

North Country Skating Club



Skater & Parent Handbook



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Mission Statement

The mission of NCSC is to provide programs to encourage community-wide participation and achievement in the sport of figure skating.

This handbook will serve as a guide for parents and skaters to help them to understand the club, rules and expectations, the expected costs for the season, and important dates, and to help in the selection of equipment.

**PLEASE READ THROUGH THIS ENTIRE HANDBOOK WITH
YOUR SKATER CAREFULLY SO YOU WILL BOTH BE WELL
INFORMED.
PLEASE KEEP IT HANDY TO SERVE AS A REFERENCE IF
NEEDED.**

A Letter to the Parents & Skaters

We would like to welcome you to the North Country Skating Club (NCSC). Our members include skaters from nearby towns such as Champlain, Rouses Point, Mooers, Chazy, Beekmantown, and Alburgh.

We are a non-profit organization that is run by a board of volunteers. NCSC is a member of Learn to Skate (LTS) USA.

NCSC is composed of dedicated parents/guardians and volunteers, skaters, and experienced coaches - all of whom support a family-oriented environment and a strong fellowship within the club, as well as the surrounding community. NCSC is governed by a board with a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and board members. Elections are held at the end of each skating season. Board members serve on a 1-year term. The board establishes the basic policies and protocols of the club. These policies are updated as needed.

NCSC strives to meet the needs of each skater. NCSC provides a fun and safe experience while also promoting health and physical fitness. NCSC offers skating opportunities for all levels of figure skaters ages 3+ as well as coaches for private lessons, test sessions, and an annual ice show in March. The season will begin in October and will end the week after the Show in March. The final week of skating will take place after the show for testing purposes. Over the past 40+ years, NCSC has helped members of all ages and abilities in the surrounding community to develop their skills as figure Skaters.

NCSC club members must comply with the club by-laws, rules, and regulations.

Just as the staff, volunteers, and board of the NCSC will support all skaters, we ask that you as skaters and parents work to be supportive, positive members of this organization. We will be following the USFSA SafeSport procedures and handbook.

A NCSC member will have the ability to participate in club events throughout the year including off-season. All coaches utilized by club members on club ice must also be pre-approved by the NCSC board.

Club Management & Elections

Club Management:

The North Country Skating Club and as well as the NCSC Board Members are managed by official by-laws.

Elections:

Elections are held at the end of each skating season. Board members serve on a 1-year term from July 1st of that year through June 30th of the following year. Any parent of an NCSC skater may be elected to serve on the Board. Nominations for Board members are taken from all skating families. An email will be sent informing nominees and to ascertain if they will accept the nomination. All nominees who accept their nomination will have their names added to the ballot. The NCSC Skating families will each vote for seven Board Members (one vote per family). The top seven voted nominees will be the following year's Board of Directors. Board members are volunteers who donate many hours of time both on and off-season. Therefore, those who are unable to serve should give their support to those who do.

Please contact a Board Member for complaints/concerns so an open dialogue may take place and a successful resolution is attained.

Volunteering & Fundraising

Volunteer support is an essential part of our club. To help continue the success of the club, NCSC has instituted a minimum volunteering requirement from each family to ensure that this time is spread evenly amongst everyone. We ask that one parent/guardian of each family donate their time to:

- One of our two ice shows
- 2 events that NCSC hosts or participates in

Parent Meetings

The Board will host parent meetings as needed throughout the season to communicate important information. Parent meetings are also a time to address any concerns that have come up during the season. These are typically show-focused.

The NCSC Board can be reached by emailing northcountryskatingclub@gmail.com or by messaging our facebook page: North Country Skating Club

Types of Figure Skating

SNOW PLOW & BASIC SKILLS:

NCSC operates the Learn to Skate (LTS) program. The LTS program is designed to encourage ice skating at all levels and to keep each student excited about the sport from the time he/she begins lessons until goals are successfully achieved. The LTS program is a fun and effective way to learn the basic fundamentals of ice skating. As a skater advances through the LTS basic skills program and the skating maneuvers become more difficult, private lessons may be used to supplement the group lessons.

A skater usually begins lessons in group classes working on their Basic Skills. Basic Skills classes are a series of classes that are numbered levels 1-6. Each level has skills that are necessary to learn and master in order to “test out” or “pass” a particular level before moving to the next level in the series. The coaches will monitor the skaters periodically throughout the season prior to the test given by the head coach.

Skaters Under Age 6 will begin in Snow Plow Sam 1. If their birthday is prior to December 31st of that skating year they will begin as a Basic 1 skater. These levels have been determined by the LTS Program to ensure skater safety.

