

U.S. Figure Skating

Basic Skills Program

Administration Manual



A How-to Guide for Running a
U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program

U.S. Figure Skating is the national governing body of figure skating as recognized by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the International Skating Union (I.S.U.) and holds membership in both organizations. Formed in 1921, U.S. Figure Skating has established itself as one of the foremost skating associations in the world and has developed many World and Olympic champions, a record of which it is truly proud.



The Basic Skills Program was developed by U.S. Figure Skating and approved by the Professional Skaters Association (PSA), the authority in professional figure skating.



Compiled by the Basic Skills Sub-committee, 1988. Copyright © 1990
U.S. Figure Skating, Colorado Springs, Colorado
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Welcome to the U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program!

The Basic Skills Program is designed by U.S. Figure Skating to be the best beginning ice skating program that serves the needs of both the recreational and the competitive skater. It is built on the premise of offering positive, rewarding and safe skating experiences to participants of all ages and ability levels. At the present time, there are more than 122,000 Basic Skills members registered in more than 840 skating schools across the United States.

The objectives of the program are:

- To provide a fun and safe skating experience for the beginner as well as the more advanced skater
- To teach correct technique of the simple basic elements
- To promote health and physical fitness
- To enable all participants to achieve the skills necessary to either skate for fun the rest of their lives or to move competently into the U.S. Figure Skating advanced test and/or competitive structure

The curriculum is designed to keep skaters enthusiastic about learning from the time they begin lessons until the time they reach their goals. Whether their goal is to achieve Olympic fame or simply enjoy the recreational benefits of skating, skaters find the Basic Skills Program is the perfect place to begin. The Basic Skills Program is also the only learn-to-skate program endorsed by USA Hockey, US Speedskating and the Special Olympics.

By using this comprehensive developmental program, skating schools and ice facilities are able to draw more skaters onto the ice. The structured approach provides skaters, instructors and directors numerous benefits: Ice facilities are used, enrollment increases, and skaters of all ages and abilities can participate in this lifelong sport.

This package includes all the information necessary to build a successful Basic Skills program. We hope you will find the information useful in the day-to-day administration of your skating school. Feedback received from our skating directors across the country has encouraged us to constantly improve and update our curriculum to be the best program available to our skaters.

If you have any questions, please contact the Basic Skills Department at 719.635.5200 or visit www.basicsskillsprogram.com or www.usfigureskating.org for more information.

Thank you for choosing the U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program – and always remember, ‘It’s Great to Skate’!



Member:
International
Skating Union



Member:
United States Olympic
Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT BASIC SKILLS

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Basic Skills Program is to provide a goal-oriented program that encourages ice skating at all levels and to enhance the quality of skating skills at these levels.

The objectives of the program are:

- To provide a fun and safe skating experience for the beginner as well as the more advanced skater
- To teach correct technique of the simple basic elements
- To promote health and physical fitness
- To enable everyone involved to achieve the skills necessary to be able to skate for fun the rest of their lives or to move competently into U.S. Figure Skating advanced test and/or competitive structure

WHO: Developed by the U.S. Figure Skating and approved by the PSA, Basic Skills is available to any member figure skating club, ice facility, recreation department, individual skating instructor, college, university or other organization. Club affiliation is not a requirement to use the program.

WHAT: This exciting program consists of Snowplow Sam, Basic Eight, Free Skate, Hockey, Adult, Dance, Synchronized, Pairs, Artistry in Motion, Speed Skating, Theatre On Ice, Special Olympics and Therapeutic group class curriculums. Upon completion of each level, the skater should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and technique to advance to the next level.

WHERE: Basic Skills classes are conducted at registered ice facilities across the United States and internationally.

WHY: Basic Skills was developed to create an interest in skating activity across the nation, to enhance the quality of skating and to increase enrollment for the benefit of the skating industry and U.S. Figure Skating.

PROGRAM FEES: Administrative materials – all items needed to run a Basic Skills program – are available at no cost. Additional support materials are offered at a nominal charge. While the additional materials are not necessary to run a skating school, they have proven to be quite helpful to many groups that have used them. Please consult a Program Price List for a list of supplies.

REGISTRATION FEES: There is a one-time-only set-up fee of \$50 to register a new program. A yearly \$12 fee for each participant (skaters, instructors and directors) must be sent to headquarters along with a completed Basic Skills registration form or a completed online form. The membership year is July 1– June 30.



The Business Value of the Basic Skills Program

U.S. Figure Skating's Basic Skills Program continues to be the industry leader with more 840 registered programs serving more than 121,000 individual members nationwide. At just \$12 per participant, it is the most cost-effective program for the learn-to-skate market. Here are a few of the key points to promote within your facility:

- U.S. Figure Skating is recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Skating Union as the national governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States.
- The Basic Skills Program is the only learn-to-skate program endorsed by USA Hockey, US Speedskating and the Special Olympics.
- Basic Skills programs are owned and operated by rinks, park districts, clubs and private individuals.
- U.S. Figure Skating provides a full competition structure for its members. From Basic Skills to adults, invitational club competitions, artistic, synchronized skating and qualifying events that lead to national, Olympic and World Championships – there is something for everyone to participate.
- There are NO FEES for hosting Basic Skills competitions. Approval is required for standardization purposes, and all aspects of application are reviewed for accuracy. Coaches, competitive skaters over the age of 16 and adult skaters are welcome to judge these events. A comprehensive competition manual is available online.
- The program liability and limited accident insurance covers all U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned and approved programs.
- Marketing and promotional materials are available for every registered program. These include badges, posters, encouragement stickers, skill cards, instructional skills DVD, Snowplow Sam merchandise, postcards, instructional manuals and skill booklets with stickers for skaters to track their progress through the curriculums.
- The progression of skills is done in proper sequential order (example: learning edges before turns). This is as important for recreational skaters and also those who may one day advance to a more competitive track.
- All Basic Skills members will receive an issue of the SKATING magazine Basic Skills Edition with membership
- Costs – There is a one-time \$50 registration fee for new programs. Skaters and instructors registration fee is only \$12 per year.

