



SALT LAKE
Figure Skating

New Member Handbook

About Salt Lake Figure Skating

Salt Lake Figure Skating is a non-profit [501(c)3] organization sanctioned by US Figure Skating (USFS). Club By- Laws have been established to secure compliance with federal and state laws governing non-profit organizations, and to align the club operations with standards established by USFS. The power of the club is vested in its members. Nine members are elected by the membership to serve on the Club Board of Directors. The Board of Directors are all volunteers and act as Club Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) and Committee Chairs. They represent the membership in the making of policy, establishing and updating bylaws, and filing the required state and USFS reports and forms. Board members also select Delegates to the USFS Governing Council meeting each spring.

US Figure Skating

USFS is the governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States. It is a member of the International Skating Union (ISU) and a member of the US Olympic Committee (USOC). USFS is made up of more than 600 Member Clubs throughout the country, as well as 171,000 individual and associate members. USFS has no governing authority over the member clubs and will not make judgments on matters that are internal to member clubs. When needed, USFS will assist member clubs to resolve concerns that involve USFS guidelines, rules and regulations. They also provide access to resource materials, publications, and technical expertise with well-qualified authorities in a multitude of technical areas. Knowledgeable staff can provide information and assistance in developing existing programs or in starting new programs. Skaters are encouraged to obtain a copy of the official *USFS Rulebook*, which details the rules associated with the sport of figure skating, competitions, test structure, and provides other related educational and instructional materials.

Benefits of Belonging to Salt Lake Figure Skating

As a valued member of SLFS:

- You will be a member of US Figure Skating
- You receive the USFS *Skating Magazine*
- You are eligible to compete in USFS sanctioned competitions
- You are eligible to take USFS tests and receive certificates and patches for tests passed
- You will receive the club newsletter and other communications
- You have the opportunity to perform in the club spring ice show, IceStravaganza: Salt Lake On Ice!
- You are eligible to attend club sponsored clinics
- You help support club skaters who are competing at regional, sectional and national levels
- You may vote on issues at the club General Membership meetings if you are over age

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- You have the opportunity to enjoy club social activities and educational seminars
- You are part of a wonderful organization dedicated to maintaining the positive spirit of figure skating

LESSONS

Learn to Skate Program

Group Lessons: The Salt Lake City Sports Complex has Learn to Skate programs for ages 3 to adult. The program consists of one ½-hour group lesson per week for each 6 week session. Fliers are available at the front desk/Learn To Skate Bulletin board with dates/times of classes.

Rental skates are included for participants in the Learn To Skate Classes at SLC Sports Complex.

Warm clothing (coats, hats and gloves) is recommended for children taking lessons.

Basic Skill Levels:

Snowplow Sam I

Snowplow Sam II

Snowplow Sam III

Basic I

Basic II

Basic III

Basic IV

Basic V

Basic VI

Basic VII

Basic VIII

Adult I

Adult II

Adult III

Adult IV

Freeskate I

Freeskate II

Freeskate III

Freeskate IV

Freeskate V

Freeskate VI

Bridge Program:

The bridge program is offered during the summer months for skaters Basic IV and above who are interested in learning more about what competitive skating is all about. There is more instruction time, smaller classes and you have the opportunity to learn a skating program to music and skate in the Skate Salt Lake Competition.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are 30 minute one on one sessions taught by a SLC Sports Complex professional (Pro). The Pros at SLC Sports Complex are independent contractors. Prices vary from coach to coach. Information about the Pros is available on the Pro bulletin board and on our club website: www.saltlakefigureskating.com.

Should I take private lessons? If you are a fast learner or want to move ahead more quickly in skating or would like to compete in a competition with a program set to music then private lessons are for you. Private lessons are available for any skill level.

Lesson time is primarily spent working on skating technique, learning, perfecting, and polishing the jumps, spins, footwork, and artistic presentation of a program for competition. Very little time is spent on conditioning. A Pro may advise on a physical training regime to build endurance and fitness. Off ice practices may be encouraged to train the coordination and height for jumps.

The number of lessons you take each week varies according to several factors. Beginners usually take one or two lessons a week and spend additional time at the rink practicing what was learned. The Pro can monitor a skater's progress and adjust the amount of instructional time depending upon the skater's progress. Skaters who 'do their homework' by practicing often at the rink, generally advance more quickly compared to those who practice less frequently.

How Do I Choose a Coach?

You will want to observe a few ice skating lessons taught by the various Pros. You should then ask for a lesson from the Pro that you are interested in and try them out. You can then decide on which Pro you would like to work with.

Qualifications of the Pros are posted on the Professional Bulletin Board and on our club website: www.saltlakefigureskating.com

- Choose someone who can you develop a rapport with, someone you can be open with.
- A Coach should be professional and serious about the job, have definite lesson times and consistently follow through on plans.
- Don't rule out a Pro due to age or inexperience with coaching. When you are just starting out, the younger coaches will usually have more time to spend with you and may be more enthusiastic compared to the more experienced coaches or those in high demand who become heavily involved in travel to competitions and preparations for advanced skaters.
- Ask if the Pro is a member of the Professional Skating Association (PSA). Ask about the skating instruction they have received.

- Ask what level skaters have they coached and how well have the skaters performed at competitions?
- Some coaches specialize in pairs or moves in the field or ice dancing.

When Do I Skate?

