



# MENTOR FIGURE SKATING CLUB

## NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

Revised April 2012



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>The Club</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>3</b>
History and Background		3
Club Functions		3
Club Structure		3
<b>Skating Disciplines</b>		4
<b>Skating Stuff</b>		5
Boots and Blades		5
Care of Equipment		5
Practice Clothing		5
<b>The Big Ice: Skating on Club Ice</b>		6
Expected Skills Checklist		6
Choosing a Professional		6
Contracting to Skate		6
Safety and Etiquette on the Ice		7
Procedures		7
<b>Skating Professionals</b>		7
Choosing a Professional		7
Changing a Professional		9
Coaching Fees and Expenses		9
<b>Coaches Profiles</b>		9
<b>Testing</b>		14
Test Levels		15
Testing Procedures		15
Testing Attire		16
<b>Competitions</b>		16
Qualifying and Non-Qualifying		16
Competition Categories		16
Music and Choreography		17
Registration Process		18
Competition Attire		18
Competition Groups		18
Competition Checklist		19
Judging and Accounting		20
“Parents Primer to Scoring” by Ann Morton Neale		20
<b>Guest Coaches</b>		22
<b>Want to Know More?</b>		22

## **THE CLUB**

### **History and Background of Mentor FSC**

The Mentor Figure Skating Club (MFSC) was formed in 1983 and was chartered by the United States Figure Skating (USFS) in 1984 with PSA designation.

### **Club Function**

**Club Ice:** The MFSC contracts club ice from the city of Mentor and offers special club ice sessions for MFSC members. The Ice administrator schedules these sessions and provides a contract for MFSC members. This ice time is designated “club” ice time and you must be a member of USFS/MFSC to contract this time. Please see the specific contract for any special restrictions and cost for these sessions.

**Sunshine Invitational:** Every summer, the MFSC hosts the Sunshine Invitational Skating Competition for all levels of skating.

**Diamond Classic:** Every winter, the MFSC hosts the Diamond Classic Synchronized Skating Competition for all levels of synchronized skating.

**Shows:** MFSC Shows are offered every couple of years, usually during, “It’s Better in Mentor Days,” the ice show features MFSC skaters of all levels.

**Clinic & Workshops:** The club offers special clinics and workshops for skaters to help develop skating skills. For example one workshop featured a Physical Therapist who gave the skaters tips on their posture and alignment along with individualized exercise programs.

**Previews:** The club usually organizes previews at the Mentor rink before major competitions so that friends and family can enjoy your program(s) and so that you can practice your program(s) in front of an audience before the actual competition – without the pressure of judging. Sign-ups for previews are posted in the rink.

**Testing:** The club hosts regular Test sessions for members of MFSC or other Greater Cleveland Council of Figure Skating Clubs members.

### **Club Structure**

#### **Mentor Figure Skating Club (MFSC) Board of Trustees**

A board of nine elected members, each of whom serves a three-year term, conducts the business of the MFSC. The board also oversees the various committees within the club structure.

#### **Membership**

In order to skater on the MFSC club ice, you must become a member. Applications for membership are available at the monitor's desk or from the MFSC Membership Chairperson. Your membership must be renewed annually. If you are not a U.S. Figure Skating member, you will not be allowed to contract for ice or to, "walk-on" club ice. With your club membership, you also become a member of the United States Figure Skating (USFS). All club members must renew their membership each year. Membership runs from July 1-June 30 of the next year.

There are different types of Membership, regular, college, introductory, coach and associate membership. Regular, college, and introductory members call the MFSC their "Home Club" and get full membership privileges. Each full member, 18 years or older is also permitted to vote on any club issues, be elected to the board, and hold a club office. Members under the age of 18 may have a parent represent them and vote on any club issues. A college membership is a concurrent four-year membership that a college student may apply for once in a lifetime. Associate members are primary members of another club who would like the privilege of contracting MFSC ice time or is a member of the Ice Diamond Synchronized skating teams. Associate members cannot hold office or be elected to the board. Regular members always have priority over associate members for ice time.

General membership meetings are held twice per year, once in the fall and once in the spring. The board of Trustees meets monthly at the rink to conduct business. If you wish to address the board at a board meeting, you may contact the President of the club to be placed on the agenda prior to the board meeting.

### **Bylaws**

As a member of the MFSC, it is your responsibility to read the MFSC bylaws so that you are fully aware of your obligations, rights, and restrictions as a club member. The current bylaws are available from the club president, officers, or club website.

## **SKATING DICIPLINES**

**Free Skate** – This discipline of ice skating is your jumps and spins. Skaters receive music to skate to from their coach which is then used in competition. Free Skate has a progressive test structure.

**Moves in the Field** – This discipline teaches all of the edges and turns a skater will use in skating. There is also a progressive test structure in moves in the field. There is typically no competing in this discipline.

**Ice Dancing** – This discipline is skating done on patterns of ice dances to music, (such as Waltz, Tango, & Rumba.) This discipline has its own test structure and skaters may compete in dance.

**Pairs** – Pair skating is a male and female skating together. They do lifts and side by side jumps and spins. Pair skating has a progressive test structure and skaters may compete.

