

# FIGURE



# SKATING

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDE



# USA ROLLER SPORTS

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Amateur roller sports competitions have taken place in the United States since 1937. Today, the membership of USA Roller Sports (USARS) includes skaters in four disciplines who, in turn, belong to amateur skating clubs across the United States. In addition to promoting roller sports nationwide, USARS administers competitive roller sports from its national headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska in a variety of ways. Some of these are:

- Program and competition rules development
- Registering skaters and clubs
- Training and certifying judges and officials
- Conducting seminars for skaters and coaches
- Approving requests for amateur roller sports competitions
- Hosting regional and national championship competitions
- Representing USA skaters in conferences at the national and international level
- Registered member skaters/coaches of USA Roller Sports are provided with excess (secondary) accident/medical expense benefits in the amount of \$50,000 for injuries occurring **ON SKATES** limited to organized and supervised practice sessions held within USA Roller Sports chartered club facilities, or during USA Roller Sports sanctioned competitions and/or USA Roller Sports training sessions sanctioned by national headquarters specified to occur outside of club facilities. The event must be supervised by a club officer (or an official USA Roller Sports coach) or the USA Roller Sports designated leader of an USA Roller Sports sponsored event. The individual will be required to certify the validity of the claim being submitted. No coverage is extended to a skater injured while on skates, but who is not in training for USA Roller Sports competitions.



Working both independently and in cooperation with the United States Olympic Committee, USARS seeks to advance medical and technical knowledge of, as well as support for, roller sports in the United States. The USARS Sports Medicine Committee constantly conducts studies which help coaches and trainers to better understand the exercise and conditioning needs of roller skaters. USARS skaters are also allowed to train and live at Olympic Training Centers across the United States. USARS, a non-profit corporation under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is the National Governing Body (NGB) for amateur roller sports in the United States under the Amateur Sports Act of 1978. USARS is a member of:



- The United States Olympic Committee (USOC), the premier sports organization for amateur skaters in the United States.



- World Skate, the governing body of roller sports worldwide. World Skate, which is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the General Assembly of International Sports Federations, is comprised of 119 national roller skating federations, in all five IOC continents: Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania



- The Pan American Sports Organization (PASO), which governs the amateur sports of all nations located in the Western Hemisphere.

As the sport's NGB, USARS provides skaters of all ages in figure, speed, roller hockey and roller derby with opportunities to compete at the regional, national, and international level.



## ABOUT THE SPORT

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### Combining Skill, Grace and Music

Roller figure skating demands that its skaters combine a careful balance of precision, strength, and artistry into a single, impressive performance. The results are as spectacular to witness as they are to perform, and they demonstrate a mastery of the sport in all its intricacy. The diversity of its members reflects the breadth of roller figure skating. Skaters of all ages can take an active part in the sport, finding any number of challenges to inspire them to reach their individual goals - from a beginner class to world -class championship competition. This diversity, both in appeal and participants, has made roller figure skating the largest division of competitive roller skating in the United States. Skaters enter events in one or more categories - Singles, Pairs, Figures, Solo Dance, Team Dance, Inline, Precision, or Show skating. Judges mark on content and manner of performance. This includes the skater's ability to do identifiable, difficult content items, like jumps, spins, and footwork, while utilizing those movements in an artistic interpretation of accompanying music. Skaters may choose to skate in a variety of categories or concentrate on only one.

### Dance (Team and Solo)



In dance skating, each team or individual skates to prescribed patterns and rhythms. Solo Dance is conducted as a coed event within USARS domestic youth divisions. Judges' criteria include timing to the music, execution of basic fundamentals and technical requirements, pattern, correct body positions, including team unison, and musical expression. The judges award scores for each component. The World Class Team event competition includes two (2) events in one -- a compulsory dance framed within a set element component (Style Dance) designated by WSF yearly, with the second portion as a Free Dance.

The Style Dance (SD) is skated in rhythms and tempos specified annually by the WSF; e.g. Polka, Latin combinations, Swing combinations, etc. The second portion in the World Class dance events (Solo and Team) is the free dance. Within both the SD and free dance portions of this event, the skaters have required set elements that must be included in the routines. The programs are tailored to best suit the skaters particular style of skating, using their own original choreography to music of their choice. In determining the best overall team or solo skater, the technical values and component marks focus on difficulty and accuracy of the steps as well as the quality of performance, including skating skills, transitions, choreography, and performance.

## Figures

Compulsory Figure skating demands tracing accuracy, body control, and extreme concentration. Each skater retraces a series of figure patterns--combining a variety of difficult take-offs, edges, and turns--on a set of circles painted on the skating surface. Figure skating, considered the basis of all skating, teaches balance, control, and discipline. Skaters at the national level devote hours of silent and demanding practice each week to figure skating in order to attain their success. Skaters in this event are judged on their quality of edge while tracing of the figure circle, execution of turns and takeoffs, pace, flow, and posture. Loop figures are also another important part of figure skating.



