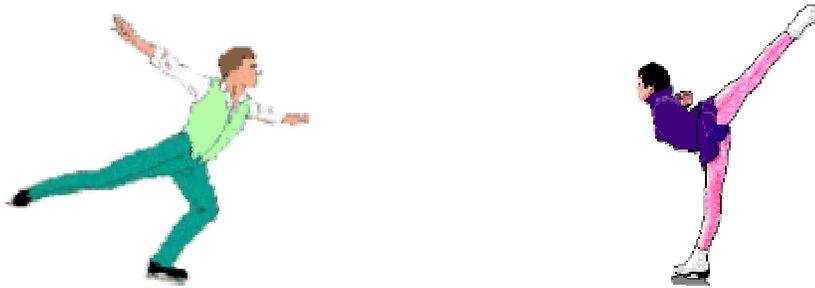


The Capital City Skating Club:

What Every Parent Needs to Know



For parents of skaters transitioning from CanSkate to figure skating

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Note of Thanks

A publication like this doesn't happen in isolation. Many people contributed to it in a variety of ways. I would like to thank the 2005/06 board members for their thoughts about the topics this handbook should include, and the 2006/07 board for their feedback on it. Special thanks go to Pam Snow for her helpfulness and promptness in providing information. Coaches Karen Alexander, Greg Rochefort and Gwen Smith-Walsh showed amazing patience in answering my endless questions. Karen Cunningham reviewed an early draft of the handbook; her comments were very helpful. Thanks to Allen for making dinner so I could write. Finally, special thanks go to my toughest editor and personal skating hero, Keegan.

Joy Manson
Summer 2006

Welcome to the Capital City Skating Club

Congratulations! Your son or daughter has decided to figure skate. Your child has chosen a demanding, thrilling, exasperating, wonderful sport to pursue. Skating will teach your child much, much more than just toe loops and camel spins. Your child will learn many important life skills, such as motivation, time management, self-confidence, the importance of fitness, and that hard work brings rewards. Your child will learn to work independently, but will also make many new skating friends and have the fun of being a member of the Capital City Skating Club (CCSC).

Over the next few weeks and months, you and your skater may feel like you are the only ones who “don’t know” as you encounter new situations in figure skating. Believe us when we tell you: you’re not the only ones! We’ve all been there. In fact, this handbook is the result of our own experiences of “not knowing.” We’ve produced it to provide information and explain our practices and traditions. While it focuses on parents and new skaters making the transition from the CanSkate Program to the junior ranks, others may also find it useful. We hope that you find the answers to your questions in its pages. If you don’t, just ask.

The CCSC formed in winter 2008 when the Fredericton Figure Skating Club and the Nashwaaksis Figure Skating Club merged into one new club. The FFSC celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2005 and has always made its home at the Lady Beaverbrook Rink (LBR). The NFSC formed about 35 years ago and used the Nashwaaksis Arena on Fredericton’s north side as its base. CCSC skaters are offered ice time at two locations, the Lady Beaverbrook Rink on the south side of the river and Willie O’Ree Place on the north. The CCSC is a non-profit organization run by a volunteer board of directors. A complete list of current board members can be found on our Web site. The Club is a member of Skate New Brunswick and Skate Canada.

The club relies heavily on the support of parent volunteers to help out by playing music for the skaters when they practice their programs, making costumes for the ice show, taking on special projects, serving on the board of directors – there are many different ways to lend a hand. The CCSC wouldn’t exist without volunteers! We encourage you to get involved, learn more about your club, and have some fun, too.

We’re always interested in feedback, suggestions, and volunteers. The club can be reached in the following ways:

Email capitalskating@gmail.com
Web www.capitalcityskatingclub.ca



I. Differences Between CanSkate and Figure Skating

CCSC Programs

In addition to CanSkate (our learn-to-skate program), the CCSC also offers a specialized Pre-Junior Program to smooth the transition from CanSkate to figure skating during our Winter, Spring and Fall Schools. This program is for skaters who have reached Stage 4 or above in the CanSkate Program, who want to skate two or three times a week in a group environment, and who want to learn the basics of figure skating disciplines. Instruction is provided by one of our professional coaches. Skaters wishing to have private lessons from one of the coaches may be required to pay an additional fee for ice time and must pay the private lesson fee. Pre-Junior skaters are encouraged to try Preliminary Skate Canada tests.

The CCSC also offers figure skating instruction at the junior, intermediate and senior levels. We provide an Adult Skate Program which covers a range of abilities, from beginning adult skaters to adults with experience who want to compete. We also offer a Power Skating Program, ideal for hockey and ringette players wishing to improve their fitness and skating skills.

CanSkate to Junior: What's the Difference?