**Synchronized Team Skating** – Synchronized skating is one of the fastest growing disciplines in figure skating. Teams of 8 – 20 skaters perform to music displaying various formations and footwork with speed and flow. The Mentor Ice Diamonds Synchronized Skating Program was started in 1995 and competes at various competitions in the Midwest.

**Junior Club** – This is the introductory class for the MFSC offered by the City of Mentor Learn to Skate Program for any skater who has passed Basic 6. This class rotates instructors so that your child can get to know the staff. Club members come and talk to parents to answer questions about skating and the club.

## **SKATING STUFF**

### **Boots and Blades**

The largest and probably most important investments for ice skating are the skating boots and blades. Boots and blades are usually purchased separately. The size of the blade must match the boot and the type of skating that you intend to pursue. You will need the help of a professional at a reputable skating shop to get the proper fit for the boot and the appropriate blade for your size boot and level of skating. You will receive instructions on lacing the boots and caring for the boots and blades when you purchase your equipment. Skater's Edge on Mayfield Road is a reputable skate shop. You may purchase used skating equipment at the club's annual dress sale but do not purchase skates at a local sporting goods store or discount mart. Figure skates must fit properly. Always consult your professional coach before making a final purchase. The price of equipment varies considerably, depending upon your age, size, and level of skating. At the lower levels, you should expect to spend \$150-\$200, at the highest level of skating the cost can run as high as \$800-\$1200 for quality boots and blades. Remember that you cannot skate successfully without the proper fit and equipment.

Skaters who are more advanced and skate, both the dance and freestyle may have two pairs of skates, one for each discipline. The beginning skater can manage with one pair of skates. Sometimes the blade for dance differs from the blade for freestyle skating.

### **Care of Equipment**

Most skaters carry their skates in a bag of some sort. It should be able to support the weight of the skates and prevent the blades from being damaged. All skates should have two types of guards to protect the blades, soft and hard. A soft pair made of absorbent material protects the blades between sessions, in the locker, or in the open skate bag. Skates should never be stored in an airtight space. Skaters should use hard guards while walking around in skates off the ice to protect them from becoming dulled, nicked, or scratched. Hard guards should not be used to store skates because the blade can rust in hard guard within thirty minutes. Just remember to take the hard guards off before you go onto the ice.

Boots should be cleaned and polished regularly with waterproof polish made especially for ice skates. A protective waterproofing seal can be purchased at skate shops. The skate shops can polyurethane the soles and heels if you prefer. More information is available at your local skate

shop. A great pair of skates is useless if the blades are dull. Routine sharpening by a professional at a reputable skate shop is a must.

### **Practice Clothing**

Skaters have many options when it comes to practice attire. As long as the attire is comfortable, allows a full range of motion, and does not impede movement or positioning, it is acceptable. Most skaters practice in outfits made of lycra. Because it is always cold in the rink, a sweater or sweat shirt is necessary. Most skaters wear skating tights and over-tights for extra warmth. The tights worn in competition are usually flesh colored, but practice tights can be any color. Tights are available at any skate or dance shop. Boys have a wide range of options for practice clothing. Comfort and flexibility are the rule. Sometimes there are different practice pants and dance pants.

Lycra fabrics can be purchased at any fabric shop or from vendors at competitions. Ready to wear skating dresses and other clothing are also available at competitions, through catalogs, and at skating shops.

Other items of clothing you may need include compression shorts that pad the hips, thighs, and back upon a fall (a certainty in skating) and knee or elbow pads to help protect these sensitive areas. Gloves are a necessity for males and females. Speak to your coach about any items your skater may need.

## **THE BIG ICE: SKATING ON CLUB ICE**

### **Expected Skills Checklist**

For safety reasons skaters must master some basic skills before skating on club ice. The MFSC offers Basic Skill sessions for skaters pass Basic 1 and Open sessions for skaters whom have passed Basic 6 in the Learn to Skate program. Skaters should have a signed test form from the Learn to Skate instructor to give to the club. Your pro is the best judge of your readiness, but the MFSC might also require a demonstration of these basic skills before granting a contract to a new member.

### **Choosing a Professional**

Before contracting to skate on MFSC ice, you should select a professional who can best meet your needs. See the section titles, "Professionals," for further information.

### **Contracting to Skate**

To skate on MFSC ice, you must be a member of the U.S. Figure Skating and a regular or an associate member of MFSC. Due to insurance regulations, you cannot skate on club ice without a USFS membership.

Ice contracts guarantee you ice time on a regular basis, depending on your seniority in the club and the amount you purchase. There are different contract periods during the year. The rink usually closes for a couple of weeks each May for maintenance and ice time may be unavailable. You will be notified of these times. The ice administrators provide ice contracts at the rink two-to-three weeks before they are due. This gives skaters time to consult with their pros and decide on when they plan to skate and how many sessions they may want. Ice times will be awarded based upon the amount of ice available and the skater's seniority in the club. Contracts should be returned to the ice administrators by the deadline to ensure ice time. Payment schedules are included with the contract.

Skaters are responsible for paying for all ice contacted. Ice credits are available on an even exchange basis and given for competitions, illness, and other reasons. Ice Credits are only good for the current ice contract.