## Singles



Singles free skating demands creativity, technical agility, and virtuosity. The objective is for skaters to blend the necessary ingredients of singles skating--jumps, spins, and footwork--with music to create a performance that embraces both sport and art. Judges reward speed and height in jumps, control, velocity and variety of position in spins, and originality and confidence in the footwork segments used to connect each item in the program. These jumps, spins, and step sequences earn points relative to their technical values. Manner of performance reflects the skater's poise, showmanship, and expression during a routine and programs earn scores reflecting the following components: skating skills, transitions, choreography, and performance.

## Pairs

Pairs skating combine all of the difficulty of singles skating with the complexity of adding a partner. Harmony is the key to pairs skating, with partners mirroring each other as they move through their program. Skaters strive for the perfect conversion of music to movement by executing simultaneous spins, jumps, and footwork, punctuated by exciting and physically demanding overhead lifts.



Contestants in this event earn points according to both technical value and skating skills, transitions, choreography, and performance. Additionally, pairs skating requires the highly orchestrated interactions among the partners in varied, technically challenging ways by using a variety of partner holds and the demonstration of the partner interactions both physically and theatrically.

## Precision Team Skating

Precision Skating is a group of skaters all working together as a unit. Maneuvers and formations are done to music with a focus on unity of movement, accuracy of formations, pace and speed, and synchronization of the team. Required elements are: circle, line, wheel, intersecting lines, block, and three different handholds. Teams may consist of men and women with Senior Teams having 12-24 team members, and Junior Teams and Novice Teams having 8-16 team members. Two scores are given as an “A” and “B” Mark; one for composition and one for presentation. Qualifying teams in the Senior Division go on to the World Artistic Championships.



## World View

Successful roller figure skaters can trace their beginnings to their rink’s USARS chartered club. It is here where skaters hone their skills through practice, lessons, and competition. Many strive to represent their rink and club at local, regional, and national competitions.

Skaters who succeed at any of the nine Regional Championships advance to the National Championships. Here, skaters compete for national titles in divisions of artistic skating grouped by age and levels of experience. The top three placements (top two in the Jr. and Sr. WC Solo Dance events) in the Senior World Class divisions and the top two placements in the Junior World Class divisions of men’s and women’s Figures, Singles, Pairs, and Dance skating represent the United States at the World Artistic Championships. In the past, skaters have traveled to such places as Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Taiwan, Canada, Columbia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, France, Argentina, Chile, China and the United States for World Championships, International Events and Training Camps/ Seminars.

All of this begins with the willingness to organize and maintain a competitive roller figure skating club. Although, for the purposes of this publication we emphasis here the skating centers, where the sport of roller figure skating can be organized and enjoyed in any organization dedicated to working with people of all ages. All it takes is a little planning and enthusiasm to get a successful roller figure skating program off and rolling.

## GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

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Every solid business has diversified sources of income. For the rink operator this may include private parties, birthday parties, game machines, snack bar sales, skate sales, and locker rentals. A successful roller figure skating club can be viewed as just another contribution to a rink operation's bottom line, however it can be so much more.

The foundation of success begins when the club's members have access to a skating facility, the guidance of qualified and USARS certified instructors, and have specified amounts of time for practice and lessons. In return, club members will often give their loyalty, business, and dedication, making them the rink's best public relations tool. The results can be expanded rink use, increased revenues, positive public and media attention, and improved session attendance and retention.

Roller figure skaters, like other devoted athletes, willingly accept a broader range of available times than the average customer does. In essence, it is like hosting a private party every night when the skaters show up for practices, classes and meets. Please do not forget that they are paying for the privilege of using the facility. They deserve the same respect that any other paying customer expects, as well as consistent service and fair prices.

Roller figure skaters are proud of their sport and their accomplishments, often encouraging others of all ages to get involved in the fun. Roller figure skaters themselves will serve as the club's own best advertising to build the program and attract other skaters.

Club members also pay for classes and private lessons, in addition to their monthly club dues. Monthly dues vary, but a club with 50 members charging \$30 a month generates a gross income of \$18,000 a year. That figure does not include the money generated at the snack bar or through increased sales of quality skates, equipment and wheels.

Meets and exhibitions are another income-producing opportunity for the rink operator. From people willing to pay admission to spectators enjoying the grace and beauty of an artistic program, meets and exhibitions often draw an enthusiastic response. These types of events go a long way in promoting the public perception that the skating facility is a safe and fun recreational facility. Even if skaters go to meets and exhibitions outside of their host facility, the desire to win will encourage them to buy even more practice time and private lessons through their home rink's roller figure skating program.

An active artistic club also can attract the attention of the local media. It is hard for newspapers and television stations to ignore the photographic possibilities of a roller figure skating meet or exhibition. Cooperating with the local media can also assure that the results will be part of the local sports coverage. Skaters who

have gone on to national and world competitions have an even broader exposure in a wide variety of media outlets, from national magazines and newspapers to television coverage.