One of the biggest differences between CanSkate and the figure skating program is the amount of independent work involved. In CanSkate, things are very regimented and controlled. All lessons are done in group format under the guidance of our coaches and program assistants. As they master the skills and progress through their badges, the skaters may be given a little more freedom to do some independent work. The Pre-Junior Program is an important stepping stone to prepare young skaters for the independent work to come. By the time they reach the level of junior, the focus has shifted and the skaters are expected to be on their own working independently most of the time, supplemented by short lessons given by a coach (you must make arrangements with a coach for this; information about coaching is found later in the handbook).

Some new junior skaters can be overwhelmed during their first few on-ice sessions to discover that they are now responsible for much of their own practice. To come onto the ice and discover everyone else working away by themselves can be intimidating, but it's surprising how quickly they adapt once they know the routine. As a parent, it's helpful

when you share the information in this handbook with your daughter or son so they'll know what's expected of them.

Helmets: To Wear, or Not to Wear

The most visible difference between CanSkate and Junior is the absence of helmets. It is imperative for kids in the CanSkate Program to wear helmets for safety. The kids have very little balance and coordination at this level and they can take many spills. Once they progress to junior, however, their balance and coordination have improved considerably and they have learned how to fall safely. Some junior skaters are willing to wear helmets, but most will refuse because no one else wears them. Some skills are difficult to master in a restrictive helmet. Ultimately the decision whether to wear a helmet or not is between you and your skater.

Helpful Hint: Depending on the age of your skater, it may be necessary for a little parental involvement during their first sessions as a junior. Sometimes younger skaters will need a nudge from a parent in the form of a suggestion of what to work on while they're out there, such as spins or cross-cuts, until they're able to take responsibility for their practice themselves.

What to Expect at a Typical On-Ice Session

All skaters need to stretch before going on the ice to warm up the muscles and prepare them for the work to come. Skaters need to focus on stretching hamstrings, quadriceps, ankles, calves, hips and upper body. Your coach can suggest some good stretches, or you can consult the following Web site (www.skating-wos.on.ca/sportsci/stretchnotes.htm), but the skaters themselves must take responsibility for doing them. Skaters can stretch in the dressing room or the warm-up area by the benches.

The on-ice session begins with Stroking that involves all skaters at the same time. This helps the skaters to warm up their muscles, to feel comfortable in their boots and with the ice, and to practice their skating strokes, a fundamental figure skating skill. Depending on the session, there may be intermediate or senior skaters on the ice, too. One of the coaches will direct the skaters to move or skate in a certain direction, speed, or pattern. Stroking sessions last for 15 minutes. Skaters are expected to arrive on time for the beginning of stroking. Anyone who arrives late must wait until stroking concludes to go on the ice and warm up separately. This is for safety.

When stroking is completed, skaters begin the next discipline, which will be Dance, Freestyle or Skills (your registration brochure – a copy is usually posted -- will indicate which discipline and the length of each session). Skaters spend most of this time working independently on appropriate skills. During this time, the coach with whom you have made arrangements will spend approximately 15 minutes working with your child (see Section II Coaching for more information).



If it is a dance session, the skaters will work on perfecting the steps to the dance(s) they are learning. The music is pre-determined for each dance, and it is common to see groups of skaters doing the same dance together to the music. If it is a freestyle session, the skaters will practice skills such as spins and jumps. Those who have programs for competition will go through them. While skaters practice elements of their programs many times without music, they also need to practice with their music, and this is where parent volunteers are so important! *Volunteers are always needed to play music.*

Helpful Hint: There may be times in the schedule when junior skaters are on the ice with older, faster skaters. It is common sense for the junior skaters to yield the right of way to faster skaters, who may be working on jumps that require significant speed and preparation. Please make sure that your skater understands this important safety consideration.

Skaters often leave gouges and holes in the ice when they practice jumps and spins. This kind of damage to the ice surface causes problems for skaters, problems that are solved by flooding and cleaning it. Flood times are included in the on-ice schedules, and skaters must leave the ice immediately when a flood is scheduled.

Change Rooms

Junior skaters generally dress for on-ice sessions in the area with benches outside the doors to the ice surface. One change room has been allocated to intermediate skaters and another to senior skaters. The change rooms are unisex, but the boys seem to prefer to dress in the area outside the ice surface.

On-Ice Rules and Etiquette

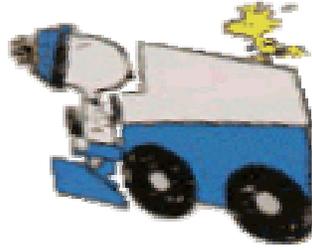
On-ice sessions go more smoothly and safely when everyone observes the following rules and skating “etiquette.” It’s important that you go over these rules with your skater so that they’re not involved in a collision or injury.

- Skaters who are late for stroking may not enter the ice surface until stroking has concluded. This also applies to off-ice training sessions.
- For safety reasons, no standing at centre ice or in the corners.
- No gum or candy on the ice.

