



# PARENT HANDBOOK

(Excerpts from Skate Canada's  
Western Ontario Section Parent Handbook)



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## 1. Choosing a Coach

All coaches at the Flamboro Skating Club are Skate Canada certified coaches, which means they have completed components of the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) from Level 1 to Level 5. The NCCP is a five-level educational program for coaches of all levels in over 60 sports. Levels 1-3 cover three components of coaching: theory, technical and practical. After completing all three components at each level, coaches receive official certification in recognition of their accomplishments. Level 1 to 3 is a training program of approximately 100 hours, designed to certify coaches as competent coaching leaders. Levels 4 and 5 prepare candidates for leadership roles in national and international sport.

The choice of coach is up to you as a parent. You may want to consider the coach's skill level, coaching style, personality and availability when making the best choice for your skater. Some coaches team coach and you have the option of working with more than one coach in some circumstances.

When choosing a Coach for your child here are some things you may want to consider:

- Select a coach carefully. Choose the right person for their teaching and coaching abilities, but also consider that the coach will be the role model for your child. The coach will be spending considerable time with your child, so it should be someone your child feels comfortable with.
- Coaches are the experts. Make sure you understand what the coach expects of you as parents. Work together with your coach to create realistic goals and objectives for your child.
- Take time when selecting a coach. Remember that a picture is worth a thousand words. Watch the coaches teaching other children and see how they interact and present themselves.
- Coaching fees may vary according to the certification level and experience of the coach. Ask what the fees are up front so there are no misunderstandings later. All coaching fees are billed by and paid directly to the coach on a billing cycle determined by each individual coach. The coach will bill additional for extra sessions, making of music, and competition attendance and mileage at the individual coach's discretion.

At the start of each season we recommend that you and your skater sit down with the coach to discuss each of your goals for the skater. The goals may change as your skater progresses. Remember that communication is the key to continuing a healthy relationship with the coach. We encourage you to discuss any concerns with the coach throughout the season.

If your skater will be absent at any time, we remind you to please notify your coach directly. In addition, if your coach will be absent, he/she will notify you and/or arrange for another coach to teach in his/her absence.

As your skater progresses, your child's needs may change; the choice to change coaches is yours. It is expected that you inform the coach you would be leaving prior to doing so.

See the FSC website for coaching information and contact the coaches directly for any questions you may have.

## **2. Skate Canada Programs**

Every Skate Canada skating program complements the others and allows for unrestricted movement and development through the system.

All programs at the Flamboro Skating Club are taught by professional coaches certified through the NCCP.

### **Learn To Skate**

**CanSkate** – CanSkate is Skate Canada's flagship learn-to-skate program for beginners of any age and teaches fundamental movement and basic skills. The skills are arranged in progressions, from very simple to more complex. Each stage has a primary focus. Once the skills on each stage are mastered, a badge is awarded. The series of badges include Stage badges, Fundamental Movement badges and Fitness badges.

**CanPowerSkate** – CanPowerSkate Program is an action-packed, high energy instructional power skating program geared to hockey and ringette skaters that focuses on balance, power, agility, speed and endurance. Skills, techniques and conditioning drills are taught in a progressive format that emphasizes how the skills apply to game situations. CanPowerSkate provides an alternative to figure skating and is an excellent complement for those athletes playing on hockey or ringette teams. Its unique skill award program provides incentives and motivation for skaters to continue to achieve.

### **STARSkate Figure Skating**

STAR(Skills, Tests, Achievement, Recognition)Skate offers opportunities for skaters of all ages to develop fundamental figure skating skills. Unique in Canada, this program teaches figure skating skills in a group and/or private lesson format in a progressive and sequential manner and includes specifically designed awards and incentives.

## **Levels**

The STARSkate program consists of figure skating skills in four areas – Skating Skills, Ice Dance, Free Skate and Interpretive. Each area is divided into the following 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

Once a skater is in the Skate Canada STARSkate Program, there are several of options. Skaters may choose to remain in the STARSkate Program, taking tests (although not mandatory) at organized test sessions and honing learned skills. Skaters may also choose to enter competitions, while still trying Skate Canada tests. Other skaters may feel that they have progressed to a point where they may wish to enter the Skate Canada Competitive Skate Program or become involved in synchronized skating, evaluating or judging, or participate as an adult or varsity member.

## **Skating Skills**

Skating Skills are a combination of fundamental skating movements, executed on a pattern and skated solo. The basic components of all disciplines of figure skating are incorporated into the program. The movements are derived from former compulsory figures, free skating and ice dancing. The objective of the Skating Skills program is mastery of the basic fundamentals of skating - edge quality, control, power and speed. There are 6 Skating Skills tests in the STARSkate program: Preliminary, Junior/Senior Bronze, Junior/Senior Silver, and Gold.