Sponsorships are another way to supplement a competitive program, which can help offset the cost of travel, costumes, equipment purchases, and entry fees.

In addition to the terrific financial and promotional returns a club can provide for a small investment of time, it gives the rink operator a rewarding opportunity to work with dedicated athletes for the advancement of roller sports.

The bottom line is, for your roller skating business to continue to grow, it needs to also grow as a sport.

## STARTING YOUR PROGRAM

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### CALL TO ORDER

All it takes to begin a roller figure skating program is a basic understanding and knowledge of what is required, which can be acquired through reference books, DVD's, or the coaches program offered by USARS. Resources are available for download at <https://www.usarollersports.org>.

Networking is another way new coaches can learn more about their sport. Coaches dedicated to their craft will be more than willing to share what they know with someone who shares their enthusiasm. Both parties benefit by increasing the quality and quantity of competition available to skaters. You can also reach out for assistance to one of our many volunteers at [figurecoachesreps@usarollersports.org](mailto:figurecoachesreps@usarollersports.org).

It also does not take an excellent skater to begin a program; it does require someone who is willing to understand and work with people of all ages. A successful sport leader possesses great communication skills, not only technical skills.

Some operators find qualified and interested coaches who are already on their staff, such as floor guards, managers, or coaches in other competitive programs. Thanks to progressive USARS rules, active competitive skaters are also eligible to coach. In addition, in some cases, the best prospects for coaching positions are the parents interested enough to bring their child down to the rink and watch them practice on a regular basis.

The person chosen must be someone who can accept the responsibility, and consistently invest several hours a week into the development of the program. They should also possess a genuine concern for people. Choose carefully because the image projected by the coach is the image of the operation that parents will share with everyone they meet.

As a way to maintain and encourage a club's coach, it is advisable that some form of profit sharing or other type of agreement be devised in regard to class structure teaching time. An example would be a 50/50 or 60/40 arrangement between the coach and operator, whether it is based on monthly dues or practice fees, or having to coach the classes in return for being allowed to teach in the facility. Whatever arrangements the parties make, be certain that they are clearly defined and understood by all parties.

## **FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS**

The methods used by rink operators with successful roller figure skating clubs are almost as varied as the number of clubs. However, the one common thread is that there must be a solid foundation of "beginner" classes. From there, a program can move skaters into progressively more advanced classes, leading to a solid Junior and Senior club which will secure the rink's place in the community for generations.

Beginner classes can be something as simple as a basic 15-minute freebie before or after the session, which covers skills such as standing up and falling down. A more structured approach could progress from the fundamental skills to more advanced techniques, such as backward and forward skating, scissors, crossover, step over, or shoot the duck.

The content at each class level is up to the individual program leader. However, when planning the program it can sometimes be helpful to see what other operators have outlined for their class levels. Here is just one example:

### **Tiny Tot Class – age seven and under**

- Standing up - balancing on one foot standing still
- How to fall down and not get hurt
- How to get up
- How to move forward; marching and scissors
- Starting and stopping with toe stop
- T-Position; starting and stopping
- Stoop skate and Shoot the duck

(Parents may not realize that children begin skating lessons at such an early age. By scheduling the seven and under class immediately before the beginner class, the parents may be encouraged to bring in their younger children for the next class.)

### **Beginner Class – age eight and over**

- Standing up
- Falling down
- Getting up
- Starting and stopping with toe stop
- T-Position; starting and stopping
- Skating forward on one foot

- Skating forward properly
- Stoop Skate and Shoot the duck
- Backward skating
- Stopping backward
- Spiral

### **Super Skater Class I**

- “Graduates” from the Beginner Classes could apply to take their #1 Super Skater achievement test.

### **Intermediate Class**

- Figure # 1
- Spread eagle
- Mohawk
- Waltz jump
- Backward one foot skating

### **Super Skater Class II**

- “Graduates” from the Intermediate Class could apply to take their #2 Super Skater achievement test.

### **Advanced Class**

- Figure # 111A
- Figure # 112B
- Glide Waltz
- Progressive Tango
- Figure eight cross pulls
- Bunny hop
- Mohawk jump
- Two foot spin
- One foot spin
- Primary footwork

In this example, beginner and intermediate skaters advance to the next level only after students have accomplished the skills taught in their current class. However, each class structure needs to reflect the goals and abilities of each individual program.

Regardless of which approach used, be sure to make it easy for beginner skaters to get involved in the class structure. In time, their skills and self-confidence will progress to the point where they will be asking for better skates, private lessons, and increased practice times. Pressure them too soon, and they'll be packing their bags for some other recreational activity.

Once the groundwork for the classes is established, it's important to promote the programs. Use posters and session announcements to encourage skaters to participate. Have coaches or club skaters demonstrate the various types of roller

figure skating at sessions. Also, have the coaches keep an eye open for talented skaters and personally invite them to join the class program.