- Hard or sharp objects should not be carried in pockets or worn in the hair.
- Spins are usually practiced at centre ice during the first or last 15 minutes of a freestyle session.
- Jumps are usually practiced in the corners.
- Skaters having a lesson have the “right of way.”
- Get up quickly after falling. Skaters lying on the ice are vulnerable.
- When skating backwards, always look in the direction of travel.
- Skaters shall only have lessons during designated ice times and during the scheduled discipline.
- Skaters having a lesson have priority for having their music played. However, if their music has already been played, they must wait until everyone else’s music has played.
- Skaters must not play their music more than once if other skaters are waiting. Skaters with more than one program may not play their music back to back.
- Skaters must check with a coach before leaving the ice surface.
- Skaters shall not enter the ice surface until cleaning equipment has left. Similarly, skaters will leave the ice promptly when a session has ended.
- Foul, offensive and abusive language will not be tolerated. Be polite and courteous to all skaters, coaches, arena staff and volunteers.
- Use of the facilities and equipment is a privilege, not a right.
- During an emergency, skaters must follow the instructions of coaches and arena staff.
- Skaters must be in good standing with the club before attempting tests.

- Guest skaters must obtain permission from the CCSC at least 24 hours prior to skating. Skaters must be registered with another club. Permission will not be granted when maximum on-ice numbers exceed safety restrictions.
- Please use designated dressing rooms.

Please make sure that you discuss everything covered in Section I with your skater, so that he or she feels confident and ready to deal with whatever comes along.



II. Coaching

Why Coaches are Necessary

In the CanSkate Program, instruction is done in small groups. Things are done a little differently in figure skating. You must make specific arrangements with one of our professional coaches to instruct your child. Coaches teach skaters the technical skills they need, including spins, jumps, dances and footwork, as well as important life skills such as setting goals and dealing with stress. The coach choreographs programs for your skater, selects and records program music, works with them during lessons, and provides direction and guidance for independent practice. Lessons can be done in either group format or privately, depending on your budget and the needs of your skater and the coach. Some coaches also have students at other skating clubs (eg. Oromocto).

What to Look for in a Coach

CCSC coaches are well qualified and have lots of valuable experience. When looking for a coach for your son or daughter, please keep the following in mind:

- To be qualified to teach Skate Canada programs, coaches must be National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) trained and/or certified and they must also be professional coaching members of Skate Canada. They must have completed a Skate Canada-approved police clearance check and positions of trust check, and hold a valid First Aid Certificate.
- The coach should be someone your skater feels comfortable with, and someone you respect as an individual as well as a teacher.
- The coach should treat your child with respect and be interested in your child's development as a person as well as a skater.
- Inquire about the coach's own skating background and experience, their coaching experience and certification, and their coaching philosophy.
- Consider your child's personality and temperament when matching them with a coach.
- Ask about coaching fees, which may be affected by certification levels or availability.
- When making a coaching decision, it is helpful to watch coaches as they interact on and off the ice with skaters.
- You may also wish to talk to other parents and skaters. After all, the coach will be spending a lot of time with your skater, and you will be paying the coach a fair amount of money, so take the time to find the right coach for your child.

Once you have selected a coach, support him or her by letting them do their job. Good communication is important in any relationship, and the parent/skater/coach relationship is no different. Skate Canada recommends having an annual meeting with your coach and skater at the beginning of every skating season during which you assess the previous year (if required), set short- and long-term goals, and discuss new programs, training and competition schedules, school and other commitments.

CCSC Coaches

Our complement of coaches changes somewhat with the season. During Summer School, for example, there are many more coaches affiliated with our club because of the number of skaters from other clubs who train with us. The current registration brochure usually has an up-to-date list of coaches and their contact information. Detailed information about each coach can also be found on the Club's Web site (www.capitalcityskatingclub.ca).

Private vs. Group Lessons

There are several factors to consider here.

- The first is your budget. Small group lessons are generally less expensive, making them more appealing to parents particularly when your junior skater is first starting out. Be sure to consult your coach about the difference in cost and to request an estimate of the weekly or monthly cost of lessons.
- Some parents prefer private lessons because they feel their skater improves more quickly.
- Some skaters learn more readily through one-on-one instruction; others prefer the fun of the group format.
- Other factors to consider include the age and commitment of your skater. Group lessons are fine at the junior level, but by the time your skater moves into intermediate or starts to compete, some private lessons will be required.

Number of Lessons in Each Discipline

Skaters are instructed in three disciplines: dance, freestyle, and skills. The number of lessons per discipline each week is best determined by your budget, your coach, your skater's level of commitment, and their rank. In general, dance and skills seem to have less emphasis for lessons than freestyle. Similarly, a junior skater will require fewer lessons per discipline than a senior competitive skater with two programs.

How to Pay Your Coach

Once you have made arrangements with a coach, he or she will keep track of the amount of time spent with your child and will send you invoices at regular intervals. Invoices are to be paid directly to the coach, not the club. For some, coaching is their primary source of income, so please pay invoices promptly.



III. The “Nuts and Bolts” of Figure Skating

Many of us know very little about our child’s chosen sport and its required equipment and clothing. The following information, provided by Skate Canada, will shed some light on this subject.