The club can contract up to 24 skaters for an open session. If there is space available, skaters may, "walk-on," the session without being contracted. Skaters who wish to walk-on a full session must ask the monitor to be put on a waiting list. The monitor is required to hold a contracted skater's time for the first 10 minutes of the session before granting any walk-ons. After the 10 minute-limit the monitor will allow walk-ons on a first come first serve basis. Walk-on skaters are required to pay for the session by check, punch card, or exchange credits. Please refer to the MFSC Standing Ice Rules for further details.

### **Safety and Etiquette on the Ice**

Before stepping on club ice, you will be asked to watch a special DVD regarding proper ice etiquette. This DVD will review jumping patterns that the older skaters will be observing. We suggest new skaters watch this video with a parent, so the parent can assist their skater in learning patterns and ice etiquette for safety and flow for all club skaters. Skaters must always be aware of other skaters on the ice during a freeskate lesson. When you skate backwards, for example, look behind you. Keep moving on the ice. Do not practice the same move or jump continuously in one spot on the ice. **The right of way during a freeskate session always goes to the skater whose music is being played and is wearing a yellow colored vest; secondly, to any skater who is in a lesson.** You must be aware of other skaters and programs so that you know who has the right of way.

You should not stand around on the ice or by the boards socializing. If you do not feel like skating, you should leave the ice. If you fall, get up as soon as possible and keep moving. Do not lie or sit on the ice. Even though you might feel frustrated at times, swearing, shouting, toe picking, and stomping the ice is not acceptable. No food or drink is permitted on the ice.

The monitor is responsible for enforcing the rules on the ice and playing music. Be courteous to the monitor, and do not ask the monitor to break the rules for you. The ice monitor may ask you to leave the ice until you can observe proper etiquette on the ice.

### **Procedures**

When you arrive at the rink, check in with the monitor. Then get on the ice as quickly as possible. Music is played on a rotating basis, so if you are the first on the list, you want to be sure that you are ready to go. Otherwise, you may miss your spot in the rotation. Coaches are allowed to request music for a skater in a lesson, so you might be, “bumped,” from the rotation temporarily. Coaches are limited to the number of, “pulls,” per session so you should eventually get your music. If you do not want your music played, let the monitor know ahead of time so that you can be pulled from the rotation. Also, if you leave the session early for some reason, always let the monitor know.

## **SKATING PROFESSIONALS**

### **Choosing a Professional**

One of your greatest decisions in skating is choosing the right professional for private lessons. Parents should review all of the material available on the coaching staff, including background, experience, qualifications, and fees. Skaters should also consider the personality of the professional to make sure that there is an acceptable, “chemistry,” between the student and teacher. An interview with the prospective pro would certainly be appropriate. Parents of skaters should deal directly with the pro in making the final decisions concerning lessons and fees.

The following information is from Skater’s Edge Sourcebook: Ice Skating Resource Guide by Alice Berman. It should be helpful when considering a pro.

#### **Things to Think About:**

- \*Is there ongoing, two-way communication?
- \*Can he/she explain things in a way you can understand?
- \*Is she/he flexible in teaching styles? Able to adapt to the student’s learning style?
- \*Is there mutual respect? Mutual trust?
- \*Do you have a good working relationship?
- \*Is she/he able to inspire and motivate?
- \*Is he/she interested in your development as a person?
- \*Does she/he attend seminars/workshops to stay current?
- \*Do you like the way his/her student look on the ice?
- \*Is the person a good role model?

#### **Possible Questions to Ask:**

- \*How long have you been teaching? Where? Whom have you coached? Is it possible for me to talk with former/current students? What kind of successes have your students had?
- \*What kinds of training do you have as a skater? What test level did you reach? Did you compete? Up to what level?

\*What kind of training do you have as a coach? Do you belong to any associations? Do you attend professional conferences, seminars, or workshops? Are you rated and insured as a member of PSA and USFS?

\*May I watch you teach? (Look for enthusiasm, patience, communications skills, quality of information, humor, personality, mutual respect, flexibility, teaching style.)

\*Can you explain your coaching philosophy? What are your goals for a skater? Do you have regular planning sessions or discussions with your skaters and parents? What are your fees? On what basis do you bill or expect payment (per lesson, weekly, monthly.)

\*Would you consider a trial period before I make a commitment? Is there a minimum trial period you would suggest?

\*How often would you suggest lessons? How would they be scheduled? How is the ice time arranged?

\*Do you sometimes have your skaters work with other coaches for special need? Who? How is this arranged?

\*Is the rink where you teach known for any specialty that might influence the direction of my skating?

### **Changing a Professional**

For whatever reasons, sometimes skaters wish to change pros. While it is not uncommon, it can be a sensitive issue if it is not handled properly. Out of courtesy to both skaters and pros, the MFSC recommended the following procedure for changing pro:

\*If you have a problem or concern with your pro, discuss the situation immediately. Do not let it grow into something that cannot be resolved.

\*If you decide to make a change, discuss your decision with your current pro first and settle all outstanding accounts.

\*Contact the new pro and make sure the new pro can accommodate your needs.

