US FIGURE SKATING
Basic Skills Program

Directors Handbook
Version 2
## Table of Contents

Welcome to the U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program

Welcome and Overview ................................................................. 2
The Basic Skills Program .............................................................. 3
  Mission and Objectives............................................................. 3
  Curriculum ............................................................................. 3
  Qualities of a Great Director .................................................. 3
Management and Leadership ......................................................... 4
  Management ........................................................................... 4
  Leadership and Management .................................................. 4
  Leadership Quotes .................................................................. 4
Building Blocks of a Successful Program ...................................... 5
  Planning ................................................................................... 5
  Mission and Values................................................................. 5
  SWOT Analysis ......................................................................... 5
  Goal Setting ............................................................................ 5
Establishing Policies ...................................................................... 5
Staff ............................................................................................. 6
  Staff Structure and Compensation ............................................. 6
  Hiring and Screening .............................................................. 7
  Employee vs. Independent Contractor ...................................... 7
  Training Instructors ............................................................... 7
  Working with Your Staff ........................................................ 8
  Firing ....................................................................................... 8
  Evaluation ............................................................................... 8
Marketing and Promotion .............................................................. 9
  What Are You Selling .............................................................. 9
  Know Your Community and Customers .................................. 9
  Website .................................................................................. 9
  Word of Mouth ....................................................................... 9
  30 Marketing and Growth Ideas ............................................... 9
  Community Involvement ......................................................... 10
Skater Retention ......................................................................... 10
Scheduling: Making the Most of Ice Time ................................. 11
Working with Customers ............................................................. 11
  Parent Education .................................................................... 11
  Customer Service ................................................................... 12
Working with Management: Rink Relations ............................... 13
Financial Management ............................................................... 14
  Knowing Your Numbers ........................................................ 14
  Budgeting and Cost Analysis .................................................. 14
Risk Management ....................................................................... 15
Director Resources and Continuing Education ............................ 16
Basic Skills FAQ ......................................................................... 17
Tips from Your Colleagues ......................................................... 18
Your Notes and Tips ................................................................... 19
Acknowledgements ..................................................................... 19
Appendix ....................................................................................... 20
  Twenty Questions for Basic Skills Program Strategic Planning .... 20
  U.S. Figure Skating SWOT Analysis ......................................... 21
  Coach Evaluation Forms ......................................................... 22
  Figure Skating Club Basic Skills Program Waiver Release Sample ........................................................................... 25
  New Program/Update Form ..................................................... 27
  Register your Basic Skills members ......................................... 28
  BS Transmittal form ................................................................. 29
  Basic Skills Performance approval form .................................... 31
  Basic Skills Competition approval form ..................................... 32
  Basic Skills Price List .............................................................. 33
Welcome and Overview

Greetings, directors! Congratulations on leading a Basic Skills Program. Whether you are a new director establishing a program or an experienced director looking for growth and improvement tips, this resource is for you. Here you will find general information about the U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program, building blocks for a successful program, a resources list and tips from your colleagues. There is even a place to record your own tips to share.

As directors, our role is complex. We impact the lives of thousands of people during our careers. We act as supervisors, mentors, role models, policy makers, event planners, customer relations experts, advocates, mediators and more. We all share the rewards and responsibilities of serving as a leader and influencing the experience of skaters of all ages. Enjoy the journey!

Mission and Objectives

The mission of the Basic Skills Program is to provide a goal-oriented program that encourages ice skating at all levels and to enhance the quality of skating skills at these levels. Basic Skills "builds the base" of skating participation by teaching the FUNdamentals of skating.

The objectives of the program are:
• To provide a fun and safe skating experience for the beginner as well as the more advanced skater
• To teach correct technique of the simple basic elements
• To promote health and physical fitness
• To enable all participants to achieve the skills necessary to either skate for fun the rest of their lives or to move competently into the U.S. Figure Skating advanced test and/or competitive structure

Basic Skills Curriculums

The Basic Skills Program is divided into two sets of badge curriculums – FUNdamental curriculums - teaching the basics of skating to different age groups/interests - and Specialty curriculums - that adds enhancement and variety to help retain skaters and give them a taste of the different disciplines in skating. The full range of curriculums can be offered by any registered program.

FUNdamental Curriculums:
• Snowplow Sam 1-3
• Basic 1-8
• Hockey 1-4
• Adult 1-4
• Special Olympics 1-12
• Therapeutic 1-14 – assisted and unassisted

Specialty Curriculums:
• Pairs1-6
• Dance 1-6
• Synchronized Skating 1-4
• Artistry in Motion 1-4
• Speed Skating 1-6
• Theater on Ice 1-4

Qualities of a Great Director

A successful Basic Skills program requires a great deal of planning and organization. Directors are managers, business people, mentors and community leaders. An effective skating director is critical to the success of the program. It is your responsibility to implement, oversee and coordinate the overall delivery of the program. You are also the link to the local skating club, hockey associations and other facility user groups, and will need to work together to build and maintain strong relationships with all ‘next step’ programs.

Below are some qualities to look for when hiring a director or furthering your own directing skills:
• Organized
• Self-aware
• Open-minded
• Visionary
• Flexible
• Problem Solver
• Friendly Personality
• Consistent
• Communication Skills
• Passionate
• Patient
• Proactive
• Multitasking
• Enthusiastic
• Detail-oriented
• Approachable
• Energetic
• Self-confidence
• Knowledge of Skating
• Knowledge of Community
Management

Ice Facility or Municipality

- The director is the liaison between staff, skaters, parents and the arena management. The director is a program advocate. Strong working relationships with management are important to program success. Your program is likely one of many recreation programs for which your managers are responsible. Managers may not possess advanced figure skating knowledge.

Figure Skating Club

- The director’s relationships with the local figure skating club(s) and Board of Directors are particularly important. The club may hire a skating director to manage the Basic Skills program, and the director may be expected to retain skaters to become part of the club.

Private Ownership

- The skating director is both owner and director of the organization. The program may be a not-for-profit organization or a business entity such as a sole proprietorship, LLC, LCC or S corporation. The director has no direct manager and is often personally responsible for planning and finances. The formal relationship with the facility is often limited to purchasing ice time, though it is beneficial to develop strong communication with arena management to discuss mutual goals and collaboration. A business background will be helpful, as will working relationships with an attorney and an accountant.

Regardless of the situation, many management considerations are consistent for all directors. A director needs to act as a true manager to his/her staff, not a friend or peer. A director needs to possess visionary leadership and supervisory skills. A director needs to keep up with the figure skating industry and revise his or her methodology in the best interest of the program.

Leadership vs. Management

Though there are a wide variety of definitions of leadership and management, in general, management refers to one’s ability to impact the bottom line. Managers manage tasks and transactions and are constrained by time and money; leaders, however, manage people and inspire them to reach goals by acting according to agreed-upon values. Leaders set the tone and maintain the organization’s culture through leading by example. Leadership and management skills overlap. The best directors understand and possess both.

Great leadership is at the core of the long-term success of any Basic Skills Program. The leadership example of a director filters down to the staff and, through them, to skaters. How a director gives feedback, handles frustration, listens to complaints and communicates through body language all contribute to their image as a leader. Part of a director’s role is to be self-aware and understand how his/her actions impact others and the program.
Planning

Strategic planning determines where an organization is going, how it intends to get there and how it will evaluate its progress. Planning is a collaborative process on the part of director, management and staff, and it can make the difference between an organized, efficient program and a program without a unified purpose. Important planning steps are identifying your program's mission and values, establishing policies and short and long-term goal setting.