You and your instructor will decide on a lesson time, usually during a freestyle session, possibly on a public skate session. Remember, it is a good idea to practice between lessons. The more you practice the faster you will progress. Consult with your coach about the amount of time you should practice and how many lessons you should have per week.

How Much Does a Private Lesson Cost?

Each skating professional at SLC Sports Complex sets their own rates based on experience and qualifications. Lessons are usually 30 minutes in length and range from \$18 to \$35 per 30 minutes depending on the coach.

Ice time is not included with your lesson. If skating on the freestyle session, you will need to pay for the specific session you are skating on. If you are skating on the public session, you will need to pay for that as well.

How to get the most from your lessons

- Value your time and the coach's time. Focus on skating.
- Come rested and mentally prepared to work and concentrate.
- Eat right, warm up and stretch properly before each lesson.
- Ask questions. Don't wait until the last few minutes of the lesson to ask questions. If they are important enough to ask, they are important to have answered and maybe worked on during the lesson.
- Practice. Repeat the same lesson you did with your coach in the same order. There is often a reason for the order.

ICE TIME

Public

Public skating is available at the SLC Sports Complex and several other rinks in the Salt Lake Valley. Call each facility for their schedule and cost. During public ice time, anyone can skate and there is no limit to the number of skaters that can be on the ice.

Private lessons generally are not taught during public ice time because it is difficult to practice jumps, spins and moves in the field due to the number of skaters.

Freestyle Sessions

A freestyle session is ice time designated for skaters who wish to practice their jumps, spins, moves in the field and competition programs. Up to 25 skaters are allowed on each session. Freestyle sessions are separated into 3 different levels: High Test, Low Test and Open. High Test sessions are for advanced skaters who are Intermediate and above. Low Test sessions are for skaters beginner through Juvenile. Open sessions are for any skater.

A skater's competition music may be played for practice on a first come first served basis. However, coaches can 'bump' their students music to play during their lesson.

Spins are generally practiced in the center of the ice. The corners of the rink are known as the "Lutz corners" as this is where skaters do a jump called the Lutz. You should not spin or stand in the Lutz corners.

Dance patterns are done around the perimeter of the ice.
Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the freestyle session rules posted on the back of the freestyle session schedule.

Advance Ice Registration:

You may pay for your freestyle ice in advance at the SLC Sports Complex front desk for a small discount (\$5.50 per session). However, once a session is paid for there are no refunds or changes made in the schedule of the sessions.

Ice purchased Daily:

If you don't buy your ice time in advance you will pay \$6.00 for the session.
Only 25 skaters are allowed on the session at any one time. If the session is full you may not be able to skate. However, you may be "wait listed" for the session. If a skater listed for the session is not there within 10 minutes of the session starting, they are bumped off the session and the wait listed skater is allowed on the session.

EQUIPMENT

Skates

There are different types of skates for the different levels of skaters. Your coach is a good resource for what skate is best for you. In general, Freestyle skates are very sturdy to provide support to the ankle, arch and foot while jumping. A good fit is crucial. There must not be a lot of room for the foot to move around in the boot. Toes should have only a little room for up-and-down movement or side to side. If the toes are pinched or painful, there is not enough room. You shouldn't be able to lift your heel in the boot and the ankle and arch of the foot should have plenty of support. A boot is broken down and should be replaced when there are deep creases across the top of the boot along the ankles or if the top flops over when the boot is taken off.

Remember, skates are not meant to be really comfortable at first. Friction points are common. Breaking the skate in, where they mold the boot to your foot, may take several weeks depending upon how often you skate. Use boot blister pads or bunga pads to provide protection to your friction points.

Boot experts can press out or deepen depressions or add padding to improve the comfort and fit if problems persist after the breaking in period. Custom fit boots are also available.

The difference between cheaper and more expensive boots is in the materials and weight or stiffness of the leather. Younger, lighter skaters can use a lighter, less expensive boot. The thinner leather breaks in easier, but the boot will break down faster if subjected to the heavy jumping. Ice dancers, because they don't jump, use boots that aren't as stiff as the freestyle skater's boots. Your coach can help you select the proper boot for you.

Blades

Freestyle blades are made for spinning, stroking and have a larger toe pick for jumping. A figure skating blade is not flat along its length. The curvature from toe to heel is called the **rocker** and on the toe end is a serrated section called a **toe pick**. The blade is concave across the width, making two sharp edges. There is an outside edge and an inside edge and four different pressure points on each blade: front inside, back inside, front outside, and back outside.

Different moves and jumps are done from specific edges of the skate blade. As the skater skill at jumping progresses a larger toe pick may be required. The coach will help with selection of the proper blade for the skater's skill level.

Several factors affect the cost of blades. Less expensive blades are nickel-plated and made of softer steel. The solder used to attach the blades to the plates that screw onto the soles of the boot may not hold up to the stress of repeated landings from jumps. More expensive blades are made of harder steel, polished to a better finish and strengthened to withstand jumping.

Blades must be sharpened at intervals to maintain even speed and to cut through the ice.

Dance blades are used specifically for ice dancing. The blade is cut off shorter in the back; this enables the skater to do very close footwork. However, most skaters use their freestyle skates for dance.

Hockey skates are sturdy skates designed specifically for playing hockey. The blades are made for speed and well as quick stops and turns.

Rental skates are good for the recreational skater who does not want to invest in buying skates. They work well for group lessons and beginning skaters.