Boots and Blades: What to Look For

In figure skating, skates are the most important piece of equipment. Purchasing appropriate skates for the level of your skater and budget is of utmost importance. In CanSkate, either hockey or figure skates are appropriate, but when your skater moves into the figure skating ranks, it is time to purchase better quality boots and blades.

Here are some general guidelines:

- Proper fit is important. Avoid the temptation to buy a larger size for your skater to “grow into.” Skates that are too big will frustrate the skater and hurt their feet.
- Firm ankle support is key. Ankles should never appear to fall over.
- Look for good quality leather. Leather boots are preferable to vinyl. Moulded plastic skates are not recommended.
- Look for blades that are installed with screws instead of rivets, so that the blade can be moved if necessary. If the blade is riveted, make sure it is straight and centred. The skate should look and remain balanced when placed upright on a flat surface, and the skater should stand straight when wearing the skates.

From time to time an older skater may have some outgrown equipment to sell. Check the CCSC bulletin board regularly for information.

How to Try Skates On

When trying on skates at the store, the skater should wear only one pair of tight-fitting socks or tights (the same pair that will be worn when skating), and:

- partially lace boots through the instep
- slide foot forward so toes can touch the front but are not cramped
- stand with weight equally distributed over both feet
- bend knees

The space at the back of the heel should be no more than a pencil width. Once the skates are tied loosely over the toe and front of the boot and snugly over the ankle and instep, the skates should fit snugly around the ankle and heel with some room for movement of toes. When walking around the store, the skates should feel comfortable. Make sure there is no looseness or creases in the boot. The tongue should be well padded and wide enough to cover the front of the ankle and stay in place.

When your skater begins competing, it is appropriate to purchase better quality boots and blades. They will provide additional support as your child becomes more technically proficient. At this level, boots and blades are generally bought separately. Buy a general purpose blade and have it screwed onto the boot soles, not riveted.

Mounting the blades on the boots is very critical and should be done only by an experienced person. Some coaches and skating stores are able to do this. Many skaters prefer to go to Maritime Sports in Moncton to purchase skates and mount blades. Boots and blades at this level typically range from \$125 to \$250 new, to \$50 to \$100 used.



As your skater progresses, their level continues to dictate the quality of boots and blades. Your coach will be able to recommend a good type for your skater. Different blades are designed to meet the specific needs of different figure skating disciplines. These boots cost approximately \$350 and up, with blades starting at \$175. Used sets are sometimes available, at greatly reduced cost.

Tips for Sharpening

As soon as you purchase your skates have them sharpened. The bottom pick should not be removed, as it is essential for proper balance. Skates should be re-sharpened after approximately 30 hours of skating, depending on usage and care.

Helpful Hint: It pays to be careful about where you take figure skates to be sharpened. Some sharpeners only know how to sharpen hockey skates. Make sure your sharpener is familiar with the edges needed for figure skating. Many skaters prefer to take their skates to Maritime Sports in Moncton to be sharpened.

Caring for Skates

Proper care of boots and blades can help them last as long as possible. Skate guards must be worn whenever your skater is walking on any surface other than ice. This includes wood, cement and rubberized flooring. Gritty surfaces such as these can damage the edges and sharpening of the blades. Blades and boot soles must be dry before the guards

are put on. The insides of the guards must be washed regularly because grit can accumulate in there quickly.

- When removing skates, unlace them enough before taking them off so that the back of the boot does not break down or rip.
- Blades and soles must be dried carefully with a soft cloth.
- Remove guards when putting skates away, because cold blades get wet from condensation and will rust if the guards are left on. Instead of guards, use soft terry cloth covers to protect your blades during storage. These covers can be purchased where you buy your skates.
- Once at home, make sure the skates are taken out and left to air dry at normal household temperatures to avoid rotting and rust.

Clothing

Once your skater moves into figure skating, there are different expectations about clothing. Clothing must strike a balance between providing freedom of movement and revealing the “lines” drawn by a skater’s body with warmth and comfort. Skating clothing can usually be purchased off the rack from sports stores that sell skates, although boys’ clothing is harder to find. Some parents prefer to order clothing from the Web. Blue Skys, based in Edmonton, Alberta, is a reputable Canadian source (www.blueskys.com). Clothing can also be ordered from local costume-makers who offer custom design and fitting services. Sometimes an older skater may have an outgrown outfit to sell. Check the CCSC bulletin board for notices. Your coach and other parents can also provide suggestions.

For Girls

- For beginners, warmth and comfort come first.
- As your skater progresses and is able to skate more readily (and generate more body heat), skating dresses and tights become the norm for practice, although some prefer to wear tight-fitting elasticized pants. Clothing must not be bulky or restrictive.
- Layering with an additional sweater or warm-up jacket along with gloves may also be worn, if necessary.
- Undergarments should be hidden under the dress or not worn at all.