\*Make an agreement with the new pro for a number of lessons per week for each skating discipline.

\*Be aware that it is inappropriate for one pro to solicit new students from other pros. The change must be initiated by the skater or the parents of the skater.

\*Pro's will operate under PSA(Professional Skating Association) standards.



**Debi Gamber**[Just1830@aol.com](mailto:Just1830@aol.com)

(440) 974-8743

Coaching Since: 1980-1986; 1998  
PSA Rating: Basic and Registered Sports Science  
Test Achievements: Junior Figure and Free; Preliminary Dance; Bronze Pair  
Coaching Achievements: Coached skaters on Moves and Freestyle through Novice Level; Coached Sectional Synchronized Skating Teams; Choreographer for Ice Shows.  
Personal Achievements: Regional Champion and Medalist; Sectional Competitor in Singles and National Synchronized Skating Medalist.  
Areas for Private Instruction: Synchronized skating, Freestyle, Moves, and Group Instruction.  
Fee: \$9.00 per 15 minutes

**Susan M. Harte**[smharte@roadrunner.com](mailto:smharte@roadrunner.com)

(440) 639-1122

Coaching Since: 1968  
Test Achievements: 4<sup>th</sup> Test ISIA, F/FS Preliminary Dances  
Coaching Achievements: Supplemental Coach strictly through other Professional Instructors  
Personal Achievements: LTS Director in several cities offering both ISA & USFS Instruction; Trained NCAA, AHL, and NHL players. Coaching for Private and Group lessons in Fundamentals for both Figure Skating and Hockey students.  
Areas for Private Instruction: Fundamental training.  
Fee: \$12.50 per 15 minutes

**Heidi Kempert**

(440) 289-0383

Coaching Since: 2009  
PSA Rating: Entry Level Certification  
Test Achievements: Has skated for 17 years and has passed Senior Level Free Skate and Moves in the Field.  
Areas for Private Instruction: Free skate and Moves in the field  
Fee: Available upon request.

**Holly Maher**[thehollster33@hotmail.com](mailto:thehollster33@hotmail.com)

(440) 479-3600

Coaching Since: 1995  
PSA Rating: Basic Accreditation  
Test Achievements: Intermediate Freestyle, 2<sup>nd</sup> Figure Test  
Coaching Achievements: High percentage of passing tests. Instruction in strength and conditioning. Coaching Ice Diamond Synchronized Skating teams since  
Personal Achievements: Regional Champion and Medalist; Sectional Competitor in Singles and National Synchronized Skating Medalist.  
Areas for Private Instruction: Freestyle (all levels,) Moves in the Field, Basic Skills, Strength and Conditioning, Choreography, and Style.  
Fee: \$11.00 per 15 minutes

**Betsy Parke** [Parkeyates@gmail.com](mailto:Parkeyates@gmail.com) (440) 255-5626  
 Coaching Since: 1970  
 PSA Rating: Basic Accreditation  
 Test Achievements: 5<sup>th</sup> Figure; Canadian Bronze Free Style; U.S. 2 Gold Dances; U.S. Silver Free Dance; Canadian Silver Dance.  
 Coaching Achievements: Coach of Regional Singles Competitors including 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place medalists; Coach of Bronze medalist at Adult Nationals. Developed and Directed Skating Program for Individuals with Special Needs since 1982; Trainer of three Special Olympians selected to represent the U.S. at the Special Olympics World Games.  
 Personal Achievements: B.A.; Sociology; Certified Trainer for McCracken Positive Parenting Practices; Deepwood Center Coach of the Year, 2000.  
 Areas for Private Instruction: Freestyle; Moves; Ice Dancing; Music Editing.  
 Fee: \$12 per 15 minutes

**Chip Rossbach** [icedross@aol.com](mailto:icedross@aol.com) (440) 338-5683  
 Coaching Since: 1987  
 PSA Rating: Master Dance; Master Moves; Free Dance Ranking Level V.  
 Test Achievements: Senior Moves; Gold Free Dance; Gold Compulsories  
 Personal Achievements: Choreographed programs for various National and International Competitors. Performance director for the Ice Capades for six years; Choreographer for NBC Nutcracker on Ice; Assistant Choreographer for Warner Brothers and MGM Touring shows; Director/Choreographer IX Ice Shows; Director and Choreographer for a Tribute for Svatlana; Choreographed for closing exhibitions for 2002 Skate America; Assistant Producer for the Madison Square Garden, "A Skating Tribute", 2002 Los Angeles Nationals Exhibition Finale and the award ceremonies; Director/Choreographer 2002 C.S.C. Ice Show.  
 Coaching Achievements: Junior Nationals Juvenile Men's 2002 Silver Medalist; Junior National Intermediate Ice Dance; 2002 Silver Medalist.  
 Areas for Private Instruction: Dance, Moves, Stroking  
 Fee: \$20 per 15 minutes

**Leslie Shackelford-Rinicella** [Sk8solon@yahoo.com](mailto:Sk8solon@yahoo.com) (216) 470-6514  
 Coaching Since: 1984  
 PSA Rating: Master Free Skate; Moves; Figures. Group and Certified Choreography.  
 Test Achievements: Gold Figure 8<sup>th</sup>; Freestyle-Senior; and Dance USFSA; Gold Figure; Freestyle Canadian FSC.  
 Coaching Achievements: Students have passed all USFSA tests, Freeskiate and Figures and Dance. Sectional and National Competitors; students have passed Canadian Gold Tests.  
 Personal Achievements: Junior and Senior Ladies Regional Champion; Sectional and International Competitor; PSA Open Championship, 1989 – Silver Medalist; PSA Rating Team Member, 2005.