If your rink is not running a U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills program, please contact U.S. Figure Skating's Basic Skills Department or 719.635.5200 for a free administration packet.

A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM BRINGS TO THE...

Ice Facility/Local Member Club

- Increased revenue for the ice facility
- Increased ice usage
- Increased membership
- Increased pool of future athletes
- Volunteerism
- Advertisement and promotion of the local ice facility and skating

Skaters

- A place to have fun while learning
- A safe learning environment
- A social atmosphere to make friends
- Incentive rewards for their accomplishments
- A higher level of self-esteem
- Valuable life skills, i.e. good sportsmanship and fair play
- Increased fitness level
- A solid technical base for skaters to develop skills
- A direct and natural progression from Basic Skills to competitive programs and clubs
- The privilege of being a registered member of the national governing body for the sport of figure skating, which could lead to the road to the Olympic Games

The Community

- The opportunity to learn and have fun at local ice rinks
- Family togetherness – skating is a sport for the whole family
- Entertainment for the public – ice shows and competitions
- Fundraisers – charity drives
- Safe, fun and affordable recreation
- Employment opportunities for local skating instructors

The Basic Skills Program is an excellent base for the recreational skater as well as the first step to training the athletes of the future. Delivering a high-quality program involves a great deal of work and enthusiasm. Pay attention to detail, encourage and support your staff members, try new approaches, and always be aware of your customers' needs.

BASIC SKILLS REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Step 1: Register your program

There is a one-time set-up fee of \$50 to register new programs. Fill out the official Program Registration form and mail/fax it to U.S. Figure Skating to formally register your new program as a member. Once received, the Member Services Department will first make sure your selected name is not already being used by an existing club or program.

When choosing a name, please refrain from using the term “Club” unless the program is owned and operated by the member club. In this case, the name will be the same as that club. Consider choosing a program name using any of the following sample terms with your location (Hawaii Skating Academy, The Colorado Ice Rink, Skate with Utah)

- Academy, Skating Academy
- Skating School
- Basic Skills Program
- Program
- Figure Skaters
- Ice Rink

These are suggestions only. Be as creative and original as you want when naming your program to stand out from the rest! However, please try to keep your program name less than 32 characters and spaces long.

Member Services will then assign a membership number to your new program and send you a kick-off packet. Your kick-off packet will include everything you need to get your program started.

Once your school is registered, it is protected by third-party liability coverage. This policy covers all scheduled Basic Skills events including group lessons, exhibitions, recitals and Basic Skills competitions. A certificate of coverage will be requested on behalf of the Basic Skills Program and sent to the program director for the facility.

Step 2: Register your participants and staff!

The cost is \$12 per participant/per year and must be collected by the program and forwarded to U.S. Figure Skating. There are four ways to register your participants and staff: online using the Members Only site, mailing in completed membership forms, using the alternative registration form or sending in an Excel spreadsheet with the necessary information. Full payment must accompany registrations by using a credit card, electronic check, purchase order or check with the amount of the total number of membership registrations multiplied by \$12.

Each current registered member automatically has a \$2,500 deductible Sports Accident Insurance policy coverage for injuries sustained as a result of skating-related accidents. **It is mandatory that each skating school register all its skating participants as members of the Basic Skills Program, as only the current registered members are insured.**

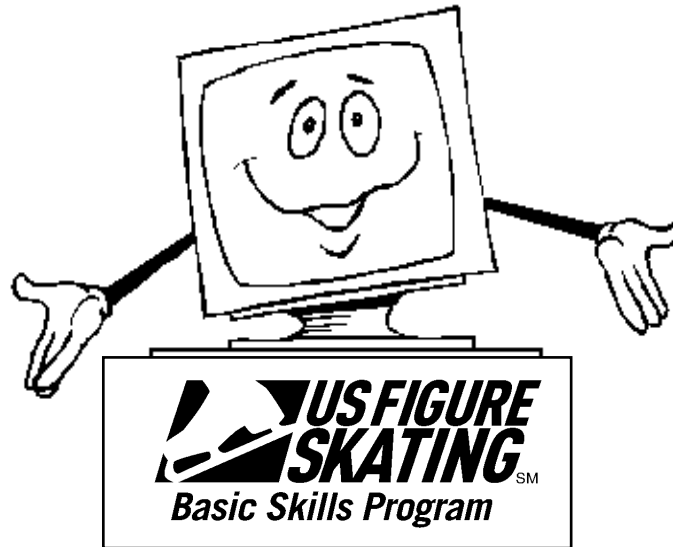
The Basic Skills membership year is July 1 through June 30. Each participant, including students, instructors and skating directors, must submit a membership registration each membership year to be active, current members.

It is important that membership registration forms be sent to headquarters within the first week of registration to allow for processing and mailing time. Processing time is usually two weeks. Mailing time of materials can take up to one week. By registering your members online, you will receive materials faster. Once you have processed your payment, those members are current. The other benefit to using the online system is having access to current and past rosters, and the ability to order supplies.

All registered Basic Skills students will receive a record book with stickers to keep track of the levels they complete, a member patch, a year patch, information about skating, the Basic Skills Edition of SKATING, sports accident insurance coverage and the opportunity to participate in group lessons, exhibitions, ice shows and Basic Skills competitions. All registered Basic Skills instructors and directors will receive an instructors manual that lists each level along with requirements for each, an instructors patch, a member patch, a year patch, the Basic Skills Edition of SKATING, sports accident insurance coverage and the opportunity to purchase additional affordable liability coverage for their coaching activities.

