

Welcome to the World of Figure Skating Competitions!

How to Enter a Competition

Each competition has an entry form that will ask you to fill out basic personal information, your skater's Skate Canada registration number and indicate which category your skater will be competing in. Your coach will tell you what category to register for.

Go to the club bulletin board and look for the **competition announcement**. Find out where and when the competition is. Submit the completed entry form

Once the competition registrar receives all the entries, skaters in each level are divided into **groups**. Closer to the date of the competition you will receive information listing: **the name of event and group number** that your skater is competing in. Pay careful attention to the group number as not all groups may be run together on the same day. If a schedule is not included, there will be one posted at the arena on the bulletin board. **Inform your coach of the group that your skater is in** so they can plan their schedule accordingly.

Now that you have entered the competition, it is time to answer that all-important question:

What to Wear??

When in doubt, the rule of thumb for competition wear is Keep it Simple!

Your coach will probably have some suggestions, but if they are not too particular or forthcoming, go by these guidelines:

Consider the music your child is skating to. A bright pink dress to "Green sleeves" just seems a bit odd and something with light puffy sleeves just does not jive with techno.

Look at ready-made dresses for ideas and ask other parents if they have any suggestions. There is usually someone in the stands with some sewing savvy that has an eye for dress design.

Consider your child's colouring and what looks good on the ice. Stronger colours are always a safe bet. Softer colours can work well, although pale peachy skin tones, greys and browns generally look dead on the ice.

Remember that they have to jump and spin in this outfit. While puffy sleeves and multi-layered skirts can look pretty, consider the weight. Heavy skirts can take on a life of their own in a spin or jump and there is nothing worse than sleeves that obscure vision when the skater raises their arms by their head! For boys, make sure the crotch does not sit too low once they have hooked the pant hems under the skates. These pants look funny and feel even stranger to skate in. (Want to know a sewing trick popular in Montreal? If you are really having a sagging crotch problem, half way down the center back seam attach an elastic that goes down to the crotch seam. Guaranteed to keep things pulled up although no word on how comfortable this solution is to the wearer!)

The weight and amount of embellishments should not exceed the weight of the dress or the skater. Outfits that "drip" with beads, rhinestones, and sequins usually overpower the skater. Sometimes a simple piece of sparkly braid around the neck, or cuffs, for example, is all they need. Just enough to make it special

Test Drive the Outfit. Have your skater try out the dress or outfit on a practice session prior to the competition to ensure that everything looks and works the way it should.

Ensure that if sheer fabric is used that it covers the body during all movements. No one wants to expose themselves so ensure that any sheer fabric stays where it should during all stretching movements like spirals and layback spins.

Do not skimp on the pant area of a dress. While higher cut legs are often more, attractive they usually do not stay in place while skating and the dress does not cover the bum. Obviously that is unattractive to view and uncomfortable to wear. **Sewing Tip:** When applying elastic to the leg opening, apply it 1:1 over the front section and then stretch it to fit over the bum section.

Consider the Cost: There is a dress for every budget out there particularly at the upper end. If you sew, you are definitely at an advantage. Absorbing the labour costs, particularly when it comes to adding sparkle, can save you money. To purchase a ready-made dress, you are probably looking in the neighborhood of \$80 and up. Sometimes, it is advantageous to purchase a basic ready-made dress and add the sparkle yourself. Your coach and other parents can also recommend sewers in and out of the club to you. Just remember that like skates and the jeans you bought your skater in September, they will grow out of the competition dress soon enough and they won't get nearly the wear out of the dress as they do the jeans. Many competition dresses (if not too tight) are often retired to practice dresses when their day is done.

Ensure that underpants are not visible. There is nothing worse than a lovely dress that has flowered underpants sticking out underneath.

Rule of Thumb: If you cannot guarantee that underpants will not show — do not wear them at all.

Hair & Makeup. While taking your skater to the hairdresser for an elaborate “up do” prior to their first competition may seem like a great idea (and it sometimes looks lovely), remember that like the dress, they have to jump and spin with whatever is on their head. **However the hair is done, it must be well secured to ensure it will not fall out half way through the program...** While pulling only half the hair back may look great with the dress, the back (if long) still tends to flop about and look messy while they skate. Buns, French Braids and even a neat and tidy ponytail are always a good bet. Makeup wise, do not overpower young skaters. A bit of colour is all they need and do not push the issue if they do not want it.

