

Preparing For Competition

Competing is optional but most coaches feel it is important to compete even if you don't have Competitive Stream aspirations because the process of preparing for competition focuses skaters' efforts and the performance experience can improve performance under pressure both at competitions and for tests. Besides, skaters enjoy competitions outside their club- they are exciting and they feel proud to represent their club.

To compete, a skater must meet the age and test qualifications for the event. If a certain competition is appropriate, your coach will give your skater an application form. It is the parent's responsibility to fill it out and send it to the competition registrar along with the entry fee before the due date.

Applications are not accepted after the due date- not even one day late.

The application will usually ask for the signature of a Club Official. This is someone on the OFSC Executive; their names are listed on the Club Website and Club Bulletin Board.

This signature is to confirm that you are a member in good standing and that the test information is correct.

There are different types of competitions in figure skating- Test Stream and Competitive Stream. Everyone starts off in Test Stream competitions. These include Club competitions and Invitational competitions.

About a week before the competition either the skater or the coach or the club (it varies with the competition) will receive confirmation of the entry along with the time of the event.

Discuss coaching arrangements for each event with your private coach. Participation in competitions involves some added expense. Skaters are required to dress appropriately for the event, competitions charge an entry fee and your coach will charge for the preparation of the skater's music and extra lessons. It is customary for coaches to be paid to attend competitions. This fee covers time, gas and lessons missed to be there. Skaters may also require extra ice time to prepare.

Remember, each skater is unique, It is NOT a good idea to compare your skater's progress or results to others. There are too many factors influencing progress to make comparisons meaningful- age, maturity, talent, annual training volume, etc. A skater's placement in one isolated competition is not a definitive evaluation of your skater's ability and it certainly is not a measure of his worth as a person. Please keep the following 'Do's and Don'ts for Parents' in mind.

DO

- maintain a positive attitude
- be respectful of other competitors
- be generous with your praise (your skater has worked hard)
- support your skater regardless of the outcome
- accept the result with grace

DON'T

- keep asking your skater if he is nervous
- keep picking at your skate's hair, clothes etc. because you are nervous
- bad-mouth other skaters
- bad-mouth your skater
- complain about the result

Judging

Each judge assigns each skater a mark. After the competition the marks are tallied according to Skate Canada rules. All placements are final. Results are posted about $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour after the event finishes.

Trophies, medals and/or ribbons are usually awarded to the competitors about an hour after the results are posted. Notices about presentations are usually posted near the results board.

What Do Judges Look For?

Competitions are judged by qualified Skate Canada judges. They will be looking for quality elements executed with good form and balance. Skaters receive two marks for their performance. The first mark is for Technical Merit, the second mark is for Presentation. These two marks are added together to form the skate's final score.

Technical Merit

- Difficulty
- Variety
- Cleanness and sureness
- Speed

Presentation

- Harmonious composition and conformity with the music
- Variation of speed
- Utilization of ice surface and space
- Easy movement and sureness in time to the music
- Carriage and style
- Originality
- Expression of the character of the music

The Day of The Competition

Plan to arrive an hour ahead of your scheduled performance time. Skaters can eat a light meal no later than $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 hours before the competition but don't force skaters to eat. Register at the desk when you arrive and hand in 2 copies of your music- one tape and one CD. Make sure your tape is fully rewound; they will not do this for you.

Do not assume your event will start at the scheduled time- they rarely do. Be sure you are in the correct arena. Many competitions have two rinks going at the same time. Make sure your skater stays warm. Skaters should not sit and watch other skaters before they perform but it would be nice for them to stay and support our other skaters afterwards, if possible.

Immediately preceding each flight there will be a warm-up (anywhere from 3-6 minutes). The warm-up is not judged. About 15 minutes before this your skater can put his skates on. Do not put them on too early. If there are a lot of skaters in the event the event may be divided into two or more groups. Each group may be further sub-divided into flights.

Parents should follow the volunteers' directions regarding proper viewing areas. Parents will NOT be allowed at ice level during the competition.