Information about Online Registration

Need to register your students the quickest way possible? Want to receive your membership cards and materials in a shorter amount of time? We've got a solution... register your Basic Skills members online!



- Access the Members Only website at www.usfsaonline.org. The Members Only site is also provided through a "Members Only" link on the official U.S. Figure Skating website at www.usfigureskating.org.
- For each skating school, only the person listed in the U.S. Figure Skating database as the Basic Skills Program Contact will have access to the member registration area. Because of this, **it is imperative that you notify us immediately when there is a change in your program's contact information.**
- Other than registering your students/instructors online, you will also be able to:
 - View, download and print your current membership roster
 - Print a member's temporary membership card
 - Edit and update student/instructor address information as well as your own
 - Download Transmittal Forms, Program Info Update Forms, Alternative Registration Forms, Basic Skills Price List and more!
- We will only issue one password per program to the skating director/primary contact. This password and the contact's current U.S. Figure Skating membership number (club, individual or Basic Skills membership) will be used to log in to the Members Only website. To request a password, contact Cindy Pacheco at cpacheco@usfigureskating.org.
- You may pay for your online transactions by using a credit card (Visa, American Express, MasterCard and Discover) or by electronic check only.
- The system is secure throughout.

PLANNING PROCESS

Included in the Administration Packet is important information to assist you in the set-up and organization of your new program. Once your program registration form is processed at headquarters, you will be mailed a Kick-Off Packet with samples of materials and promotional items we offer. Consult a Program Price List (order form) for more information.

List of promotional materials available:

- Attendance record/test sheets on disc
- Report cards for all levels on disc
- Basic Skills Instructors Manual – included with instructor membership
- Lesson Planning Manual for instructors
- Record books with stickers – included in participant membership
- Basic Skills Competition Manual – available ONLINE!
- Basic Skills promotional, Snowplow Sam and U.S. champions posters
- Instructional Skills DVD
- Skills cards for Basic and Free Skate levels
- Certificates of achievement
- Badges for all levels
- Basic Skills brochures
- Basic Skills logo pens/pencils
- Snowplow Sam stickers
- Postcards
- Customized dasher boards and banners for rink
- 30-second commercial – customize final screen
- Welcome to U.S. Figure Skating DVD
- Additional souvenirs (check supply)

National Skating Month promotional supplies are offered annually for a nominal fee.

Please contact the Ordering Department at 719.635.5200 ext. 419 or fill an order form to purchase supplies for your program.

ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS

There are many items to consider when you organize your program. It is important to write a business plan and a mission statement, speak with an accountant (if you are privately owned), do a market analysis and consult other established Basic Skills programs for advice.

Who is going to administer the program? Basic Skills programs are either run by ice facilities, member clubs, local parks and recreation department or are privately owned and operated. The size of the program is entirely dependent on local factors. These factors include the amount of ice time devoted per week to Basic Skills, population base and demographics, income level of the population and how many other programs are offered in the area. The enrollment range in registered Basic Skills programs across the nation is 75-2,500 skaters per year. The average size is about 200 skaters.

A few organizational questions to consider:

- How many sessions are you going to offer per year? How many weeks are in a session (six-, eight- or 10-week sessions)?
- How much ice time can be allocated to Basic Skills lessons per week?
- How many skaters minimum/maximum in each class (12 maximum)?
Recommended Class Sizes:
 - Snowplow Sam: 7 skaters to 1 instructor
 - Basic and above: 10 skaters to 1 instructor
- How much does ice cost at the facility?
- How much are you going to pay your staff (full instructors, assistants, director)?
- Suggested length of class times (consider the ages of the skaters in each class):
 - Snowplow Sam: 30-minute class
 - Basic 1-3: 30-minute class
 - Basic 4-8/Adult: 45-minute class
 - Special Olympics/Therapeutic: 30-minute class
 - Hockey: 30- to 45-minute class
 - Freestyle Classes: 45- to 60-minute class
 - Pairs: 45–60 minutes
 - Dance/AIM: 45- to 60-minute class
 - Synchronized Team Class: 60-minute class
 - Speed Skating Class: 30-minute class
 - Theatre on Ice Class: 30-minute class
- Will the program offer practice ice for the skaters? During class time? During public sessions?
- How will the program handle make-up lessons?
- How much are lessons going to cost? Will you offer a family discount?
- Are there any benefits to joining? Coupons? Free public skating sessions? Rental skates included in the fee?

INCOME/EXPENSES

Administering a Basic Skills program can be quite profitable. The following is a summary of some of the income and expenses involved with the day-to-day administration. Depending on who is directing/owning the program, these direct costs may be altered. Before starting your program, it is advisable to speak with an accountant.

Income/ Expense Itemization

Income	Expenses
Registration Fees (your fee for the session) Sponsorship Fundraisers	Ice time Wages – administration and instruction Membership fees (paid by participant) Brochures Advertising Mailing/Postage Badges/Promotional materials Toys, markers, clipboards, binders Taxes Copying Office equipment Rental skates Phone bills Refunds Staff meetings/in-services Gifts – for staff and rink attendants

Curriculum Descriptions

The Basic Skills Program is a twelve-curriculum skill development program teaching the fundamentals of ice skating to all ages and abilities:

FUNDAMENTAL PROGRAMS

SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snowplow Sam 1-3• Basic 1-8• Hockey 1-4• Adult 1-4• Special Olympics/Therapeutic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free Skate 1-6• Synchronized 1-4• Dance 1-6• Pairs 1-6• Artistry in Motion 1-4• Speed 1-6• Theatre On Ice 1-4
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Fundamental Programs:

SNOWPLOW SAM 1-3

The Snowplow Sam levels are designed to help the preschool-age skater develop preliminary coordination and strength necessary to maneuver on the ice. Snowplow Sam is a big, fuzzy, white bear who loves to skate. Time with Snowplow Sam will allow preschool children to become comfortable on the ice.

