3 Olympic champions elected to World Figure Skating Hall of Fame
Coach Mishin, choreographer Kawahara join Class of 2017

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado, USA (April 10, 2017) – Olympic champions Trixi Schuba, Alexei Yagudin and pairs team Shen Xue & Zhao Hongbo lead the 2017 class of the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame, nominating chair Lawrence Mondschein announced today. They are joined by coach Alexei Mishin and choreographer Sarah Kawahara.

“The Class of 2017 is the largest in recent memory,” Mondschein said. “Among the members elected are those who have made significant contributions to the development of figure skating in terms of athleticism, artistry and entertainment. Once retired from the competitive ranks, many went on to have successful careers as officials, coaches or choreographers to a new generation of figure skaters.”

Austria’s Trixi Schuba is the 1972 Olympic champion and a two-time World champion (1971-72). Schuba won two European titles and is a six-time Austrian champion. She is considered the greatest compulsory figures skater of all time, as she earned untouchable leads after the figures portion of the competition. Schuba was so dominant that the International Skating Union altered the weight of scoring figures from 60 percent to 50 percent. Compulsory figures were eliminated in 1990.

In just six senior seasons, Russia’s Alexei Yagudin won the 2002 Olympic gold medal, became a four-time World champion (1998-2000, 2002), a three-time European champion (1998-99, 2002), and a two-time Grand Prix Final champion (1998, 2001). His fierce rivalry with countryman Evgeni Plushenko fueled the athletic style of men’s figure skating today. Yagudin’s career was cut short due to a congenital hip disorder. He retired from competition in 2002.

Chinese Olympic champions Shen Xue & Zhao Hongbo ended almost a half century of Soviet/Russian pairs dominance and laid the foundation of the Chinese national team. Their 2010 Olympic title is China’s first gold medal in any figure skating discipline and ended Russia’s 46-year, 12-Olympic gold medal streak. Shen & Zhao are the first Chinese pairs team to medal at an ISU event (gold, 1997 Skate Canada), the World Figure Skating Championships (silver, 1999) and the Olympics (bronze, 2002). They are the first Chinese pairs team to win a World championship (2002) and Olympic title. Today, Zhao is a Chinese national team pairs coach.

Russia’s Alexei Mishin is one of the most successful and innovative coaches of the sport. His students have won three Olympic gold medals (Alexei Urmanov, 1994; Evgeni Plushenko, 2006; and Plushenko’s team event gold, 2014), five World titles, 10 European crowns and 22 Russian championships. He continues to coach many current stars in Russia and abroad. Mishin, who earned an engineering degree, was the first to train athletes with harnesses and weights, created a training system for multi-rotation jumps and designed training devices still used around the world. Mishin has published 100-plus works on figure skating teaching methods.

Skating choreographer and director Sarah Kawahara is known for her television, film and touring ice shows. She has won two Primetime Emmys, for Scott Hamilton: Upside Down (1997) and The Opening Ceremony of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Olympic productions featured more than 1,000 skaters on the largest outdoor ice surface ever created. Kawahara, a Canadian who lives in California, remains in demand as a choreographer of ice shows and films.

The hall’s Legends Committee, which considers contributions in 1960 and prior, posthumously selected 1936 Olympic bronze medalist and coach Vivi-Ann-Hulten of Sweden; 1908 Olympic pairs silver medalists Phyllis Wyatt Johnson & James Johnson of Great Britain; Switzerland’s Hans-Rudi Mauch, better known as “Mr. Frack” of the ice skating comedy team of “Frick and Frack”; and three-time World silver medalist Werner Rittberger of Germany, who at age 17 invented the loop jump in 1910.