A registration form should be developed for the programs. This form can be used to explain the sport of roller figure skating and the benefits of the program. Each class skater, or their guardian should provide their name, address, phone number, email address, birthday, and any other pertinent data your facility deems necessary.

One way to inspire beginners is to hold club exhibitions. This is a great way of showing less experienced skaters what they can accomplish if they maintain their involvement in classes and private lessons. If you do not have many club members, contact another club in your area and see if they can have a couple of their skaters come and perform an exhibition at your facility. Many skaters out there that would gladly help promote their sport of roller figure skating.

The operator or coach may pursue other avenues as well. USARS offers a Future Star Program that is ideal for the casual skater who wants to learn more about their sport of choice, but is not ready for the demands of structured lessons or competition. The Future Star Program is a systematic approach to teaching progressive skills to beginning skaters that awards patches based on achievement. The idea is to reinforce participation on the easiest level and build a foundation for further learning. It also provides the framework to design an effective and profitable class structure in your facility. Contact the USARS National Office for more details.

The Roller Skating Rink Operators of America (RSA) also offers the Super Skater Program, as well as the Achievement Test Program. ([www.rollreskating.com](http://www.rollreskating.com))

## **ORGANIZATION SKILLS**

Although classes are critical to the success of the rink operation, competitive roller figure skating goes one step further by providing skaters with a reason to stay active with their host skating facility long after their interest in the class structure has been exhausted.

To lay the groundwork for the club, it is recommended that the operator hold an organizational meeting with the coaches. Although it will ultimately be the operator's decision, coaches can provide some helpful recommendations in establishing club dues, practice fees, class schedule, and class structure.

It's also a good idea to set consistent times for activities such as private lessons, exhibitions, and practices. Establish a schedule that will not only take advantage of the rink's down times, but which will also meet the needs of the intended customers. Pre-schoolers are pretty flexible during the week, but school age children generally need that time slot between the final bell and the first session. Adults can generally fit into later time slots, but be aware of their individual needs as well. On weekends, it is customary to fill every available time not already dedicated to sessions and private parties. Also remember private parties are

part of the rink business and tend to bring in more income than practice time, so there will be times where private parties take priority over practice time.

A registration form should be developed for club and private lesson skaters. This form should list practice times, club dues, practice fees, private lesson fees, rink rules, and any other anticipated expenses.

## **MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES**

Each individual in a competitive program must purchase a USA Roller Sports membership card. The membership card application may be obtained through their club officers. Once signed by the proper club officer, the skater submits the form, along with the membership fee, to USA Roller Sports. In addition to the membership card application, each first time applicant will need to provide a photocopy of any legal document that verifies their date of birth - i.e., driver's license, birth certificate, school record or baptismal record (don't send the original - it will not be returned). The card will only be valid for the competitive season that is active during the date of application. The USARS competitive season is from September 1 through August 31.

Benefits of USARS membership to the skaters include:

- Participation in competitive events authorized by USARS, including sanctioned exhibitions and roller skating shows.
- Official Notice of Board of Director actions mailed to each skater twice a year.
- Opportunities to hold office in USARS and local clubs if of legal age, and, upon completing SafeSport Training and passing a background check to become a commissioned USARS official.
- Officiating in other capacities at sanctioned USARS activities.
- Registered member skaters/coaches of USA Roller Sports are provided with excess (secondary) accident/medical expense benefits in the amount of \$50,000 for injuries occurring **ON SKATES** limited to organized and supervised practice sessions held within USA Roller Sports chartered club facilities, or during USA Roller Sports sanctioned competitions and/or USA Roller Sports training sessions sanctioned by national headquarters specified to occur outside of club facilities. The event must be supervised by a club officer (or an official USA Roller Sports coach) or the USA Roller Sports designated leader of an USA Roller Sports sponsored event. The individual will be required to certify the validity of the claim being submitted. No coverage is extended to a skater injured while on skates, but who is not in training for USA Roller Sports competitions.

In addition to many of the above benefits, USARS membership holds many advantages for the rink operator or sponsoring organization as well. This includes their eligibility to obtain \$1,000,000 in liability coverage for sanctioned competitions.

## **CONTINUED SUPPORT**

Promotion is an ongoing effort that helps guarantee the continued success of a roller figure skating program. Many operators find that one of the best methods of promoting their program is to let the session skaters come in while the roller figure skaters are still on the floor. Seeing other youth have fun is a sure way to spark the interest of more than a few session skaters.

Some operators generate interest in their competitive program by making videos of their roller figure skating club in action. By playing the tape during sessions, they can make a direct pitch to the club members' peers.

If there are other roller figure skating clubs in the area, try to establish regular exhibitions. The exhibitions could be hosted on a rotating basis, with each operator taking turns at promoting and facilitating the event. The public could be invited to these exhibitions as a way of introducing them to the fun of artistic skating.