BASIC SKILLS 1-8

The “Basic Skills” are the fundamentals of the sport. These eight levels of the program introduce the fundamental moves: forward skating, backward skating, stops, edges, crossovers, three turns and Mohawks. Upon completion of the Basic 1-8 levels, skaters will have the basic knowledge of the sport, enabling them to advance to the more specialized areas of skating.

HOCKEY 1-4

The Hockey curriculum is designed to teach the fundamentals of hockey skating. In four badge levels, skaters will learn how to maneuver faster and be more agile on the ice. Proper skating techniques are the primary focus of the levels. All elements will be taught without a stick or puck. Skaters will learn the necessary fundamentals to be successful in game situations.

ADULT 1-4

The Adult curriculum is designed for the beginner adult skater. It will promote physical fitness as well as improve balance and coordination while learning proper skating techniques. Divided into four levels, adult skaters will progress at an individual rate while being challenged and motivated. This is a new exciting program for people who look to skating as an enjoyable way for a fit and healthy lifestyle.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS 1-12

The Special Olympics Sports Skills Program is designed for people with mental handicaps who may exhibit any number of physical impairments. The Special Olympics Figure Skating Badge Program allows athletes to learn skills in a progressive order and earn badges at each level. Athletes who complete the Special Olympics Badge Program will be prepared to move into the existing badge program at local rinks.

THERAPEUTIC – assisted and unassisted

The Therapeutic Badge Program is designed to help the physically challenged skater develop skills and enhance their skating experience. The program encourages skaters to continue in the sport of skating for physical recreation and activity while taking limitations into consideration.

Specialty Programs:

FREE SKATE 1-6

Skaters are always excited to graduate from the Basic to the Free Skate levels. Each Free Skate level is divided into four sections:

- Moves in the Field
- Dance/footwork sequence
- Spins
- Jumps

The Free Skate levels are designed to give skaters a strong foundation on which to build their skills. This is the point where the skater can choose whether to pursue a recreational or competitive approach to the sport of figure skating.

SYNCHRONIZED SKATING 1-4

Synchronized skating is the fastest growing aspect of skating today. The Basic Skills synchronized badge program is a fun introduction to the five basic elements:

- Circle
- Line
- Block
- Intersection
- Wheel

The purpose of these tests is to introduce skaters to synchronized skating and to familiarize them with elementary holds, formations and transitions. A group can consist of six or more skaters to get started.

DANCE 1-6

The Dance badge program focuses on the components of ice dancing and reviews the basic edges and turns while skating to music. Skaters will learn the first six dance patterns in the U.S. Figure Skating test structure. These tests can be taken with or without a partner.

PAIRS 1-6

The candidates for the Pairs curriculum should have passed at least Basic 8 or have the recommendation of the class instructor. The pairs levels are designed so that when a skater graduates from Pairs 6, he or she has a strong foundation on which to build, showing good use of edges, basic skills mastered, basic spin positions acquired, single jumps learned with a partner and basic lifts and throws. This can be used as a primer to the U.S. Figure Skating preliminary pairs test.

ARTISTRY IN MOTION 1-4

The Artistry in Motion (or “AIM”) program is designed to educate skaters on the basic principles and philosophy of choreography and style. The badge program will give them a foundation in basic body alignment, movement and line. Using this program will

contribute to the training of the complete figure skater. Artistry in Motion stimulates the creative mind of every skater.

SPEED 1-6

The Speedskating track for the Basic Skills Program introduces beginning speedskating techniques for skaters after they have learned the basic skating fundamentals in Basic Skills 1-4. These techniques include basic positions, edges, turns, starts and speed development. Skaters will be ready for racing after completing the Speed 1-6 badge levels.

THEATRE ON ICE 1-4

This curriculum will incorporate the TOI elements of choreography, skating movements and the rapport between skaters and/or sub groups of skaters at an introductory level. Emphasis should be on demonstration of the elements and control of the skating skills for the badge levels required. The four themes chosen for the curriculum are: Joy, Fear, Anger and Growth.

HIRING A SKATING DIRECTOR

A successful Basic Skills Program requires a great deal of planning and organization. Hiring a skating director is critical. It is this individual's responsibility to implement and administer the program. The skating director oversees and coordinates the activities of the Basic Skills program with the local club, rink, Board of Directors and board's various committees.

Qualifications of a Capable Skating Director:

- Extensive skating background or understanding of the program
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Experience designing and overseeing program operations
- Strong administrative and organizational skills
- Must be able to promote, market and attract people to the program
- Must have excellent customer service skills
- Membership in U.S. Figure Skating and PSA

Specific Responsibilities:

Administration Duties

- Schedule Basic Skills lessons, instructors and ice time
- Develop printed material
- Coordinate and train instructional staff, set testing standards
- Hold staff meetings and in-services
- Update membership lists
- Facilitate a Bridge program between Basic Skills skaters and the local club
- Organize Basic Skills competitions, ice shows/exhibitions, special workshops and camps
- Any other activities which will serve to further the Basic Skills Program's purpose and mission

Membership Services

- Maintain a current list of members, test records and a mailing list
- Act as a resource for prospective and existing members

Public Relations

- Maintain contact with local media to raise awareness of ice skating and skating-related activities
- Promote the sports of figure skating, hockey and speed skating
- Schedule events and promotions that will attract media attention
- Advertise and market ice skating to the community

HIRING A QUALIFIED STAFF

A strong program has a variety of instructors at all levels of skating ability. A staff needs to be balanced with high-end competitive coaches, young enthusiastic student instructors, recreational instructors, adult skaters and assistants. Most important, the staff must be *well trained and teach high-quality skating techniques*. Ask about their teaching and skating credentials, experience and membership in the various skating organizations (U.S. Figure Skating and PSA).