## **Ice Dance**

Consisting of seven levels of tests, the Dance Test program teaches timing, musicality, rhythm interpretation, structure as well as basic skating skills such as edges, flow, control and unison. The dances in the STARSkate Program can be tried in any order

but a candidate must pass the required number of dances in a dance test before proceeding to the next level. In addition to the traditional compulsory dances, there are Creative Dances to challenge skaters' creativity, artistry and originality. The 7 Dance Tests are: Preliminary, Junior/Senior Bronze, Junior/Senior Silver, Gold, and Diamond.

### **Free Skate**

Free skating consists of the execution of jumps, spins, footwork, field movements and stroking, either in isolation or performed in sequence to music. There are 6 Free Skating tests in the STARSkate Program: Preliminary, Junior/Senior Bronze, Junior/Senior Silver, and Gold. Each test consists of two parts - Elements in Isolation and a Free Program.

### **Interpretive**

The objective of the Interpretive program is to encourage and develop skaters' creativity, expression, musicality, movement, interpretation of music, as well as the use of space, rhythm, line and style. The program provides skaters with the opportunity to explore the performance aspect of skating without focusing on technical elements. The Interpretive tests consist of skating to and interpreting a piece of music 2.0 to 3.0 minutes (+/- 10 seconds) in length. Skaters can take Interpretive tests as individuals and/or as a couple (male/female, female/female or male/male) at 4 levels: Introductory, Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

Coaches in the Club will be able to explain the skating programs further, or you can go to the Western Ontario website at [www.skating-wos.on.ca](http://www.skating-wos.on.ca) or Skate Canada at [www.skatecanada.ca](http://www.skatecanada.ca) for more details.

## **3. Test Days and Fees**

### **Test Days**

Flamboro Skating Club schedules tests on an on-going basis for all disciplines at any level, provided a qualified Skate Canada Evaluator or Judge is available for the test levels. Once a skater passes their test they then move to the next level in that discipline.

If the test is not successful the skater can retry that test. Your coach should determine if the skater is prepared to take the test. Skaters usually wait until the next scheduled test day before retrying a test, as waiting gives the skater more time to improve on the comments given by the Judge or Evaluator, and it better prepares the skater for the next level.

## Test Fees

The Skate Canada Test Fee schedule is as follows:

Free Skating	\$10.00 per part (2 parts)
Dance	\$10.00 per individual dance
Competitive Singles, Pairs, Dance	\$20.00 per test
Interpretive	\$10.00 per test
Skating Skills	\$10.00 per test

## Competitions

Competitions offer skaters an opportunity to perform by themselves in front of an audience and to be assessed on their performance by Judges. The children learn about good sportsmanship and they have the opportunity to work hard at being the best they can be. Competitions all have entry fees in order to participate. These fees will vary from one competition to another and must be paid when registering your skater for the competition.

## **4. Parent Roles and Responsibilities**

The most important thing for a parent of a skater is to remember that their skater is a person first, and a skater second. And in all probability the “person” in the skater is a young one, still growing, still maturing. Sometimes skaters seem so grown up, so easily able to handle pressure situations, that we forget they are still children. The same children we see looking so grown-up on the competition ice probably still cuddle their favourite stuffed animals when they go to bed at night. Let them be children, and support them as they grow. (Adapted from Don Korte’s Figure Skating Handbook.)

- **Balance:** Make sure there is balance in your skater’s life. Allow time for school and personal growth. Very few skaters make skating their life career. Don’t put so much focus on your child’s skating that you forget they’ll have to function in a “normal world” when they grow up. School is important. Social development is important. Being a child is important.
- **Help to set goals:** Help your child to set his / her goals in skating. Help him or her to be realistic about those goals, but also to make them challenging enough to make the sport fulfilling. Make sure the goals are your skater’s goals, not yours. Help to achieve these goals by setting targets, plotting progress, etc. Be willing to re-evaluate when necessary.
- **Support your Coach:** Pay your bills on time, and get your skater to the rink on time. Let the coach participate in goal-setting discussions. Listen to your coach’s advice and instructions, and help to ensure that your skater follows those instructions when participating or doing activities. Once the coach

understands your skater's goals, let the coach have the freedom to design a program to achieve them; don't try to second-guess the approach. On the other hand, responsibly watch to make sure that the general goals are being addressed over the long term.