★ Mission and Values
Defining (or refining) your mission and values is the first step in planning. Your mission is the fundamental purpose of your organization. It clarifies to staff and skating families why you exist and how you define success. While the Basic Skills mission can guide you, your program can have its own specific mission to match your situation. Values are guiding principles that help you achieve your mission. They describe the philosophy you adopt in daily operations. Examples of values could be knowledge, leadership and accountability. Ask yourself: What do we do here, and how do we do it well? What qualities make us unique?

★ SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
The SWOT examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing your program. When brainstorming the four sections of your SWOT, consider as many sources of information as possible. Think about your program evaluations, information from meetings and educational events, and input from your staff, colleagues and parents. See appendix for SWOT template.

★ Goal-setting
Using your SWOT, create a handful of short and long-term goals. Aim for turning opportunities into programs and overcoming weaknesses by using strengths. Don't waste time worrying about factors you cannot control. Instead, address them creatively. Keep in mind the SMART method of goal setting: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-sensitive. An example of a SMART goal could be, "Introduce two new specialized programs for advanced skaters in September and enroll 15 skaters in each." Next, identify the strategies to reach those goals. Which strategies align best with your values, staff and budget? What tactics will you employ, and how will you evaluate your progress? Goals can be adjusted. Keep an open mind and hold yourself accountable for revisiting your goals.

Establishing Policies
Every program should have clearly outlined policies that are easily accessible to parents and staff. They should be displayed in brochures, handbooks, at the front desk, and on your website. Policies clarify expectations and ensure that everyone receives fair and consistent treatment. They will also protect you. The following are examples of policies to consider.

★ Registration and Fees
What are your policies on registration deadlines, discounts and financial aid or scholarships? Waiting lists are not recommended, but if you use one, remember to prorate fees if skaters begin late.

★ Private Lessons
How do you promote private lessons and handle instructor assignments? Do you take requests, have a rotating list or offer trial lessons? If you take a commission, is it a percentage or a flat fee? Remember, all instructors must purchase separate liability insurance if they teach private lessons. Be consistent and make your procedure clear up front to all parties – staff, parents, front-desk staff, club board, etc.

★ Refunds and Make-up Classes
Do you offer them? When and how, and are there any limitations?

★ Other Recommended Policies:
- Parent/Observer Policy
- Unacceptable Behavior
- Equipment & Attire
- Accident/Incident Reports
- Grievance Policy
**Staff Structure and Compensation**

The structure of a Basic Skills staff generally includes the following groups in a tier system:

- Management/Owners → Skating Director(s) → Assistant Director(s) (if necessary) → Sr./Full Instructors → Jr. Instructors → Assistants → Volunteers

The recommended compensation structure is a sliding scale based on these tiers and the staff member's experience, credentials, and job performance. Tiers may vary from program to program. Staff should have well-outlined incentives to move upward through these tiers if they aspire to do so. Recommendations for advancement benchmarks include skater retention, referrals, raises, and/or bonuses. Hourly or per-class compensation varies widely depending on a region's market. Set up a pay scale for your staff. Experience and credentials should be rewarded as well as enthusiasm and reliability. Sometimes your highest-credentialled instructors are not your best group lesson instructors.

The national average for payment of group lessons is $25/hour. The range goes from “no payment,” for group lessons in exchange for private lesson teaching privileges at the arena, to around $60/hour. Whatever compensation rate(s) you choose, pay attention to the regional market and be sure the structure rewards both loyalty and outstanding performance.

**Hiring and Screening**

Job descriptions and applications should be available at the arena and on your website even if you are not actively hiring. Openness to new talent and maintaining a hiring pool of qualified instructors will leave you in a favorable position should you add new programs, increase your enrollment, or need to terminate an instructor.

When writing a job description, list the expectations and essential skills for the position. Keep it simple yet comprehensive – details can be discussed in the interview. Written application questions can include information about the applicant's skating, coaching, and education background, employment history, legal right to work in the United States, coaching philosophy, and any other topics relevant to the program. The director should request a resume and at least two non-family references. Municipalities or sports complexes may have standardized applications.

Directors should create a list of standard interview questions to discuss in person after the applicant has completed a written application. Recommended topics include:

- Why the applicant is interested in the position and what he/she feels he/she can contribute to a team
- Perceived strengths and skills most in need of development
- U.S. Figure Skating background – tests passed, competition history, training, other honors
- Education background – degrees, coursework, institutions, other honors received
- Coaching background – years coaching, training or seminars attended, ratings obtained, achievement records of athletes
- Employment history – both skating/coaching and otherwise
- Attitudes toward children and coaching
- Ability to work with others – children, parents, other coaches
- Professional attitudes and ethical/moral beliefs
- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- PSA ratings, rankings, educational events attended

Though there are no magical interview questions to predict an instructor's performance in your organization, behavioral interview questions can give you a strong idea of past performance and problem-solving skills. Behavioral interview questions are "scenario" questions that ask about past or hypothetical actions in scenarios they may face on the job. When designing questions, think about common or difficult scenarios that have come up in your program or topics that spurred discussion at staff meetings.

**Screening**

Screening is an essential step in hiring an instructor. Not only is it required, but it is in the best interest of your program and skaters. Unfortunately, there are still instances of improper representation of one's past or qualifications. Keep in mind that this person will be working with children and representing your program.

**Verifying skating experience**

- Call the applicant's references
- Call U.S. Figure Skating to verify test and competition credentials
- Contact PSA to verify ratings and education
- Use the skating network

**Background checks**

- Check the U.S. Figure Skating website to verify coach/instructor registration. If a registration is current, they have completed a background check within the past year. Background checks go back seven years for felonies involving children or drug use
- Contact PSA and U.S. Figure Skating to check into grievance history

When evaluating applicants, a good rule of thumb is to “hire for attitude and train for skills.” Good coaching is much more than just credentials. Someone may “look good on paper” but not be a good fit for your program. As a director,
you can train teaching skills and technique, but you can not as easily train personality and attitude. Ask yourself, will this person bring new skills to enhance our organization? Is he/she qualified for the position and will he/she fit in with staff and customers? Does this person have a history of teamwork? Does he/she demonstrate understanding and alignment with our values and goals?

When you hire an instructor, remember to register him or her as a Basic Skills instructor so he or she receives insurance and teaching materials.

★ Employee vs. Independent Contractor

Skating instructors can either be hired as an employee or treated as independent contractors. Generally speaking, group lesson instructors are normally classified as employees of the program and private lesson coaches are independent contractors, but this is not a hard and fast rule. Consult with your state employment office to determine your state’s rules. There are 20 factors indicating whether an individual is considered an employee or independent contractor by the IRS (check www.irs.gov). A person does not need to meet all criteria. Make sure the tax status of your staff is correct! If coaches are working in your facility as independent contractors, they should provide your facility with a copy of their certificate of insurance naming your rink as an additionally insured. Regardless of labor status, all instructors should be registered as Basic Skills instructors with U.S. Figure Skating.

Note: See www.usfigureskating.org for a handbook called “Tips on Hiring the Right Coaches for Your Organization.” The handbook covers the above topics in more detail. It also provides information on hiring coaches who are not U.S. citizens, items to include in a coaching contract, sample evaluations and more.

