



Rafael Arutyunyan: A Figure Skating Legacy

Armenian-American coach Rafael Arutyunyan has shaped figure skating for over four decades. Born in 1957, he's renowned for developing world and Olympic champions through his innovative coaching approach.



Early Life and Skating Beginnings

1

Birth in Tbilisi

Born July 5, 1957 in Georgia, then part of the Soviet Union.

2

Competitive Skating

Developed as a competitive figure skater in the Soviet system.

3

Transition to Coaching

Began coaching career at just 18 years old.



First Coaching Success in Armenia



1976

Began coaching career in Yerevan, Armenia.



1981

Coached Saak Mkhitarian to Soviet junior gold medal.



World Stage

Guided Mkhitarian to 6th place at World Junior Championships.

Coaching Career in Russia

Moscow Certification

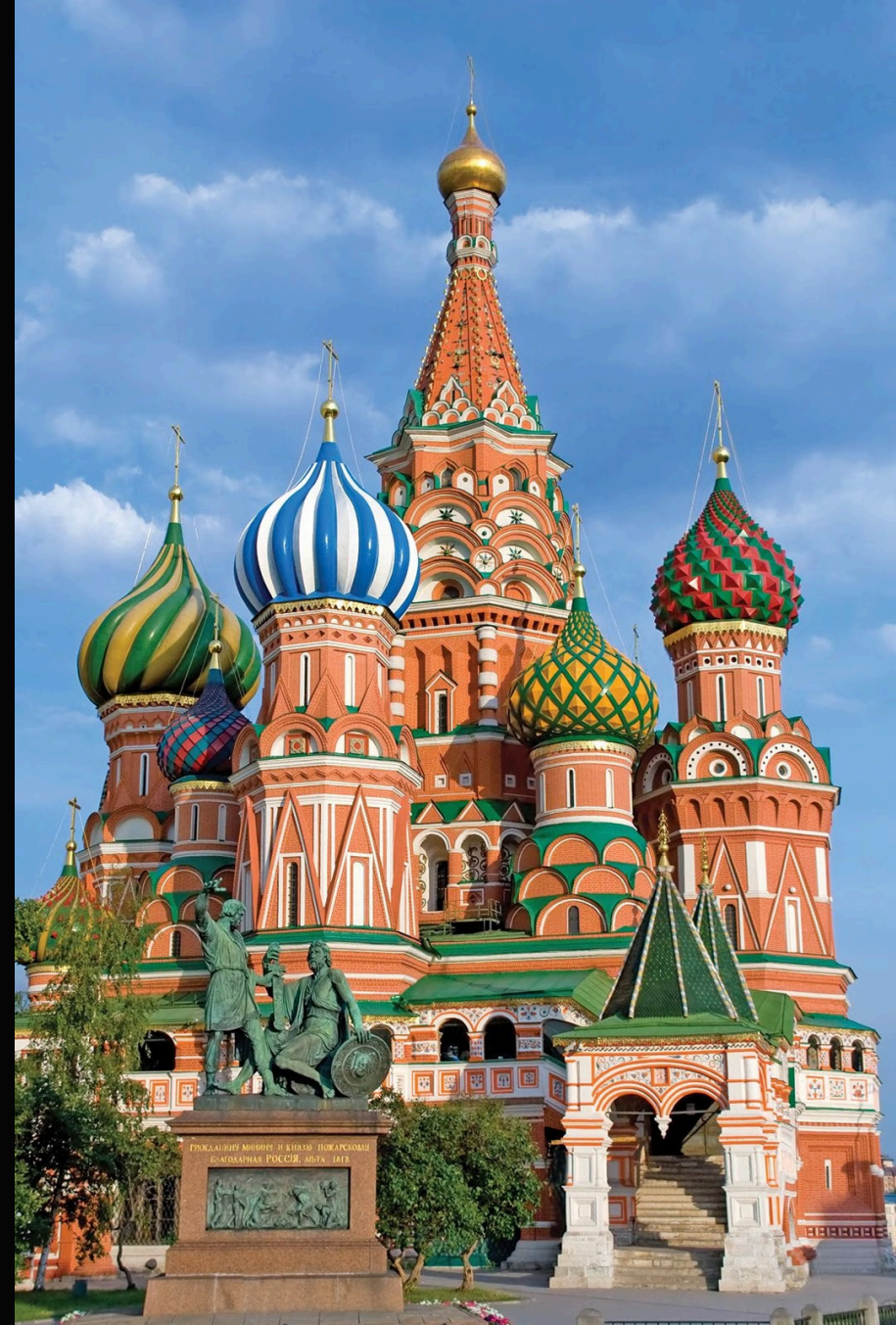
Relocated to Moscow in the early 1980s to advance his coaching credentials.

Learning from Legends

Worked as assistant to the legendary Soviet coach Tatiana Tarasova.

