



US SPEEDSKATING

Club Information Packet for the 2018 Olympics

INTRODUCTION

As our Olympic Teams make great strides towards their Olympic dreams and representing their country, we hope in turn your clubs see that same Olympic fire take hold in your current skaters and new skaters that come to you.

During each Olympic season, the sport of speed skating often sees a jump in numbers and interest, because it is when the sport is most in the public eye.

We want to provide our clubs with the best resources possible to prepare for these prospective skaters, as well as engage them to stay in the sport for many years to come.

In the following pages, you will find suggestions for how to take advantage of the publicity of the Olympics, before, during, and after the games, promotional tips for clubs to use, and information on the planned tour of elite skaters following the Games.

As always, US Speedskating staff is available to help answer any questions or work with you on anything that comes up that is specific to your club. Simply contact us at membership@usspeedskating.org or call (801) 417-5360 and we will put you in touch with whomever the best person might be to answer your questions.

We look forward to an exciting skating season, from the grassroots level to the elite, and are proud to have each and every one of you as a member of the US Speedskating family.

PREPARING FOR THE WINTER GAMES

Getting Your Club Ready

Do the groundwork to ensure your club is prepared for the Olympics. This needs to happen well before the Olympics air on TV and the phones start ringing. Areas to consider are: People, Place, Policies and Programs.

People: Be sure that you have adequate staff on hand for both on ice and also to handle inquiry calls/emails, all of whom are trained and ready to go well ahead of February 2018. Consider what your staffing needs will be and work backwards so you will have the time to find and train the right fit for your club. Make sure your current staff or volunteers are well trained and take advantage of the many resources that US Speedskating provides to educate your coaches.

Place: While your rink is usually well maintained is your equipment up-to-date, this is especially essential as many new families come through your doors. What is your process for meeting the new families, giving them a tour, getting waivers signed, trying on skates, making sure they have all the necessary equipment? Is there a place for families to watch? Is someone right there to explain what is going on with dryland or ice practice and to answer questions?

Policies: Now is the time to take a look at your registration policies, such as trial classes, make-up policies and sibling discounts. Also, if you plan to adjust your prices, you may want to consider doing so before the Olympics. Also don't forget about USS Dollar A Day memberships, so you are still covered by USS insurance. [Forms can be found here](#). Or contact USS if you'd prefer to use a sign up sheet and pay as one group.

Programs: With Olympic growth may come the need for different programming or age divisions. Maybe you have been teaching all levels together and now it is time to divide them by ability or age. You may want to offer a separate Try Speedskating session or have all new skaters in their own group and experienced skaters in their groups. Both can share ice time and it is nice for the new skaters to see the existing members skate.

Developing Your Marketing Strategy

The overall marketing objectives from the monthly tactics will help clubs do three specific things:

- 1) Raise awareness of and create excitement about the Olympic Games,
- 2) Bring in new athletes and return former skaters to their club and
- 3) Keep current skaters involved

In order for you to make the best use of the tactics shared, it is important that you spend some time thinking about the marketing strategy for your club. Because each club is different, think about the following items as they pertain to your club:

- 1) Who are your customers? What are their needs? How can your club best meet their needs?
- 2) What unique benefits does your club bring to your customers? Why should an individual choose your club over another?
- 3) What channels do you use to communicate with your customers (i.e. email, social media, snail mail, advertisements)?

- 4) Which areas/programs are your strengths and deserve your greatest focus?
- 5) Which areas/programs are your weaknesses? Can you make them strengths? Or are you better off not putting additional resources there? Should you let them go?
- 6) What do you want to focus on most to build your business as you head into the Olympic year?

Adapted and Modified [From USA Gymnastics – 2016 Rio Games](#)