One of the first lessons your skater will learn is how to safely get up and fall down on their own. It may appear as if they are not being taught skills however, it is quite the opposite. This is how your new skater will learn proper control and balance which are key elements in successful gliding.

If you would like to learn more about the basic skills, visit the following Learn to Skate USA website: <https://learntoskateusa.com/>

PRE-FREE & FREESTYLE

Freeskate groups are what skaters participate in after they have completed all levels of Basic Skills. There is a transition level between Basic 6 and Freestyle 1, called Pre-Free. On this level, skaters will work on fundamental footwork needed to start jumps and more complicated spins. There are 6 Freestyle levels. Freestyle begins with the introduction of jumps and complicated spins.

Lesson Structure

Ice Times for the 2024-25 Season

This year we will be offering ice times on Mondays 5:30-8:15 and Fridays 5:30-7:50 from October to March. There will be a 15 minute break between second and third ice to resurface the ice and give our coaches a short break.

Private Lessons

A trained coach on a one-to-one basis teaches private lessons during private ice time OR when other times the ice is available during club time. Private coaching is provided by some NCSC coaches. The skater or their parent/guardian can hire a coach that is currently onstaff with The North Country Skating Club.

It is a skater's responsibility to set up private lessons. It is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Coaches will have separate ice time fees.

Testing Out of Levels

Throughout the season testing will be done periodically when the Coaches determine the skater is ready to be tested. Please do not ask to be tested.

In order to pass, each skater must master **ALL** the skills at their current level.

Your skater will be tested once they demonstrate mastering all skills to their coach. The head coach will then test your skater. Following testing, you will receive an email indicating whether your child will move to another level and if the ice time has changed, as well as who their new coach is. Your child's new group will start the next lesson. If your child needs additional work, your email will indicate what skills need improvement.

The testing process is designed to be stress-free for both skater and the parent. Many skills will be checked off as mastered while the skater is participating in their regular lesson and the testing coach observes such. Children tend to get nervous when pulled to "test" so we have altered the testing process to be more observation and less "test-like" than in prior years.

Some levels are very difficult to pass so your skater may stay in a level longer than they did in the past. This is normal so don't be alarmed if movement is not happening as fast as it had in the lower levels. For skater safety, each skill needs to be mastered. Each skill is built off the basic skills so if one skill is not mastered, it is unsafe for level movements.

We appreciate your patience during testing as we have many children that need to be tested.

Explanation of Fees & Expenses

NCSC Fees:

All fees are determined by the NCSC Board of Directors. These fees can be paid during registration or during payment nights. A skater will not be allowed on the ice if fees or payments have not been paid or if arrangements have not been made with NCSC Treasurer prior to payment night (applicable late fees will be applied). Cash or checks payable to the North Country Skating Club only. Checks will be deposited by the end of the following week.

In the event that a check is returned for non-sufficient funds, a returned check fee will be added to the amount owed. This is a fee charged to us by the bank so it cannot be waived.

The registration fee can be paid in full or in four installments as listed below. The first payment is always due prior to the first lesson. No payment will be accepted on the first day of skating. It is imperative that payments are made on time as ice bills and show expenses accumulate quickly. You may pay the remainder of the registration fee at ANY payment date.

Late Fee:

A Late fee will be charged for all late payments. This fee will be added to your payment amount.

Refunds:

Once skating has begun your skater has until the end of the first week (Friday evening) to decide whether they will continue. If for some reason your skater does not wish to continue with their lessons, you will be refunded. After the first week of skating, refunds will not be given.

Annual Learn to Skate USA (LTS) Membership Fee

This annual membership fee is required by LTS. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to renew their child each skate year. Proof of registration must be received on registration day or on the first skating night otherwise your child will not be allowed on the ice until it is received. This is required for insurance purposes. Each Membership will Expire in June of the following year.

The LTS registered members will receive a copy of the Skating Magazine and are issued a special number that will track their membership and testing progress through the program.

Members must be in good standing with the Club and LTS for skaters to be allowed on the ice.

Show Expenses:

Our show takes a lot of cooperation from parents and skaters to produce. We also have a lot of expenses that come with putting on the show. We typically do professional photos, optional show t-shirts and DVDs, as well as show costumes.

Other Expenses

We often offer NCSC apparel in time for Christmas gifts. These are optional for those who would like to purchase.

Skate sharpening is a recurring event throughout the season. Your child's skates will need to be periodically sharpened to maintain a blade that is safe and will allow them to continue progressing. Dull blades are not easy to skate on. Typically, skates should be sharpened after every 5 hours of skating.

