

Excerpted from AMERICAN SKATING WORLD May '93

## **Gustave Lussi Still Teaches - On Video**

*by Cecily Alexandra Morrow*

I'm stuck in the snow...and a ninety-four year old gentleman is helping me pry my car loose! It is March 24, 1993; Gustave F. Lussi, legendary coach of 16 World and Olympic champions, is in his driveway in Lake Placid, with a bag of Kitty Litter, directing my efforts, by specific instructions - "put some over there, now..." using his innate knowledge of the relevant physics to coax my ungainly Chrysler up over the rise. Soon I'm on my way, but as I turn to wave goodbye, Mr. Lussi has already started to close the garage door of his home, Swiss Meadows, and I sense his immediate concern for Mrs. Lussi, whose recurring illness has saddened him in recent years.

My presence there in the blizzard aftermath was dictated by need for additional audio material for Volumes II, III, and IV of SYSTEMATIC FIGURE SKATING: The Spin and Jump Techniques of Gustave Lussi. Volume I of the video series, detailing the spinning methods developed by Mr. Lussi, those which he used to prepare students for multi-revolution jumping, is now available by mail order.

Each one-hour video places the viewer in actual lesson situations with Mr. Lussi. True to his teaching methodology, where mastery of one element prepares the student for a more complicated maneuver, each volume in the series builds upon the basics contained in its predecessor. In the words of two-time Olympic Champion Dick Button: "The spinning was the basis for the

jumping...Gustave Lussi produced champion after champion after champion because he gave his pupils technique that they could rely upon."

I first met Mr. Lussi when I was eleven. My mother followed Carol Hamill's advice and drove me up into the Adirondack peaks to train with the coach famous for his ability to teach skaters how to spin and jump. Already a good skater (fortunate in having had excellent basic instruction), I was still scared...of jumping off the ice. Until then, I'd had only general ideas about jump positions in the air, how to enter and finish spins. Mr. Lussi allayed those fears by teaching me, in detail, how to spin and jump. Mom suggested that I keep a notebook: anything, she said - diagrams, key words - so I did.

Years later, when I began teaching, I referred to that notebook and encouraged my students to go to Lake Placid to study with Mr. Lussi; he and I conducted summer workshops there together, and I learned more about his methods. At his request I started to document his methods...and to dream of a video presentation. Increasingly, I saw how his innovative work underlies the best of today's freeskating.

Again, I was lucky. Through the assistance of Dick Button, Doug Wilson of ABC Sports, Paul Wylie (and the Scotvolds), and others - especially people at the Olympic Regional Development Authority in Lake Placid - we got the project going.

Now, Volume I is out, and I'm happy to give to skating what I received from one of the great ones. ASW