Monday the 6th of February to have pins put in her broken leg but was still at the airport on Tuesday to see her team off on Tuesday. Leaving a fallen skater behind was a hard thing to do as they hugged and kissed her good-bye.

The Crystallettes faced adversity before and during the event, but they persevered through injuries and illnesses to win the international competition.

One skater suffered a broken leg during a practice at Dearborn Skating Club, the team's home ice. Another fell ill with food poisoning before leaving for Europe, and two more became sick (pneumonia and bronchitis) after arriving in Switzerland.

Though the team doctor had his hands full taking care of four USA Teams already the Crystallettes were his biggest customer.

With the freezing temperatures of Neuchâtel the team prepared and trained to start their competition on Friday by taking the ice as if they owned it as they skated their brand new short program, "Mercy" by Duffy, they skated strong and vigorous and were rewarded with a great score giving them a 9.5 point lead over the US Champions Haydenettes from Massachusetts.

As they prepared for their Long program on Saturday morning during their required official practice a skater was sliced in the hand spraying blood on her fellow teammates and the ice, causing the practice to come to a halt as they rushed to stop the bleeding so the team can finish their practice. A few stitches later the team had two options 1) give up and make excuses or 2) stay focused and rise above adversity. Their choice 2) was to be determined to hit the ice like champions Saturday evening and finish what they traveled there to do, Win Gold.

The Crystallettes refocused on their mission and hit the ice like champions that evening to finish what they traveled there to do — win the gold medal. With a message from Casey from home “to skate with their hearts” the Crystallettes performed, “On The Floor” by JLo, they skated well but not clean hitting a few bobbles on the way during their up-tempo 4.5 minute program. That didn’t matter their score was high enough to reward them with first place and win the Neuchâtel Trophy Gold medal. Next stop USFS Synchronized Skating Nationals at Worcester, Massachusetts March 2nd and 3rd.

The Crystallettes skate and train out of Dearborn Ice Skating Center in Dearborn Michigan. The team is made up of 19 skaters ranging in age from 15 to 22 years old from the southeast Michigan area, Brianne Anderson (Fraser), Nicolette Bailey (Detroit), Katie Benedetti (Chesterfield), Nicole Davies (Concord, MA), Mackenzie Elkow (Farmington Hills), Casey Josz (Howell), Allison Kohl (W.Bloomfield), Chelsea MacIntosh (Clinton Twp.), Sharon Neff (Birmingham), Captain Katilyn Peterson (Dearborn), DonAe Poe (Redford), Captain Meghan Quigley (Bloomfield Hills), Cara Schooley and Meghan Schooley (Bloomfield Hills), Alyssa Shomsky (Livonia), Spencer Thomas (Commerce), Alexandra Zazula (Birmingham), Jacquelyne and Josephine Zolynsky (Farmington Hills), Coaches, Shannon Peterson, Holly Teets, Asst. Coaches, Kevin O’Keefe, Ann Barr, Managers, Mary Ann Quigley and Laura Elkow.