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

Before the Olympics

- Reserve ice now for after the games to host “Try Speedskating” sessions at your local rink.
- Reserve additional ice for practices in February, March and into spring/summer.
- Research and list the media outlets in your area – TV, Newspapers, Radio and Social Media.
- Send a press release or note via the news outlet’s website that you are a local speed skating club and are willing to provide assistance with feature stories, such as having local news personalities give it a try or serve as technical experts for their station. Some stations like to do feature stories on the skates themselves, the skinsuits or will even give it a try themselves.
 - Build rapport with journalists **before** you need them
 - Carefully prepare your story/pitch
- Make sure your club information is up-to-date with USS. Must have the correct contact information and any other pertinent info. This will be used for the NBC Gold Map sports club finder. See page two.
- Do you have a website? If not, consider starting one. Wordpress makes it very easy and it can be a simple site – list info on your club, where you practice, what type of classes, when you offer trial skates and how to contact you for more information.
- If you do have a website, start planning how to change your home page to focus on new skaters looking for more information.
- Google your club. Does your club show up as one of the top results? If not, consider purchasing [AdWords](#) closer to the Games, so you will rise to the top.
- Do you have social channels already set up? Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube? You will also need a dedicated person to keep it active and populated with content. Don’t let your page get stale.
- Have a dedicated person to field all inquiries – phone and email. Use this time before the games to get that person knowledgeable and trained in general speed skating knowledge, knowledge about your club, about USS and how to get started in speed skating.
- Is there an Olympian attending the Games from your region? Be their biggest fans and rally for that skater. Dedicate a story or photos of that person on your site or social media.
- Is there a former Olympian living in your region? Reach out to them and see if they can help with the media features or if they would be willing to attend Try Speedskating sessions after the Games are over.
- Prepare your flyers and posters (USS has a nice shell to build upon).
- Be sure to order a video from USS that is customized for your club. Great to show on your site, social media or have playing if you have a booth or before your Try Speedskating session.

- Does your rink offer Learn to Skate lessons? Inquire about incorporating a Learn to Speedskate class for in the spring. Start preparing for this at least 6-9 months before the Games.
- Work with your rink to see if they would be willing to sponsor a Try Speedskating event after the Games. They may be able to provide free ice, if you will provide the instruction. Inquire about this 6-9 months before the Games.
- Partner with your rink's hockey and figure skating clubs to provide an overall Try Ice Sports event. Inquire about this 6-9 months before the Games.
- Look into offering a discounted session for Speed Skating through Groupon or Living Social. Make sure the coupon is offered during and after the Games.
- Create a flyer about your club and/or ask local churches, schools if you can include your club's information in their e-newsletters come February/March.
- Check with your school to see if they have a spring carnival or event that you could set up a booth at to hand out information. Sometimes grocery stores will allow you to set up a booth while volunteers bag groceries. Start seeking out these opportunities 6-9 months prior to the Games.
- Partner with your local sports store, business sponsor or skate shop and determine the details of how to hold a raffle at these locations for free registrations.
- Work with US Speedskating to host a Skate PE program in your region shortly after the Games. Start the planning for this at least nine months prior to the Games.

During the Olympics

- Be available to your local media outlets to provide expert info or to provide a local angle.
- Keep your social channels lively by sharing or re-tweeting the US Speedskating posts along with your own content.
- Alert your social audience about TV air times for speed skating events in your time zone. What times and what channel.
- During your practices, make sure that you have someone in the stands circulating to anyone watching to provide information on speed skating and how to give it a try.
- Give discounts for registration during the Games.
- Order t-shirts and gear with your club's name on it and encourage your skaters to wear during and after the Games.
- Make sure your skaters know where to tell friends or others who inquire about your club to go to get more information.
- Host viewing parties of the races at local restaurants. Take over a sports restaurant, wear your gear and cheer Team USA on as a group.

After the Olympics

- Make sure your dedicated person is ready to field all inquiries – phone and email. This is their time to shine.
- Post info on your Try Events and Learn to Speedskate skate school on your site and social channels.
- Every connection made should produce contact information for potential new skaters.
- After the Games, can local clubs feature the Olympians? What about former Olympians?
- Contact your media sources again, with a summary of speed skating results and how others can try it.
- Keep up the promotion of your club and speed skating overall. Help a local project, clean up a park, have your team volunteer in an old-folks home, collect money for a good cause or anything that improves your local environment. Not only will that win you the direct support of people who live close by, it also has a good chance to land you coverage in the media. Plus, images and news from community outreach events are prime fodder for any digital outlet!
Pro tip: When you do engage in such activities, make sure to wear your team gear or whatever you have that makes you recognizable as a team and brand.
- Hold an equipment swap or sale during Try Speedskating sessions, so new skaters can buy equipment.
- Attend public open skating sessions with speed skates and wear gear to advertise. Have materials ready to distribute for inquiries.

YOUR CLUB REPRESENTATIVE – BE SURE TO HAVE THE RIGHT ‘FACE’ OF YOUR CLUB

Who in your club is your team ambassador? Who is the face of the team? Who is that volunteer who loves to be in the stands, approach bystanders and recruit them into the sport? They can answer any question about your club, the sport and are good at recruiting or at least planting the seed.

Personal selling involves any person-to-person interaction in which a club representative has the chance to persuade a person to join the club. A coach may see a quality player and approach that player’s parents, or a club representative may respond to an inquiry from someone looking for the right athletic environment for her daughter.