National Team Coach

Joined the Russian National Team coaching staff from 1996 to 2000.



Move to the United States

Emigration

Moved to the United States in 2000 seeking greater coaching freedom.

New Beginning

Started building his American coaching legacy.



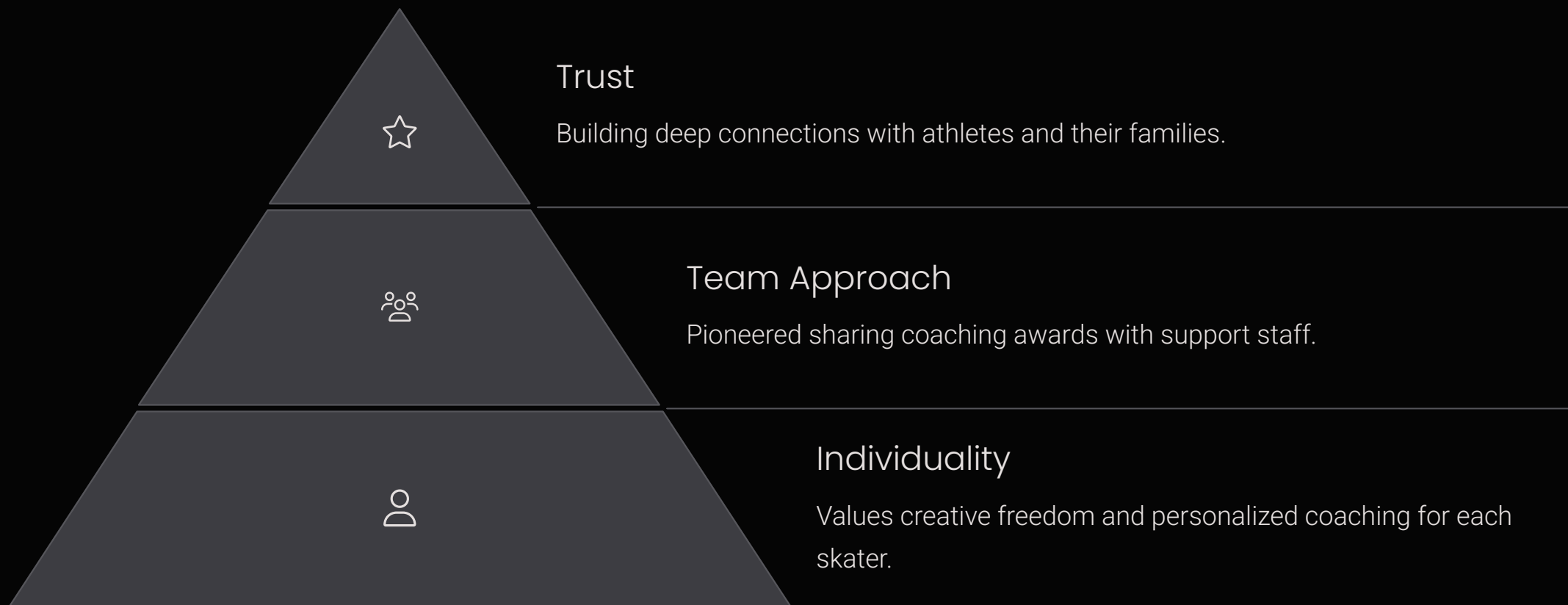
California

Settled in California to establish his coaching practice.

Ice Castle

Joined the prestigious Ice Castle International Training Center.

Coaching Philosophy and Teamwork





Mentoring Champions: Nathan Chen

11

Years Partnership

Started coaching
Nathan at age 11,
building a long-term
relationship.

6

U.S. Titles

Led Chen to six
consecutive U.S.
National
Championships.

3

World Titles

Guided Chen to three
World Championship
gold medals.

1

Olympic Gold

Coached Chen to
Olympic gold medal at
Beijing 2022.



Other Prominent U.S. Students

Ashley Wagner

- 2016 World silver medalist
- Team Olympic bronze medalist
- Three-time U.S. National Champion

Adam Rippon

- 2018 Olympic Team bronze medalist
- 2016 U.S. National Champion
- LGBTQ+ advocate in sports

Mariah Bell

- 2022 U.S. National Champion
- Oldest U.S. champion in 95 years

Ilya Malinin

- U.S. National silver medalist
- World Junior Champion
- Quad jump specialist

International Champions Coached



Mao Asada

Japanese superstar who earned Olympic silver and three World Championship titles under Rafael's guidance.



