

# Xtreme skating

Continued from front page

After a little while, a number of the teenage boys begin to gravitate toward him on the ice, watching his ice skating style. "Everyone just stops and watches," says Shawn Versheck, 14, of Bellmore, who skates with Perceval. "He'll do a 180, stop on one foot, and then spin around."

Perceval, with his actor's looks and amiable personality, is hoping that others stop and watch as well, as he hopes to make what he calls his new sport, Xtreme ice skating, a nationwide sensation.

And just what is Xtreme skating? "It's the power and speed of hockey combined with the tricks and technicality of figure skating," Perceval says. "It gives me the opportunity to take ice skating to extreme levels."

Perceval, who started skating at age of 12, says he would emulate the tricks and moves of hockey players and skaters. By the time he was 19, he says, he had really come into his own, performing quick turns and intricate, creative moves at high speed on the ice. He began calling it Xtreme ice skating, and says he hopes his nascent sport catches on.

"A lot of the reaction has been, 'Oh, extreme ice skating, that's interesting,'" Perceval says as he traverses teens milling near the concession stand. "I decided to come up with new tricks and make ice skating a little more creative."

## Extreme everything

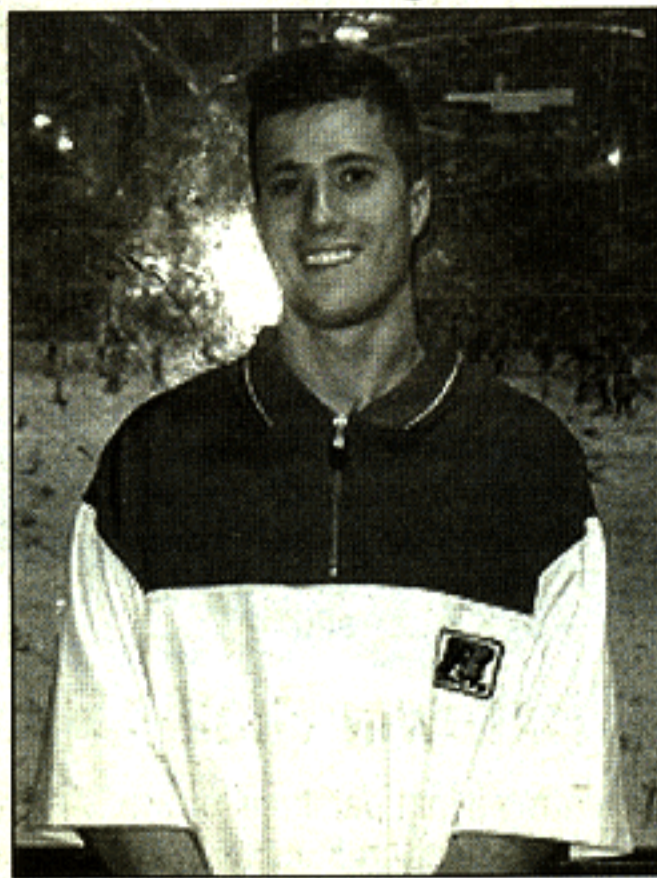
Extreme sports — mostly alternative sports, ranging from snowboarding to sky surfing at 13,000 feet — have grown in popularity since the 1990s. ESPN has its own "X Games," dubbed the "Alternative Olympics," which attracts thousands of athletes and their fans. And because the sports are attractive to teenagers, advertisements for extreme sports have become ubiquitous — Mountain Dew commercials, for example — and sell an image of individualism and rebellion.

With everything from "Extreme Ironing" — yes, ironing, in which contestants press shirts under water or in the midst of a sky dive — to a drink called Extreme Water, the marketing of anything as "extreme" has become pervasive.

Perceval, who graduated from Hofstra last year, is hoping to use this strategy to his advantage. He broached the idea of marketing his new sport to his e-commerce professor, Alexander Pelaez, who expressed interest and now acts as Perceval's business consultant. "I think the market for new and exciting things is appealing," says Pelaez, watching Perceval kick up a spray of ice at Newbridge. "It's very unique, especially for teenagers who are looking for that next thrill, like rollerblading. A lot of kids are watching him and are intrigued."