It is imperative that you assign a person or a team of people to represent your club. This is usually best served by a parent, board member or volunteer. Coaches DO NOT always make a good representative. They are usually busy conducting the business of running the practices and will not have time to ‘sell’ prospective skaters into joining the club.

The traits you are looking for in a club spokesperson for the club are:

- ✓ Has a special affinity to the organization because of past benefit, family connection, or other personal allegiance
- ✓ Often uses personal pronouns to talk about organization (me, we, us, our)
- ✓ Is knowledgeable about overall organization and its future direction
- ✓ Generally is a strong advocate for the club and sport – very positive and upbeat
- ✓ Has strong interpersonal and organizational skills and genuinely likes people
- ✓ Continuity of leadership and institutional history helpful

During this Olympic time, your club representatives should be ready to shine. They should know the history of your club, about the sport, about equipment, about coaching philosophy. This may require that you have a sit down with your ambassador team to make sure they understand the history, current plans, pricing model, how to start, where to get equipment and more.

Also be sure to give them the tools they need to be successful. Review prices, mission and values with them. Share sign up sheets and pricing structure so they can talk through it with prospective skaters. Know when skaters are ready for racing and can set expectations for the skater and the new family.

Ways to utilize your club ambassadors

- ✓ They should be in the stands and around the doors to your rink. Never hesitating to strike up a conversation with a hockey player and his dad who just stopped by to take a look.
- ✓ Be the person who answers the inquiry calls and answers the emails from people curious about giving speed skating a try.
- ✓ Invite a prospective skater to come watch a practice session or race. The ambassador should be there to answer any questions and let them know what is going on.

Promotional Tips for USS Clubs

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

DO'S

- ✓ A social media strategy starts with deciding what network fits your audience best. Facebook is all about creating a community while Twitter is about sharing short news messages and starting or joining a conversation via hashtags. Instagram is all about visual storytelling and providing a peek for your audience into the actions behind the words.
- ✓ Be visual on all social media channels. These resources are there, use them!
- ✓ Post early morning or evening
- ✓ Get your skaters involved! Have them follow the club accounts, interact with them on these platforms, and have skater take-overs where one of them controls an account for the day.
- ✓ Make it fun! Ask questions, encourage opinions and feedback, create connections with people interested in the club.
- ✓ Remember to make any of your social media accounts public. Setting these to private defeats the purpose of even having them. If you would like to have a private way for your club to communicate on social media, we recommend create a separate private page.
- ✓ Get involved with hashtags and create your own to be used by your skaters. Hashtags create conversations and allow people to join in. These are used across all social media platforms.

SPECIFIC DO'S

- ✓ Facebook allows you to upload pictures videos, and messages. Make use of all of these features.
- ✓ Anything that has been posted can be shared. This is what makes this platform the best place to create a social community for your club.
- ✓ On Twitter, videos and photos make tweets more catchy. Twitter is very fast paced so using these forms of media to catch your audience's attention is necessary.
- ✓ The best photos you feel represent your club should be on Instagram. You can add a catchy caption, use an interesting filter, but these images will represent you the most on this platform.

DONT'S

- ✗ Don't neglect your networks. If you're not going to use it, you might as well not have it at all.
- ✗ Sound like you are selling. Promote the club and the activities being done, but don't sound like a salesperson.
- ✗ Not using images. Our sport is fun and crazy and colorful! Show that off!
- ✗ Hiding from negative comments. When you respond, it demonstrates an awareness of the problem/concerns and shows that you are attempting to resolve the situation.
- ✗ Leave questions or comments unattended. People posted those for a reason and they are trying to interact with your club. Respond and encourage further communications with a broader audience.

CLUB ADVERTISING MATERIALS AND PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS

Club Advertising Materials

- US Speedskating has a range of club advertising material templates available on the website here: <http://www.teamusa.org/US-Speedskating/Members-and-Clubs/Clubs/Marketing-Your-Club>.
- Simply fill in your club's information in the applicable spots, take to your local print shop, and distribute as you wish.
- There are also informative mini handbooks available at this link to bolster interest in the sport of speed skating and perhaps answer any basic questions you are asked.
 - "About Speedskating" explains the two different types of speed skating (Short Track and Long Track), necessary equipment, safety equipment that is used within the sport and how to take care of it, and provides an overview of the programs available at the Utah Olympic Oval for reference.
 - "Learn to Speedskate" outlines the basic techniques as a skater starts their journey into the sport with tips and tricks for those beginning positions. It also provides further guidance on programs to teach and train athletes as they pursue their speed skating goals.
- On the next page, a media advisory template has been included for convenience.