Camaraderie is another important aspect of a program's success. Skaters often join a club simply because their friends are doing it, or for some other social need. Encourage roller figure skaters to bring in their friends. Even offer discounts to new class members who are brought in by a club member. The result is a solid foundation that can expand a competitive program. Remember, greater numbers equals greater profits.

Selling the program to other organizations is also a way to increase a program's exposure, while also giving the rink a broader base for producing income. Potential markets include schools, the YMCA and YWCA, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H, other youth groups, churches, and the local parks and recreation department.

## **STAYING MOTIVATED**

Keeping roller figure skaters excited about their sport is one of the best ways to ensure the club will continue to grow and develop.

Getting involved in local, state, regional, and national championships are one way of keeping the club member's interest level. People like to win, they want to test their skills against other skaters, and, if provided the support and opportunity, they'll do their best to put their club on the top.

Also, recognize the accomplishments of the club's members by placing their pictures and/or medals at a prominent location in the facility. Not only will this encourage existing club members, but it will go a long way towards attracting the attention of session skaters.

The benefits to the rink operator include a positive attitude that is sure to attract others to the rink. Even session skaters begin to emulate their competitive peers, a group made confident by their comparatively advanced skating skills. And, as mentioned earlier, the session skaters often begin buying the same type of equipment, enhancing the skate shop's business.

Once the skaters begin competing, keeping the local media apprised of their accomplishments can be a morale booster. What better way to stroke a skater's ego than to have their name, and possibly a picture, placed in the local newspaper? That also translates into free advertising for the club and the rink. However, space or time is a premium for electronic and print media, so make sure that the results are clear and accurate when they are called in. Better yet, hand deliver the results, or send an email with a write-up that the print media can place directly in the newspaper. This works extremely well.

Depending on the size of your club, consider having club shirts or even club uniforms. The more advertising you put out there, in any form, the better chance you have of increasing your club's size, as well as the rink's business.

## PEOPLE SKILLS REQUIRED

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### **VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

Although rink operators may initially use their own staff in order to get their program up and running, they invariably turn to volunteers wherever and whenever they are available in order to maintain the program. Volunteers perform a variety of tasks associated with a competitive club. This could include participation in judging, tabulation, fundraising, and registration.

Parents may be the best bet for a ready supply of dedicated volunteers. They already have a stake in at least one of the club members, and they can be counted on taking a serious approach when it comes to important concerns like safety. As they see how the program is benefiting their child, their own level of commitment will increase. Soon, they'll want to take a more active role in the program in order to further help their child. As suggested earlier, a request for volunteers could be placed directly on the skater's registration form. Be sure to stress that volunteers need not know how to skate.

Many operators have, however, found a ready supply of volunteers and coaches right in the ranks of already existing programs. Former and current competitors, whether roller figure, speed, or hockey can also volunteer their experience in a beginning program. If the numbers allow for it, give volunteers only one responsibility. By giving one person one job, and only that job, they will do their absolute best to do that job well. Not only does this make it easier to manage volunteers, but also by stressing the importance of their responsibilities, they will feel a greater sense of fulfillment, increasing the chances of their continued involvement.

Keeping volunteers is another matter. Treat them right and make them feel that their contributions are both important and appreciated and the rink can benefit from their efforts for as long as they are needed. This sometimes includes giving them reductions in admissions, club fees, or discounts on equipment purchases. Even just offering a drink from the snack bar can go a long way. Volunteers, who quickly understand that having more people involved spreads the load, will soon become a program's best recruiters for additional help.

## **PARENTS**

Parental support goes beyond looking for volunteers. Parents also provide the emotional and financial support that is essential in the continued success of any competitive program that involves youth. This is especially true with younger children - it's the parents who pay for the entry fees, travel, costumes, and equipment. Leave the parents out of the picture and they'll be the first to take their child out of the rink.

Parents are more likely to support a program if they are kept informed of their child's progress. Let them know how their child is doing and offer helpful remarks or suggestions on how the child can improve his or her performance. By maintaining a one-on-one approach and making the parents feel that they and their children are important, you'll be able to count on their continued support. If these aspects are handled properly, the parent will encourage their child to continue in the competitive program.

Another successful method used to retain parental support is a booster club. Booster clubs not only keep parents active in their child's sport, but they often provide a social climate that actually encourages the parents' continued involvement. Through regular meetings, booster club members can help plan and host competitions, recruit additional volunteers, and even develop ways to raise funds for upcoming events. The members can also learn more about the sport. This is a great opportunity for the rink operator or coach to "educate" the parents on the importance of proper equipment and the maintenance of it, continued practices, and even private instruction.

Regular mailings or handouts to the parents can also help assure their continued support. Some operators even design monthly newsletters which promote rink programs, announce scheduled practices, list upcoming competitions, and highlight the club's accomplishments (including the parents). To produce the newsletter, it might even be possible to use the creative talents represented by some members of the booster club.

