

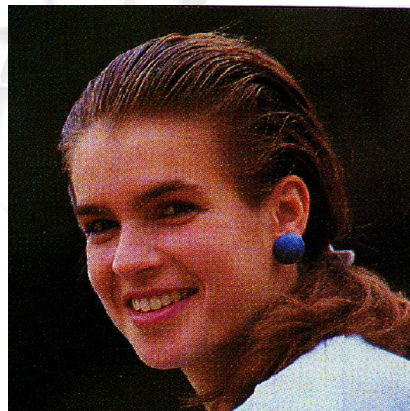
SPORTING LEGENDS: KATERINA WITT

SPORT: FIGURE SKATING

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1979 - 1994

Katarina Witt is a German figure skater. Witt won two Olympic Gold Medals for East Germany, first in the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics and the second in 1988 at the Calgary Olympics.

She won the world championships in 1984, 1985, 1987, and 1988. She also won six European championships. Her competitive record makes her one of the most successful figure skaters of all time.



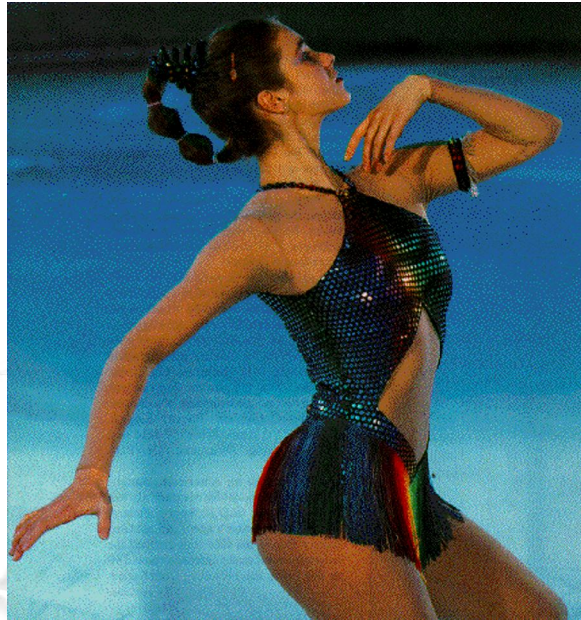
Witt was born on December 3, 1965 in Staaken (today part of Berlin, Germany/GDR). She went to school in Karl-Marx-Stadt, today reverted to its pre-Communist name Chemnitz. There she attended a special school for sports-talented children, named Kinder- und Jugendsportschule. She represented the club SC Karl-Marx-Stadt for the GDR (East Germany). Her coach was Jutta Müller since 1970.

In 1984 Katarina Witt was voted as "the GDR female athlete of the year" by the readers of the East-German newspaper Junge Welt.

In 1987 she recaptured the World Championship title, which she lost in the previous year to Debi Thomas. Many people consider her performance at this event to be the finest of her career.

In 1988 Witt started a professional career, which was very unusual for East German athletes. At first she spent three years on tour in the United States with Brian Boitano, also a Gold Medal winner at the Winter Olympics in figure skating. Their show "Witt and Boitano Skating" was so successful that for the first time in ten years New York's Madison Square Garden was sold out for an ice show.

SPORTING LEGENDS: KATERINA WITT



Witt combined grace with athletic precision on the ice

She also became an actress in the film *Carmen on Ice* (1989), which expanded upon her Gold Medal freestyle routine at Calgary. In 1990, she received an Emmy Award for her role in this film.

In 1994 she had a comeback to the competitive skating scene. She was again coached by Jutta Müller and qualified for the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, where she came in 7th place. Especially her free program to the music "Sag mir wo die Blumen stehen" was remarkable for the artistic impression including a peace message for the people of Sarajavo, the place of her first Olympic victory.

She received the Golden Camera for her Olympic comeback. In 1995 she was admitted to the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame. In 1999 she was voted as "Most favourite Female Athlete in the United States". In the same year she was also voted as the "Most favourite Female Skater of the Century".

Witt has been known for her beauty and sex appeal as well as for her athleticism. Time magazine called her "the most beautiful face of socialism". At the peak of her career, she was thought by some to resemble Brooke Shields, both of whom were in their late teens / early 20s at the time.

Witt's taste in figure skating costumes sometimes raised eyebrows. At the 1983 European championships she skated her Mozart short program in knee breeches instead of a skirt.

SPORTING LEGENDS: KATERINA WITT



Witt possessed a natural sense of rhythm and flair for dancing.

Olympic Games:

1984 – 1. Place
1988 – 1. Place
1994 – 7. Place

World Championships:

1980 – 10. Place
1981 – 5. Place
1982 – 2. Place
1983 – 4. Place
1984 – 1. Place
1985 – 1. Place
1986 – 2. Place
1987 – 1. Place
1988 – 1. Place

European Championships:

1983 – 1. Place
1984 – 1. Place
1985 – 1. Place
1986 – 1. Place
1987 – 1. Place
1988 – 1. Place
1994 – 8. Place

SPORTING LEGENDS: KATERINA WITT



Scott Burton's Final Thought

Katerina Witt was certainly the most dominant female figure skater of her generation.

She was virtually unbeatable for a decade, and became the face of German ice sports for a long time.

Well-liked and respected in the sport, Witt possessed an elegance and grace that appears only once in a lifetime.



Witt's Farewell Tour in 2008 was a huge success!