For Boys

- As is the case for girls, for beginner boys warmth and comfort come first.
- As the skater advances, a snug sweater or warm-up jacket and pants along with gloves may be worn.
- Pants should be made of a stretch material. The leg bottoms must be held in place with a stirrup under the arch of the boot and a hook from the front crease of the pant leg to the laces in the boot. This gives a good line to the leg without distraction from flapping pant cuffs.



IV. A Year with the CCSC

Registration

The CCSC is a non-profit organization. Your registration fees pay for the cost of buying ice time from the City of Fredericton, which costs the club around \$70,000 annually. Keep this figure in mind the next time you're paying your fees! (Registration fees do not include coaching fees; those must be paid directly to your coach.)

Registration fees are due at the beginning of each of our four schools:

- Summer School (July and/or August)
- Fall School (early September to mid October)
- Winter School (mid October to late March)
- Spring School (early April to mid May).

The cost of registration increases as skaters advance from junior to intermediate and senior. This reflects the increased time skaters spend on the ice as they progress through the ranks. Half the registration fee is due at the beginning of each school, while the rest can be spread out with post-dated cheques, if necessary. A brochure for the next school will be provided to you toward the end of the current school; brochures are also available from our Web site (www.capitalcityskatingclub.ca) or from the club office.

How Often Does My Child Need to Skate?

Ideally, it is important for skaters to get as much time on the ice as is reasonable, on a year-round basis if possible. This helps to keep jumps consistent, maintain fitness levels, and prevent loss of skills due to insufficient practice. Skaters tend to advance more quickly when they're on the ice regularly and getting more lessons.

There are many factors to consider, however, when deciding how often to skate:

- Your budget, other activities your skater may be involved in, and your skater's level of commitment to the sport must be considered.
- If your skater is mainly interested in recreational skating, you probably need less ice time.
- If your skater wants to be a champion, then you will most likely need to increase ice and lesson time.
- Your coach may ask your child to skate more often to prepare for a test or competition.
- There is a risk of training and competing "too much," and a skater could end up feeling burned out.
- Your skater's motivation and goals may change over time, causing a need for re-evaluation.

- With the agreement of your coach, consider “trying out” a more intensive training schedule on a short-term basis to see how your skater responds.

You have probably noticed on your registration brochure that there are several opportunities each week for junior, intermediate, senior and adult skaters to be on the ice. This is done to allow parents and skaters some flexibility in their skating schedule. Some skaters choose to skate at every session; other skaters pick and choose, depending on the factors listed above. As a general rule of thumb:

Rank	Frequency per Week
Junior	Minimum two days
Intermediate Non-competitive Skater	Min. two days
Intermediate STARSkater	Min. three days
Intermediate Competitive Skater	Min. four days
Senior Skater	Min. four days

You, your coach and your skater should discuss the frequency that is most appropriate for you.

Summer School

Many people are surprised to learn that our skaters are on the ice year-round, including the summer (July and/or August). This is because people associate figure skating with winter sports; therefore, they assume that we only skate in winter. They don't realize how much hard work goes into skating 12 months of the year.

The Club offers a full program in summer for intermediate and senior skaters which includes on-ice practice sessions, of course, and may include off-ice conditioning and fitness, dance training, creative movement and theatre on ice. The program for junior skaters is a little shorter. This is also the time of year when coaches choreograph new programs for skaters who must learn them for the upcoming competitive season. You should discuss with your coach whether your skater would benefit from Summer School.

The CCSC Summer School is well respected throughout the province. Our skaters are often joined in the summer by skaters from other clubs who come to Fredericton for additional training and expertise.

Sometimes the club is able to hire someone to help with Summer School by organizing off-ice activities for the skaters and by helping the younger junior skaters with their skates. Please be aware that Summer School is not a supervised daycare program. Skaters must either be able to function independently, or have a parent present to help. Check with the Club before registering your child to determine suitability.



Fall School

Our Fall School runs for six weeks from early September to the middle of October. Competitive skaters prepare for the busy season ahead; the first competition takes place in October.

Winter School

Our longest session runs from mid October to the end of March. There are approximately 10 competitions in and around the province during this time. Skaters are also busy acquiring and perfecting skills.

Spring School

This session runs for six weeks, from the first of April to the middle of May. The competitive season ends with the Spring Skate in April. The LBR is usually closed for maintenance from mid May to the end of June, while the Willie O'Ree Arena keeps ice in just one rink through the summer.

Program Assistants

Program assistants are older (usually over 11), more experienced skaters who volunteer their time to help with the CanSkate Program. They demonstrate skills under the direction of the coaches and generally help out wherever needed. It's a good way for older skaters to "give back" to the club. Program assistants are important role models for the younger skaters. Sign-up sheets are usually posted outside the doors to the ice surface.