We offer a banquet at the end of each season after the show. At the banquet, awards will be presented to each skater by their coach. If your skater moved up a level during the season, they will receive an envelope with recognition of the achievement inside. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the end of a great season with your skater. We may also ask that each family provide one dish to share at the banquet. During the banquet, the Board will also go over the financial report.

Equipment

Skates:

The most important equipment you as a skater/parent can purchase is your pair of skates. We cannot overemphasize the importance of purchasing good quality skates. It is important to purchase skates that are made of leather. We require all skaters to have single-blade skates. We recommend figure skates over hockey skates. The blades should be sharpened prior to the first lesson and after every 5 hours of skating.

Tips for fitting skates properly

- Don't buy skates that are too big with the thought that you are leaving room for the feet to grow. A skate should fit firmly around the ankles and you should be able to wiggle your toes a little.
- Buy a skate with a leather upper, be sure the clasps or hooks are secure, and check to see that the blades are mounted straight on the bottom.
- Wear thin socks or tights with skates. Wear what you plan to skate in when you are trying on or fitting skates.
- A skate that fits properly usually is 1/2 to one size smaller than street shoes. You should be able to place a pencil behind the heel for the proper fit.
- Purchase from a reputable dealer. Be sure to stand in the skates to assure a comfortable fit and have adequate ankle support, which means, no wobbling.
- Many new skates have not been sharpened. Check to see if they will put a figure skating edge on them. Many times they are sharpened with a hockey edge, which makes it very hard for a skater to skate properly. Play it Again Sports, Dicks Sporting Goods, and the Rouses Point Civic Center has a Figure Skating sharpener. If sharpened properly, the blades should stay sharp for up to 5 weeks of skating.
- New skates may hurt the first few times they are worn, but don't give up, they need to be broken in.

Take care of your skates; use hard skate guards anytime you are not on the ice. Be sure to wipe your blades dry after every use and put on soakers (soft guards). Even after you wipe your blades, it is important not to put the guards on right away. If you do, it can cause rust on your blades and they will no longer be sharp. Don't ever walk on concrete without your hard guards or with soft guards. You will ruin your blades. Once home, store skates out of the bag or in the bag upside down leaving the bag open. A closed bag creates a humid microclimate and will threaten the skates leather integrity and can rust the blades.

Clothing:

We recommend that skaters dress in layers rather than bulky winter outerwear. It is not recommended to dress in ski pants as this restricts the skater's movement. It is important that

Basic Skills skaters wear warm clothing, hats, and mittens/gloves. We prefer that skaters wear knit/cotton stretch pants to stay warm and have better flexibility. Many skaters wear several layers, consisting of skating tights and leggings. Wearing a thin sock higher than the skate boot will help avoid skin irritation if the foot or leg rubs on the skate. Blue jeans are not very flexible, and skaters tend to get cold and stay cold, especially if they are damp. Any ornamentation attached to the clothing must be firmly fastened so as not to fall off while skating under normal conditions. Skaters who do not wear gloves will be asked to leave the ice. This is a safety issue.

HELMET:

All skaters in the Snow Plow level and all first-year skaters are required to wear a properly fitting helmet. The helmet can be a bike helmet but must have a working chin strap to keep the helmet secure. Parents can decide to have their child wear a helmet longer as they pass up to the Basic Levels if desired. Helmets will not be used during the show.

Means of Communication

At the start of each season, we will create an email master list. It is very important that you have your current email address provided to the skating board to receive important information or dates. Please use the email address you use most frequently. If you are not receiving emails, please contact northcountryskatingclub@gmail.com

Please check your email frequently to stay updated.

We will also be using a sportsyou page to relay information to families throughout the season.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest, etc. is popular among many organizations/people. The NCSC has a Facebook page, which the board makes every effort to keep updated with notifications, photos, and other miscellaneous information.

Facebook is NOT the primary method for the distribution of information to club members.

While the NCSC cannot control the use of social media by members, skaters and parents are strongly encouraged to use these resources in a positive manner in regard to the club and other skaters and their families. Negative/derogatory posts will not be tolerated and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. (This does not include constructive criticism).

Policies & Criteria

Attendance Policy:

All skaters are encouraged to be at each practice. If a skater cannot attend a practice for some reason, they should contact the board via email before their lesson time.

Illness Policy:

If a skater is too ill to attend school she/he is not permitted to attend their scheduled practice. Please send a courtesy email to the board.