Another important means of retaining parental support is to provide an atmosphere of goodwill. Some recommendations include:

- Keep lessons affordable
- Provide good service
- Avoid favoritism

- Maintain a personal, one-on-one approach
- Show professionalism

If the parents see that their children are safe and that the rink's operator and management staff are concerned about their individual concerns and growth, they'll continue to provide the financial and emotional support their children will need to stay active in the program.

## **MUTUAL RESPECT**

From an operator's perspective, it's important to understand that practice times should be scheduled as consistently as possible. Operators and managers don't like late or absent employees, or suppliers that can't meet the agreed upon shipping date. Unless they have unlimited patience and resources, they'll probably find another employee or supplier.

The same holds true in the relationship with the club members - they expect and deserve consistency in the announced practice times. If they are told up front that private parties take precedence, then they will fully understand how practice will work within the rink. Make an effort to establish some set practice times and, if it must be canceled, try and reschedule it at a time that is convenient for the club's members.

On the other hand, it's also important for the coaches and skaters to understand the needs of the host. The rink is in the business of making money, which often means that birthday parties or other special events may be scheduled on top of less profitable competitive practice times.

An adversarial relationship will quickly spell doom for the club - after all, the rink operator will eventually "win." But a discontinued club also means the end to the benefits enjoyed by the rink operator, a clear "lose-lose" situation.

By maintaining cordial communications between both groups, misunderstandings can be quickly and painlessly resolved. The result will be a fun and profitable artistic club.

**"I've always seen the Olympics as a place where you could act out your differences on the athletic field with a sense of sportsmanship and fairness and mutual respect." - Andrew Young-  
Mayor of Atlanta (1982-1990)  
US Ambassador to the UN (1977-1979)**

# TEAM EFFORT

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## CLUBS

In order to give skaters the best opportunities for participation in roller figure skating competition at the skate center and with other clubs, plan on obtaining an official USARS club charter as soon as your club is organized. It is USARS that gives clubs written, official permission to compete with other clubs and protects skaters from unsafe competition. In addition, USARS conducts regional and national championships, selects teams to represent the United States in international competitions, and provides credentials and testing for coaches and officials.

The club charter requires a minimum of two card-carrying officers (five members are required to vote at the league and regional level). Contact USARS for the current fee for a club charter.

Skaters must also be registered with USARS in order to participate in any sanctioned meet and regional, national or international championships. Within the region, inter-club and invitational meets can be organized, even at the league level. The local competitions culminate in a regional championship each year, from which skaters' progress to the national level. The rink may make a bid to host the regional championships, providing they meet the minimum size requirements.

## LEAGUES

Leagues are subdivisions of state and regional associations and may be formed only for the purpose of creating or promoting inter-club competitions between league members. Contact the USARS National Office or refer to the [Figure Skating Rule Book](#) for specific guidelines on forming a league.

## COMPETITIVE SEASON

The competitive season for roller figure skating runs from September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>. USARS membership card affiliates the constituent via the calendar year. A skater's age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of that season is his or her competitive age.

## SANCTIONS

In order to hold an official meet with clubs outside of their host facility, the club will need formal written permission from USARS, or, in other words, a "sanction." When USARS issues this permission, it means the competition should be conducted fairly, safely, and in compliance with the rules of the sport. For their own protection, skaters should never compete in meets that are not sanctioned by USA Roller Sports. Specific guidelines concerning sanctions are outlined in the [USARS General Rule Book](#).

## COMPETITIVE DIVISIONS

Roller figure skating is broken up into many divisions by age and, sometimes, by ability. There are also different levels within some of the age groups, thereby creating a niche for everyone. Level A is for the skater that has been skating for a while; Level B is for a skater who has probably been in the sport for a few years; and Level C is for the beginning skater. Anyone can participate on a particular level, but once having placed 1-2-3 in a particular discipline at the National Championships, the skater cannot opt to move down a level in the future. Since roller figure skating doesn't demand lightning speed or killer competitive instincts, it will attract anyone who just plain likes to skate.

## REGIONAL EXPERTS TO THE RESCUE

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Each chartered roller figure club becomes part of one of the nine USARS Regional Associations. Each club has a vote (see Figure Skating Rule Book for stipulations regarding voting) in USARS regional concerns, and club members have a direct, individual voice in discussions about competitive skating through their regional association. The USARS Regional Association approves the officials chosen for the regional championships and accepts bids for those facilities wishing to host this prestigious competition.

It is within the region that a club sets up a schedule of inter-club and invitational meets during the competitive season, and, through regional contacts, it's also possible to become part of a league of teams who host regular competitions. Many of the regions also offer the opportunity for additional recognition through awards banquets held at different times of the year.

The USARS National Office would be happy to provide you with a list of Regional Association officers and Roller Figure League presidents in your area.