Skates sold in sports stores are one upgrade from rental skates and may be used by beginner skaters. However, they are not recommended for the competitive ice skater. A good skating boot hugs and supports the foot and ankle and should not be soft and wobbly. Check with a coach before purchasing any figure skate for competitions. When buying boots, make sure that the boot is all leather and the blades are made of steel.

Quality ice skates are essential for the safety as well as the progress of the skater. Quality ice skates can be ordered from various manufacturers such as Jackson, Harlick, SP Teri, Riedell, and Graf. Ice skate sizes are not the same as shoe sizes and will vary depending upon the brand. Get assistance from a skating Pro who will measure your foot and help in completing the order correctly. Blades can be ordered after the boots arrive so the soles can be measured for the right length of blade. Get assistance from a skating Pro to make sure that you order the right blade for your skill level.

Used skates are available from skaters who have outgrown their skates, or who quit ice skating and want to sell their skates. Some used skates are very good and some are not. Never buy a pair of skates or blades without your Pro checking the quality and fit.

Care of Ice Skates

Boots should be cleaned with a soft cloth and saddlesoap. For stubborn marks try Simply Green, Thoro, or finger nail polish remover. A high quality boot polish is recommended and can be purchased from the manufacturer of your boot. Boot soles should be water proofed with “snow seal” to keep the moisture out. Ask your coach for information on the correct technique for sealing soles. You can also order your boots with the sole Snow Sealed or lacquered.

Blades should be wiped down with a soft absorbent cloth after skating. After you wipe, check the blade screws to make sure they are tight. Skaters should own a screwdriver and keep it available with their equipment or in their locker. Many skaters use terry cloth blade protectors (soakers) that absorb moisture missed during wiping. These can stay on your skates to protect them from getting nicked. Never leave hard skate guards on your blades. They hold in moisture and cause rusting. Hard guards are only used when you are walking in your skates. They protect the sharp edge of the blades from nicks or wear. Remember: skate blades need to be sharpened regularly. Sharpening does two things, it deepens the hollow between the edges, which wear down over time, and it polishes off nicks or abrasions that come from hitting debris on the ice. Sharpening improves grip and glide. Ask your coach how often this should be done because it varies depending upon how you skate and how often you skate.

Where do I get blades sharpened?

Your coach will know who is the best person to sharpen your skates. Do not attempt to sharpen them yourself or you will ruin your blades. It takes special equipment and techniques to sharpen blades properly. Be aware that some sports stores sharpen blades using techniques for hockey skates, which are not useful for figure skates.

Hard Skate Guards are a rubbery-plastic cover for your blades that is the most important accessory. Never walk off the ice without putting on hard guards. Guards will keep the groove in the blades clear of dirt and grit.

Storing Equipment

Lockers are available for lease from Salt Lake Figure Skating for \$65/year. Skaters supply their own lock. Lockers allow skaters the convenience of keeping their equipment (skates, sweatshirt, music, skate guards, etc.) at the rink.

Suitcase or duffle bags are also utilized to hold equipment. There is no place to store equipment bags at the rink, it is expected that the skater will carry the equipment bag to and from the rink each time.

Clothing

Freedom of movement is important. Non-restrictive, warm clothing and gloves are suitable during public skating sessions and Learn to Skate lessons. Helmets are available at the skate rental desk. Skating tights, leotards, stretchy leggings, a skating dress or non-restrictive pants for gentlemen and a form fitting sweater or sweatshirt are best during private lessons. No baggy clothing. Skating tights are thicker and warmer compared to regular tights and can fit over the skating boot or inside the skating boot. Most skaters choose to wear flesh colored tights. Tights are available for purchase from Salt Lake Figure Skating. Danskin and Capezio brands are also sold at local dancewear stores.

Make sure that your underwear doesn't show under your tights. Most competitors choose not to wear underwear during competitions.

Competition outfits should fit the program music or theme. Excessive beads or sequins are discouraged; if they fall on the ice they create a hazard. It is best to avoid looking like a costume. Ask your coach for suggestions.

Where can I get competition outfits? Many skaters sell outfits they have outgrown through the Salt Lake Figure Skating consignment store at a variety of times during the year. There are also local seamstresses who make skating dresses. Ask other skaters who makes their dress. You can also order skating dresses off the internet and glue crystals on yourself to embellish.

ICE SKATING COMPETITIONS

At a skating competition, skaters at the same skill level compete by performing a skating program for a panel of judges. A skating program combines the different skating elements of a particular level set to music.

Competitions are not a requirement of skating. Each skater must set his or her own personal goals. However, competitions can be fun and very motivating. They are an excellent opportunity for skaters to be creative, practice their skills and presentation techniques, and learn good sportsmanship.

To compete in any competition, the skater must first be a member of US Figure Skating (USFS). All members of Salt Lake Figure Skating are members of USFS. Skaters in the SLC Sports Complex Learn to Skate program are USFS basic skills members.

Competition Program Music is selected by the coach and skater. The length of the program music is set by competition rules. In freestyle competition, vocal music is permitted in the lower levels, Snowplow Sam through Freeskate D. Music for all other freeskate levels must be instrumental. Music for Artistic and Showcase competitions may include vocal arrangements.

Competitions at the Basic Skills Level:

Skaters in Learn to Skate classes may compete if they are taking private lessons and are members of United States Figure Skating (USFS). Competitions held at the Salt Lake City Sports Complex for basic skills skaters are: Skate Salt Lake (August).