Cancellation Policy

We do hold sessions during the Thanksgiving Recess or around the Christmas Holiday timeframe. Here in the North Country, we are no strangers to snowy weather. We generally will cancel sessions when local schools close due to bad weather. However, this is determined on a case-to-case basis and an email will be sent out as well as a post on facebook and sportsyou when a decision has been made.

Injury Policy:

It is extremely important that skaters communicate their injuries to their coaches.

Ice Policy:

All skaters are expected to be dressed and ready to skate 5 minutes prior to their scheduled lesson time. No skater is allowed on the ice early for any reason. This is a safety issue and is distracting to those already taking lessons. Any skater entering the ice early will be asked to leave the ice.

Please DO NOT TALK with coaches during someone else's lessons or during a group lesson. You are taking valuable ice time from the coaches and skaters. If you need to discuss something with them, please send them an email.

Food and Gum Absolutely no food or gum is allowed on the ice during lesson time as these pose a very serious safety risk for your skater.

Parental Presence:

Parents/Guardians are asked to stay with their children while they are skating. Older children can be dropped off for their ice time. If you intend to leave your child for lessons, you MUST leave a contact where you can be reached in the event of injury or behavior issues.

SafeSport Policy:

NCSC will be following the USFSA SafeSport guidelines, criteria, and handbook. The association will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse of any of its members including athletes, coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, volunteers, or any other persons while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of the U.S. Figure Skating.

- The U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program addresses the following types of abuse, harassment, and misconduct.
- Sexual, Physical & Emotional abuse and misconduct, bullying, threats and harassment, and willfully tolerating these behaviors.

Behavior Policy

Acceptable behavior is always expected while at and away from the skating rink. Proper listening skills and good behavior are crucial. Lesson time is structured to provide the most benefits to all the skaters and when others are not following the code this takes away critical skate time from others.

- Behavior off the ice is just as important as that on ice. We understand that many children are present at the rink for more than one ice time. We recommend bringing homework, books, etc. to help minimize the boredom between ice times.
- Absolutely no climbing bleachers and no running around the rink at any time. Children are not permitted to be behind the bleachers or throw balls in the rink. Yelling and screaming are disruptive to the children on the ice as well as to spectators. Please be respectful.

If your child is noticed doing such behavior, they will be asked to stop by either a board member or a coach. If the behavior continues a board member or coach will request to speak with a parent.

Code of Conduct

U.S. Figure Skating Parent Code of Conduct

NCSC is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members 'physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

Each year with NCSC's membership packet, Parents are asked to review the USFSA official Parent Code of Conduct. Please see below for a copy:

Preamble: The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, trustworthiness, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character" (Arizona Sports Summit Accord).

I hereby agree that:

1. I will encourage good sportsmanship by my actions, demonstrating positive support for all skaters, coaches, and officials at every practice, competition, and test session.
2. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child and others ahead of my desire to win.
3. I will encourage my child to skate in a safe and healthy environment by maintaining a respectful and courteous attitude to others.
4. I will promptly inform my child's coach of any physical/mental disability or challenge affecting my child that may affect the safety of my child or others.
5. I will teach my child that doing his/her best is more important than winning.
6. I will do my best not to ridicule, bully, blame, or yell at my child or other skaters, coaches, officials, or volunteers in response to a poor performance or for any other reason.
7. I will always do my best to make skating fun and will remember that my child participates in sports for his/her own enjoyment and satisfaction.
8. I will teach my child to treat other skaters, coaches, fans, volunteers, officials, and rink staff with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, or ability. I will also take action and report any acts of bullying, harassment, or abuse to the appropriate authorities.
9. I will applaud any effort in both victory and defeat emphasizing positive accomplishments and learning from mistakes.
10. I will teach my child to resolve conflicts calmly and peacefully without resorting to hostility or violence.
11. I will be a positive role model for my child and others.

12. I will demand a figure skating environment for my child that is free of drug or alcohol abuse and agree that I will not use or provide to a third party any illegal drug prohibited by applicable federal, state, or municipal law.
13. I will not assist or condone any athlete's use of a banned substance as described by the International Olympic Committee, International Skating Union, United States Olympic Committee, or U.S. Figure Skating, or, in case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by one of these organizations.
14. I will expect my child's coach to be in compliance with all requirements of the U.S. Figure Skating and the Professional Skaters Association, to continue their education and training through programs offered by the U.S. Figure Skating, the Professional Skaters Association, and other accredited organizations.
15. I will respect my child's coach and refrain from "sideline" coaching my child or other skaters.
16. I agree to educate myself regarding the proper procedures to follow when establishing or terminating a coaching relationship.
17. I will respect the decisions of officials, their authority, and decisions during competitions and test sessions and teach my child to do the