

# SKATES U.S. HELPS ATHLETES COMPETE FOR GOLD WITH NETWORK SERVICES FROM COMCAST BUSINESS

COMCAST  
BUSINESS

COMCAST BUSINESS INTERNET EXPEDITES DATA TRANSFER  
AND ORDER PROCESSING CAPABILITIES FOR LEADING IMPORTER  
AND DISTRIBUTOR OF ICE AND ROLLER FIGURE SKATES

## Exclusive U.S. Importer and Distributor of EDEA and Roll-Line Skates Offers Unparalleled Performance and Comfort to World's Top Figure Skating Athletes



Skates U.S. is the exclusive U.S. importer and distributor for the industry's top two brands of competitive ice and roller figure skates.

These products represent

the very best in advanced technology and are used by nearly 70 percent of World Champions and U.S. National competitive ice and roller figure skaters.

Founded in 2004 and headquartered in Richmond, Indiana, Skates U.S. distributes its imported products through approximately 400 dealers throughout the U.S. It also offers customized boot fitting services to individual customers who need assistance in accomplishing their personal skating goals.



With half the weight of a traditional leather skating boot structure, the products offered by Skates U.S. feature a snug memory foam lining which provides unrivaled comfort alongside a durable MicroCarbon shell structure that can be heated and "Shaped" for

customized fits. The skates also employ the use of the EDEA Anti-Shock UnderSole, made of NOENE®, a rubber known for its extreme viscoelasticity, to provide an additional level of safety by reducing the sport's impact on skaters' bodies.

"We've taken a whole new spin – literally – on how ice and roller skate boots are made," said David Ripp, president of Skates U.S. "When skaters land a jump, their impact on the skating surface is approximately eight times their body weight, which goes right back up their ankle, knee, hip, spine and into the base of the skull. NOENE® changes the direction of that energy and diffuses it horizontally so the impact is reduced anywhere from 40-60 percent while improving performance. This allows our skaters to train longer, perform better, and stay safer."

### SITUATION

- Exclusive U.S. Importer/Distributor of top two ice and roller figure skate brands in the world
- Owns a nearly 70% market share
- Customers include members of Team USA Figure Skating and World Roller Figure Skater team

### CHALLENGE

- High volume of online sales required greater network capacity
- Continuous data transfers between multiple locations demanded more reliability
- Faster photo and video uploads needed for company website

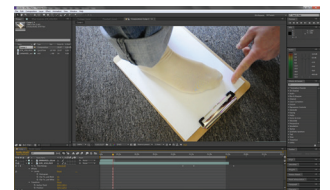
### SOLUTION

- Comcast Business Internet
- Comcast Business Voice
- Comcast Business TV

### RESULTS

- Network capacity increased from 30 to 100 Mbps; scalable to 1 Gig
- Faster online order processing capabilities
- Data & video files can be transferred with ease

To develop the EDEA Anti-Shock UnderSole, much testing has gone on behind the scenes. Researchers at the University of Delaware and University of Verona leverage a variety of technology – from scientific drop plates to skate impact sensors – to measure the impact, and of course video to film and record response. This data is transferred back and forth over the Internet via high-bandwidth video files and live streaming to decide on the custom architecture. The final skate is manufactured at a state-of-the-art facility in Montebelluna, Italy, by some of the best designers, engineers, and skate artisans in the world.



## Skates U.S. Helps American Athletes Make Their Professional and Olympic Dreams a Reality

In addition to being the Premier Sponsor of the USA Roller Sports Figure Skating National Championships, Skates U.S. leads the industry in supporting athletes involved in artistic figure skating, roller derby, jam skating, quad speed skating and recreational roller skating. The company also takes great pride in being the preferred major skate distributor and technical support provider for about 60 percent of the top-level competitive and professional ice figure skaters. Many of these skaters are also in contention for a spot on the Team USA Figure Skating team and have been loyal supporters of the company since they first began their careers.

“The Olympic motto is ‘faster, higher, stronger,’ and our distributed products enable our clients to embody exactly those qualities,” continued Ripp. “From the moment they step onto the ice until the moment they step off it, our clients can rest assured that the boots on their feet are jam-packed with the most innovative technology on the market. The rest is up to them.”



Skates U.S. processes more than 350,000 transactions and communications each year to serve its clientele. As a result, its online merchant processing system is taxed nearly every hour of the

day. With only a 30 Megabits-per-second (Mbps) Internet connection, Skates U.S. simply did not have sufficient bandwidth to conduct business. In addition to online order processing, Skates U.S. regularly shares product test results, high-speed video footage and new industry statistics between its U.S. headquarters, its European manufacturers and various researchers located across the country and around the world.

While Skates U.S. is presenting to, educating, and supporting skaters at almost 40 events each year, Skates U.S. leverages four to six mobile merchant processing units. The system continuously up-dates orders and inventory with the information stored in the data center at the company’s Richmond headquarters. This kind of communication helps Skates U.S. to keep current, accurate information on what products are being sold and need to be replenished from suppliers. Both EDEA and Roll-Line utilize online ordering systems for Skates U.S. to be able to keep things “gliding smoothly” and “rolling along”. A reliable, high-performance Internet connection is critical to ensure all parties can access the data they need when and where they need it.

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- David Ripp  
President  
Skates U.S.

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From a consumer-facing perspective, the company also uploads numerous photos and instructional videos to its company website on a regular basis. This further mandated the need for greater bandwidth that could not only accommodate the demands of ongoing large file uploads but that would also offer scalability and room for growth when needed.

### **Comcast Business Brings Skates U.S. Closer to the Skating Community with High-Performance Internet**

With the help of Comcast Business, Skates U.S. upgraded its Internet connection to 100 Mbps of capacity, with the ability to scale to 1 Gigabit-per-second (Gbps) as the company grows. This has dramatically improved the reliability of its online merchant processing system, as it allows Skates U.S. to receive and ship orders all day long without being impeded by slow Internet service or lost customer requests.

This new Comcast Business Internet service also allows Skates U.S. to quickly transfer critical company files to and from researchers in Europe and other parts of the U.S. In addition to hundreds of videos detailing energy absorption and impact diversion test results, Skates U.S. can store specific data sets for individual skaters – which often include details about their boot shape, foot curvature and body measurements – so these customers can easily reorder replacement boots without needing to supply this information more than once.

Comcast Business also installed both its Business TV and Business Voice services to help Skates U.S. operate even more efficiently than before. With phone features like call forwarding, extension dialing and call holding, the company can now ensure that customers who prefer to speak with a live person will always be able to do so.

“When we looked at other providers, Comcast Business had the strongest, most reliable network and offered much higher capacity than the competition,” concluded Ripp. “Our Internet, phone and TV services have been both dependable and robust, and we appreciate being partners with an organization that shares our commitment to supporting Team USA. With the network we have now, we are confident that our athletes will have no trouble gaining access to the skates they need to help them go for the gold.”