Harding, Tonya (1970-) Encyclopedia Article

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Tonya Harding, considered one of the greatest athletes in women's figure skating in the 1990s, has always been a hard-luck case in that glamorous sport. According to sportswriter Joan Ryan, "Harding's unforgivable sin in the skating community was not that she had no class or taste but that she refused to allow anybody to give her some." National Champion in 1991, Harding's career veered wildly between success and disaster, and was finally ended by her participation in a plot that disabled Nancy Kerrigan on the eve of the 1993 Nationals, which Harding went on to win. The much-hyped "duel" between Kerrigan and Harding at the Olympics fizzled when Harding performed poorly. Capitalizing on the public fascination with the rivalry, a television film, *Tonya and Nancy,* appeared in 1994.

She avoided imprisonment, but was barred from amateur competition and stripped of her National title, and has since struggled to return to skating.

Further Reading:

Baughman, Cynthia, editor. *Women on Ice: Feminist Essays on the Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan Spectacle.* New York, Routledge, 1995.

Brennan, Christie. *Inside Edge: A Revealing Journey into the Secret World of Figure Skating.* New York, Anchor Books, 1996.

Frey, Jennifer. "Harding, Kerrigan: Another Sad Performance." *Washington Post.* February 8, 1998.

Ryan, Joan. *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes: The Making and Breaking of Elite Gymnasts and Figure Skaters.* New York, Doubleday, 1995.