



USSPEEDSKATING PRESS RELEASE

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US Speedskating Announces Talent Identification Program

New speed skating initiative is aimed at raising awareness and increasing the talent within the sport

KEARNS, Utah – US Speedskating (USS), in partnership with Under Armour, will launch a talent identification initiative called the U.S. Speedskating Talent Combine. The goal of this innovative initiative is to raise the awareness of speed skating and to increase the talent pool of elite athletes within the United States.

USS and Under Armour will host three Talent Combines during the 2016-17 speed skating season with the first taking place in Roseville, Minnesota on Dec. 3, followed by Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Jan. 21) and Salt Lake City, Utah (March 11). Each combine will evaluate participants in a variety of on-ice and off-ice tests that will measure power, stamina and speed. Following the completion of all combines, USS will offer top performers scholarships to speed skating development programs and equipment.

“We are very excited about this new developmental program for US Speedskating,” said USS Executive Director, **Ted Morris**. “US Speedskating has a long history of producing Olympic champions but we need to increase the talent pool to remain competitive with the rest of the world. This new initiative will showcase the sport to a variety of athletes who have the talent to succeed on the Olympic Stage and will help feed our development pipeline.”

In addition to the three Talent Combines, the initiative will include an opportunity to submit a video online, solicit votes via social media and earn an invite, with travel expenses included, to the final Talent Combine in Salt Lake City, Utah on March 11. All videos will be submitted through TalentCombine.org and will allow athletes who can't attend a combine the opportunity to participate.

“There are future Olympians and medal contenders out there and they just don't know it,” said **Chris Needham**, US Speedskating's Talent Identification Coordinator. “We are hoping that athletes will see their potential in the most successful U.S. Winter sport and take a chance at becoming part of Olympic history.”

The combines and social media campaign are open to athletes in the age range of 12-24 years old. For more information on the talent combines and the social media campaign, visit TalentCombine.org.

US Speedskating has produced 86 Olympic medals to date, more than any other U.S. winter sport, as well as several of the most memorable accomplishments in Winter Olympic history. Among them are the five gold medals won by 21-year old Eric Heiden at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics, Bonnie Blair - the most decorated female U.S. Winter Olympian (six medals) - and Apolo Anton Ohno - the most decorated U.S. Winter Olympian (eight medals).

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About US Speedskating

From Pond to Podium, we are US Speedskating. We grow and nurture a sport where all ages can experience the thrill of speed and the camaraderie of the skating community. US Speedskating is responsible for the development of speed skating from grassroots to the highest elite racing programs. US Speedskating is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and the International Skating Union as the governing body for the sport of speed skating in the United States. The Organization has won 86 Olympic medals to-date, making it one of the most successful sports in U.S. Olympic history. US Speedskating is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/usspeedskating), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/usspeedskating), on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/usspeedskating) and at www.usspeedskating.org.