



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, Places, Policies and Programs.

People: Be sure that you have adequate staff on hand for both on ice and 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 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 member's 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

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?



US SPEEDSKATING

- 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](#)



US SPEEDSKATING

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).



US SPEEDSKATING

- 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 Speed Skate 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.