Those of you who frequently read my editorials know that I often use quotes to drive home certain points within my column. Recently, while putting some quotes together for the awards dinner at conference, I began to realize that often in current history, Figure Skating has become the target of late night humorists, bloggers, and columnists.

Here are examples of three recent quotes:
Alimzhan Tokhtakhounov, under U.S. indictment for allegedly creating the skating judging scandal at the 2002 Winter Olympics, gave an interview for ESPN's Outside the Lines. He said “...all that’s being written about me is completely untrue.” Responded Dennis Bolles, of the FBI: “Well, John Gotti said that. Although Gotti never specifically denied rigging figure-skating.”

Wrote Janice Hough, a frequent blogger on NY-times.com, “With the steroids in Major League Baseball, the dog fighting and other arrests in the NFL, the disqualification of so many Tour de France riders, the game-fixing in the NBA, who knows, maybe the least controversial sport might just turn out to be figure skating.”

Ray Ratto, a CBS.com columnist wrote in reference to Tim Donaghy, a National Basketball Association Referee who claimed that other Championship series had been fixed by officials, “They’re like figure skating fans, who learned to factor in the idea that the judges were straight from Enron Central Casting, and kept coming back for more.”

As often with humor, there in itself lies the truth. We have become the joke. Although much of what is written centers around the reputation of our Judges, Tiffany Chin laid it out plainly when during the Governing Council of U.S. Figure Skating in May said, “...the reputation of coaches is not what it should be.”

Based on the countless calls and e-mail I have been receiving recently, I unfortunately have to agree. But it’s not just the coaches and judges. We ALL have to look to ourselves and know that we are doing everything in our power to act morally and ethically. The internet makes this a small world...too small.

Another recent article to make its way around is the alleged rape of a 13 year old skater by her coach in Japan. This year, a former World Champion was involved in a fatal car accident while driving drunk.

Another skater was drugged with a date rape drug by a business partner. Also in Japan, a national competitor arrested for drunk driving and of course the untimely death of Christopher Bowman which had initially reported to be under suspicious circumstances.

As a group we have become selfish; the great enablers who believe that all press is good press. Does the end justify the means? What type of people are we going to attract to this sport when this is the perception of who we are? We need to turn this ship around NOW...immediately. We may not get a second chance! I’ll leave you with this final quote:

Two Wolves
One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

He said, “My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all.

One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”