Special Clinics

From time to time the CCSC will bring in a prominent coach from another club or a high-profile skater to teach our skaters and coaches during a short, intensive clinic. Brian Orser and Ben Ferreira have both taught at CCSC clinics. Our skaters are inspired by internationally ranked competitors, and benefit from a fresh perspective on performing jumps, spins, footwork, etc. There is usually an additional fee to attend these clinics, which depend on funding and availability. Look for information posted outside the ice surface.

The Ice Show

If you've come through the CanSkate Program, then you're probably already familiar with our biggest photo opportunity – the annual ice show! The CCSC has one ice show every year, usually toward the end of our winter session, to showcase the talents of all our skaters, from CanSkate to seniors to adults. Rehearsals take place during regular ice times, usually beginning several weeks before the performance date. Watch for information posted at the doors or handed out.

The ice show would not happen without the support of parent volunteers. Every year we need volunteers to make costumes, decorate the rink, and help backstage. It's lots of fun and we urge you to help your club by getting involved.

End-of-Year Awards

Every year in late March the Club presents end-of-year awards. Sometimes the presentations are made at the ice show, sometimes during a banquet. It's an opportunity for the Club to come together and celebrate our successes. The awards and criteria are as follows:

- Bank of Montreal CanSkater of the Year: This award goes to a CanSkater and is based on the criteria sent to the club by Skate Canada and upon the skater's achievements and their attitude towards skating and overall perseverance.
- Bank of Montreal Spirit of Skating: This award is presented to a CanSkater who embodies the qualities considered essential to the "spirit of skating" like commitment, dedication, passion and triumph, with an emphasis on personal achievement or accomplishments.
- Program Assistant of the Year: This award is presented to a skater who is eager to help young skaters learn, make suggestions on how to better the program, help the coaches and truly loves to be a coach. This individual has good attendance and can be relied upon by coaches, club and skaters.
- Sportsmanship: This award goes to a skater who demonstrates good sportsmanship towards fellow skaters, coaches and all others during practice, competition, test days and all other skating activities on and off the ice.

- **Most Improved Skater:** (one award each for junior, intermediate, senior and adult skaters): Criteria considered for this award are tests and levels passed in the past year and competition improvements from last year to this year.
- **Spirit of Skating:** This award is presented to a STARskater or Competitive Program skater who embodies the qualities considered essential to the “spirit of skating” like commitment, dedication, passion and triumph, with an emphasis on personal achievement or accomplishments.
- **Skater of the Year** (one award each for pre-junior, junior, intermediate, senior and adult skaters): The criteria taken into consideration are competition results, tests passed and involvement in various club and regional activities.

Look for information posted outside the ice surface or call the club office (457-1903).



V. Test Days

Tests are what enable the skaters to move ahead, and they spend countless hours perfecting the skills needed to pass the tests. Evaluators from outside the club are brought in to assess the skaters according to national standards that are pre-determined by Skate Canada. There is usually one test day scheduled near the end of each of our schools. When your coach feels that your skater is ready to take a test, his or her name will be forwarded to the test chair. A time will be reserved for your skater to take the test and you will be notified. There is also a fee that must be paid in order for your skater to take the test. Ask your coach to explain the process to you so you'll know what to expect.

What Happens on Test Day

- Your skater should arrive at the rink 30 to 45 minutes before their scheduled time. This will give enough time to warm up properly and prepare mentally without feeling rushed.
- Your coach will advise your skater on what to wear. Some prefer competition clothing (if available), while others say regular practice wear is fine. A warm-up jacket and gloves are acceptable for warming up, but must be removed for the actual test unless the temperature in the arena prohibits it.
- A schedule will be posted by the doors outside the ice surface. When your skater first steps on the ice, it will be for a short warm-up of anywhere from three to 10 minutes.
- For higher level tests, test days may be centralized, with skaters from other clubs in the surrounding area coming to a central location to be tested. This gives everyone equal opportunity and makes it easier for evaluators.
- Following the warm-up, your skater will perform for the evaluator. The evaluator will observe and make comments on the test sheet.
- Periodically, the test sheets will be collected and handed to the skaters. The test sheet will indicate whether your skater has passed or must retry the test. Evaluators are trained by Skate Canada to provide positive feedback to help skaters progress.
- Don't be surprised if your skater does not pass the test. Sometimes it takes two or more attempts to pass a given test.
- Your skater should discuss the evaluator's feedback with your coach as soon as possible.

How Skaters are Evaluated

Each element is evaluated on a four-point scale: Needs Improvement, Satisfactory, Good and Excellent. For every test there are specific requirements that must receive a satisfactory or better evaluation in order to pass. These elements are highlighted on the test sheets. Tests are evaluated according to pre-determined criteria that are specific to each discipline.

