



Durham dad Colin Granger designs better Balance Blades for learning skaters

Durham father Colin Granger taught his oldest son to ice skate during Sunday afternoon public skating sessions at the local arena. He remembers watching worriedly as the four year old fell backwards again and again. As his son's skating confidence was taking a hit, Granger knew there had to be a better way to teach kids to ice skate.

"The signature helpless feeling you get, when you see their skates slip from under them and you picture the impending rear fall, hoping they do not hit their head off the ice," said Granger. "I felt it necessary to come up with a way to avoid falling at the beginner level. Having previous national figure skating and hockey experience, I had an idea."

When it came time to teach his younger boy to skate, Granger developed Balance Blades. The blades worked so well in preventing rear falls and as a learning aid that his son learned to skate sooner. Granger did not have to hold him up once.

"He was able to get off the ice on his own, stand on the spot, push off with proper skating strides and glides," said the Scugog resident.

Balance Blades use a uniquely engineered blade unlike any other beginner skate in the world. A hybrid between a figure skate and a hockey skate, front and rear interior

indentations in Balance Blades are hidden within the contour of the blade, unlike a traditional figure skate in which the picks protrude and can be a tripping hazard.

Indentations cut into the rear of the blades -- similar to inverted skate picks, except hidden inside the blade -- do not interfere with normal skating. They engage the ice automatically and involuntarily when the skate starts to slip out, providing a moment for the young skater to realign centre of gravity and avoid a fall.

"I also cut indentations into the front of the blades. They would engage the ice deliberately and voluntarily to assist with basic skating skills and to get him participating with his brother right away," said Granger.

Interior indentations at the front of the blade help new skaters stand up, stand in one spot, push off, propel forward and change direction. As the child's skill grows, the front indentations will encourage proper stride the same way figure skates do. The child will adopt a natural skating stride to avoid any contact with the front indentations.

One pair of adjustable Balance Blades is good for up to four seasons.

Once children's skills improve and they rely less on Balance Blades to prevent rear falls and as a skate aid, the indentations on the front and rear of the blade can slowly be reduced during regular sharpening. This reduces dependency

on Balance Blades, like gradually taking off the training wheels. In time children will transition to a regular skate blade and are then ready for figure skates, hockey skates or speed skates.

Like many Canadian families, the Grangers grew up loving skating. They wanted to make the blades available to encourage novice skaters. Granger and his wife had past experience in business development, marketing and communications.

Balance Blades launched in October 2015 and was incorporated in June 2016. Balance Blades has a U.S. and Canadian patent-pending design. The local company currently sells only online and has a growing following through social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. Balance Blades are helping kids learn to skate throughout Canada, USA and Europe -- including sales placed from as far away as Ukraine and Austria.

Since its launch the company has introduced skate towels, covers and bags. In 2017 Balance Blades will be expanding to include junior and senior sizes and displays in retail stores. Granger also plans to develop and introduce a youth hockey skate.

Visit www.balanceblades.com to learn more about Balance Blades, or order online. E-mail balanceblades@gmail.com to contact Granger with any questions.