Your coach should help you complete the application form to ensure you enter competitions at the appropriate skill level. A coaches signature and a club officers signature are required on all competition forms. Skaters are restricted to compete at their current basic skills level or equivalent, or no higher than one level above their current level. A skater may not enter at more than one level. You can find the current required elements in the USFS *Basic Skills Rulebook*.

Other Competitions:

Skaters that have advanced beyond the basic skill levels and who are members of USFS may also compete at Skate Salt Lake (August) and other local area competitions.

Competition announcements are available on the club bulletin board and on the club website www.saltlakefigureskating.com.

Your coach should help you complete the application form to enter competitions at the appropriate skill level. Skaters are restricted to compete at their current skill level or equivalent, or no higher than one level above current level. A skater may not enter at more than one level.

Test Competition Levels

Pre-Preliminary no axel

Pre-Preliminary with axel

Preliminary

Pre-Juvenile

Juvenile (age 12 and under)

Open Juvenile (age 13 and up)

Intermediate

Novice

Junior

Senior

Utah skaters compete in the Central Pacific Regional Championships in October each year. The competition is hosted by a different club in the region each year. Any test level

skater can compete at Regionals. Skaters at Juvenile and Intermediate who place in the top 4 will advance to US Junior Nationals. Skaters Novice and above who place in the top 4 advance to Pacific Coast Sectionals. Skaters in the top 4 at Sectionals advance to US Nationals.

Competition Events

A Competition includes one or more of the following events.

Freeskate – Skaters/coaches select their own music and theme, and choreograph the different required jumps, spins and program elements for the skating level that best displays their technical and artistic skills. Music duration is dependent upon test level. The Competition entry form usually provides information on the music duration and required elements for the different levels of entry.

Showcase skating performances focus on entertainment. Entries in this category can be dramatic, theatrical, light-hearted or comedic in nature. Costumes and props must fit the category and performance. Music can include vocal arrangements.

Artistic Freestyle skating is a rhythmic interpretation of music selected by the skater/coach. Judges consider composition, interpretation, and style in determining the mark given, with the difficulty of jumps given no weight. Artistic music may include vocal arrangements. No props of any kind are allowed.

Ice Dancing is based on different aspects of dance, with the emphasis on rhythm and steps. The beauty of ice dancing lies in its precise footwork, coordination, and flair.

Spin events are hosted by some clubs in which skaters perform selected spins for each level. They are judged only on how well each of the spins is performed. For example: how strong and secure the entrance of the spin, how difficult the spin was due to a varied position, number and speed of the revolutions completed, the centering of the spin, the security and strength of the exiting of the spin.

Pair Skating is essentially free skating performed in unison by partners (male and female), with the addition of lifts, throw jumps, connecting steps, solo spins, and pair spins. Unison is reflected as shadow skating or mirror skating. Jumps and spins are synchronized; stroking is simultaneous and in rhythm.

Synchronized Team Skating is a highly technical form of team skating characterized by speed, accuracy, intricate formations and breathtaking transitions performed by teams of 8 – 20 skaters. This specialized discipline requires skaters to have excellent skating skills so they can perform intricate step sequences, difficult hand holds and quick changes of direction with the highest level of precision. Synchronized skating is currently available at Cottonwood Heights.

Non-competitive Performances

Salt Lake Figure Skating provides skaters opportunities to perform for family and friends, without the pressure of being judged. Each year, SLFS holds a Holiday Exhibition in December and a Spring Ice Show in late April/Early May.

SKILL LEVEL PROGRESSION TESTS

As a skater advances and becomes more proficient in their skating skills, USFS, through their member clubs, provides test sessions in order for skaters to advance through the different levels of test level skating. In testing, skaters do not compete against other skaters. Skaters are judged according to how well they complete the required elements or Moves In The Field for that level. Judges who are qualified according to USFS rules and regulations watch the skater perform the required movements and determine if the test has been skillfully executed to pass. The skater can then move to the next level in competition, Freestyle, moves in the field, and ice dancing.

When do I test? You and your coach will determine when you are ready for a test. Test sessions are usually available once/month at the different skate clubs in the Salt Lake Valley/Utah Interclub Association. Your coach should help you complete the application for admission to a test session. Remember, coach and club officer signatures are required. Test applications must be mailed no more than 45 days before and no less than 21 days before a scheduled test session. The applications should be mailed to the address listed on the test application for the figure skating club that is hosting the test session. The costs for test sessions are established by the Utah Interclub. The fees for test sessions are standard for all clubs belonging to the Utah Interclub. The fees cover the cost of hosting the test session, and pay for ice time costs, USFS processing, and awards for tests passed.

Testing “Tracks”

There are three main tracks for test progression. SLFS skaters usually work on more than one test track at a time.

- Freestyle tests are skated to music, includes jumps and spins
- Moves in the Field: Each test consists of 3 – 7 moves, no music, etc.
- Dance tests are a set pattern dance with specific steps and music.

Freestyle tests must be passed in addition to the Moves in the Field (MITF) test to advance competition levels. Freeskate tests can not be taken unless the MITF test of the same level has already been passed. You can take a MITF test and a Freeskate test in the same test session.