★ Training Instructors

Well-trained instructors are one of your program’s greatest assets. Organized orientation and training can refresh your instructors’ knowledge and build synergy among your team. Training can come in the form of formal pre-season workshops, in-house staff meetings, shadowing or team coaching, participating in U.S. Figure Skating or PSA seminars, or any combination of the above. Also, encourage or mandate your staff to complete the CER C online courses (www.skatepsa.com).

Some tips for designing a training program:

- **Start with team-building.** Not only is training intended to improve your team’s teaching skills; it is also a chance to enhance other skills that will make your program stand out, such as communication and teamwork. Try team jeopardy or sharing your funniest/scariest coaching moments. Handing out scenarios and troubleshooting together is a great way to improve teamwork and problem solving skills.

- **Set clear expectations.** Review your policies and code of conduct and highlight changes from previous sessions. Explain why they have been implemented and field questions now to avoid surprises or confusion later. If you have an instructors handbook, review it together and have everyone sign that they have both read and understand its contents. All staff members should be required to wear an identifiable jacket or top with your program’s name or logo so that customers can identify who to turn to with questions.

- **Use variety.** Just as you would expect your instructors to do in their group classes, consider your team’s varied learning styles: visual, auditory and tactile. Invite a guest speaker, read through handbooks, do “mock classes” on the ice or practice lesson planning in small groups. Keep in mind that the skill-learning that has the most impact involves doing. Allow your team to role play and problem solve rather than just listen. For example, discuss “What do we consider a passing crossover?” or “What steps should we take if someone asks for a private lesson or their money back?”

- **Involve your team.** If you have instructors who are great with adults or especially talented at leading games, give them the chance to share their knowledge. As a director, it is important to remember that you are just one member of a highly skilled group. Encouraging your staff to share ideas will foster a confident, empowered team.

★ Working With Staff

Trust and strong working relationships among the staff and between the director and staff are essential. Your staff is your salespeople, your eyes and your ears, and some of your most influential program representatives. Your staff needs to feel valued and part of the business. Your leadership sets the tone, and it is up to the director to sustain a work culture based on integrity, strong communication and mutual respect. This is where leading by example and being straightforward about your expectations will go far. Upholding your policies and stepping in quickly and professionally in the case of breaches is an important aspect of maintaining trust and respect as a leader.

Staff members do not need to be involved in every decision, but brainstorming improvements or getting their input on policy decisions can supply you with great ideas and generate win-win solutions. Input increases the staff’s commitment and loyalty, and helps you “keep the pulse” on the real issues at hand.

Tips for Maintaining a Positive, Productive Working Environment:

- **High expectations + support and mentorship = Enabling people to develop to their full capacity**
- **Make your goals and expectations clear**
- **Consistently recognize improvement and strong perfor-**
- Have a coach liaison on the Board of Directors of the club
- Be in charge, not a friend
- Lead with compassion and help people develop
- Self-awareness – which leadership skills can you still develop?
- Seek input in formal evaluations and informal discussions at meetings
- Follow through!

★★ Evaluating Staff

At the rink, allow yourself time to “float” during lessons to be aware of how classes are running and how staff members are doing. Your presence as a supervisor and support helps set a professional tone. Further evaluate staff performance by keeping records of retention and seeking feedback from parents. One-on-one check-ins are helpful to discuss both positive and constructive feedback from you or parents. Policies for when and how you conduct evaluations should be outlined to staff from the beginning, and all coaches should be held to the same procedure. Having staff fill out self-evaluations will give you ideas for discussion points. Remember to keep written records of conversations, especially when delivering constructive or negative feedback regarding performance.

Mandatory staff meetings are a great way to relay information and have important discussions. E-mails can also work, although face to face communication is preferable. Be careful to hold only as many meetings as you actually need. Show your organization and respect for the staff’s time by posting agendas in advance and always begin and end on time.

★★ Termination

If you are responsible for terminating a staff member; professionalism, clarity and sticking to your policies will keep the process as smooth as possible. Often this will not come as a surprise to a staff member if he or she have been warned or made aware of no-tolerance behavior. Be sure you have a firm policy about grounds for dismissal (After a certain number of warnings? Are certain actions no-tolerance?) Keep written records of all incidents, grievances, warnings and the termination process. These only need to be sent to U.S. Figure Skating if a claim is being filed.
Marketing and Promotion

Marketing your program involves much more than flyers and advertisements. It includes everything from your special events to your public image to the quality of your customer service. Careful planning and organization are required to reach the widest possible audience within your budget.

Directors should work with their managers to create a plan outlining annual marketing strategies and how to evaluate their impact. Consider your target audience, timeframe and cost for each item. Make the most of your free marketing and consider your personal contacts and the skills of skating parents. Compiling information into one document will help you meet deadlines and save the hassle of searching through information. Your SWOT analysis can help you define marketing goals. General skating marketing and promotion should be ongoing, and specific marketing for Basic Skills sessions should begin at least six weeks prior to the registration deadline.

★ Who is your audience?

Ask yourself, who are my customers? What are they looking for? What are they willing to pay for? Do a market survey and ask for input on your program evaluations. Post information in the most popular community spaces (don’t forget the library, community center and coffee shops). Participate in local events: march in parades, and donate lessons to auctions and benefit drives. Track how much other youth programs cost and make sure you fall within an appropriate range.

★ What’s so special about what are you selling?

Above all, we are all selling FUN! Skaters will not return or want to begin participating unless it looks fun and they have fun. Make sure your materials are geared toward kids and smiles. Other selling points are health and wellness, a long-term family activity, life skills, friendships and the opportunity for rewards and advancement as far as desired.

★ How is your web site?

In today’s culture, a web site is becoming more and more of an expectation. Managed well, your web site can save time and money by streamlining time consuming processes like registration, evaluation and answering basic questions. It is a low-cost method of attracting new skaters and communicating with current families. An organized, aesthetically pleasing web site shows your professionalism and helps parents gather information before coming to you with more detailed questions. Some features that can be included on the web site are the following:

- Program Descriptions
- Contact Information
- Schedules and Prices
- Blog/Message Board
- Online Registration
- Parent Resources
- Meet the Staff Page
- Photos/Videos
- Coaching Resources
- Merchandise
- Evaluation Forms
- Map and Directions

Find out who is in charge of updating and maintaining your web site. If you are interested in creating your own secure web site, we recommended using the WordPress open source platform. WordPress sites are free to register, they can be edited from any internet connection, and they do not require advanced programming knowledge. See www.northfieldskating.org for an example of a home-grown WordPress web site. Click “Contact Us” for further resources for creating your own site.

★ Word of Mouth: Your Best Marketing Tool

Word of mouth is by far the most effective and least expensive form of marketing. Foster it in every way possible! Spread accurate information through parent meetings and email updates. Train your staff on customer service skills to help maintain a fun and supportive environment for all skaters. Encourage satisfied parents to help spread the word by distributing materials at their workplaces and to their peers.