Skating skills are assessed on:

- Edge quality
- Ice coverage
- Ease of motion
- Correctness of steps
- Musicality/pacing

Free skating tests are assessed in two parts: Elements and Program. The two parts can be assessed during two different test sessions, or assessed at the same time during one test. The Elements portion is assessed on:

- Stroking patterns
- Jumps
- Jump combinations
- Jump sequences
- Spins
- Footwork
- Field movements

The Program portion of free skating tests is assessed on:

- Use of ice
- Carriage/line/form
- Speed
- Use of music
- Sureness of skating skills
- Program composition
- Connecting steps/field movements
- Jumps
- Jump sequence
- Jump combinations
- Spins and spin combinations

Dance skills are assessed on:

- Rhythm (timing, expression and unison)
- Execution (accuracy/flow, style/form, pattern/placement)

Criteria for *interpretive tests* are:

- Under the first mark for “Skating”: edge and turn quality; speed, flow and power; creative movement with sureness; carriage and line
- Under the second mark for “Performance”: interpretation of music; communication of theme; use of whole body; use of levels and space; originality/creativity; interaction (couples only)

Test Levels

Primary Level Tests

Skating Skills: Preliminary, Junior Bronze
Free Skating: Preliminary, Junior Bronze
Dance: Preliminary, Junior Bronze
Interpretive: Introductory

Intermediate Level Tests

Skating Skills: Senior Bronze, Junior Silver
Free Skating: Senior Bronze, Junior Silver
Dance: Senior Bronze, Junior Silver
Interpretive: Bronze

Senior Level Tests

Skating Skills: Senior Silver, Gold
Free Skating: Senior Silver, Gold
Dance: Senior Silver, Gold, Diamond
Interpretive: Silver, Gold

For more information and detailed descriptions of all the technical elements of figure skating (different jumps, spins etc.), go to the Skate Canada Web site (www.skatecanada.ca), click on Know Your Skating and select Glossary.



VI. Competitions

The CCSC is very proud of the skaters who represent the club in competitions. Over the years, a number of our skaters have done well enough to compete in national events. As your child's technical abilities improve, your coach may feel that it's time to think about competing. Preparing for a competition is a great motivator for skaters, providing a "reason" to practice, if you will.

Skate Canada offers two different competitive streams for singles skaters: the STARSkate Program and the Competitive Skate Program. Skaters may participate in either one. Ask your coach to discuss the pros and cons of each to determine the best choice for your skater. Regardless of the program, skaters, coaches and parents need to keep in mind what is truly important: the personal growth and development of the athlete and their enjoyment of the sport.

Once you have made a decision regarding which competitive program to take part in, there is no special paperwork required to "enroll" your child. Your stream is determined by the category you select on the competition registration form; your coach will tell you the category.

A Note About FunSkate: Your child's first exposure to competition may come through FunSkate, a recreational competition between two different skating regions for both CanSkate and beginning juniors. There are events for new STARSkaters in freestyle, dance and interpretive. CanSkaters' events are elements from their badges. FunSkate introduces new figure skaters to the feel of competition in a fun and no-pressure format.

STARSkate Program

STARSkate stands for Skills, Tests, Achievement, and Recognition. STARSkate encourages skaters to develop more advanced skills in areas such as skating skills, free skating, dance and interpretive skating. Instruction can be done in either group or private lessons. Progress is assessed through tests (see Section V. Test Days), and there are various recognition awards and incentives to encourage skaters to progress.

STARSkate also challenges skaters with competitions throughout the year, culminating in the Homesense National STARSkate Championships. Some skaters start out in the STARSkate Program to get their competitive feet wet, and then switch to the Competitive Skate Program.

Competitive Skate

This is a fun and challenging program for those who wish to hone their skills in a competitive environment. Success in this program requires a significant commitment of time on the skater's part. Skaters advance through tests and competitions. They take the tests listed in Section V. Test Days until they reach the juvenile category. Then the tests they take are related to the level at which they compete: juvenile, pre-novice, novice, junior or senior. Skaters in the Competitive Skate Program are eligible to compete in Skate Canada national championships and the world championships and they have access to provincial and national funding.

Completing the Registration Form

- The same form is used for both STARSkate and Competitive Programs.
- Forms are generally handed out to skaters and/or parents during lessons. They can also be downloaded from the Skate NB Web site (www.skatenb.org and click on "Events").
- If your form was hand-delivered to you during lessons, you will see that the section pertaining to the club will have already been completed and signed for you by one of the club representatives. If you downloaded your registration form, remember to have a club representative complete this section for you. The rest of the form is your responsibility.
- Keep track of the tests your skater passes. This information will be needed on registration forms.
- You will need to provide proof of your skater's age. Keep several photocopies of his or her birth certificate on hand for this purpose.
- Your coach will tell you what event your skater is competing in.
- The form must be accompanied by a certified cheque or money order from Canada Post as payment for registration. Many parents prefer to use a money order because they're less expensive.
- Pay attention to the deadline for registration and take steps to ensure that yours arrives before the date. Forms received after the deadline, even if they are post-marked before, are rejected.
- At the event itself, you may be given a small rebate if your form was completed in full and correctly. Any blank spaces left on the form are considered to be incorrect, even if you didn't need to fill them out. We recommend putting NA in those spaces.
- Any time you're not sure how to complete the form, consult with your coach.