At least two in-services (training meetings) should be held per year. Keep your staff well educated and well informed of ice facility schedules, compliment them on a job well done, and treat them with respect – they are the ones who come in direct contact with your customers. A strong program always has a terrific staff. Your staff must keep the skaters enthusiastic about lessons and keep them coming back for more. Look at their attendance records. Listen to what the parents are saying about them. Most important, a skating instructor must be enthusiastic and have a positive approach to teaching.

Qualities of the Staff:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledgeable• Fun/Enthusiastic• Reliable/Punctual• Positive attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional• Team player• Safety conscious• Smiles
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The size of your staff will depend on the size of your skating school and the number of classes you plan to offer. An instructor's personal skating accomplishments are not necessarily related to teaching ability. It is very important that the teaching techniques of your staff are standardized. Try to have your staff use similar language (calling a swizzle a swizzle, not sculling or hourglasses), so that when a skater moves from one instructor to another, he or she will feel comfortable and not confused. Consistency is one of the key ingredients to a successful program.

Having a staff uniform or easily identifiable clothing is a good idea, even if it is just a coat with your logo or the U.S. Figure Skating logo on it. First, the public coming into a facility will immediately recognize the staff members and can go directly to one of them for assistance. Second, it makes the instructors feel like they are part of a team. Third, it looks professional. A high-quality image of your staff sells more than skating lessons.

Employee vs. Independent Contractor: Skating instructors can either be hired as employees of the rink, club or parks department, or as independent contractors. Consult your state employment office to find the rules in your area. There are 20 factors indicating whether an individual is considered an employee or independent contractor by the IRS. A person does not need to meet all criteria. Make sure the tax status of your staff is correct.

Set up a pay scale for your staff. Experience and credentials should be rewarded as well as enthusiasm and reliability. Sometimes your highest-qualified instructors are not your best Basic Skills group lesson instructors. A great line to remember is “Hire for attitude.” You can train the testing procedures and skating technique, but you cannot train personality or loyalty.

MARKETING

Definition: “The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.” – American Marketing Association

Marketing is a technique as well as a process. It focuses on identifying and satisfying customer needs and wants, is vitally important and is much more than advertising. The first step is to analyze the situation and to look at the environment, your future customers and the strengths and weaknesses of your business and your competition.

A few important questions to ask:

- Who is the target market?
- What are their needs and wants?
- What are they willing to pay for?

Being unfriendly, over-promising and having poor professional packaging and/or training are a few reasons to be “fired” by your customers. Parents are very tough critics, and they expect quality programs for their kids. More than 90 percent of angry customers will never return. Remember that your best form of advertising is word of mouth. Focus on the customer.

PROMOTION/ADVERTISEMENT

Promotion is essential to the success of the program. If the public is not aware of the local facility and your skating program, how can they sign up for lessons? Start advertising six weeks prior to the first day of lessons. Distribute your flyers at schools, libraries, stores, day cares, coffee shops...anywhere you can post a flyer. Buy advertisement space in local newspapers and community shoppers. Ask the local cable channel to have a commercial about the program. Get involved in a parade. Your materials should be suitable for the entire year.

Develop a professional-looking brochure to advertise your program. Make sure to include the following information: description of the classes offered, ice facility address, phone number for more information, dates and times of lessons, skate rental information, proper attire, registration application, waiver, list of staff and fees.

Have a bulletin board at the facility with materials about upcoming events, pictures of the skating lessons, picture of coaching staff, interesting articles from skating magazines, advertisements for equipment, results from competitions, newspaper articles written about local skaters or the programs, etc. Display any trophies or team awards your skaters have won.

Other ideas for promoting your program:

- Flyers
- Welcome letters
- Calendar of events and public skating
- Free introductory lessons on public skating
- Newspaper ads – Rule: 5-10% of total profit from the program should go back into advertising
- Local free shoppers
- Yellow Pages
- Web sites – try for community links
- Social networking sites
- Public schools (depends on the school district rules)
- Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts/Boy Scouts have a skating badge/belt loop requirement
- Answering machine at the rink
- T-shirts/club jackets/sweatshirts with skating program name on it
- Special appearances of elite skaters in the area
- Birthday party packages – 20% off first session for new skaters

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Holding a registration night or open house before the first day of classes is ideal. Advance registration allows you to plan classes. Mail-in/online registrations should always be accepted. Try to avoid a waiting list, if possible, because you never want to turn customers away. Make sure that skaters include full payment before classes begin.

Necessary information for registration:

- Your program registration brochure/flyer
- U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills membership registration form (if not using the online system)
- Welcome Letter – Include a thank you for participating in your program, a brief description of the lessons, your testing procedures, introduce staff members, describe the ideal fit of skates (“floppy skates” vs. good equipment), what to wear and other promotional materials
- Public skating schedules

Try to have a few staff members available on registration night for greeting the new skaters, answering any questions they may have and giving tours of the facility. Have the new skaters try on their rental skates to ensure a proper fit. This will save time on the first day of classes.

Keep a master list of all skaters enrolled in the program by sessions. Using a computer system can be very helpful with the organization and paperwork required. Make a master binder with all your important information included such as class times, levels, instructors, phone numbers, substitute instructor list, insurance information, accident report forms, extra brochures and other information that you need.

You must also keep accurate financial records!

Prepare your instructor/class lists from these master enrollment lists and make each instructor their own binder/clipboard for lessons. Divide your class lists by ability then age. For example, if 30 Basic One skaters enroll, divide the group into three different classes: Basic One High, Basic One Low (9- to 13-year-olds) and Basic One Low (6- to 8-year-olds).