Freeskate & Moves in the Field Test Levels

Pre-Preliminary

Preliminary

Pre-Juvenile

Juvenile

Intermediate

Novice
Junior
Senior
Adult Pre-Bronze
Adult Bronze
Adult Silver
Adult Gold

Dance Test Levels

Preliminary: Dutch Waltz, Canasta Tango & Rhythm Blues
Pre-Bronze: Swing Dance, Cha-Cha & Fiesta Tango
Bronze: Hickory Hoedown, Willow Waltz, Ten Fox
Pre-Silver: Fourteen step, European Waltz & Foxtrot
Silver: American Waltz, Tango, & Rocker Foxtrot
Pre-Gold: Kilian, Blues, Paso Doble, & Starlight Waltz
Gold: Viennese Waltz, Quickstep, Westminster Waltz & Argentine Tango
Junior International: Rhumba, Gold Waltz, Australian Waltz, Cha Cha Congelado
Senior International: Silver Samba, Yankee Polka, Ravensburger Waltz, Tango
Romantica, Midnight Blues

Pairs Test Levels

Preliminary
Juvenile
Intermediate
Novice
Junior
Senior
Adult Bronze
Adult Silver
Adult Gold

Free Dance Test Levels

Juvenile
Intermediate
Novice
Junior
Senior

Ice dancers and freestyle skaters all start out together in learning basic stroking and the use of edges. In time, they frequently take separate paths based on which discipline the skater finds more interesting and fun. Freestyle skating requires intensive work on jumps and spins; ice dancers and synchronized team skaters spend hours perfecting intricate steps and arm positions.

Gold Medals

It is a significant accomplishment for a skater to pass the Senior Moves in the Field, Senior Freestyle, or Gold Dance level tests. Salt Lake Figure Skating proudly recognizes these skaters by awarding them with the USFS gold medal and placing their name on a plaque in our trophy display case.

CHECKLIST FOR TESTING OR COMPETITIONS

The first and most important thing with testing or competitions is to get your paperwork filled out properly and turned in on time.

- Complete the Test/Competition application; fill in all requested information, including your USFS number, and have your coach, parent/guardian, and SLFS Officer sign the application, as required.
- Submit completed application and fees prior to the deadline (Do not submit test applications more than 45 days prior to deadline, they will be returned).
- Be able to provide proof of having passed the prerequisite test requirement, if requested.
- If you have a special need or request, let the test chair or competition registrar know as far in advance as possible. Accommodations will not always be guaranteed.
- If after applying for a test, you find that you cannot make it, notify the test chair immediately. Once the test schedule is posted no refunds will be given unless for medical emergencies. No refunds past 21 days before the test date.
- Confer with your coach about your competition or test attire so you are sure to be dressed appropriately.

Practice Ice: When available, sign up for a practice ice session prior to the competition. Read instructions regarding the price and duration of the practice ice session. Some sessions allow for the skater's music to be played and some do not. Most practice ice sessions include a small number of competitors on the ice at the same time. Practice ice time helps the skater fit the program to the size or orientation of the ice rink and provide a real confidence boost a day or two before the official competition.

Day of Test or Competition:

- Plan to arrive one hour prior to your scheduled warm-up time, unless instructed otherwise. The schedule frequently runs ahead.

Bring with you:

- Skates
- Hard Guards and soakers
- Skating outfit
- CD with your program music plus a backup copy
- Jump rope or other warm-up equipment
- Water and snacks
- Extra boot laces
- Girls - extra pair of tights
- Girls – hair accessories, makeup supplies

- Repair kit – screwdriver, skate polish, nail polish remover, band-aids, needle and thread, safety pins.
- Something to do quietly until test/competition time (book, Walkman with headphones, etc.)

Dress properly for the test – girls: nice dresses and sweater, hair tied back from the face, light make-up optional; boys: nice pants and top.

Upon arriving at the rink check in with the registrar or assistant and determine if there have been any schedule changes. Turn in your CD. Make sure your CD is clearly marked with your name, skating level and time of the program. Keep your voice down so as not to interrupt another skater's concentration.

Have your skates on and be ready to get on the ice when your warm up group is called. Be aware of which end of the ice you will be starting your test.

During a Test

- Prior to starting your test introduce yourself to the judging panel.
- Wait for a signal (usually a verbal “okay” or a nod) from the judge-in-charge or other official prior to starting the test and each move.
- During Moves in the Field tests you may speak BRIEFLY with your coach. However, skaters should be ready to start when signaled to do so.
- At the conclusion of your test do not leave the ice until dismissed (usually a verbal “thank you”) by your judging panel.
- If the judges request a re-skate of an element let the judges know whether you plan to warm it up (freeskating tests only) or just do it. Also, you may speak briefly with your coach.

After a Test

- Copies of your test papers will be given to you so you can see the results and read the judges comments.
- If you pass your test you will receive a patch for the level of test you passed.
- Be mindful of other skaters' feelings.
- Retrieve your CD (freeskate tests only).
- Thank the judges and those in charge of the test session. Remember they are volunteering their time for you.
- Make sure you have all of your belongings before departing the rink.

SCORING COMPETITIONS

Judges mark performances at competitions according to rules established by USFS.

Required elements for the skill level are evaluated:

- Jumps - height, ice coverage, technique, clean takeoff/ landing.
- Jump Combinations - all of the above with equality of both jumps.
- Spins - smooth entry/exit, strong controlled rotation, number of rotations, speed of rotation, centering.

- Flying Spins - all of the above for spins, height of jump, the position in the air and on landing.
- Step and Spiral Sequences – difficulty of the steps, swing, carriage and smooth flow of the movement in character with music, pattern
- Difficulty of the Connecting Steps and Movements. Crossovers are not considered to be connecting steps.
- Speed – between elements and in the entry and exit of elements.

