

## Elvis Stojko

## Athlete Category

No figure skating fan in the 1990s will forget one Elvis Stojko. The native of Richmond Hill, Ontario took the world by storm to become one of Canada's best-ever figure skaters. He is a two-time Olympic silver medallist, a three-time world champion and seven-time national champion. A Canadian sport icon, Stojko has long been committed as well to charitable causes.

The masterful skater burst onto the scene in 1990, when at the age of 17 he finished second at the Canadian Championships to Kurt Browning – the Canadian legend he would soon surpass. It didn't take long for Stojko to make history. At the 1991 World Championships he became the first skater ever to land a quad combination, a quadruple toe loop-double toe loop. (He finished sixth.)

Stojko won four straight national silver medals – the one in 1992 earned him a trip to his first Olympic Winter Games. In Albertville, he finished seventh. Two years later he rose to another level. A Canadian champion for the first time, topping Browning, Stojko turned heads with a silver medal performance at the 1994 Olympic Winter Games. That year he also captured his first World Championship gold medal. He was named Canadian Male Athlete of the Year.

It is then that his legendary perseverance took shape. Stojko injured his foot at the 1995 nationals, forcing him to withdraw. Most expected him to miss the World Championships, but the recovering skater did much more: he not only competed, but repeated as world champion. In 1997, he was world champion again, a year that saw him land the world's first quadruple toe loop, triple toe loop combination jump in competition. Stojko ran a string of Canadian titles from 1996 through 2000, adding one last title in 2002.

His gutsiest performance came on Olympic ice in 1998. Unbeknownst to viewers, Stojko skated despite a severe groin injury and a case of the flu which aggravated it even worse. After his long program, he doubled over in pain. But, amazingly, his performance won him a second Olympic silver medal. Stojko limped to the podium in sneakers to receive his medal. For his courage and determination, he won the Governor General's Meritorious Service Cross and the silver Greek cross for performing to an uncommonly high standard.

Stojko finished eighth at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and soon after announced his retirement from competitive figure skating. All along the way he volunteered with many charities, including Ronald McDonald's Children's Charities, The United Way, Variety Village and Sick Kids Hospital. He has long supported the Special Olympics, lends his voice to numerous other non-profit groups, and helps coach young figure skaters. His awards and distinctions are numerous and all richly deserved.