- **Learn about the sport:** Learn enough about skating to recognize the elements. Know enough to know when something is done well, and when it is done less well. Recognize progress. Be interested, and listen when your skater talks about progress or problems.
- **Watch:** Don't use the rink as a baby sitter. Stay and watch your skater practice, and in lessons, at least sometimes. They need to know you're interested. Often skaters whose parents never watch in practice feel very self-conscious or "pressured" when their parents finally do show up to watch. If competition events are the only time you watch your skater, you may be hurting them more than helping them.
- **Be a good sport:** Remember that every skater is someone's child, and that they ALL deserve to be treated fairly and with respect. Be willing to recognize other skaters graciously. When someone else is skating in a competition, don't walk back and forth in the bleachers, don't be noisy or disruptive.
- **Support your skater:** Remember, your skater is still maturing. Offer praise when appropriate, but be realistic with that praise; recognize progress towards goals, but be willing to acknowledge when more work is needed without making that a "bad thing". Never destructively criticize, especially in front of others. Resist the urge to compare your child against another. Some learn faster, some learn slower. Let them progress at their own level.
- **Support your club:** Pay your bills on time. Help with club activities. Be willing to work on committees, or serve on the Board of Directors if needed. Be willing to do "jobs" like ice monitor, music monitor, etc. Help out with ice shows or competitions.

## **Providing Program Assistants**

The Club provides training for Program Assistants, who are skaters 12 years or older, who can volunteer their time to help with the CanSkate Program. They demonstrate skills under the direction of the coaches and generally help out wherever needed. Being a PA is a good way for skaters to serve as role models for younger skaters.

## **Makeup Days**

If your child misses a schedule session, please make arrangements to schedule a makeup day with your coach. The makeup session must be in the same program; skaters are not permitted to skate up or down a level.

## **5. Club, Coach and Skater Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Club Code of Ethics**

Parents should be familiar with the Skate Canada Club Code of Ethics. The Club Code of Ethics can be found in the Skate Canada Rule Book under Policies and Procedures or on the Skate Canada website at [www.skatecanada.ca](http://www.skatecanada.ca)

### **Coach Rules and Responsibilities**

All Skate Canada coaches must abide by the Skate Canada Professional Coaches' Code of Ethics. Parents can review the Coaches' Code of Ethics found in the Skate Canada Rule Book or on line through the Skate Canada website: [www.skatecanada.ca](http://www.skatecanada.ca) or the Western Ontario website at [www.skating-wos.on.ca](http://www.skating-wos.on.ca) or [Coaching@skating-wos.on.ca](mailto:Coaching@skating-wos.on.ca). Coaches must complete a Skate Canada approved Police Check; hold a valid First Aid Certificate and have a current Skate Canada Coaching Membership.

### **Skater Roles and Responsibilities**

As parents you should be familiar with the skater roles and responsibilities, as it is your job to remind your children of our Club's rules:

- Courtesy and respectful language and behaviour are expected at all times
- Dress appropriately for figure skating
- Be on time for all skating sessions
- All skaters must be aware of the other skaters on the ice
- Skaters should be on the ice during their sessions
- Skating sessions are for lessons and practice, not a time to socialize (this can be done off ice)
- Right of way on the ice is given to skaters doing solos (Juniors) and skaters in lessons
- Be in "good standing" financially with the Club
- Keep the skating environment clean
- Help out when asked by the Club Board and Coaches

## **6. Role of Other People Involved in Skating**

### **Role of the Evaluator**

Evaluators are volunteers and trained officials that attend Clinics, take technical tests and keep updated with communications from Western Ontario and Skate Canada. Evaluators also attend workshops conducted by the Western Ontario Section Judges Committee on the changing trends in skating. When your child enters the Skate

Canada Test Stream, they will take tests in one or all the disciplines in figure skating – Free Skate, Dance, Skills, and Interpretive skating. The evaluators are the officials that determine if your child has mastered the necessary skills sets to move on to the next level.

### **Role of the Judge**

Judges are volunteers who give of their time freely to judge tests and competition and offer advice to Coaches during the year to help with the development of a skater who competes at the competitive level. Judges are highly trained to judge competitive tests and officiate at competitions. They take judging courses; write exams, and trial judge events before they are promoted and Judge at competitions. Judges attend workshops and seminars each year to update their expertise in rule changes and technical aspects of skating. Western Ontario Section provides and financially supports Judges training each year.