Marks for **Technical Merit** consider the following:

- Difficulty of all the elements (jumps, spins, step sequences and particularly the glide, footwork and difficulty and variety of connecting steps). No individual element is given predominant importance, the program is evaluated as a whole. Excessive values cannot be assigned to elements especially when of poor quality.
- Variety, diversity of the jumps, spins, spirals and connecting steps.
- Speed between elements and in the entry and exit of elements. Cleanness and sureness, secure edges and flow.
- Poor technique such as *cheated jumps* (which are jumps in which part of the rotation is completed either before takeoff or upon or after landing, rotations on the ice instead of in the air) or *wrapped jumps* (where the knee is bent in the air and appears to be wrapped high around the skating leg) do not earn high marks.

Marks for **Presentation** consider the following:

- Harmonious composition of the program as a whole in conformity with the music. Movements suit the music, appropriate movements to match highlights of the music (including connecting steps), speed tension and expression of movements match intensity/tempo of music.
- Variation of speed, speed of movement changes with the pace and character of the music, using both long, sustained movements and short, sharp movements. Demonstrated ease of acceleration and deceleration with the tempo of the music.
- Utilization of space and the ice surface, not too much reliance on circular and straight line patterns. Highlights distributed over the entire ice surface. Balance overall program, not just designed for judges, sold to the spectators, all four sides to the arena are utilized. Entire body used to express music through up and down or side-to-side movements.
- Easy movements and sureness in time to the music. Balance, strength, rhythm, timing, flow all of good quality with effortless flow. Avoid skates on your toes and scratchiness, work for running edges.
- Carriage and style that is pleasing and in control of body movements.
- Originality and innovative movements are rewarded. Choreography that is inventive and reveals the character of the music. A judge is expected to be open-minded, they may not like the music, but must reward original interpretation of the music chosen.
- Expression of the character of the music is inspired from within. Express the love and feel of what you are doing. Demonstrate that you understand the music chosen. Use the entire body to interpret the music or theme. Use facial

expressions. Keep expressions natural, not mechanical. Demonstrate conviction and feeling.

Skaters may ask a judge after a test or competition about their marks or can request a preview or critique of a program prior to a big competition and ask for suggestions on how to improve. Both the Judge and the coach have an important role in helping the skater to progress in skill and ability.

Figure skating does not have a numerical degree of difficulty that figures into scoring. Judges take relative difficulty of jumps into account when ranking skaters' performance against each other. Toe pick assisted jumps such as the toe loop, flip and lutz are not as difficult as the edge jumps: the axel, salchow and loop.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SKATER'S PARENT

The success of a young figure skater is highly dependent upon a three-way partnership and working relationship between the skater, parent, and coach. Initially, the parent is more involved in daily decisions on training. As the skill level of the skater progresses, the skater must assume more responsibility for their training, the parent's involvement shifts from that of a manager to a motivational supporter. Abide by the skating parents code of conduct.

There are 3 pamphlets published by US Figure Skating called "The Skating Parents' Survival Guide". They have some important information for parents on how to help their skater be successful. You can get these from the SLFS new member liaison.

Teaching Kids to have Good Sportsmanship

1. Abide by the rules.
2. Try to avoid arguments, learn to manage anger.
3. Always be fair.
4. Listen and follow the directions of the coach.
5. Respect other skaters' efforts.
6. Offer encouragement to other skaters. Praise other skaters when they do well and comfort and encourage them when they make mistakes.
7. Accept the judgment calls of the officials.

Sportsmanship is the ability to:

- Win without gloating
- Lose without complaining
- Treat your opponent with respect

How to Be a Positive Role Model

Children learn behavior from many different people – coaches, teachers, other adults, and peers. But the people they learn from the most are their parents. Your child not only soaks up what you say, but also what you don't say. Nonverbal messages – like a look of disgust or disappointment, often speak louder than words. Modeling good sportsmanship and respect for others provides an important lifelong lesson for your

child. Keep all comments positive and avoid criticizing officials, the club, and coaches in the presence of your child.

Be Involved...

Every youth sport program needs enthusiastic involvement from parents to be successful. Volunteering your time not only helps your child's program; it's also an enjoyable way to meet other parents/adults and make new friends. Here are a few ways to become involved:

- Be an ice monitor for test sessions, competitions.
- Attend the Fall and Spring General Membership Meeting of SLFS.
- Volunteer on a committee supporting club activities.
- Serve as a member of the Board of Directors.
- Volunteer to help at competitions or test sessions
- Help with fundraising

Don't Get Too Involved

No figure skating coach wants to be – or should be – second-guessed by parents on coaching decisions. Indications that a parent is too involved include:

- You are overly concerned with the outcome of an event.
- You spend a lot of time talking with the coach about competition strategy, skater's skill levels, and the way she or he conducts practices and coaches at competitions.
- Your child has stopped enjoying skating or has asked you to stop coming to competitions or practices.
- You require your child to take extra practice.
- You technically correct your child's skating elements.
- You insist on being present for every practice session.

Both the coach and your child will usually welcome a healthy involvement. Show interest, help the coach where needed, encourage your child – and enjoy the sport yourself.

Emphasize Fun and Skill Development. A focus on developing skills and striving to win takes the pressure off winning – which no one child is in control of. However, all children can improve their skating skills. And when they see that improvement, they are usually motivated to improve more. Developing skills is one of the most satisfying aspects of any sport.

Keep winning in perspective; emphasize personal improvement and define success as giving a maximal effort.

