

ON OUR RADAR

# Sasha Cohen

## Look Out, World



**F**igure skater Sasha Cohen is a 19-year-old human tornado whose dazzling jumps and spins would twist lesser skaters into a knot.

Yet Cohen is known more for the embarrassing falls she took at the Winter Olympics and World Championships in 2002. At both events, she was a gold-medal contender but finished fourth.

But this 2003-04 season, Cohen has pulled off a miracle on ice. On October 3, she won the ladies' title at the Campbell's International Figure Skating Classic, an invitation-only event for world-class skaters. She beat five-time world champion Michelle Kwan for the first time in her career.

"I've always looked up to [Michelle]," says Cohen. "To be able to hold it together and skate a good program and beat Michelle was a big step."

Then, from October 25 through November 16, Cohen won three more elite international competitions: Skate America, Skate Canada, and Trophée Laliue.

Why is Cohen suddenly skating with more thrills and no spills? "I've learned to handle myself [during] the pressure of competition," she says. "I just focus on being positive, relaxing, and doing what I do in practice."

The key to Cohen's new approach is her coach. In September 2002, Cohen hired Russian legend Tatiana Tarasova, who has trained seven Olympic champions. Tarasova toughened Cohen up physically, with intense workouts, and mentally, by teaching her to skate with poise. A month later, the shaky confidence that was Cohen's stumbling block vanished when she won Skate Canada.

"[Coach] pushes me in all different parts of my skating," says Cohen. "I've really seen an all-around improvement." Cohen has won eight gold medals with Tarasova. Still, she isn't satisfied because she hasn't won at the Olympics, worlds, or nationals.

The pressure will be on to win the U.S. Championships, this January 3-11. Cohen is one of the favorites, but she'll have to defeat Kwan, the defending champion, again. Cohen's moment of truth is almost here. And this time, the twirling tornado plans to blow away the competition. — *by Shawn Nicholls*

**BY THE WAY:** Cohen finished third at the U.S. Championships in 2003 behind Michelle Kwan and Sarah Hughes.

**Height:** 5' 2" **Weight:** 95 lbs.  
**Birth Date:** October 26, 1984  
**Birthplace:** Westwood, California  
**Accomplishments:** Champion: 2003 Skate Canada, 2003 Skate America, 2002 Trophée Laliue

SASHA COHEN

1. WHAT IS SASHA'S BIRTH PLACE?
2. IN 2003 WHAT PLACE DID SASHA FINISH IN THE U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP?
3. IN 2002 WHAT PLACE DID SASHA FINISH IN THE WINTER OLYMPICS?
4. HOW BIG IS COHEN?
5. WHO IS THE NEW COACH THAT COHEN HIRED?
6. COHEN HAS ALREADY WON AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL. TRUE OR FALSE
7. HER NEW COACH IS FROM BURKE. TRUE OR FALSE.
8. COHEN HAS WON SKATE CANADA, SKATE AMERICA AND TROPHÉE LALIQUE. TRUE OR FALSE
9. WHAT DID COHEN WIN ON OCT. 3<sup>RD</sup>?
10. COHEN'S NEW COACH PUT A LOT OF PRESSURE ON HER. TRUE OR FALSE.