### ROLLER FIGURE COMPETITION REGIONS

Northwest - Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington

Southwest - Arizona, California, Nevada

North Central - Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wyoming

South Central - Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Texas

Great Lakes - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin

Southern - Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee

Southeast - Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C., West Virginia

Eastern - Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania

Northeast - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

# PROFESSIONAL COACHES

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In time, the growth of the rink's roller figure skating program will make it advisable to hire a professional coach to manage the classes and club's activities. The coach selected for the position should have experience and motivation to develop a class and competitive program that will fulfill the operator's personal and business objectives.

Unlike sports where winners cross the finish line first or score the most goals, roller figure skating is judged on precision and technique in the simplest movements, as well as the more complex items, such as jumps, turns, and spins. These are skills that can be safely mastered only under the watchful eye of a USARS certified experienced skating coach.

## SERVICES RENDERED

A roller figure skating coach's primary responsibility is often taking charge of the rink's lesson program - whether it be with small children first learning to skate, or older adults who have rediscovered the fun and health benefits of roller skating. This could include using the USARS Future Star Program or the RSA Achievement Test Program.

Coaches also manage the rink's roller figure skating club, providing guidance that constantly challenges and maintains the members' interest. Their responsibilities also include finding new students, a task which might require the coach to skate during public sessions to promote the rink's club and classes. The coach should also help in supporting the rink's pro shop by encouraging the skaters to purchase quality equipment at the rink. Private lessons are another level of service coaches can provide. This will be discussed further in a moment.

Because of the wide range of skills required to run a program that appeals to skaters of all ages and interest levels, rink operators often find it helpful to hire several part-time coaches. Not only does this offer more diversity to the customers, but by sharing the load, coaches are encouraged to develop their own expertise, giving the rink more depth to its services.

No matter how many coaches a rink may utilize, usually one is selected to take charge of the daily responsibilities inherent in the club's management. This person relieves the operator of many tasks associated with having a club and running the practices. The coach's responsibilities in managing the club could include handling the paperwork, scheduling and promoting classes, and reporting any problems to the operator or management.

## **THE “PERFECT” MATCH**

Because a professional coach can help shape the success of a roller figure skating program, it is important to take the selection process seriously.

Finding a professional coach may initially seem like an ominous task, but it doesn't have to be if the right steps are taken. Some operators have been successful in their search by attending competitive roller figure skating competitions, where they get to know some of the working professionals in the field. Regional and national competitions are attended by coaches who have proven that they have what it takes to lead a successful program, so operators should take the time to ask them questions and observe their techniques. Upon doing so, a list of qualities will soon develop that can help define the type of person needed to fill the coaching position. Word-of-mouth or discussions with regional representatives can sometimes be the best way to locate a coach. Select the coaches wisely. With everything else going on in a rink's operation, the last thing an operator needs is to be tasked with the personal supervision of every aspect of the rink's classes and club activities. This fact makes it advisable to select coaches who can be trusted in club-related aspects of the rink's operation. An operator should be able to hand over the keys to the facility and not agonize over the decision. Sometimes a brief time of watching the coach at work is advisable prior to giving them the keys to the facility.

While interviewing applicants, ask for references, and always check with previous employers or previous coaches. In some cases, they might be the best person to talk to about the person interested in coaching in your facility. Look for the following qualities in the coach: responsibility, loyalty, technical competence, and the ability to work well with people of all ages. Also, draw up a written agreement before hiring a coach that details what duties the coach is expected to perform in exchange for pay and rink time. A written agreement in the beginning may prevent disputes later.

## **MANAGING SUCCESS**

The financial arrangement between the rink and the coaches is subject to negotiation. Some operators offer a commission on pro shop sales, a portion of the class money, and part of the lesson fees. In some instances, coaches will pay a rental fee for the use of the rink and then keep the lesson fees. Still other coaches may teach the classes for no fee and in return be allowed to teach private lessons in the rink for their personal profit. Be fair in your negotiations and quality people will be attracted to the rink. The result can be a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

However, coaches need to understand that the rink is a business and that they must take the same approach. Many operators require their coaches to attend sessions to promote both the operation's classes and their individual private lessons. It is also customary for an operator to let the coaches handle class sign ups, mail outs, and other publicity related tasks.

Although a well-organized competitive club doesn't require a lot of supervision, it is still advisable for a rink's owner or management staff to monitor occasionally a club's activities and the services provided by the coaching staff. In so doing, not only are coaches subtly reminded of their obligation to the rink, but the club's members and parents will also feel at ease knowing that everyone is looking out for their best interest.

A coach's loyalty to an operation, however, can be just as important. They, too, need to believe that the operator is looking out for their best interest. Steps toward achieving this goal can include fair treatment, two-way communications, and a genuine sense that the operator understands the problems faced by coaches.

The success of the roller figure skating program can be measured in many ways. For a coach, this could include a measure of how many students they have, how many private lessons they give, or even how many students have been successful in competition. However, a similar approach would define a successful coach as the one whose students keep coming back.