**Tia Tasca**

(440) 677-1892

Coaching Since:

Personal Achievements: PSA Rated in Freestyle and Sports Science; Several years of competitive skating with over 200 competitions and medals won.

Test Achievements: Gold in Freeskate and Moves in the Field.

Coaching Achievements: Coached many levels of skating; students have done well at all levels; Coached Regional and National competitors.

Areas for Private Instruction: Figures, Freestyle, Moves, and Choreography.

Fee: \$12.50 per 15 minutes

**Colleen Thomas**[Thomas@cityofmentor.com](mailto:Thomas@cityofmentor.com)

(440) 478-5548

Coaching Since: 1982

PSA Rating: Basic Accreditation

Personal Achievements:

Test Achievements: 7<sup>th</sup> Figure, Novice Freestyle, Pre-Silver Dance

Coaching Achievements: Coached skaters through Gold Moves and Freestyle; Coach for National Rank Synchronized Teams; National Title, 1986; Regional competitors; Senior Freestyle and Senior Moves students passed Golds; LTS Director for City of Mentor; Central Skating Office; Founder of Mentor Ice Diamonds.

Areas for Private Instruction: Specializing in Freestyle, Moves, and Synchronized Skating.

Fee: \$13 per 15 minutes

**Baiba Zvejnieks**[Baibaskating@aol.com](mailto:Baibaskating@aol.com)

(440) 255-5764

Coaching Since: 1973 in Latvia and 1995 in the U.S.

PSA Rating: Basic Accreditation.

Test Achievements: Freestyle-Senior, Figures 8<sup>th</sup>, Dance-Junior, Pairs-NoviceCoaching Achievements: The highest level passed by students: Freestyle-Novice; Moves in the Field-Senior; 2001 Adult Championships-3<sup>rd</sup> Place; Regional Competitors.

Personal Achievements: National Competitor in Latvia and former Soviet Union; Winner of the Latvian Championships; Coach and Soloist in Riga Ice Show; B.A. in Physical Education.

Areas for Private Instruction: Freestyle, Moves, and Powerskating.

Fee: \$13 per 15 minutes

# TESTING

## Test Levels

The degree of advancement that the figure skater has accomplished is officially recognized by the U.S. Figure Skating by passing tests in that discipline. Tests are conducted in the following: Moves in the Field, Free Skating, Pairs, and Ice Dancing. Passing the test means that the skater has attained that particular level of proficiency. The passing of a particular test also determines which level a skater is eligible to enter for competition.

**Required Tests:** The Moves in the field tests are separate from the Free Skating Test. You progress through all the Moves tests without taking the corresponding test in Free Skating. Free Skating, however, is different. One may not progress in the Free Skating Test until the corresponding Moves in the Field is passed. A testing candidate is not eligible to take a higher test until all of the preceding tests of the same category have been passes or completed.

MFSC Members usually take their tests at the Mentor Rink, however, members may test at other club rinks with written permission from the test chair of the MFSC.

The tests within each discipline are listed below. A more detailed description of each test requirement may be found in the Official USFS Rulebook of the current year.

**\*Moves in the Field:** All moves in the field tests consist of specific patterns to be performed by each skater. Each pattern has a particular judging focus. The test levels include the following: Pre-Preliminary, Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile, Intermediate, Novice, Junior, and Senior.

**\*Free Skating:** With the exception of the Pre-Preliminary test, all Free Skating tests consist of routines of a specific duration with required elements skated to music. (Pre-Preliminary can skate six elements separately for the judges to evaluate one element at a time.) The test levels include: Pre-Preliminary, Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile, Intermediate, Novice, Junior, and Senior.

**\*Pairs:** All tests consist of routines with required elements skated to music. The test levels include the following: Juvenile, Intermediate, Novice, Junior, and Senior/Gold.

**\*Figures:** (No longer tested. Moves in the field-replaced figures) Each test had a specific set of required elements. The test levels included: Preliminary, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, through 8<sup>th</sup> test/Gold

**\*Dance and Free Dance:** Dance tests consist of compulsory dances in set patterns. Free Dance tests may be taken only after the candidate has completed the compulsory dance at the same level. The test levels are as follows: Preliminary Dance, Preliminary Free Dance, Pre-Bronze dance, Bronze Free Dance, Pre-Silver Dance, Silver Dance, Silver Free Dance, Pre-Gold Dance, Gold Dance, Gold Free Dance, and International.