SETTING PERFORMANCE GOALS

View skating as a vehicle for learning about commitment, self-improvement, and dealing with successes and failures.

Performance goals – with emphasis on individual skill improvement – are much better than the outcome goal of winning. Performance goals are in the athlete's control and will help the athlete improve. Performance goals should be specific and they should be

challenging but not too difficult to achieve. Performance goals are best set by the skater, with assistance from the coach.

Physical conditioning and endurance training are key elements of performance goals. Having the ability to go full speed on the ice for four minutes puts you in far better condition compared to your opponents. It takes less effort to skate the program and you can have more focus on the artistic and mental aspects of the program.

Ways to Improve Your Skating

1. Videotape yourself so you can see yourself how your coach and the judges see you.
2. Practice like you perform, create an attitude and routine practice that is exactly the same way as how you want to perform.
3. Pick music that suits you.
4. Don't worry about your competitors. Focus on what you need to do to be your best. Don't give your opponents the advantage of getting inside your head by worrying about what they've done.
5. Leave the past in the past. If you make a mistake during a performance, don't dwell on the mistake, focus ahead on the moves you have control over so that the rest of the performance will overshadow that mistake.
6. Go to your Coach if you have a question or problem. Going to others at the rink may lead to multiple answers and a more complicated problem. A good coach welcomes that kind of discussion. You're paying for their assistance.
7. Learn to accept criticism. Take criticism as the coach's way of helping you, remember that you're working together and the coach is saying these things to help you improve. You need the coach's feedback, expertise and viewpoint to do your best.
8. Become self-sufficient. Be able to do your own hair, makeup, and put on your costume. Take responsibility for finding out practice ice times and competition schedules. Being responsible for yourself demonstrates your dedication to the sport.
9. Take dance lessons. You have so little time on the ice to work on the basics: edges, stroking, jumps and spins. Dance lessons provide the additional training for proper carriage, posture and control of your body.
10. Keep your blades sharpened. Check your edges after every practice or lesson.

Ways to Improve your Condition

1. Warm up properly before getting on the ice or doing any off-ice training.
2. Become more flexible. Flexibility makes athletes more resistant to injury, gives full range of motion improving grace and artistry. It adds to strength, speed and sureness of landings.
3. Training on the ice to develop the *muscle memory* you need to perform the specialized skills of ice skating. When you repeat a motion over and over, your muscles "remember" the motion.
4. Maintain a regular and consistent conditioning regime. The progress you make in conditioning comes slowly and can be lost quickly.

5. Train for endurance. Take several run-throughs of your program without any breaks. Have hard stroking sessions to work on your speed.
6. Train for power with weight training, cycling or stroking.
7. Improve your upper body strength. Strong decisive arm movement is as important to consistent jumps as strong legs.
8. Make the most of ice time, work hard. If you love what you do, you'll work hard. If you work hard, you'll get better. If you get better, you will love what you do even more.
9. Get plenty of rest. Lack of coordination, poor balance and concentration result from inadequate rest.

How to Avoid Injury

Skating injuries occur mainly in three areas – knees, feet, and back. There are exercises and precautions must be taken to minimize the risk of getting hurt. Stretch properly every time before you skate.

Knee pain, which is a symptom of knee injury, is a common complaint. Several things can put your knees – or any part of your body - at greater risk of injury.

- Injury in another part of the body that causes the skater to alter the technique or posture to avoid pain or compensate for weakness. That throws the body out of balance, increasing stress on another body part. A common place for this to happen is the knee or back.
- Poorly fitting boots can have the same effect as an injury.

The best protection for the knee is for muscles that control motion and protect stability to be fit and properly warmed up and stretched prior to skating. Muscles that are not warmed up are brittle and are more likely to tear or bruise. The muscles that protect the knees are in the thighs and calves. Every time you skate, take a few minutes to stretch them out. Your coach will demonstrate effective stretching exercises.

Off ice practice of jump takeoffs and landings should be supervised by the coach. Skaters should wear sturdy athletic shoes and should never try to 'stick' the landings. Instead bounce up. When you land, you're still spinning around and the landing leg has to stop the spinning force. The floor isn't as slippery as ice, on the floor you can twist your ankle or worse on improper landings.

GLOSSARY OF SKATING TERMS

(obtained from *the Spectator's Guide* by Campbell's Soups and United States Figure Skating and Kristi Yamaguchi's *Figure Skating for Dummies*)

Axel The easiest jump to recognize because it is the only jump taken off from a forward position. The skater glides forward on one foot, takes off from a forward outside edge, rotates (1 ½ revolutions for a single axel, 2 ½ for a double and 3 1/2 for a triple) and lands on the opposite foot skating backward. Name after its inventor Axel Paulsen.

Cheated jump Any jump where the rotations are completed before the takeoff or after landing.

Choctaw A turn from forward to backward (or backward to forward) from one foot to the other in which the curve of the exit edge is in the opposite direction to the curve of the entry edge. The change of foot is from outside edge to inside edge or from inside edge to outside edge.

Clean A program with no mistakes. It also describes precise skating without scraping the blade, dragging the toe pick, and so on.

Crossover A method of gaining speed and turning corners in which skaters cross one foot over the other. There are both forward and backward crossovers.

Death Spiral This is a required move in pair skating in which the man spins in a pivot position while holding one hand of the lady, who is spinning in a horizontal position on one edge of the skate with her body parallel to the ice.