On the first day of lessons, you can administer a brief skills test to place each skater in the correct class. Help your instructors to be as organized as possible. Tip: Give the staff their class assignments before the first day of lessons each session. They will then have time to prepare a lesson plan and review the skills taught before the class meets.

THE FIRST DAY

Be organized! The first day is always chaotic. There will be parents who are confused, skates not tied properly, terrible quality skates (“floppy skates”), skaters wearing shorts or dressed like the abominable snowman, parents running late, walk-in registrations, skaters in the wrong level, kids crying, lost children, etc. Know that things will go wrong but handle each situation as it arises with a smile. Try to think of the worst-case scenarios and how to handle difficult customers. It is advised to have as much help on the first day as possible. Train your volunteers first so they know what to do.

Skaters should first check in at a registration table and be given a nametag to wear. Color coding or using recognizable symbols/characters are the best. Write the skater’s name, class time and level on the tag. Your instructional staff should also have name tags. Volunteers can help escort skaters to their class area.

All classes on the first day should meet off ice. Have the instructors greet the class, and discuss proper fit of skates and proper attire (gloves, helmet, sweatshirts). For all beginning levels, talk about proper falling techniques, falling and recovery, marching, placement of arms, proper alignment of the body, listening, discipline and the importance of practicing. Have your instructors keep accurate attendance records. It is very important to keep track of the skaters; make note of drop-outs and changes/additions to the class.

A few tips for successful group lessons:

- Have your staff members write a lesson plan. Divide the class into five-minute segments and decide how many elements can be taught within the class time (this depends on level of class and ability of skaters).
- Discuss and be sensitive to teaching/learning progressions. Skills must be broken down into parts before the whole can be mastered.
- Make classes fun!
- Keep skaters moving throughout the lesson. Give short, precise instruction.
- Use teaching aids, markers, toys, cones and games.
- Have all staff members use the same skating vocabulary.
- Give positive feedback to all the skaters in the class. End each class on a positive note. Make sure skaters are excited to come back next week.
- Someone knowledgeable should be available for questions as they arise.

ATTENDANCE/TEST RECORD FORMS

This form is designed to do two things:

- Record attendance dates of the students
- Record the test results

In the area marked “Attendance,” list the date that each lesson will be taught. At each class meeting, have the class instructor initial across from the skater’s name who attended and below the lesson date if the skater was in attendance.

The area marked “Test Elements” is to be used when the skater is to be evaluated. Use a “P” for pass. If the element was not sufficient, use “NI.” The bottom portion of the test sheet is a list of elements in each level.

EVALUATION/TEST DAY

It is our philosophy that skaters should progress through the Basic Skills curriculum at their own ability rate. Skaters should neither overwhelmed and discouraged nor challenged and bored with class material. Evaluations should be done on the first day of the session and either the second-to-last or the last day of the session. This is to ensure proper class level assignments. Move skaters accordingly at the discretion of the skating director and/or class instructor. Keep a paper trail of the skater.

Evaluations can be done by any certified/trusted instructor. Consistency in standards is important. Be careful of a testing bias either by the instructor or the skater's parents. Avoid questionable situations. ***Tip: Make sure the regular class instructor agrees with the results of the evaluation before the skaters receive the results of their test.***

A written evaluation is helpful to the skater and important to the skater's parents. Always have your instructors write something encouraging. Report cards, certificates and badges are available from headquarters for distribution. Skaters should always leave the last class with a progress (report) card, a badge/certificate if they completed the class or a participation award or ribbon if the skater did not pass, a smile and a re-enrollment form or more information on continuing skating lessons. Keep your customers well informed. Remember that this is a service-based business and word of mouth is your best form of advertising. End each session on a positive note.

BASIC SKILLS RECORD BOOK

The record book allows the skater to track his/her skating progress. Each level of the program has a page that lists all of the elements in that level. Each record book contains two pages of gold-colored stickers. When the skater officially passes a certain level, the instructor signs the appropriate page in the record book (depending on size of program, this is not always feasible.) The skater can apply the gold stickers to that page, indicating that he or she has mastered the various elements in that level. The record book is included with Basic Skills membership fees.

Fun ideas for the last day of classes:

- Bring a Buddy day
- Play games that include all levels
- Have each class perform a small demonstration
- Invite the whole family
- Host a mini-skills competition or team competition

*Have all non-members sign an event waiver before participating. For sample waivers, visit www.usfigureskating.org → Clubs → Risk Management.

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR BASIC SKILLS PROGRAMS

Annual Ice Shows/Exhibition/Recital

Shows and exhibitions increase the public awareness of ice skating and the facility, attract new business and build excitement about the programs offered. Shows provide an opportunity for skaters to perform in front of an audience, build confidence in their skills and show off to family members and friends. For more information on the Basic Skills performance rules and approval guidelines, visit www.usfigureskating.org → Programs → Basic Skills → Directors.

Basic Skills Competition – In House or Open

The purpose of the competition is to promote a fun, introductory, competitive experience for the beginning skater where everyone is a winner. Hosting a one- or two-day competition can be very beneficial to the host club/program. Information on organizing a competition, the announcement, approval process, judging sheets and more can be found at www.usfigureskating.org → Programs → Basic Skills → Competitions. In addition to increasing skating participation and generating enthusiasm, it is a fun and rewarding way to introduce competitive skating. All competitors should receive an award for participating.

Fun Days

- Bring a Buddy
- Costumes
- Teddy bear picnics
- Fun and games
- Races

Rent the Snowplow Sam Costume (Contact headquarters for a rental agreement)

Snowplow Sam represents the Basic Skills Program as the official “spokes bear.” The costume can be rented out for ice shows, promotional skating events or appearances. The little kids love how warm and fuzzy he is.

Fundraisers

- Car wash
- Candy sales/pizza sale
- Skate-a-Thon (skaters being sponsored for number of laps skated)
- Skate/clothing resale
- Raffle
- Selling advertising in programs for ice shows and competitions
- Corporate sponsorship – local business gets title sponsor of team, event, rink board...