## **Testing Procedures**

Your Pro will let you know when you are ready for a particular test(s.) The MFSC usually offers test sessions every other month in the following disciplines: Free Skating, Moves, Dance, Free Dance, and Pairs. Check the Club bulletin board at the rink and/or website for application deadlines. The first step is to pick up the test application at the monitor's station and check the deadline date. The application must be filled out in full and returned to the test chair two weeks before the test date. If testing out of club, the test application needs to be signed by the MFSC test chair or a MFSC board member to show that the member is in good standing and eligible to test. The application must be complete with a check for the test fees

On testing day, skaters should arrive one hour before their scheduled warm-up time. Each skater will have a designated warm-up time with her/his pro before each test. After each test, the panel of judges will let the skater know whether or not the test is a, "Pass," or "Retry." Each skater will receive a copy of the test evaluation sheets after the test. Skaters who fail any given test may sign up for the test again after a 28-day waiting period. Parents and skaters may wait and observe quietly in the bleachers.

Test pins for each test passed may be purchased from the Test Chair Person. The cost of the pins vary depending upon the test and the level of the test. Pins are available for Free Skating, Figure, Pairs, Dance, Free Dance, and Moves in the Field.

Further information about preparing for a test and the USFS test structure may be found at: <http://www.usfigureskating.org/Clubs.asp?id=353>

## **Testing Attire**

For Moves in the Field tests, nice practice outfits or competition dresses are appropriate. Girls often wear sweaters for these tests. For Free Skating tests, the long program outfit is appropriate. Be sure to polish your boots before testing.

# **COMPETITIONS**

## **Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Competitions**

Qualifying events: the only qualifying competitions within the USFS structure are the Regional, Sectional, and National Championships. The term, "Qualifying," means that the skater must enter the Regional level of competition and place in the top three or four (typically) in her/his particular level in the final round of competition in order to qualify for advancement to the other championships. The MFSC participates in the Eastern Great Lakes Regional Championships and the Midwestern Sectional Championships. The location of these qualifying competitions varies each year.

Non-Qualifying events: All other competitions are classified as, "Non-Qualifying," events. Placement in the top three or four of these competitions does not qualify a skater to advance to

any other level in competition. Local competitions are usually non-qualifying competitions, but they are still sanctioned by the USFS.

For both qualifying and non-qualifying competitions, skaters must pass certain test levels in order to compete. Skaters are grouped by test levels and for levels below Juvenile, usually also grouped by age. .

### **Competition Categories**

Competitions are held in an effort to stimulate interest in figure skating and to afford a competitive experience for as many skaters as possible. There are a variety of competitions offered through the USFS. Local competitions are typically sanctioned non-qualifying and/or club qualifying competitions. Competitions involve some or all of the following categories: Compulsory Moves; Short Program; Free Skating; Pairs; Dance; Similar Pairs; Showcase; Interpretive; and Maneuver Team.

Most competitions are hosted at the same time every year, and, as time goes on, one may become accustomed to a schedule of events. Until then, please check the MFSC bulletin, and with your Pro about upcoming competitions.

Some competitions focus on the beginning levels, while others offer the entire spectrum of levels. Details of the competitions should be included on the registration forms.

In non-qualifying competitions, skaters are usually allowed to skate at their test level as of a specified cutoff date or one level above, but not both. Usually, gold medal winners of an event from the prior year are not permitted to compete at that same level again.

The different events are listed below:

**\*Compulsory Moves:** Programs of required elements without music on one half of the ice surface. The levels included in the category are Beginner through Pre-Juvenile.

**\*Short Program:** Programs required elements skated to music on the full ice surface, Juvenile through Senior.

**\*Free Skating (Freestyle):** A program incorporating jumps, spins, steps, and other linking movements skated to music on the entire ice surface. Includes Beginner through Senior with specific test requirements and time limit for each level.

**\*Pairs:** The skating of two persons in unison. Pairs competition levels range for Juvenile through senior. A competition level lower than Juvenile may be offered for those pair skaters who have not passed the Juvenile Pair Test. This information would be listed on the registration form. Pairs free skating consists of a well-balanced program composed and skated to music on the entire surface. Program durations and testing requirements vary depending on the test level. Some competitions offer two kinds of Pair Skating: Similar Pairs (same sex) and Mixed Pairs (opposite sex.)

**\*Dance:** Competitions in the Dance category typically conform to Compulsory Dancing presented on the ice surface as diagramed in the USFSA Rulebook. The music must conform to the type and tempo specified in the description of the dance. Dance competition levels range from Preliminary through Senior. The registration form will contain information about testing requirements and dance partners. Dance competitions may be offered for partners/and/or ladies solo dance.

**\*Showcase:** This category is a form of free skating where the emphasis is placed upon theatrical and entertainment value of the skater's performance rather than on the technical performance. Depending on the number of entrants, some levels may be combined. All levels are limited to 1 ½ minutes, and vocal music is allowed. Costumes and props are encouraged, however, props are limited to those the skater can carry or push onto the ice in one trip. Some competitions do not allow props to touch the ice. Please check the individual competition application regarding use of props for each competition. Skaters may not be assisted during the set-up time, which should; not exceed 30 seconds. Live props are not permitted.

**\*Maneuver Team:** The figure skating club enters a team at each level, and the team member performs a particular required maneuver. Limits are imposed on the size of a team and the number of teams a club may enter. Boys and girls may compete on the same team. Team members may not skate below their fee skate level. Levels range for Preliminary through Junior/Senior.