Competition Day — the Checklist

Skates (laugh, but you'd be surprised what is forgotten)

Extra Laces (you never know when a break will happen)

Extra Pair of Tights

Skate Guards

Duct tape (great for covering blisters – tape over tights)

Extra Tape or CD of Program (the only tape eaten that day will be yours)

The Outfit (laugh again, but we have stories...and bring an extra one)

Practice Dress

Club Jacket or sweater and gloves to wear during warm-up.

Blanket (some arenas are cold and a blanket is necessary in the stands and while waiting)

Toiletries (hairspray, band-aids, make up etc.)

Camera and/or Video Camera

Extra Snacks (oranges, bananas, granola bars, water bottles etc.)

Map to Arena (know the route and alternatives to take to get there).

Extra Change (for concessions after competing)

If you forget something, there are usually skate shop vendors on site that can help you out with things like guards and laces. However, depending on when your skater is scheduled to skate, they may not be open.

Ensure that you are at the Arena at LEAST one hour prior to the scheduled start of your event. Competitions may run ahead of the scheduled time by up to 30 minutes and it is your responsibility to ensure that you are there on time. Use the road reports on the radio to help you avoid traffic problems and allow plenty of time if you are traveling during rush hour and are unfamiliar with the route or how busy it is during peak travel times.

At the Competition

When you get to the arena, look for signs indicating the skater's entrance and directing you to registration.

Register your skater

Submit your music to the registration desk. A volunteer will then provide your skater with a competition ribbon (if available) and any other goodies if they have them. They can also help give you an idea of whether the competition is running on schedule.

Locate the Starting Order for your Group. Skaters in a group are further divided into **flights**. There is a separate warm-up for each flight of skaters. Determine which flight your skater is in so that you can tell your coach and prepare your warm-up accordingly.

Locate your Coach. Your coach may be with other skaters that are competing before you. However, be assured they know you are coming and will be there to help you. You can help them out by taking time to start warming up and stretching.

Do a Proper Warm-up. Find a warm place to get your muscles moving and stretched out. Your coach will also help to ensure that you are warm and ready to go. They will also tell you when you should get your skates on and take you down to the dressing rooms.

Check in with the Ice Captain. The Ice Captain is the person who stands by the side of the ice making sure that the right skaters go on the ice at the right time. Periodically they will go down to the dressing room area to see that the next group of skaters is in attendance. Check to insure that the order of skate has not changed. They will know if the competition is running on time.

Did you know? All judges are volunteers too. They are not paid locally or internationally

When it is your turn to skate your program, go out and have a great time! Enjoy the moment and just give it your best effort.

Do not forget to smile (and a curtsy or bow at the end to the spectators and judges is always a great way to finish your program).

After You Have Skated

After your group has skated, the results will be posted. If you are not sure where they are posting results, (sometimes they are in the same place as the Starting Orders) ask the volunteer at the Registration Desk. If there are finals for your event, see if you have made the cut. If so, check to see when you are scheduled to skate again. There will be a notice above the results section indicating what the competition policy is. Usually medals and ribbons are presented about 30 minutes following the posting of results at the photographer's podium. Be sure to congratulate your fellow competitors on their efforts.

PARENTS REMEMBER THAT IT IS YOUR CHILD WHO SKATED – THEY CAN RETRIEVE THE RESULTS. When you stand by the results, it gives the message that the results are important to you. What is important is how your child feels about their skate, not how they placed. Did they reach their personal goals?

Do not leave personal items in the dressing room. If you are, dome skating take your skates to your vehicle.

Check out when your fellow club competitors are competing and cheer them on.

Before you leave the arena, **remember to pick up your tape from the registration desk!**

Always remember to have fun and enjoy the experience of competing. That is what it is all about. You are representing our club when you compete so be sure to show your fellow competitors what a great sportsman you are. It is OK to be disappointed if you do not skate the best you can. We all cannot be at our best 100% of the time. All anyone expects of you is that you *try*. No matter what result you receive, your club and your parents are proud of you for trying your best!