Before the Competition

- Competition organizers will send you confirmation before the event and will tell you your skater's start time.
- Some parents prefer to travel to the event the day before, particularly if there's an early start time. Your registration form will include information about hotel accommodations in the area.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive at your destination, particularly if you're not familiar with the route.
- Don't forget to bring two copies of your skater's music and the costume!
- Consider getting your coach's cell phone number so that you can reach them if something happens.
- You should arrive at least 60 minutes before your ice time. This will allow you plenty of time to register and find your dressing room.

What to Expect at a Competition

- When you arrive, find the registration desk. Register your skater and leave your music at the desk. Organizers will ensure that the correct music will be played for each skater. Check the skating order at this point, too, to determine when your skater is expected to be on the ice.
- Find the correct dressing room. There are usually signs posted or organizers will give directions. Your skater may wish to change into his or her costume at this point. Some skaters prefer to arrive at the competition already dressed.
- Never leave skates unattended in a dressing room. If they're not on your skater's feet, take them with you.
- Your skater should take some time to stretch and warm up before putting on skates and warm-up jacket.
- Find your coach, if your coach hasn't already found you. (See The Role of the Coach, below).
- For events that have a lot of skaters, the group may be divided into smaller "flights." Each flight will have its own separate warm-up period. Warm-up periods vary in length with level and discipline.
- Once the warm-up concludes, the first skater takes the ice and performs their program.
- At the conclusion of the program, the skater leaves and usually removes their skates while waiting for the marks to be ready. Skaters may return to their parents at this point.
- Judges write down notes and assign their marks according to criteria established by Skate Canada. Final results are tabulated by accountants and posted when ready at a central location.
- Presentation of awards to the top three from each category generally takes place while the ice is being flooded (to avoid distracting competitors).
- Remember to pick up your skater's music when you leave the competition. If it's not ready when you're leaving, ask your coach to pick it up.

Helpful Hint: Sometimes the parent seems more nervous at a competition than the skater! This is a natural reaction. All parents want their kids to do well, and the fear of not knowing how the performance will go can be nerve-wracking, for you and your skater. Stay calm. It's best for your skater if you can keep your "game face" the same in good times and bad. Don't jump three feet off the ground when your skater wins, and don't dissolve into tears when they don't. Your skater needs to know that no matter what the result, they have your unconditional love and support. Help your child learn to win and lose gracefully.

The Role of Your Coach

Your coach plays an important role during competitions. In addition to helping your skater train and prepare for competitions, your coach will also help your skater deal with nerves and be a source of support during the event.

- Find your coach when you arrive. The coach will remain with your skater throughout the competition, enabling parents to sit in the audience and watch the performance. Particularly nervous parents may wish to separate themselves from their skater, so that the nervousness is not passed on.
- Your coach attends the warm up and guides the skater through it, making sure that he or she is properly warmed up and feeling comfortable. If your skater is having trouble with a skill during the warm up, the coach will work with the skater to correct it.
- Your coach will also be there when your skater leaves the ice after their performance.
- Your coach and skater will set general goals for the competition ahead of time, such as placing in the top ten, skating a clean performance, bettering a previous score or landing a particular jump. Following the performance, the coach and skater will discuss the goals again in light of the performance. Make sure you discuss your skater's marks with the coach.
- Keep in mind that your coach will have several skaters to supervise at each event. Find your skater after their event has concluded, so that your coach can focus on the next skater.

- Your coach will provide an invoice to you after the event for the cost of supervising your skater. There may also be an amount for mileage, meals and accommodation. If your coach has other skaters competing at the same event, these travel costs will be divided among them all.



VII. Other Sources of Information

Questions? Who To Ask

This handbook contains the practical information you need to navigate through the first few years of figure skating. We recommend that you consult its pages first. Inevitably there may be questions that won't be answered here. Who should you ask?

- **Your Coach:** practical questions specifically about your skater, a competition or test, training, setting up group lessons.
- **Other Parents:** queries concerning sources for clothing and skates, sharpening, organizing group lessons, ride-sharing to and from the rink.
- **Your Club:** questions about policy, registration, schedule changes, club events, volunteering.
 - Club email: capitalskating@gmail.com
 - Club Web: www.capitalcityskatingclub.ca
- **Skate New Brunswick:** questions about officiating, provincial events and results, competition registration forms, funding, policy.
 - Tel: 451-1321
 - Email: skatenb@nb.aibn.com
 - Web: www.skatenb.org
- **Skate Canada:** Once you're a member of the CCSC, you become a member of Skate Canada, too. Your Skate Canada membership number (on your skater's card) gives you access to a members-only area on their Web site. Consult Skate Canada for questions about national news, events and results, programs, getting involved, national teams, other figure skating resources.
 - Tel: 1-888-747-2372
 - Email: skatecanada@skatecanada.ca
 - Web: www.skatecanada.ca