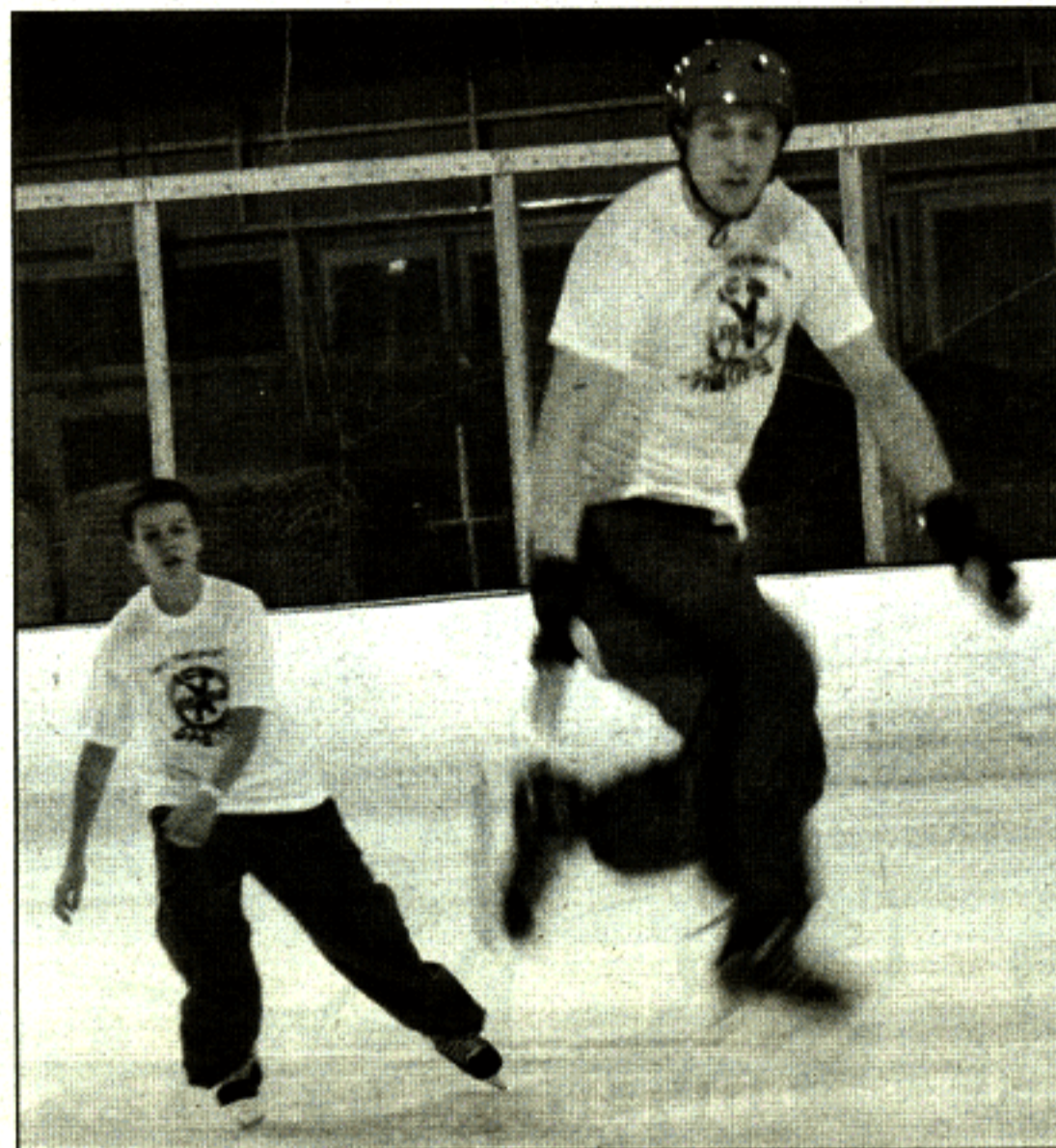
Nick Butler, a 14-year-old from Bellmore, is Perceval's protégé, and has been an Xtreme ice skater for five months. "I saw [Perceval] doing these crazy tricks," says Butler, who quickly became interested in the sport and asked Perceval to train him. "Ever since then he considered me an Xtreme ice skater."