★ 30 Marketing and Growth Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Group Discount Sites</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Referral bonus</th>
<th>Charity events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community newsletter</td>
<td>School/Corporate staff lists</td>
<td>Local parades</td>
<td>Holiday parties</td>
<td>Open house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures and posters</td>
<td>Birthday parties</td>
<td>Fundraisers/skate-a-thons</td>
<td>Bring-a-buddy</td>
<td>National Skating Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult fitness classes</td>
<td>Coffee club</td>
<td>Free public skating promo</td>
<td>School PE programs and field trips</td>
<td>Parent and tot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>Special Olympics/Therapeutic</td>
<td>Contests and giveaways</td>
<td>Radio advertising/interviews</td>
<td>Local cable TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate team building</td>
<td>Free skate pass for good grades</td>
<td>Theater On Ice exhibition</td>
<td>Ice shows</td>
<td>Competition (see manual on web)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One free lesson invitation/promotion</td>
<td>Coloring contest in local papers</td>
<td>Bookmarks/Prizes in schools</td>
<td>Teen introductory class</td>
<td>Home school skating event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

★ Community Involvement

Joining forces with other organizations does more than give your skaters new opportunities and expand your professional network. It is a chance to share expenses and be exposed to another organization’s customer base. In short, it boosts your bottom line. In addition to creating a positive impact on more lives, you will expand your program’s audience, create a diverse network and increase your program’s value in the eyes of community members and prospective skating parents. Two great ways to forge community connec-
tions are collaborating with other youth organizations and providing creative employment and volunteer opportunities.

Parents are in search of the best value for their money. If your program provides unique, “pre-packaged” opportunities for skill-building and fun, you will have a better chance of standing out in a sea of youth activities. Try approaching organizations whose goals and values are similar to yours. Have a plan and show them how collaborating will reduce advertising and operations costs and allow you to share resources like customers, volunteers and new ideas.

★ Examples of Community Collaboration:
- Sampler camps with skating, dance, hockey and gymnastics
- Special Olympics/Therapeutic classes
- YMCA adult fitness programs
- College staff or alumni skating events
- Girl Scout skating events
- Holiday parties including all arena user groups
- Collaborative ice shows with other local skating programs
- Work with craft stores to personalize skating apparel
- Used equipment sales with hockey programs
- Ballet for skaters beginner dance class

Knowing your community will help you build relationships. Does your city have a youth sports collaborative? Ask to join it! Colleges? Contact their offices to ask if they’d co-host an event. Is there a community resource center? Find out about local benefits, like food and toy drives, and what scholarship opportunities may be available for lower-income skaters. Learn the demographics of your area and translate materials such as FAQ into any widely-used languages other than English. Local students may be able to help with this for school credit.

Try matching the skills of local students and community members with the needs of your program. Parents or college students may be able to manage your web site, help with taxes or develop an artistic logo or marketing plan. Someone interested in management may be willing to work out an internship and assist you with director duties. Some schools will grant PE or academic credit for coaching activities. These arrangements create mutual gain for your program and these individuals while helping people develop skills in a “real-world” context.

★ Skater Retention

It costs far less to retain a current skater than to recruit a new one. Basic Skills programs should aim for at least a 60 percent retention rate (60 percent of current skaters sign up for the next set of lessons). An 80 percent rate is excellent. Monitoring your retention rates from session to session will provide useful information. Are more skaters dropping out after a certain level? At a certain age? After working with certain instructors? The reasons children stop skating normally have to do with stress, a lack of having fun or a loss of motivation. Reward instructors with high retention rates!

Knowing how you are perceived will help you boost retention. Gather information about your reputation and the satisfaction of your skating families so you can identify needed improvements. Contact parents of skaters who did not re-enroll and ask what contributed to their decision. In your program evaluations, ask parents if they would recommend the program to peers, and why or why not. Be sure your program is offering “package deals,” like other sports, and stress fun at every level, including higher levels. Camaraderie and friends go a long way toward kids’ enjoyment. Basic 4-6 and learning an Axel are typically the most common drop-off points. This is a good time to offer supplemental private lessons (booster lessons for 15 minutes), second class half-off discounts or special workshops like “Axel Class” to help retain skaters who might need additional support.

Your current customer base is one of your best resources for increasing enrollment and retention. Try offering referral packages or family discounts, or offer repeat-enrollment discounts to encourage loyalty and progression.

Higher-level skaters inspire lower-level skaters as role models. Exposing newer skaters to their older, more advanced peers can increase their motivation and desire to dream and keep skating.

Try a buddy program or big brother/sister mentor program. Organize a group trip to a touring skating show. Invite high-level skaters to perform an exhibition or skate their session right after group lessons so that newer skaters are still at the arena to see them. Try a “Brag Board” of the students who have passed through the group lesson program and joined a club.
Putting some thought into your daily, weekly and seasonal scheduling can make a big difference in participation. Your schedule's consistency and convenience to parents can influence participation almost as much as which programs you offer. Finding creative uses for less-used ice can have a large impact on the bottom line of your program and facility. Many programs face ice limitations due to multiple arena users and competition for "prime-time" ice. Here are some tips to make the most of the ice time you have to work with.

**Daily Scheduling**

Keep in mind the school calendar and start-end times. Make sure your ice time allows appropriate travel time to and from the arena. Your market research can help with scheduling. For example, find out whether a large proportion of your families attend church or whether you have a large group of stay-at-home parents. Survey parents or take a look at demographic statistics if you are unsure. Some programs that tend to have more success during the day than others are adult fitness classes, coffee clubs, home-school skating class, half-day kindergarten classes and school PE programs. When scheduling instructors, make sure they have enough time to get from place to place and get the occasional breaks. Higher-level skaters are generally more willing to commit to before-school sessions than newer skaters, but this depends on your situation.

**Seasonal Scheduling**

Programs can expect some cycling in participation numbers throughout the year. Historically, January is the busiest month, and summer registration tends to slow down compared to other times of the year. Summer is a great time to offer package deals and special events such as punch cards, camps, collaborations with other programs or seminars. Watch local and school calendars for events and try to schedule more skating events on days off from school or in conjunction with other local or big community events.

Keep in mind that all programs experience some fluctuation. Basic Skills enrollment generally peaks every four years with the Olympics, so be prepared for an enrollment boost and plan more special events those years! If you see a decrease in enrollment, the best approach is to be reflective. Survey staff and parents (returning and not returning) to help pinpoint areas you can improve or factors that influenced participation.

**Parent Education**

Parents education is a series of organized, proactive efforts to inform parents of relevant aspects of skating and your program. It is critical to explain to parents what to expect and how to help their child get the most out of skating. Parents education should be inclusive and encouraged for ALL parents, not just those who seek it out.

**Benefits of Educating the Parents:**

- Makes your job easier to have parents on your side from day one
- Information quality control. Makes sure every parent is getting the same, accurate message
- Prevents and alleviates problems by clarifying expectations upfront and ensuring proper preparation
- Enhances your support and credibility by setting a standard for respectful communication, generating commitment and recruiting volunteers. People's behavior changes when they feel listened to and when they trust leaders.
- Improves your business (bottom line). Satisfied parents spread positive information for you, and informed parents spread accurate information.
- Shows your program's total value to parents: skating skills and long-term life skills
- Parents have time set aside for questions and to understand what they are investing time and finances into. This increases satisfaction and retention.
- Educated parents ask more focused questions.

The way parents education is delivered will depend on your audience and resources. Common meeting spots are the arena during lessons or community space, such as a library or community room. Consider the following when planning the frequency and timing of parent education: Are skaters approaching transition points, such as their first test, first competition or entering a bridge program? Are new parents entering your program? Have you changed programs or policies? Can parent education be tied in with any special events?

