

Olympic Skater Piper Gilles Wins Bronze, Shines Global Spotlight on Ovarian Cancer

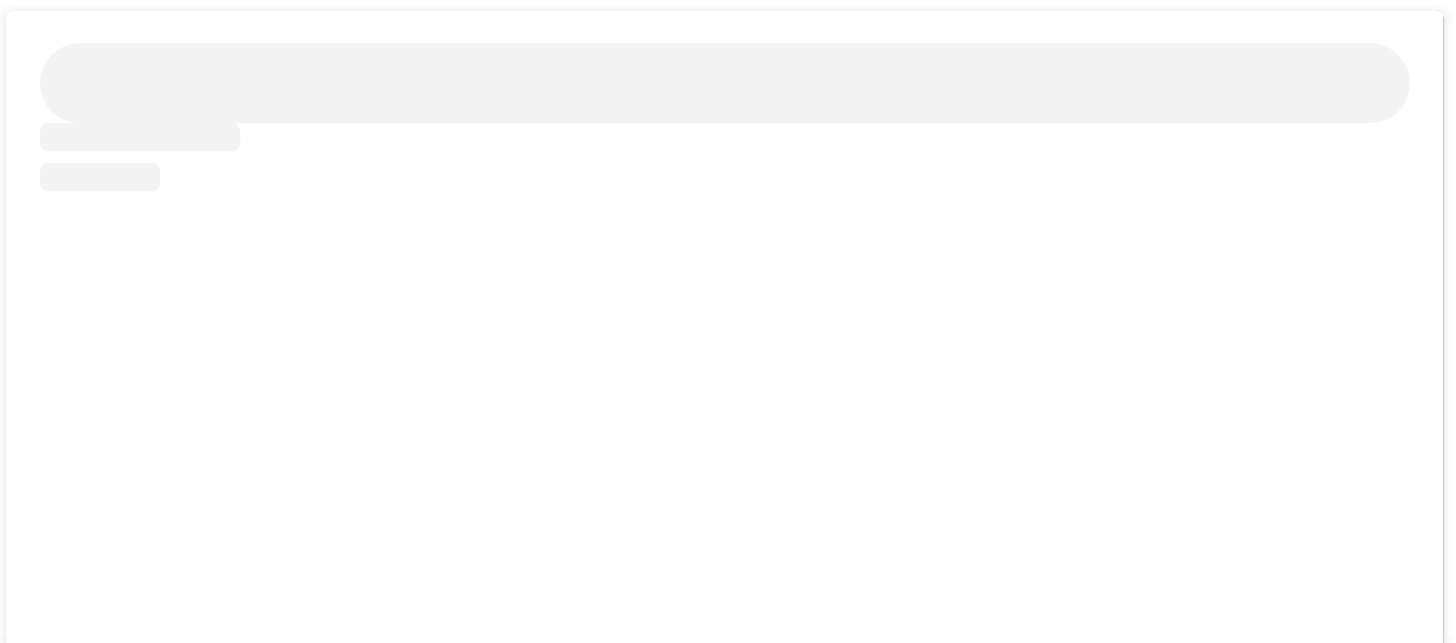
Olympian Piper Gilles's Olympic journey has been marked by her own ovarian cancer diagnosis and the loss of her mom to brain cancer.

February 17, 2026 By Eva Lorenz

Canadian figure skater Piper Gilles won a bronze medal in the 2026 Winter [Olympics](#), just three years after being diagnosed with [ovarian cancer](#).

Gilles first started noticing symptoms in October 2022. Fatigue, nausea and excruciating pain on her left side sent her to the hospital, where doctors found a tumor attached to a cyst on her left ovary.

"I was booked for surgery in December to remove the tumor, and on my 31st birthday, I learned that it had been Stage I ovarian cancer," Gilles said in [an interview with Toronto Life](#). Originally from the United States, Gilles moved to Toronto in 2011 to train with ice dancer Paul Poirier and is now a [Canadian](#) citizen.





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Ovarian cancer is difficult to detect early because screening for it is lacking and its symptoms are easy to ignore, [according to the Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education](#). As a result, ovarian cancer is often diagnosed at later stages, when the cancer has spread beyond the ovaries. It is often referred to as “the silent killer” and is the fifth deadliest cancer among [women](#).

About 21,010 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the United States, and 12,450 women will die of the malignancy, [according to the American Cancer Society](#).

After the surgery, Gilles’s doctor confirmed she would not need chemo and could continue to skate.

Gilles returned to the ice with Poirier in early 2023. She slowly ramped up her training, and the pair won bronze at the 2023 World Championships in Japan.

“Throughout my cancer journey, Paul was immensely supportive,” Gilles [told Toronto Life](#). “They say skating partnerships are like business marriages, and Paul was there for me in sickness and in health.”

Although Gilles and Poirier considered retiring in 2024, they continued to skate for the chance to compete in one more Olympics.

A year before the pair competed in the 2018 Olympics, Gilles's mother was diagnosed with [glioblastoma](#), an aggressive brain cancer. Her mother died in 2018, a loss that stoked her passion for skating. Following her Olympic success, Gilles reflected on her journey.

"The people that have been there for us, they're even more important than the Olympic medal," Gilles said [in an interview with Reuters](#). "And I think if you have that kind of perspective, you've already won."

To learn more about ovarian cancer, click [#Ovarian Cancer](#) or read Cancer Health's [Basics on Ovarian Cancer](#). It reads in part:

What is ovarian cancer?

Cancer develops when cells grow out of control. The most common kind of primary ovarian cancer, meaning it starts in an ovary, is known as epithelial ovarian carcinoma. Cancer may also arise elsewhere in the body and spread to the ovaries, a process known as metastasis.

Who gets ovarian cancer?

About 22,400 women will receive a new diagnosis of ovarian cancer, and about 14,100 will die of it annually, according to the [American Cancer Society](#). It is the fifth most common cause of cancer death in women, though death rates have been falling slightly in recent years.

Ovarian cancer can occur in women as young as 15, but most cases are diagnosed in women older than 55. Ovarian cancer is more common among white women (followed by Hispanic women) than in African American or Asian women, though diagnoses are declining in all groups.

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<http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/olympic-skater-piper-gilles-wins-bronze-shines-global-spotlight-ovarian-cancer>