Celebrate Holidays on Ice

- Halloween candy and games
- Holiday recital/public skating sessions offered
- Skate with Santa
- Birthday parties
- New Year’s party on ice
- Valentine’s Day treats for the skaters

RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE

INSTRUCTORS MANUAL

The instructors manual contains the elements and specific testing requirements for each level of the Snowplow Sam, Basic Skills, Hockey, Adult, Free Skate, Dance, Synchronized Team, Pairs, Artistry in Motion, Theatre On Ice, Special Olympics and Therapeutic curriculums. These guidelines can be very helpful in creating consistency of content and teaching methods. A comprehensive glossary of skating terms is included.

LESSON-PLANNING MANUAL

The lesson-planning manual contains specific strategies on how to instruct your group class. This is meant to be used as a guideline and can be customized to fit your teaching styles and needs. It explains class procedures, organizational ideas, proper teaching techniques and traffic patterns. The lesson plans consist of objectives and goals along with key words to focus on while teaching each element in all curriculums.

SKILLS DVD

The Skills DVD demonstrates all elements in Basic 1 through Free Skate 6, including the Axel. The DVD is a cutting-edge teaching tool for instructors of beginning skaters but is great for skaters and parents as well. Learn basic skating techniques as well as turns, stops, spins and jumps. It's all served up through motion-captured 3D animation! To order your copy, please contact U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters at 719.635.5200 or visit our website at www.usfigureskating.org.

BASIC SKILLS SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There are members of a Basic Skills Sub-committee across the country to assist new and existing Basic Skills programs in the organizing, marketing and administering of this program. They are all experienced skating directors, instructors and officials and have many ideas to share with you. Please call headquarters or look in a current U.S. Figure Skating Directory to receive the name and phone number of your representative. They will be happy to help you with any questions you may have along the way.

U.S. FIGURE SKATING WEBSITE

The U.S. Figure Skating website is another source of information for skaters, instructors, directors and parents. Information includes a general description of the Basic Skills Program, the competition manual, display of the badge chart, news and notes, competition calendar and much more. Please check it out at www.usfigureskating.org.

STAR

U.S. Figure Skating and USA Hockey have formed a joint venture association called Serving the American Rinks (STAR) to serve the needs of facility owners, operators, suppliers and users. STAR is a nonprofit organization that provides productive and cost-effective programs and services to benefit rinks and arenas, and facilitate the advancement of hockey and figure skating, throughout the United States. STAR offers a comprehensive package of programs designed to make the facilities work more effectively, including technical and management training, quality programming, expense reduction and insurance coverage programs. To contact STAR, please call 719.538.1149 or visit STARrinks@usahockey.org.

U.S. FIGURE SKATING BRIDGE PROGRAM

Have you ever looked out onto the ice during Basic Skills classes, with all the ice zones full, and wondered where everyone goes after these sessions are completed? Yes, the role of the Basic Skills Program is to introduce the public to the joys and fun of skating but also to feed the other “next step” programs such as learn-to-play classes, hockey teams and figure skating clubs. A successful, full-service facility offers programs at every level up the chain. A Basic Skills program is a feeder program, but in order to be successful in its role, the next step needs to be defined to your customers from the beginning so they can have a clear vision of where they are presently and what comes next. This will keep them in the rink and learning to skate, and will show them the benefits and opportunities offered to them.

The U.S. Figure Skating Bridge Program is one of these types of programs your facility and/or local figure skating club can host. The mission of the Bridge Program is to teach skating skills at a faster pace in a group lesson environment and to introduce the benefits of club membership.

Your Bridge program should be custom designed based on the needs of the Basic Skills program and figure skating club. You may be able to draw beginning skaters from the Basic 3 level or you may have to limit it to only the free skating levels. It also depends on how much ice time you can devote to this program. A Bridge program offers skaters an opportunity to learn at a faster rate, pass Basic badge tests, be on the ice more than once a week in restricted class zones and learn about the benefits of joining the local club – all in a package program with a set fee.

For example, the summer time, when ice is more available, is an ideal time to implement this program. Skaters from the winter and spring group lesson program will register for a Bridge program that offers them an opportunity to learn at a faster rate, pass tests and be on the ice more than once a week in their restricted class zones.

The important aspects of a Bridge program are the introductory meeting before the first class and at least one parent meeting during the session to discuss important topics such as the goal of the program and introducing the coaching staff, club officers and membership chairs. Include special presenters (your club president, a boot and blade expert, a U.S. Figure Skating official) to explain these topics in more detail.

Other important topics to discuss include:

- Proper equipment
- Appropriate attire
- Ice etiquette
- Ice utilization and good practice habits
- Good eating habits
- Goal setting and positive thinking
- U.S. Figure Skating testing and competitive structure
- Joining a figure skating club
- Club functions
- Volunteering

- How and when to select a private coach

The skating curriculum should be specific to the ability of the skaters enrolled. If you include some of the lower Basic levels in your Bridge program, make sure the emphasis for them is on their badge curriculum so they can officially pass those classes and earn their badges. At the conclusion of the session, you could also have a judge test the skaters for their pre-pre moves.

The on-ice skating curriculum should also include:

- Proper stretching techniques
- Warm up and cool down
- Stroking and edges
- Introductory moves in the field
- Introductory dance
- Spins
- Jumps
- Artistry in Motion

The fees for the program should be higher than the group lesson fees in your area but not so high as to discourage people from participating. The membership can either be as a registered Basic Skills participant or a new category of a one-year introductory club membership for the skaters participating in the program.

You can run this type of program as a full eight-week session, a one-day camp, a special workshop or as a class on free skating times. It has been the experience of some clubs that 80 percent of the Bridge Program participants stay in skating, either as free skaters, dancers or members of a synchronized team.