### **Music and Choreography**

Skaters who skate a short program or a free skate program perform to instrumental music selected by the pro and the skater. The length of the program is determined by the event and by the test level and must be burned on a CD, usually by a pro. Pros will charge for this service. Each program should have a, "slow, moderate, and "fast," tempo section or a, "fast-slow-fast" tempo to best demonstrate the skater's abilities. Skaters usually keep their programs for at least a year, so the music should be acceptable to both skaters and Pros. The program should be choreographed by a professional, usually the skater's coach. There is also a charge for this service. As a matter of courtesy, you should not use music selected by another skater in your rink. Skaters should have at least one back-up CD for each program in case of an emergency at a competition.

### **Registration Process**

In order to participate in competitions sanctioned by the USFS, you need to be a member of a figure skating club. Registration forms for the various competitions are available on line through the hosting clubs. Please be sure to discuss plans with your coach prior to submitting an application. Your pro may let you know which competitions she/he plans to attend. You may enter a competition even though your pro will not be there. Be sure to fill out the registration form in full and submit to the Chairman or Club Officer for verification of test level well before the deadline date. All competition deadline dates are strictly enforced. It is the skater's responsibility to fulfill all registration requirements and to mail the forms and entry fees to the appropriate

location by the deadline date. Competition registration may also be offered on-line. Review the competition announcement for details and fee schedule. It is a good idea to make copies of all registration materials prior to submitting them, just in case. Once the competition organizers have established a schedule, they often post it online. They also have information regarding practice ice.

### **Competition Attire**

Girls typically have two costumes, one for compulsory or short program, and another for free skating or long program. The dress for the long program is usually fancier, more ornate; often embellished with stones or appliqués, (no feathers.) All embellishments must be firmly attached to the dress so that they do not fall off onto the ice and endanger another skater.

Boys should have two slacks or trouser outfits. One for the compulsory and one for the free skate program. Again, the costume for the long program is more ornate.

Additional outfits may be needed for showcase or maneuver team.

Parents who can sew may purchase the lycra material at local fabric shops or at competitions from vendors who specialize in skating attire. For those parents who do not sew, several seamstresses who specialize in skating attire are available in the local area. Local skating shops carry ready-to-wear dresses. Skating catalogs and internet shopping offer a wide variety of attire for skaters. Prices vary depending upon the fabric, the embellishment, and the fee(s) of individual seamstress/tailor.

### **Competition Groups**

Competitions usually run from one to four days, depending upon the number of entries and events. Competition events are listed in a published program and are grouped by type of event and test level. When an event has a large number of participants, the skaters may be divided into two groups. In non-qualifying competitions, group members compete against only other members in their group unless a final round is being held at that level, unless the event only has enough skaters to form one group. In qualifying competitions, the top three or four skaters in each group of initial rounds will also compete against each other in a final round. At each competition, the group will have a warm-up period (usually four minutes) immediately before the judging begins. After the event, the judges tabulate the results, which are then posted at a designated location in the rink. Medals or Ribbons are awarded to skaters in each group for each event.

## Competition Checklist

The following information written by Ann Morton Neale is from the July 1995 issue of Skating Magazine. It is invaluable advice for parents.

Before you leave home:

1. Mark everything with your skater's name and phone number. Most skaters have similar clothing and accessories.
2. Be sure your skates are polished.
3. Check the competition outfit. It should be skated in before leaving. Repair holes and loose decorations.
4. Pack the skating bag. Include guards, practice outfits, warm-up sweater or jacket, extra laces, a towel, pins, and a sewing kit.
5. Bring your USFS membership card or ID number.
6. Two copies of your music.
7. Be prepared for a cold rink.
8. Confirm your hotel and travel arrangements.

What to expect at the competition:

1. First, go to the registration desk and turn in your music CD. An official bulletin board should post information about skate sequence and practices as well as any schedule changes. Be sure to check it regularly. Any schedule received prior to the competition is tentative and subject to change.
2. Practice ice is usually crowded. Do not expect much time to be available. It most likely will be very early or very late.
3. Expect busy facilities. Most rinks are not prepared to handle large groups of skaters. It is a good idea to dress for the competition before arriving at the rink. If you choose to dress at the rink, there should be dressing/locker rooms designated for males and females.
4. Arrive at least one hour before your event is scheduled. Check with the monitor to see if the events are on schedule. Expect the schedule to vary a little.
5. After you check in at the registration desk, check in with your coach.
6. Your coach will help you warm up for your event.
7. If anything is wrong with your music, go immediately to the referee. Do not be afraid. The referees are there to help you.
8. Remember that all skaters have good days and bad days. Not everyone can place. Go out and do the best you can. No one can ask more of you than that you have tried your best.
9. Whatever happens, do not throw a tantrum in public. If you must cry, go to a private place.
10. Results are usually posted within a half-hour. If you place, do not gloat. It is unsportsmanlike-like and unbecoming.
11. If you do not understand the results, ask your coach to explain them to you.

12. Usually awards are given shortly after results are posted unless otherwise stated. Once results are posted, please check in with the awards desk. Check the bulletin board for the time of the awards ceremony. Be there on time, in your outfit, and have our skates on.

