

Apolo Ohno: Whizzing on Ice

Apolo Ohno is a famous short track speed skater. He has won eight Olympic medals in his sport: two gold, two silver, and four bronze.

Apolo was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1982 and was raised by his father, Yuki. While Apolo was growing up, he and his father lived in Seattle. Yuki worked long hours. He wanted to find ways to keep his son busy before and after school. So he signed Apolo up for sports. Apolo joined a swim team. He also started roller skating and in-line skating.

Apolo became interested in speed skating at age twelve, when he watched the 1994 Winter Olympics on TV. He found it exciting to see skaters race around an indoor ice track the size of a hockey rink.

It took Apolo only two years to become the fastest short track speed skater in the country. He moved away from home to practice with coaches in New York and Colorado. He hoped to join the 1998 U.S. Olympic speed skating team. He worked hard, but sometimes he didn't exercise enough. At the tryouts for the Olympics, he skated too slowly to make the team.

Apolo was very upset. This is when his father stepped in to help. Yuki took Apolo to a cottage outside the city of Seattle, with no TV or telephone. There, Apolo had plenty of time to think about how he would feel if he dropped his sport. One day, sitting alone on a rock in the rain, he decided to keep skating. After that, he worked very hard. He earned a place on the Olympic team in 2002, 2006, and 2010, and won medals every time. In fact, Apolo has now won more medals at the Winter Olympics than any other American.