This program introduces skaters to a “training program” and offers them an introduction of all the elements in skating and what is required if they choose to continue to skate recreationally or begin a competitive career. Parents will be eased into the expense involved with the sport. Parent meetings should be encouraged as ways to educate them about their future involvement in figure skating. Encourage a mix of Basic Skills skating school staff and club professionals to instruct this program.

All sample lesson plans and information needed to organize a U.S. Figure Skating Bridge program is available at www.usfigureskating.org click Clubs then Bridge Program. If you have any questions, please contact Member Services at 719.635.5200.

FAQ

My instructors are already registered U.S. Figure Skating club or individual members and/or teaching pros. Do they still have to register for Basic Skills? Will this affect their eligibility status? It is imperative that you register your instructors for insurance purposes and so that they receive and are equipped with updated manuals and teaching tools. Registering a Basic Skills instructor will not alter his or her club or individual U.S. Figure Skating membership or eligibility status.

One of our members was injured on the ice. What do we do? What does your sports accident insurance cover? If I have insurance questions, who do I call? When your new program registers to use the Basic Skills Program, the program is protected by the third-party liability insurance coverage. The amount of protection is \$1 million for your program. Also offered is a \$2,500 deductible secondary sports accident insurance for individual injuries sustained as a result of skating-related accidents. All scheduled Basic Skills events (lessons, exhibitions, recitals or Basic Skills competitions) are covered under this policy. See "The Insurance Program" for more detailed coverage. Contact our insurance broker, Wells Fargo Insurance Services, at 800.332.9256 ext 100

Are Basic Skills instructors required to have coaches liability insurance? We do not require it, but we highly recommend it as added protection for instructors and instructor-related activities on and off the ice. Please visit this link for more information: <http://www.usfigureskating.org/About.asp?id=248> and scroll down to Insurance or contact Wells Fargo Insurance Services at 800.332.9256 ext 100. Note that coaches liability insurance is effective from sign-up through June 30 each year. This insurance is also available through the PSA.

How old must a Basic Skills instructor be to be registered? All instructors, assistants and volunteers should be registered so as to receive a copy of the instructors manual and supporting materials. However, we recommend that full instructors being compensated for their services are over the age of 16.

When is the best time to register members? The sooner the better! You do not have to wait until the end of your skating sessions/season to submit all your registrations. Register your members right away to get them insured, eligible to participate in Basic Skills events/competitions and to receive membership materials. Do not wait until the last minute, as all competitions/events require proof of current membership (membership card).

Where is my SKATING magazine? A Basic Skills Edition of Skating is mailed directly to all Basic Skills members as soon as headquarters receives a registration. This magazine is full of useful skating information, articles and even trading cards for the beginner skater and parent!

How do I order badges? Can we place badge/supply orders online?

There are four ways to order badges. You can order online, by fax, by mail or by calling in your order. For further questions regarding orders, please contact our Order Department at 719.635.5200 ext 419.

Do you keep records of Basic Skills member tests/levels? No. It is up to your program how you want to keep track of this information. Test and evaluation sheets are available upon request. Certificates of achievement can be ordered as well.

Who is my area representative? Visit the Basic Skills Program section of our website at www.usfigureskating.org/Programs.asp for a current list of Basic Skills committee persons, also available in the current U.S. Figure Skating Directory.

Is there a Basic Skills website? You can find the latest news and updates for skating directors, instructors, parents and skaters by visiting www.usfigureskating.org → Programs → Basic Skills.

Can I download forms? If so, where? Contacts/skating directors can download the Program Info Update Form, Transmittal Form, Basic Skills Price List and more at <http://www.usfigureskating.org/Programs.asp?id=47>.

Why do renewal members only receive a year and member patch? The purpose of the record book is to allow a skater to keep track of his/her progress through his/her Basic Skills lessons. Therefore, only new Basic Skills members receive a record book. Only if the record book is updated (i.e. curriculum changes) will we issue all renewal members a new record book the season it is released.

Please contact us if you have any questions at 719.635.5200.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM U.S. FIGURE SKATING

Programs

- Basic Skills admin packet, directors handbook, kick-off kit, promotional and support materials
- Synchronized skating – promotional video and brochures available
- Bridge Program – transitioning skaters from Basic Skills to the club
- Theatre On Ice – the on-ice performing program
- Showcase
- Adult skating programs, testing and competitions
- Skating camps and clinics
- School-affiliated clubs
- Collegiate clubs
- Bid applications to host regional, sectional and U.S. championships

Brochures

- Basic Skills Program – the FUNdamentals of ice skating
- About U.S. Figure Skating guidebook
- Adult skating programs
- Special Olympics
- Friends of Figure Skating
- Memorial Fund
- Parent handbooks, volumes 1-3

Manuals

- How to Form a Figure Skating Club
- Basic Skills Instructors Manual
- Basic Skills Lesson Planning Manual
- Basic Skills Competition Manual
- Nonqualifying Competition Manual
- Club Finance Manual
- Club Fundraising Booklet
- Test Chair Handbook
- Synchronized Skating Team Manager's Manual
- Formation of a Nonprofit Corporation
- Trial judge packet
- National Skating Month and Media Manual

Publications

- U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook and Directory
- SKATING magazine
- Basic Skills SKATING edition
- U.S. Figure Skating media guide
- U.S. Figure Skating synchronized skating media guide
- U.S. Figure Skating fact sheet

Videos

- Welcome to U.S. Figure Skating
- Basic Skills instructional DVD

ABOUT U.S. FIGURE SKATING

Mission Statement:

As the National Governing Body, the mission of U.S. Figure Skating is to provide programs to encourage participation and achievement in the sport of figure skating.

Publication: SKATING magazine

Website: www.usfigureskating.org

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