If parents believe in your philosophy and the quality of your program, they are more likely to sign up again as well as speak highly of the program to their friends, family, neighbors and coworkers. Satisfied parents sharing accurate information are your best advocates.
★ Example Parent Education Topics:
- Benefits of Skating and Values Learned
- The Basic Skills Curriculum
- Program Policies and Expectations
- Role of the Parent
- Testing Structure
- Choosing and Changing Coaches
- Fitting Skates
- First Competition
- Proper Attire
- Tips/Testimonials from Other Parents
- U.S. Figure Skating Web Site
- Questions

For more topic ideas, use “The Skating Parents Survival Guide Vols. 1-3” and the Parents section of the web site.

★ Customer Service
What does customer service mean in the context of a Basic Skills program? Customer service includes everything from communicating with parents to the attitude of your instructors to ensuring that all lessons begin and end on time. Remember, Basic Skills skaters are the future of our sport and our business.

★ What does customer service mean for group lessons?
- Easy access to program information: bulletin boards, handouts, volunteers at a registration table
- The program should be straightforward and easily understood by participants and front desk staff.
- Make sure skaters know where to check in, how to get their skates and where to meet their teacher. After day one, do they know where to go day two?
- Awareness of customer expectations and goals
- Giving feedback to customers
- Openness to evaluations and input from customers
- Communication with parents. Try e-mails or newsletters with photos and reports

- Quality instruction, including correct technique
- Following through on incidents and inquiries in a timely manner
- Offering a fair price and a consistent schedule
- Updating your web site

To provide excellent service, everyone who interacts with parents, including your instructors, volunteers and front-desk or office staff, should have a firm understanding of customer service skills. Some tips for training staff and volunteers:

- Ensure accurate knowledge of your program and policies. Anyone expected to answer parents’ questions needs to be comfortable explaining information accurately and consistently. Try role-playing challenging situations.

- Stay positive. Instead of “problem solving,” train your staff to “provide solutions.” When interacting with parents, they should always listen first and remain professional. Keep in mind that when communicating face to face, body language and tone often speak more loudly than words. In the long run parents are more likely to remember their experience with your staff members than the actual result of those interactions.

- Complaints are good. Some complaints circulate among parents and never get back to the skating school staff. When a customer complains to you or an instructor, it should be seen as an opportunity to address their concern directly and a chance for you get a “pulse” reading of your program. If you thank customers for sharing their feedback and follow through on their concerns, complaints may turn into future compliments.

- Practice! Communicating with parents can be especially intimidating for new staff. Providing a chance to practice and providing opportunities for parent/coach interaction during the season will increase the skills of your staff and satisfaction of your parents. Try hosting an open house or a “Coffee Hour with the Staff” to encourage interaction and feedback.
Working with Management: Rink Relations

The director and management share many goals. Open communication and a team approach will benefit customer service and the delivery of programs and, in turn, increase the bottom line. Communication with the rink management is essential to establishing the team approach. Developing this relationship is not always easy and may take some nurturing. Many rink managers do not understand the needs of figure skating and need to be educated. Here is where a positive and helpful attitude can help develop a positive working relationship. A good approach with the rink manager is to demonstrate the benefits provided to a rink by having a strong program in the rink. Some benefits include the following:

- A conduit to the national governing body for the sport of figure skating
- A conduit to competitive figure skating through U.S. Figure Skating
- The ability to conduct official U.S. Figure Skating test sessions and competitions
- The ability to provide continued opportunity for figure skaters
- Programs available for the development of figure skaters from the basic level to top competitive levels
- The ability to bring additional skaters into the rink and programs to keep them returning
- Business to the pro shop and concession stand
- Advice for the pro shop about selected supplies to stock.

At the same time that you are demonstrating the benefits of having a strong program in the rink, the rink manager may need to be educated about the needs of figure skaters. These could include:

- Adequate and consistent scheduling of free skating, dance, pairs sessions
- Quality ice conditions, free of ruts and holes
- A quality sound system
- A jump harness and other potential aids
- Off-ice space for off-ice training, locker rooms, meeting rooms, etc.
- Support operations within the rink including pro shop and concessions

Communication between these groups must be kept at a high level. In almost every negative situation, the issues come down to a lack of understanding of each other’s goals or concerns. Invite the rink management to attend meetings. If they take an interest in your program and learn more about your issues, you will help them understand how you operate.

Keep in mind that the rink manager deals with other facility users. Hockey and public skating are very strong revenue streams for most rink operations. The rink manager will typically protect these areas of strong revenue. As a result, try to be realistic in the approach to obtain figure skating ice time. It is also important to establish a relationship with the other user groups within your facility, including the youth hockey program. A strong relationship will benefit your program when seeking extra ice time or unloading excess ice time.

Basic Skills programs add great business value to an ice facility. This is important to understand when communicating with managers and making decisions as a director. The U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program adds business value because:

- It is the most cost-effective skating program for the learn-to-skate market.
- U.S. Figure Skating is recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Skating Union as the national governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States.
- The Basic Skills program is the only learn to skate program endorsed by USA Hockey, U.S. Speedskating and Special Olympics.
- U.S. Figure Skating provides a full competition structure for its members. From Basic Skills to adults, invitational club competitions, artistic, synchronized skating and qualifying events that lead to the U.S. Championships, World Championships and Olympic Games – there is something for everyone to participate!
- There are NO FEES for hosting Basic Skills competitions. Approval is required for standardization purposes, and all aspects of applications are reviewed for accuracy. Coaches, competitive skaters over the age of 16 and adult skaters are welcome to judge these events. A comprehensive competition manual is available online at www.usfigureskating.org.
- The program liability and limited accident insurance covers all U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned and approved programs.
- Marketing and promotional materials are available for every registered program. These include badges, posters, encouragement stickers, skill cards, instructional skills DVD, Snowplow Sam merchandise, postcards, instructional manuals and skill booklets with stickers for skaters to track their progress through the curriculums.
- The progression of skills is done in proper sequential order (Example: learning edges before turns). This is as important for recreational skaters and also those who may one day advance to a more competitive track.
- All Basic Skills members receive a free Basic Skills Edition of SKATING Magazine with membership.
- Costs – There is a one-time $50 fee to register a new Basic Skills Program. The registration fee for skaters and instructors is only $12 per year.
★ **Knowing Your Numbers**

A working knowledge of your revenue, expenses and profit is important to managing your finances. It is essential for the skating director to have fluency with these numbers in order to make informed decisions. Keep in mind the following tips for understanding your numbers and organizing your finances:

- **Organize your revenue.** Each session, organize participant records including registration form, proof of purchase and class assignment. Understand how payments are processed and reconcile receipts with registration forms (ask general manager to add procedures if they aren’t already in place)

- **Organize and control your expenses.** Set a policy that expenses must be approved by the skating director. Keep records in a binder with a summary page showing the semester/session expenses. Know and understand your payroll expenses.

- **Control your payroll.** Plan class roster and then coaching staff. Check payroll against budget weekly.

- **Know your profit contribution.** Revenues – Expenses – Payroll = Learn-to-Skate Contribution to the Rink. The contribution must at least equal the number of hours multiplied by prime rate per hour.

- **Understand the general manager’s view point** and know these numbers when communicating.