Falling Leaf A jump taking off from a backward outside edge as in a loop jump takeoff, and projecting the free leg forward turning 1/2 revolution. The landing is forward on the toe of this lifting leg and either steps into a forward glide position on the opposite leg (original take-off leg) or steps into a forward inside three-turn.

Flip A toe-assisted jump, taken off from the left foot going backward and landed on the right foot. The skater will usually push with the right foot going into this jump.

Layback Spin Generally performed by women, the layback spin involves an upright spin position where the head and shoulders are dropped backwards and the back arches.

Lifts Any move in which the man in pair or ice dancing lifts the female partner off the ice. In pair skating, the man lifts his partner overhead with arms fully extended. In dance, only small lifts are allowed and a man may not lift his partner above his shoulders.

Loop The loop is taken off and landed on the same foot and edge. At the point of take off, the skater's feet may look as if they are together. The free leg is then thrown sideways and upward in the direction of the jump.

Lutz One of the few jumps that takes off counter to the natural rotation of the edge. The skater usually approaches in a long curve, takes off from the left back outside edge with assistance from the right toe, and turns counter clockwise, landing on the outside back edge of the right foot. Named for Austrian skater Alois Lutz.

Mohawk A turn from forward to backward (or backward to forward), from one foot to the other, each edge forming parts of the same curve.

Moves in the Field One of three test structures in U.S. Figure Skating (including free skating and dance). Moves in the field tests help develop all basic fundamental edges and turns while emphasizing edge quality, extension, quickness and power.

Referee A competition official who supervises the judges' panel and who has full authority over a competitive event.

Regionals The regional championships is the first step in the U.S. qualifying competition structure that leads to the U.S. Championships. U.S. Figure Skating currently breaks down the U.S. into nine regional areas and competitions. Skaters must place in the top four at their regional event to advance to sectionals (the second step in the qualifying competition structure).

Juvenile and intermediate skaters go directly from regionals to the U.S. Junior Championships (top four places only).

Rocker A turn made on one foot from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge maintaining the same character, i.e., outside to inside or inside to outside.

Salchow A jump with a wide leg swing. At the moment before take off, the back inside edge of the skating foot curves sharply and the free leg is brought forward to initiate rotation. The skater lands on the back outside edge of the opposite foot of takeoff. Named for Swedish skater Ulrich Salchow, nine-time World Champion.

Sectionals The sectional championships are the second and final step in the U.S. qualifying competition structure that leads to the U.S. Championships. The top four finishers from each sectional advance to the U.S. Championships. There are currently three sectionals - Eastern, Midwestern and Pacific Coast - within U.S. Figure Skating competition structure.

Spin A spin is the rotation of the body in one spot on one foot. There are many different kinds of spins, some named for the body position during the spin: such as sit spin, a layback spin, or a cross-foot spin. A camel spin, originally called a parallel spin, has the free leg extended fully behind the skater parallel to the ice. A very, very fast spin is usually a scratch spin, or blur spin, since the skater spins so fast he/she appears blurred to the vision. If a skater leaps into the air before coming down into a spin, it is usually called a jump or a flying spin, such as a flying camel or flying sit spin.

Spiral A move in which a skater demonstrates flexibility and a fluid line by extending his or her non-skating leg behind them into the air during a long glide.

Split Jump A flashy move seen in single skating, in which the skater jumps into the air and performs a split in mid-air with the hands touching the ankles or toes. It is also sometimes called a "Russian Split". When a half-revolution is added after touching the toes, the jump is referred to as a "Split Flip".

Sweet spot The spot on your blade that you balance on while spinning. It's right back from the toe pick on the ball of the foot, but not too far back. It's forward on the blade without hitting the toe pick. If you hit the toe pick too much, you slow down.

Swizzle A method of two-foot progression, either forward or backward, by an in-and-out movement of the feet on inside edges.

Three Turn A turn on one foot from forward to backward to forward (from outside to inside edge or inside to outside edge).

Throw Jumps Seen in pair skating; the male partner assists the lady into the air into a jump.

Toe Loop Rarely performed as a single jump, but very popular as a double and triple. The skater takes off from the back outside edge, strikes the toe of the free foot into the ice, turns in the air and lands on the original back outside edge. The free leg stretches along the line of travel before take off.

Twizzle A traveling turn on one foot with one or more rotations, which is quickly rotated with a continuous (uninterrupted) action. The weight remains on the skating foot with the free foot in any position during the turn, and then placed beside the skating foot to skate the next steps.

Waltz Jump A jump involving a half-turn in the air in which the skater takes off from a forward outside edge on one foot and lands on the backward outside edge of the other.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR SKATERS

Skating Magazine is the official publication of the US Figure Skating and is the best way to keep informed. By joining USFS and SLFS your family will receive a year's subscription included with your membership.

USFS Directory provides vital contact information for all clubs and Basic Skills programs across the country. It also gives contact information for the USFS

Executive Committee, board members, committee chairs, committee members, and officials.

USFS Rulebook contains all the bylaws for the association along with the technical rules that govern figure skating.

Figure Skating for Dummies by Kristi Yamaguchi, Christy Ness, Jody Meacham contains a complete guide and provided much of the useful material contained in this guidebook. Thank you Kristi!

www.usfigureskating.org

US Figure Skating

www.skatepsa.com

Professional Skaters Association

www.isu.org

International Skating Union

www.saltlakefigureskating.com

Salt Lake Figure Skating Club website

www.skateisi.com

Ice Skating Institute