Perceval has his own Web site, [www.XtremeIceSkating.com](http://www.XtremeIceSkating.com), which is filled with photos, streaming video and an online store. He also offers lessons, and is looking to assemble a team that would tour the country and attract corporate sponsorship. In April, Perceval says, he will perform a brief show before a college hockey game in Pennsylvania. "Eventually, I want to be in the X Games," he says.



Courtesy of Dan Perceval

**EXTREME CLOSE-UP** Dan Perceval



**AIR BORN** Dan Perceval in mid air as Nick Butler, 14, of Bellmore looks on at Newbridge Arena in Bellmore. Perceval and other "Xtreme" skaters come here on Friday nights.

Philip Datz/Herald



**COOL MOVES** Perceval holds his ankle in the midst of a jump, one of his many tricks that he performs as an extreme ice skater.

## A familiar face or a nuisance?

Just as Friday nights are synonymous with teenagers at Newbridge, Perceval has become a staple at the rink. He says he comes almost every Friday night, and when he isn't there, he is working on making his dream a reality, writing proposals and looking for investors. He is not like others his age, he admits, spends Friday nights at a skating rink when most are hanging out at bars or nightclubs.

"I live a different lifestyle than most," Perceval says, adding that he is more interested in sports, the arts and keeping physically fit.

And he is clearly at home on the ice. Mostly, he keeps his routine tame out of consideration for the other skaters, and also because he could be kicked out of the arena if he gets too wild. Perceval says that at times, arena officials do express some annoyance with him, but for the most part he doesn't take skating too far.

"When it's busy they give me a hard time," says Perceval. "Sometimes other rinks turn me away. But I've been skating here for a while and I don't give them a hard time."

He demonstrates some of his signature moves, with names such as the "drunken sailor," the "machine gun" and the "air flow." At times he zooms around teenyboppers and children, crunching the ice with each landing and hard stop. He crisscrosses his legs in mid-air, does rapid moves on the ice and then quickly bounces into the air and twists his body. He demonstrates a move called the "spider," in which his knees protrude outward as he scurries along the ice.

From the spider he quickly performs the air flow, in which he does a 540-degree spin while airborne.

"He defies gravity," says Perceval's father, Gene. He illustrates how high his son can get, putting his hands above his head and, with a smile, saying, "This high."

Things will get really extreme, Gene says, when they finish building ramps that will propel Dan through the air. "He can easily go 20 feet," his father says.

Perceval doesn't have the grace of say, figure skater Michelle Kwan, but that's not the point of Xtreme ice skating. It's meant to be more accessible and low-brow, he says.

Brian Perrone, a 14-year-old from Bellmore, has been learning some moves from

Perceval. "I didn't think I could do it," says Perrone, who, along with his friend Matt Lazarus, also of Bellmore, hangs out at Newbridge on Fridays. "At first I fell a lot, but now I'm pretty decent."

Perceval admits that there are dangers, like any other sport. Not long ago, he sliced his wrist as he grabbed his skates while performing a trick in midair. Ever since, he has worn a protective brace on each wrist. Aside from that, he says, he and others who skate with him have suffered no injuries. "As long as I wear protective equipment, I'm good," he says.

There is one detractor at the arena, however. "It's such a joke," says one young man who won't give his name.

Mostly, though, kids say they are impressed, and congregate near Perceval, especially tonight, with a reporter and a photographer focusing on him. At one point, as Perceval makes his way off the ice, a cluster of teenage girls ask him for his autograph, and he happily obliges.

"Everyone always says he's amazing," says 13-year-old Kelly Morgese, of Merrick. Make that Xtreme.

Comments about this story? [Baldwineditor@liherald.com](mailto:Baldwineditor@liherald.com) or (516) 569-4000 ext. 207.