- **Profitability** is most often lost through two areas: 1) Class sizes that are too small and 2) Losing control of instructor payroll.

★ **Budgeting and Cost Analysis**

Staying on top of budgeting and costs helps directors determine the minimum number of skaters each session that will make the program profitable. Directors should create spreadsheets for per-skater profit. The following are examples of items to help calculate profit. Total Revenue – Total Expenses = Total Profit. Once you have calculated your total profit, it is helpful to determine profit per skater by dividing by total number of skaters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration Fees</td>
<td>U.S. Figure Skating Membership Fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise</td>
<td>Supplies:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraisers</td>
<td>U.S. Figure Skating Materials (patches, certificates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>Instructor Supplies (clipboards, markers, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and Promotion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing and Promotion (printing, postage, ads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead Expenses:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice time</td>
<td>Director Fees/Salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Fees</td>
<td>Refunds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Meetings</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Financial Management**
Risk Management

As a benefit of membership, U.S. Figure Skating provides general liability insurance for all Basic Skills programs and sports accident coverage for all registered members. All member programs are provided certificates of insurance at the beginning of the policy term (July 1–June 30) indicating coverage for their sanctioned and supervised skating activities. Sanctioned activities are considered all qualifying and nonqualifying competitions, test sessions, all performances including ice shows, exhibitions, recitals and carnivals, and any other activity held under the direction of the club, team or program.

★ General Liability Coverage

All sanctioned skating and skating-related activities of member clubs, teams and Basic Skills programs are covered including all fundraising activities, off-ice training and other club/program events that are run under the direction of the club, team or program. General liability coverage provides insurance for an occurrence that results in bodily injury or property damage to a third party. This coverage does include the cost of defense even if the charges are groundless, false or fraudulent.

The activities of Basic Skills instructors are covered under the general liability policy of the program, but the individual instructor is not covered for any negligence charge under this policy. Basic Skills instructors can purchase additional coaches liability insurance through either U.S. Figure Skating or from PSA if they are members.

★ Sports Accident Coverage

All registered members of U.S. Figure Skating receive sports accident coverage as a benefit of their membership. It provides excess medical coverage for participants in figure skating events and practices sponsored, sanctioned and supervised by U.S. Figure Skating and U.S. Figure Skating member clubs, teams and programs. It is mandatory that each club, team and program register all of its skating participants as members of U.S. Figure Skating, as only current members are covered.

For more detailed information about the General Liability and Sports Accident policy, including extensions and exclusions, please contact U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters for a document entitled "The Insurance Program."

★ Helmets

The following information is our recommendation for skaters and parents.

U.S. Figure Skating strongly recommends the use of helmets for all beginner skaters and children 6 years old and under. To select the helmet that best suits your needs, please consider the following information.

A helmet should be both comfortable and snug. Be sure that it is level on your head – not tilted back on the top of the head or pulled too low over your forehead. It should not move in any direction. The chin strap should be securely buckled so that the helmet doesn't move or fall off during a fall or collision. The individual that will be wearing the helmet should be present when purchasing a helmet so that it can be tested for good fit.

DO:
• Wear helmet low in front to protect forehead
• Fasten buckle and check strap adjustment often
• Replace your helmet immediately if it shows any visible signs of damage
• Clean helmet with mild soap/water only
• Store helmet in a cool, dry place

DON'T:
• Wear anything under your helmet
• Attach anything to your helmet
• Wear a helmet that does not fit or cannot be adjusted properly
• Leave a helmet in direct sunlight or in a car on a sunny day

A hockey, skateboard or ski helmet (multi-sport) will be suitable during beginning ice skating lessons. These helmets are designed to withstand more than one moderate impact, but protection is provided for only a limited number of impacts. They should be replaced if visibly damaged. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for guidance on when the helmet should be replaced.

★ Other Risk Management Notes:

There should never be unsupervised activities on the ice! Either a coach/instructor or a responsible adult must supervise all skating activities.

When offering "Bring a Friend Day" or "Family Skate" during Basic Skills-sponsored ice time, participants not registered as a member should sign a waiver before they are allowed to skate. Sample waivers can be found on the Risk Management section of the Clubs home page.
★ Director Resources and Continuing Education

★ Below is a list of director resources and education opportunities:
- U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Instructor and Director Meetings, offered annually across the country
- Basic Skills staff at U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters. Phone: 719.635.5200.
- Your area representative for competition approvals
- U.S. Figure Skating Director’s track at NARCE, presented annually by STAR
- PSA Program Director Ratings (see www.skatepsa.com)
- PSA Education Events: PACE, Workshops and Seminars, International Conference and apprenticeships with Master Rated Directors
- Certified Education Requirement Category C (CER C) online courses
- U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Committee. Listed annually in the directory. Contact the committee with suggestions, questions or topics for discussion
- Networking with other directors.
- Basic small business courses at local colleges

★ Information Available on www.usfigureskating.org:
- Athlete development, training tips, injury prevention, nutrition
- Event, club and program search
- Club resources, education, insurance information, fundraising guidebook, sample bylaws, forms
- Basic Skills directors, instructors, skaters, parents
- Judging Systems and technical information – 6.0 and IJS
- Synchronized skating and team management
- Collegiate programs – find a college search
- Adult skating programs and events
- TOI, Showcase, High School program, school letters
- Parents section

★ Resources available from United States Figure Skating Headquarters:

| Basic Skills Program Brochure | Certificate of Achievement |
| Participant Registration Form | Basic Skills Competition Manual |
| Basic Skills Performance Approval Procedure | Basic Skills Performance Approval Application |
| Evaluation/Attendance Sheets (on disc) | U.S. Figure Skating Poster |
| Snowplow Sam Badge Chart | Basic Skills Pencils |
| Basic Skills Teaching DVD | Snowplow Sam Zipper Pull |
| Skate Zipper Pull | Bookmarks |
| Skill Cards and Order Form | Postcards |
| Lesson Planning Manual | Skating Parents Guides Volumes 1, 2 & 3 |
| Basic Skills Instructor’s Manual | Record Book available with membership |
| Snowplow Sam Rental Form | Customized Dasher Board and Banner |
| Bring a Buddy Coupon | Snowplow Sam Encouragement Stickers |
| Membership Forms | |

"US FIGURE SKATING
Basic Skills Program"
Basic Skills FAQ

- My instructors are already registered with a U.S. Figure Skating club or individual members and/or teaching pros. Do they still have to register for Basic Skills? Will this affect their eligibility status?
  All instructors over the age of 18 must pass a background screen by either registering as a coach OR as a Basic Skills instructor. For those that have registered as a coach, please register them in addition with your program as an instructor to receive the Basic Skills teaching materials. If they register as a Basic Skills Instructor directly through Member's Only, then they are registered for the year. All instructors under the age of 18 will need to be registered through the program as no background screen is performed on minors. Registering a Basic Skills instructor will not alter his or her club or individual U.S. Figure Skating membership or eligibility status.

- One of our members was injured on the ice. What do we do? What does our Sports Accident Insurance cover? I have insurance questions -- whom do I call?
  When your new program registers to use the Basic Skills Program, the program is protected by the third party liability insurance coverage. The amount of protection is $1,000,000 for your program. Also, offered is a $2,500 deductible secondary Sports Accident Insurance, for individual injuries sustained as a result of skating-related accidents. All scheduled Basic Skills events (lessons, exhibitions, recitals or Basic Skills competitions) are covered under this policy. For any incident that occurs during lessons, please file an accident report found on usfigureskating.org click “Clubs” then “Risk Management”. If you have further questions, contact Wells Fargo Insurance Services, at 800.332.9256 ext. 100.