Promotional Videos

- US Speedskating has a long and short version of a club promotional video that we are happy to provide to clubs upon request.
- We will also personalize these videos for your club's use, you will just need to tell us the name of the contact person, the email address to be used, and the website of the club. This information will be put at the end of the videos.
- Please send the above information with a personalization request, or a request for the basic videos, to membership@usspeedskating.org. Once we have received the request for the basic videos, or the personalization of the videos has been completed, we will send you a Dropbox link to download these from and they can be used however the club sees fit.



USSPEEDSKATING MEDIA ADVISORY

5662 South Cougar Lane | Kearns UT 84118

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Change contact info) **Contact:** Matt Whewell (mwhewell@usspeedskating.org)
Friday, September 8, 2017 (Change the date) (If multiple contacts add one here)

*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

US Speedskating To Hold Open Training Practice September 15 At Pettit National Ice Center (Ex...XXX Club to host Olympic Day)

WHO: The US Speedskating National Training Program, Olympians and other top U.S. speed skaters (full list of athletes below).

WHAT: Eighteen of the country's top long track speed skaters are in Milwaukee training as they prepare for World Cup Qualifications (Oct. 11-15 in Salt Lake City) and the start of the Olympic racing season. The skaters are wrapping up an intense two-week sea level training camp at the site of the 2018 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Speedskating.

WHEN: Friday, September 15 (local times)
9-11 a.m. – B-Roll/Photo opportunity as Team USA trains on ice
11 a.m.-12 p.m. – Interviews with Team USA skaters and coaches

WHERE: Pettit National Ice Center
500 South 84th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53214

ATHLETES: (This section is not necessary unless an Olympian is appearing or a big name)

Petra Acker (Clifton Park, N.Y.)
KC Boutiette (Tacoma, Wash.)
Brittany Bowe (Ocala, Fla.)
Jonathan Garcia (Houston, Texas)
Kimani Griffin (Winston-Salem, N.C.)
Kelly Gunther (Clinton Township, Mich.)
Brian Hansen (Glenview, Ill.)
Emery Lehman (Chicago, Ill.)
Mia Manganello (Crestview, Fla.)

Joey Mantia (Ocala, Fla.)
Ian Quinn (St. Louis, Mo.)
Carlijn Schoutens (Heemstede, Netherlands)
Paige Schwartzburg (Ocala, Fla.)
Jeffrey Swider-Peltz (Chicago, Ill.)
Nancy Swider-Peltz, Jr. (Chicago, Ill.)
Jerica Tandiman (Kearns, Utah)
Sugar Todd (Omaha, Neb.)
Mitch Whitmore (Waukesha, Wisc.)

About US Speedskating (Change to your club information)

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](#), [Instagram](#), on [Facebook](#) and at www.usspeedskating.org.

(For any questions please contact Austin Controulis at acontroulis@usspeedskating.org)

USS CLUB APPAREL PROGRAM



USSPEEDSKATING



Use your club members to broaden your clubs visibility and brand in your community and beyond!

The goal of this program is to support clubs in obtaining high quality, uniform team apparel through UnderArmour, a USS Sponsor, for the purpose of representing their clubs at their home rinks, towns and any places you go.