## **FLEXIBILITY - THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

A successful program must attract all levels of skaters, from beginners to seasoned world competitors. By offering skaters the breadth of roller figure skating - dance, figures and free style - each skater is allowed to choose their own path to success. If the rink is prepared to offer support for their vision, it will be in a position to instill a sense of accomplishment that will keep them involved in the program for many years.

The rink's skating instructors must also share this understanding – the last thing a program needs is a coach trying to cultivate a few at the expense of many. Regardless of a coach's experience, they must understand the value of teaching to all levels of skaters. They should never believe they are “too good” to teach the beginning levels, for it's at this level that a foundation for a successful program is built. **It's also on this level that the future of roller skating depends.**

Skating coaches should be encouraged to work together. They'll benefit professionally from the shared experience, and the rink will benefit from having a greater range of services to offer in its skating program. The result will be an ability to attract a broader range of skaters to the program.

## PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are often introduced to skaters who have come up through various classes and reached a level where the guidance of a professional coach, in a one-on-one approach, can take them to new levels of success.

However, private lessons are not time-friendly. Although intermediate skaters begin by taking about 20 minutes for each private lesson, advanced skaters can demand several hours of lessons each week. Private lessons are usually scheduled during times not convenient for any other use. It is customary for some coaches to begin private lessons as early as 5 a.m. and as late as midnight. Managed correctly, rink down time can be practically non-existent.

Coaches are often allowed to keep whatever money they collect through private lessons. As a result, it then becomes their responsibility to promote and collect for their own lessons. However, skaters taking private lessons should be required to take regular classes, pay club dues, or pay practice fees in exchange for their use of the facility.

## USA ROLLERSPORTS COACHING PROGRAM

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Coaches are encouraged to join the USARS Coaching Program, a service that involves a variety of education and certification levels. The coach benefits from knowing that they have the resources to be the best in their field, while the rink operator benefits from having a fully qualified certified professional in charge of their competitive program.

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Benefits of the program include:

- Full USARS coach membership for designated disciplines
- Coaching recognition by a U.S. Olympic Committee NGB
- Technical manuals - free distribution of Figure Skating Rulebook and appropriate discipline teaching manuals
- Eligibility for commission as an official without additional fees
- Eligibility to be a club officer in any discipline
- Recognition pins for championship achievement
- Class VI Coach Membership in USARS, with all rights and privileges as enumerated in USARS By-Laws

- Accident/injury insurance as per USARS membership while actively coaching in a registered USARS club facility or a sanctioned competition
- Liability insurance for all USARS certified coaches while coaching in a registered USARS club facility, or in a sanctioned USARS competition
- Eligibility to be certified as a USARS-USOC coach, with traditional competitive floor privileges
- Seminars, training programs, and continuing coach education.

Contact the national office for additional information.

## **YOUR SHOPPING LIST**

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### **EQUIPMENT NEEDS**

**SKATES:** For the first few roller figure skating classes, rentals will be fine. Anticipate the skaters' needs and stock the skate shop with some affordable "starter" skates and wheels. Use your coach as a guide for what might be needed.

**COSTUMES:** Decorated costumes are only required for sanctioned competitions. Several companies make practice outfits for both males and females. In addition, many parents sew and can make outfits for practice and competition.

**MUSIC:** The coach can obtain the organ music that is used for dance skating and can also use instrumental music to make routines for those skating Free Style and Creative Solo dance. All music is now on CD and available for download on the website. As technology develops, so will the needs of competitions. Coaches, as professions, must maintain currency within the sport's needs.

### **USA ROLLER SPORTS SUPPORT MATERIAL**

**Figure Skating Rule Book & Technical Manual:** This comprehensive rule book explains every aspect of competitive roller skating, making them indispensable for every roller skater competing in the United States. The rule book outlines the by-laws governing the Confederation, explains how to conduct competitive events, lays out disciplinary proceedings, gives information on competitive officials' commissions, and much more. The Technical Manual includes a glossary of terms and outlines the assessment criteria for officials.

**USARS Technical Manuals & Instructional DVD's:** Call USARS for a current listing of available educational material.

**Pins, Patches & Apparel:** Let everyone know that the club's members are competitive skaters by encouraging them to wear their disciplines pin or patch - figure, speed, or hockey. Each offers an attractive depiction of their favorite

discipline displayed in a three-color design. Also available is apparel that displays the USARS logo.

Web site: USA Roller Sports web site, [www.usarollersports.org](http://www.usarollersports.org) , features the very latest news and information regarding roller sports competitions, athletes, and more. From a calendar of events detailing competitions across the nation to dynamic first-hand coverage of international world championships, USA Roller Sports provides all the information you need right at your fingertips. The web site contains valuable resources to get your club rolling in the right direction. There are also links to each of the regional web sites as well as a contact list at USARS National Office if you are unable to locate the information you are looking for.

**BEST WISHES AND GOOD LUCK !!!**



# NOTES

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**CONTACT USA ROLLER SPORTS TODAY!**

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**Get Trained. Identify. Report #USARS #SafeSport**

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