- Are Basic Skills Instructors required to have Coaches Liability Insurance?
  All registered Basic Skills instructors are covered under the general liability and sport accident coverage through U.S. Figure Skating. If an instructor is teaching private lessons, then they should have the additional coach liability policy to cover their activities as independent contractors. Please visit the Risk Management section of the Clubs page at usfigureskating.org for more information or call Wells Fargo Insurance Services at 800.332.9256 ext. 100. Note that Coaches Liability Insurance is effective from sign-up through June 30 each year. This insurance is also available through the PSA.

- How old can we register a Basic Skills Instructor?
  U.S. Figure Skating does not have an age requirement to be an instructor, however, we recommend that only instructors over the age of 16 be compensated for teaching services. Assistants can begin training as young as 12 in a supervised setting.

- When is the best time to register members?
  You do not have to wait until the end of your skating sessions/season to submit all your registrations. The sooner the better! Register your members right away to get them insured, eligible to participate in Basic Skills events/competitions and receive membership materials. Do not wait until the last minute, as all competitions/events require proof of current membership (membership card).

- Where is my SKATING magazine?
  A Basic Skills Edition of Skating is mailed directly to all Basic Skills members as soon as headquarters receives his/her registration. This magazine is full of useful skating information, articles and even trading cards! SKATING magazine is available to all full members of the association. Subscriptions are available at $27.50/year, which includes 10 issues (some months are combined). Contact U.S. Figure Skating for more information at 719.635.5200

- How do I order badges? Can we place badge/supply orders online?
  There are three ways to order badges. You can order online, fax or mail us the completed Basic Skills price list order form, or you can call in your order. For further questions regarding orders, please contact our Orders Department at 719.635.5200 ext. 419.

- Do you keep records of Basic Skills member tests/levels?
  No. It is up to your program how you want to keep track of this information. Test and evaluation sheets are available upon request. Certificates of Achievements can be ordered as well.

- Who is my area representative?
  The Basic Skills subcommittee has representatives from around the country and each region has one area representative for Basic Skills competition approvals. The list is in the U.S. Figure Skating Directory and available online.

- Is there a Basic Skills web site?
  Yes, you can find all of the information available for directors, instructors, skaters and parents on usfigureskating.org then click “Programs” then “Basic Skills”.

- Can I download forms? If so, where?
  Contacts/skating directors can download Program Info Update Forms, Transmittal Forms, Basic Skills Price Lists and more at http://www.usfigureskating.org/Programs.asp?id=118.

- Why do renewal members only receive a year and member patch?
  The purpose of the record book is so a skater can keep track of his/her progress through his/her Basic Skills lessons. Therefore, only new Basic Skills members receive a record book. Only if the record book is updated (i.e. curriculum changes) will we issue all renewal members a new record book the season it is released.
Tips From Colleagues

Tips from a Basic Skills Program survey of directors that all earned a membership recognition award:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connect with parents</th>
<th>Offer scholarship programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Multi-tiered” marketing strategies</td>
<td>Send flyers through schools or donate materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Basic Skills competitions and events</td>
<td>Create a program newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer discounts or incentives</td>
<td>Frequently evaluate staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online registration</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAKE IT FUN!**

★ **Tips for Staying Organized:**

- Post new policies.
- Divide classes on the ice by color.
- Hold regular meetings with all leadership.
- Use binders per semester/session.
- Order stamps instead of having instructors sign books.
- Let parents know to put names on record books and keep in skating bags.
- Record books can be given out when skaters enroll.
- Contact headquarters to arrange this.
- Set aside organization time every week.
- Create priority lists to determine your most important tasks and avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- Use e-mail, online registration and a well-trained front-desk staff to cut down on time director must spend on the phone.
- Use a comprehensive voice mail message giving basic information on a line devoted to Basic Skills.
- Have well-trained greeters at a registration or welcoming table to serve as “face” of the program.

Look outside of skating. KEEP THE PULSE and evaluate. Learn to accept criticism gracefully. A well-trained, empowered staff goes a long way to improve the quality of your program and makes your job easier.

★ **Other tips from directors:**

- Don’t be afraid to look outside of skating for leadership ideas and inspiration. Things like program ideas, marketing and business practices can be well informed by other industries.
- As a director and as a leader, it is your responsibility to make it easy for the staff to succeed and reach its full potential. Mentor each staff member to reach beyond their comfort zone and surpass what they thought were their capabilities. The development of coaches is personally rewarding and has long-term implications for the program.
- Make friends with the skating club, but don’t run the skating club. Especially if there is a relatively new club, they will be looking for lots of guidance, and the first place they will look is to you as the skating director. It is appropriate to offer advice and help where you can, but it would be very easy to get too involved and end up running everything.
- We have to target arena managers as a consumer group and make them want us to be on their ice for their public. It’s a major opportunity. Rinks with support from the managers and owners thrive!
- I made it my policy not to take on any new students unless all my other coaches were full or if I were specifically requested by a parent and no other coach would fit their needs. My job was to grow a program, not grow my own clientele. I think this is a pretty fair policy for any skating director, whether full or part time. If you have done your job as a director well, all the coaches in your rink are “the best,” and any one of them should be able to work with any new skater who is looking for private lessons. Of course, some kids and coaches don’t mesh for various reasons, but it should be okay for most kids coming out of Basic Skills to work with just about any coach at the rink.
- Ideally, all your coaches should have full schedules, whether full or part time. If they don’t, you need to evaluate if you have too many coaches on staff.
Your Notes and Tips

Record them here and e-mail them to us!

Acknowledgements

The Director Handbook was created and complied by Carey Tinkelenberg. Thank you to the following groups and individuals for your contributions to this resource: U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Committee, Susi Wehrli-McLaughlin, Jill Haubert, Katie Moose, Michael Masionis, Paul Paprocki, B.L. Wylie, Amy Vorhaben, Carol Rossignol, Thomas Hickey, directors at the May 2009 Overland Park, Kan., workshop, and the staff of the Northfield Skating School.
1. Do we need to exist?
2. If so, why?
3. What is our image?
4. What would we like our image to be?
5. What impact have we had?
6. What impact would we like to have?
7. Whom do we serve?
8. What are the needs of our constituents?
9. What do we do?
10. What programs are going to be obsolete?
11. What programs are we going to need to add?
12. How well do we discontinue programs?
13. What are our strengths?
14. What are our weaknesses?
15. What are the threats facing us?
16. What are our opportunities?
17. What trends are taking place that will affect us?
18. Who is our competition?
19. What is our strategic advantage?
20. What is the vision for the group?

Reprinted with permission from, Club Leadership Development, a publication of BoardSource, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. For more information about BoardSource, call 800-883-6262 or visit www.boardsource.org. BoardSource © 2002. This text may not be reproduced without written permission from BoardSource.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Waiver and Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement ("Agreement")

In consideration of participating in ______________ activities, I represent that I understand the nature of figure skating activities ("activity") and that I am qualified, in good health and in proper physical condition to participate in such "activity". I acknowledge that if I believe event conditions are unsafe, I will immediately discontinue participation in the "activity".