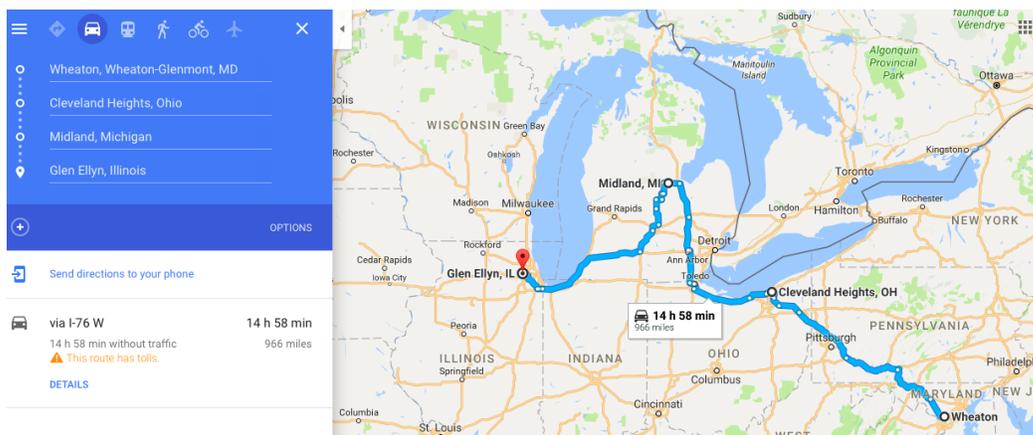
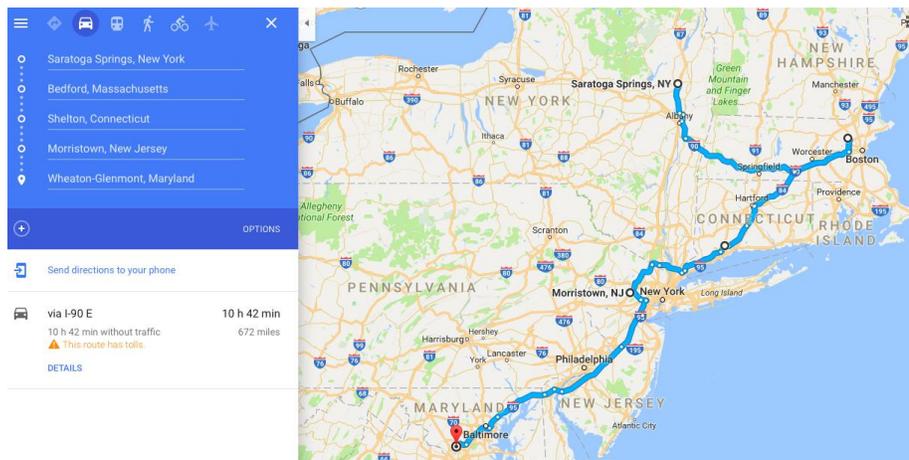
- The minimum order on quantities per item is five, with a total order minimum of ten (for example, five t-shirts and five hats).
- 50% discount on all apparel used for speed skating (ice training, dryland training, team uniforms, warm-ups, etc.) available on the UnderArmour website. Order subject to verification of available inventory.
- Embroidery and/or screen print of logos is handled by USS staff and its vendors.
- USS shield logo is mandatory on all apparel purchased through the Club Apparel Program (this excludes shoes, socks, gloves, hats, headbands). All other logos are optional (Club logo, Club sponsor etc.)
- Choice of embroidery versus screen print is dependent upon the apparel material and will be determined by the print/embroidery company to guarantee best results and best look.
- Each embellishment is a flat fee of \$10 PER spot. For example, USS shield, your club logo, and a club sponsor; the total cost for those additions would be \$30.
- Club and sponsor logos are welcomed! A one time fee of \$150 will be applied to digitize new logos
- Typical turnaround time is 2-4 weeks but this timeframe is dependent on scope of work, quantities, and the production shop schedule
- The club will be invoiced for the cost of the apparel, shipping, and embellishment upon completion of all work.

USS Tour of Olympians

After input from participating clubs during the 2017 USS Congress in Baltimore the idea to conduct a “Tour of Champions” was introduced. The tour will consist of two USS athletes (preferably current Olympians) and two staff members. The tour will start the weekend of Age Group Nationals in Saratoga Springs (March 24th) and will end April 11th. On the way we will visit clubs along a designated tour route, shown below. The clubs that this tour intends to visit are as follows: Saratoga Springs, Bay State, Connecticut Speedskating, Garden State, Flushing Meadows, Potomac/UCB/Dominion, Cleveland Heights, Midland Speedskating, Glen Ellyn Speedskating, Wisconsin Speedskating, Cornerstone Speedskating, Madison Speedskating, Champaign, St. Louis.

As it is a big tour in a short time we will need ‘boots on the ground’ assistance to make each visit a success. A detailed email will go out to the respective club presidents/primary contacts with a list of what we can offer and where the local clubs will need to step up and take charge.

The goal is to promote speed skating and leverage the short window of popularity our sport gains during the Olympic Games and TV coverage to help recruit new members and spark interest in local areas.



The image shows a navigation application interface. On the left, a blue sidebar contains a list of destinations: Glen Ellyn, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Green Bay, Wisconsin; Madison, Wisconsin; Champaign, Illinois; and St. Louis, Missouri. Below the list is an 'OPTIONS' button and a 'Send directions to your phone' button. The main area displays a map with a blue route line connecting St. Louis, Missouri to Glen Ellyn, Illinois. A summary box on the map indicates the route is 'via I-94 W', takes '12 h 16 min', and is '789 miles' long. A warning icon and text state 'This route has tolls.' Below the summary is a 'DETAILS' link. The map shows major cities in the Midwest, including St. Louis, MO, Kansas City, MO, Chicago, IL, and Milwaukee, WI.

Options:

- Glen Ellyn, Illinois
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Green Bay, Wisconsin
- Madison, Wisconsin
- Champaign, Illinois
- St. Louis, Missouri

Send directions to your phone

via I-94 W 12 h 16 min 789 miles

12 h 16 min
789 miles

This route has tolls.

DETAILS