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Free lessons at club's open house may spread 'skating bug'

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Wolfie Norgren slid right up to the boards of the ice rink at the Tim Moylan-Tranquility Iceplex.



Taylor Pendley, front left, and Rachel Achola, in earmuffs, stay upright during a free skating lesson Sunday afternoon at the Tim Moylan-Tranquility Iceplex. The Premier Figure Skating Club hosted the event to celebrate National Skating Month.

"Dad!" Wolfie, 7, called out. "I was skating at a very high speed."

"How fast do you think you were going?" his father, Rob Norgren, asked.

"About 9 miles an hour," Wolfie said, before taking off again around the rink.

Wolfie already is a veteran of ice skating lessons. On Sunday, he moved among beginners and instructors at the Premier Figure Skating Club's open house to celebrate National Skating Month.

David Leatherwood, 19, is a junior coach for the skating club. Dressed as the Cat in the Hat, he was one of several instructors who offered free 15-minute lessons to beginners. They also offered face painting and coupons for free classes.

The coaches targeted those beginners who were "hugging the wall," said Ann Summers, president of the skating club. There were plenty of those. Several children pushed orange traffic cones around the ice for support.

"We want to teach them how to fall, how to get up and how to march on the ice," Summers said.

As a child, Papillion's Stacy Neil skated every once in a while on Johnson Lake near Lexington, Neb.

"No lessons. Just for fun," Neil said.

This winter, her father flooded the rough ice on the lake to make a smooth rink for her own children. Emma, 12, and Claire, 9, love to skate, but they aren't experts.

Nonetheless, they were fearless Sunday as they slid around the ice with their younger and more experienced cousin Taryn Smith, 7, who has competed in figure skating contests.

"They thought it was a good change to skate with her and watch her do some of her tricks," Stacy Neil said. "They're doing awesome."

The Premier Figure Skating Club offers "learn to skate" classes for beginners of all ages, as well as for more experienced skaters.

"We just want people to catch the skating bug and have fun," Summers said.

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