



Leiden, March 13th 2017

To whomever it may concern,

It is with great pleasure that I write a letter of recommendation for Max Snijders. I have known him for more than three years now. In his first year as a physics student he clearly stood out in the experimental classes that I taught. Later I met him in the honours track that he was selected for. From his grades and his course work, it is clear that he has remarkable skills. It was when he has working in my group a year ago on a new experiment on the dynamics of ice skating, that I realized that he probably is the best undergraduate student I have ever interacted with in the almost twenty years that I am a university professor.

For about four years I had been working with successive individual students on an experiment where we attempt to measure the water layer between the ice and a sliding skate. Max Snijders shifted gears on this very demanding project. He was capable of adding functionality and automating the experiment at an amazing pace. He designed the experimental procedures and analyzed data at a speed that would impress me even if he would have been a graduate student.

He has displayed a talent to analyze a complex problem and focus first on those ingredients, which carry the highest risk of failure. He combines a very pragmatic approach with good theoretical skills and has managed to interest and involve other people in his project. For example, instead of measuring the roughness of the ice with a mechanical device point by point as I had planned, he used a 3D printer to mount a simple camera, wrote the image processing software so that the computer could read off the dial of the mechanical device and he completed this automation task in just two days.

He went on to take the first data in the world, in which the sliding of the skate is linked to the formation of a microscopic water layer, by a direct conduction experiment.

I have put in considerable effort to encourage him to join my group as a PhD student after he finishes his masters, but unfortunately for me he is more likely to come up with his own alternative plan. I wish him the best of luck.

Greetings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tjerk H. Oosterkamp".

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