Alexander Abt

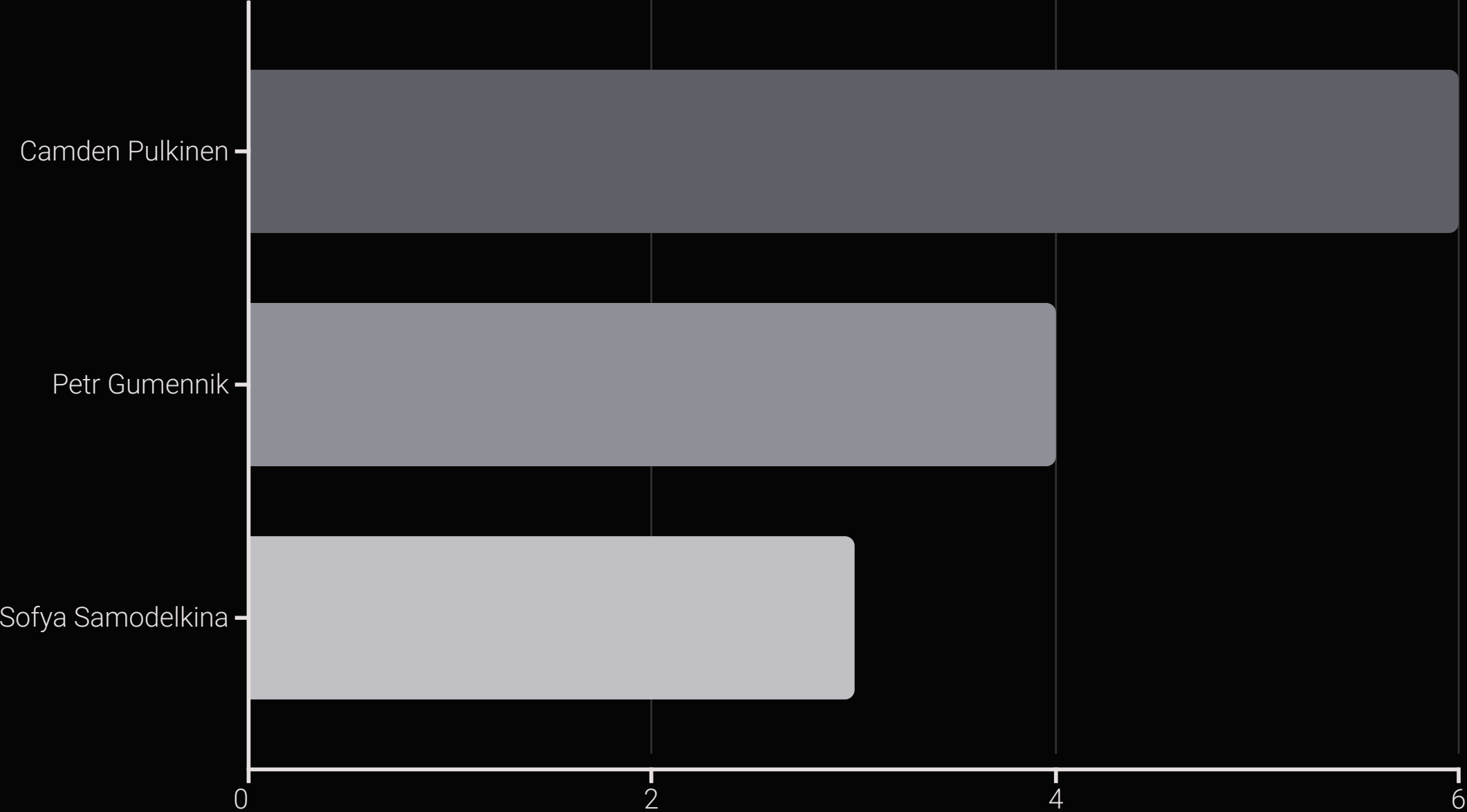
2003 Russian National Champion who refined his technical skills with Arutyunyan.



Michal Březina

Czech skating champion who reached his potential through Rafael's technical expertise.

Recent and Current Students



Awards and Recognition



2015 PSA Coach of the Year

Individual recognition for coaching excellence



2016 PSA Team Award

Recognized with his coaching staff



2022 PSA Team Award

Honored again with his innovative coaching team



Impact on Figure Skating Technique



Quad Revolution

Pioneered training methods for quad jumps that transformed men's skating.



Artistic Innovation

Balanced technical difficulty with choreographic excellence.



Technical Precision

Developed methodologies for consistent jump execution under pressure.



Mental Strength

Created approaches to build competitive mindset and resilience.

Influences and Collaborators

Family Partnership

Works closely with wife Vera Arutyunyan, who brings complementary coaching expertise. Their partnership strengthens their approach.

Technical Team

Collaborates with Nadezda Kanaeva and other specialists. This creates a comprehensive support system for athletes.

Current Position

Serves as Head Coach at Great Park Ice & Fivepoint Arena in Irvine, California since 2019. The facility has become a premier training hub.

Legacy and Ongoing Influence



For over four decades, Rafael Arutyunyan has shaped figure skating worldwide. His technical innovations and coaching philosophy continue inspiring new generations of skaters and coaches.