### **Role of the Volunteer**

A volunteer is an individual that gives freely of their time to assist and work towards the goals of an organization. Western Ontario Section is very fortunate to have a dedicated population of very hard working volunteers throughout the Section. You will see them serving on Boards of Directors, working at events, fundraising and helping out wherever they are needed. Clubs depend on parents of their skaters to help create a viable and safe environment for all skaters, so give a hand when you can.

## **7. Equipment**

### **Skates**

The purchase of a boot and blade is a major decision which can represent a substantial financial investment.

### **Fitting Basics**

A skater's size, weight, and skating level are very important. These aspects will determine what boot and blade to purchase and how long they will last. While seated, the boot should be snug in the heel, arch, and ball areas for best support. Toes should be able to wiggle freely but not slide to any great degree. After the boot is laced and the skater stands, the boot should feel slightly tighter. There should be little to no movement when the skater tries to lift her or his heel. The toes should just be touching the front of the boot. Toes should feel slight pressure but not severe bending or pain. Toes should also not be cramped or curled under. It is important to have a correctly fitted boot for optimal skater performance. The boot must be snugly fit so that it responds exactly to the skater's movement. Additional room in the skate can cause the foot to slide and thus may impede the Skater's progress.

Remember:

- Skates should fit snugly around the ankle and heel – there should be room for movement, but the ankle, instep and heel must be firmly supported.
- The tongue should be sufficiently wide so that it will stay in place and it should be well padded to prevent the laces from cutting into the foot
- The front opening of the boot should be sufficiently wide to pull the laces tight.
- Avoid buying skates a size larger, as they tend to break down faster and hamper your child's progress and more importantly could create long term foot problems.

### **Buying Used Skates and Blades**

Good used skates can be okay for your child, especially in the beginning stages. If you do buy used skates, you may have to know a bit about the brand and model of the boot and blades you purchase. Ask your Coach about suggestions on what to look for. Sometimes a good used boot and blade set is better than an inexpensive, lower quality "sharpening life" left in it. Many skate companies have a website that describes an appropriate boot/blade combo for a particular level of skating.

### **Sharpening of Skates**

Make sure you take your skates to a reputable figure skater sharpener who is familiar with the edges needed in figure skating. Do not remove the bottom pick, as it is essential for proper balance.

### **General Care of Boots and Blades**

Proper care of the boots and blades can help them last longer:

- 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 and wipe / wash them. Grit and dirt become lodged in the tracks of the guards. Replace guards occasionally.
- Cover dried blades with soft blade covers (terry cloth or soft fabric).
- Take skates out of bag at home to let them air dry at normal temperatures to avoid rusting.

## **Skating Clothing**

For young skaters in CanSkate a warm pair of pants and sweater or jacket with mitts or gloves is suitable. Snowsuits can be bulky and hinder the child's progress. At the CanSkate level helmets are also mandatory.

As skaters progress, females will wear tights and skating dresses or skirts as well as gloves and males will wear a stretch pant with stirrups to go under the arch of the skates along with a sweater or warm-up jacket and gloves.

## **Club Wear**

Club wear jackets, pants and hoodies are available to order and are recommended to be worn at club events and competitions. Club wear is generally available to order each fall.

## **8. Managing Your Budget**

Parents will have to plan their budget well in advance of each skating season. The costs you will incur will depend on your child's participation in the sport. Here are some suggested items you should have in your yearly budget:

- Club Membership
- Skate Canada Membership
- Skates and accessories like guards, blade covers, skate bag as well as appropriate skating attire
- Extra Ice costs
- Coaching Costs – Lessons, Competitions and Test Days
- Choreography Fees
- Costumes
- Ice Show or Carnival Fees
- Music Fees for burning of CD's for solo music
- Off ice Fees for skater's conditioning
- Seminars
- CD's that recorded your Competition skate
- Travel and Accommodations for Competitions and Test Days

## **9. Resources Available to Parents**

There is a large network of resources available to parents in figure skating. Here are just a few:

The Western Ontario Section Office

237 Consortium Court

London, ON N6E 2S8

Phone: 519-686-0431

Website: [www.skating-wos.on.ca](http://www.skating-wos.on.ca)

Western Ontario Section Office Staff:

Member Services / Administrative Support: [memberservice@skating-wos.on.ca](mailto:memberservice@skating-wos.on.ca)

Member Services / Coaching Support: [Coaching@skating-wos.on.ca](mailto:Coaching@skating-wos.on.ca)

Skating Programs Co-ordinator: [programs@skating-wos.on.ca](mailto:programs@skating-wos.on.ca)

Skating Technical Director: [competitive@skating-wos.on.ca](mailto:competitive@skating-wos.on.ca)

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