### **Judging and Accounting**

In skating competitions, there are three classifications of people in determining the results: the referee, the judges, and the accountant. The referee, in general, is in charge of all phases of the competition and is responsible for managing all activities related to the competition. The judges score the performances of the skaters. There are always an odd number of judges scoring each event. They typically number three for compulsory events and five to nine judges for Free Skating events, depending upon the test level. The accountant determines the results of the judges and posts the results. There are two systems of judging competition: Open (public) or closed (written.) The Open System is what we are familiar with when watching skating events on television where the judges publicly display the points awarded for technical and artistic merit immediately after the individual skater's routine has been completed. The Open System is used for major skating competitions. The Closed System is used in most club and non-qualifying competitions. In the Closed System, judges score their marks for technical and artistic merit in a personal record sheet immediately after the skater's program. After each group of skaters has finished skating, the judges record their marks and turn in their personal record sheets over the referee, who then delivers them to the accountant. The accountant will record the marks in a computer program which determines the placement of skaters and prints the results. This occurs typically within 30 minutes after the event.

Understanding the results of a competition is not an easy task. In the following article from the May, 1996 issue of Skating Magazine, Ann Morton Neale does excellent job of explaining the procedure.

#### **“Parent’s Primer to Scoring” by Ann Morton Neale**

The scene: We are in a municipal skating rink watching young skaters compete in The Spring Competition. The event is over. We are standing in the dark, crowded corner where the results are to be posted.

“Excuse me,” someone says flinging herself into the crowd and taping up the results. All huddle closer to see.

“What’s happening here?” asks a perplexed parent. “Jennifer has two ones, and the girl ahead of her only has one!”

Everyone moves forward to really look at the results. Sure enough, this is what they see:

Brenda Buttons	3	3	2	1	5	4/3
Jennifer Jones	4	1	4	4	1	5/4

When a child begins learn to skate, his/her parents begin to learn the language and culture of figure skating. For all or you, the tasks are difficult. When the skater begins to compete, the challenge becomes more difficult.

The judging system of figure skating is subjective. Each judge sees the event differently. The ordinal system of determining placement is used to take into account these differences and produce placements that agree with the *Majority* of the panel. Competition judging is different from test judging. In a testing situation, the skater is compared to a standard, which must be achieved in order to pass. In competition, the skater is compared only to the other skaters in the division from first to last. These rankings, or ordinal, are compared to determine the majorities, which determine the final placement.

In order for a skater to be awarded a place, she/he must have a majority of the judges place him/her in that position or higher.

Returning to the results above, we see that Brenda was placed third or higher by four of the five judges, while Jennifer was placed fourth or higher by five judges; therefore, Brenda was third and Jennifer, fourth.

Here are some examples of how placement is determined.

On a five member panel, the majority is 3

A:            1     1     1     2     1     4/1

Four judges have placed the skater in first place; We write this majority 4/1.

B:            3     4     3     5     4     4/4

B does not have the majority of 3's; therefore, we go to the next ordinal and count all of the 4's or better, arriving at 4/4.

After the majorities are established, they are compared to determine the placements: the skater with the majority of 1's receives first; 2's second; etc. When two or more skaters each have a majority for the same place, they are tied, and the tie must be broken if possible.

Greater Majority

A:            4     6     5     6     7     4/6

B:            6     7     6     7     5     3/6

A is awarded sixth place because more judges have placed them sixth or better.

Total Ordinals of the Majority (TOM)

A:            4     6     5     6     7     4/6

B:            6     6     6     7     5     4/6

Since A and B each have four ordinals of six or better, the ordinals that make up the majorities are added.

A:            4+6+5+6=21

B:            6+6+6+5=23

A has the lower total (she was placed higher by more judges) and is awarded sixth place.

Total Ordinals (TO)

A:            2     4     5     3     3     3/3

B:            3     3     6     4     2     3/3

Both skaters have three ordinals of three or better. The ordinals that make up the majority are added.

A:            2+3+3=8

B:            3+3+2=8

The TOMs are equal. To break this tie, all the ordinals are added.

Total Ordinals

A:  $2+4+5+3+3=17$

B:  $3+3+6+4+2=18$

A has the lower ordinals than B and is awarded third place. To feel more comfortable with calculating totals, practice by using some of your results sheets. Once you get the hang of it, you will see that it is not so mysterious and even kind of fun. For more information about determining ordinals and placement, consult your USFS Rulebook. There is usually one on the monitor's cart during Club ice.

## **GUEST COACHES**

Sometimes skaters request a guest coach, who is not employed at the Mentor rink but who is a member of the USFS, to visit the rink for special instruction in choreography or skating. Guest coaches must follow proper procedure to be allowed on MFSC ice. All guest coaches should see Terri Rosenwald, Rink Manager, and the MFSC Pro Chair for information.

## **WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

US Figure Skating - [www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org)

Greater Cleveland Council of Figure Skating Clubs - [www.clevelandskating.com](http://www.clevelandskating.com)

Mentor Figure Skating Club - [www.mentorfsc.com](http://www.mentorfsc.com)