I fully understand that this "activity" involves risks of serious bodily injury, including permanent disability, paralysis and death, which may be caused by my own actions, or inactions, those of others participating in the "activity", the conditions in which the "activity" takes place, or the negligence of the "releasees" named below; and that there may be other risks either not known to me or not readily foreseeable at this time; and I fully accept and assume all such risks and all responsibility for losses, costs, and damages I incur as a result of my participation in the "activity".

I hereby release, discharge, and covenant not to sue the ______________________________, United States Figure Skating, its directors, officers, administrators, sponsors, volunteers, agents, employees, staff, instructors, trainers, other participants and if applicable, owners and lessors of premises on which the "activity" takes place (each considered one of the "Releasees" herein) from all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages on my account caused or alleged to be caused in whole or in part by the negligence of the "releasees" or otherwise, including negligent rescue operations; and I further agree that if, despite this release, waiver of liability, and assumption of risk, I, or anyone on my behalf, makes a claim against any of the Releasees, I will indemnify, save, and hold harmless each of the releasees from any loss, liability, damage, or cost which any may incur as the result of such claim.

The ______________________________ has the right, but not the obligation, to provide rules, regulations and/or ice monitors for Club Ice. We hereby acknowledge that the ______________________________ shall not be responsible for the supervision of the members at Club Ice.

I have read this RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY, ASSUMPTION OF RISK, AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT, understand that I have given up substantial rights by signing it and have signed it freely and without any inducement or assurance of any nature and intend it to be a complete and unconditional release of all liability to the greatest extent allowed by law and agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid, the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

__________________________________________  ______________________________
Printed Name of Participant  		 Date

Signature of Participant
PARENTAL CONSENT AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

I, the minor’s parent and/or legal guardian, understand the nature of the above referenced activities and the minor’s experience and capabilities and believe the minor to be qualified to participate in such “activity”. I hereby release, discharge, covenant not to sue and AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND SAVE AND HOLD HARMLESS each of the Releasees from all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages on the minor’s account caused or alleged to have been caused in whole or in part by the negligence of the Releasees or otherwise, including negligent rescue operations, and further agree that if, despite this release, I, the minor, or anyone on the minor’s behalf makes a claims against any of the above Releasees, I WILL INDEMNIFY, SAVE AND HOLD HARMLESS each of the Releasees from any litigation expenses, attorney fees, loss liability, damage, or cost any Releasees may incur as the result of any such claim.

________________________________________
Date _______________________________

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

________________________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian

Consent for Medical Attention or Treatment

I certify that I, the member, or I, the parent/guardian of said participant, give my consent to the and the facility the activities are taking place in and their staff and to members of the ________________________and the facility the activities are taking place in and their Board of Directors and volunteers to obtain medical care from any licensed physician, hospital or clinic, including transportation and emergency medical services, for myself/ourselves and/or said participant for any injury that could arise from participation in these activities.

_________________________ ___________________________
Name of 1st Minor Child Member (please print) Name of 2nd Minor Child Member (please print)

_________________________ ___________________________
Name(s) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) (please print)

_________________________ ___________________________
1st Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_________________________ ___________________________
2nd Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_________________________ ___________________________
Name of 1st Adult Member (please print)

_________________________ ___________________________
1st Adult Member Signature Date

_________________________ ___________________________
Name of 2nd Adult Member (please print)

_________________________ ___________________________
2nd Adult Member Signature Date

This Consent for Medical Attention shall be binding and effective for the ______-____ membership year of _________________________________.

Basic Skills Program

Figure Skating Club
Waiver Release Sample
Basic Skills Transmittal Form

Skating Director/Contact:
To avoid delays in processing, please complete & include this transmittal form with each mailing of registration forms for the 2014 season. Allow 2-4 weeks for your registrations to be processed & for materials to be shipped. For a faster turn-around time, contact us to register your members online!

Mail this form, registrations & payment/P.O. to:
U.S. Figure Skating | 20 First Street | Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Basic Skills Contact:
☐ Check here if you are the assistant contact we have on file for this program.

MAILING ADDRESS VERIFICATION. Please make sure that our records are up to date.
Contact us immediately with any program/contact changes at 719.635.5200 or tspears@usfigureskating.org.

Street: ________________________________
City: ___________________ State: ________ Zip Code: __________

ENCLOSED ARE NEW/RENEWAL REGISTRATIONS FOR:

______ # Skaters/Participants
+ ______# Instructors/Skating Director
= ______ # Total Registrations Enclosed @ $12.00 each = $______ Total Membership Dues

+ $______ Shipping & Handling

+ $______ Administrative Fee (See Table below)

= $________

PAYMENT TYPE ENCLOSED:
[ ] Check/M.O. # _______________
[ ] Purchase Order # _______________
[ ] Credit Card Exp. Date ___________
# _______________
[ ] Security Code _______________
Cardholder: ___________________
Billing Address: ___________________

Shipping & Handling Table
Fees based on total membership dues
AK & HI add $10 to your shipping cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transaction Amount</th>
<th>Administrative Fee paying by card</th>
<th>Administrative Fee paying by Echeck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.01 - $33.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$33.01 - $100.00</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100.01 - $250.00</td>
<td>$7.50</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250.01 - $500.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500.01 - $1000.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1000.01 - $2000.00</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2000.00 - $3000.00</td>
<td>$90.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3000.01 - $4000.00</td>
<td>$120.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4000.01 - $5000.00</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5000.01+</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>OR $1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: If mailing in registrations and paying by credit card, the above applicable Administrative fee will apply. If mailing a check or if you are set up to utilize a PO, there is no fee.

If you use the online portal to register your members, there will be an administration fee that allows U.S. Figure Skating to deliver important services via the Internet. The administrative fee is calculated based on the table below. Alternatively, you must pay by E-check (electronic check) with a $1.00 fee per transaction instead of incurring the administrative fee. To use this option, on the payment screen after you input your registrations, select “Check” from the drop-down menu to submit payment via an electronic check.
APPROVAL PROCEDURE
FOR HOSTING A BASIC SKILLS COMPETITION

To improve the quality and uniformity of the Basic Skills Competitions, the Basic Skills Sub-Committee requires all Basic Skills Competitions to follow the guidelines as set forth in the Basic Skills Competition Manual.

The APPOINTED Basic Skills representative for your region must approve these competitions before the announcement is made public.

Appointed Regional Basic Skills Competition Approval Reps:

Upper Great Lakes: Brigitte Carlson Roquet brig811@aol.com
Southwest: Pam Nearhoof bladenboot64@aol.com
Eastern Great Lakes: Suzy Malloure MalKidsx4@aol.com
New England: Michael Masionis IceXpo@aol.com
Northwest Pacific: Leslie Albright sk8inginstructor@msn.com
Central Pacific: Katherine Moose sk8tiemoose@yahoo.com
Southwest Pacific: Julie Patterson juliep@coyotesice.com
North Atlantic: John Simon skatejohnsimon@frontiernet.net
South Atlantic: Kent Johnson sk8johnson@hotmail.com

Steps to follow for approval:

1. Fill out the Basic Skills Competition approval request form.
2. Email a copy of your competition announcement, application and approval request form to the approval representative for your region at least 30 days prior to the distribution of competition materials.
3. Please do not distribute the announcement before obtaining approval.
4. U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters will issue your competition an official approval certificate and post your competition on the U.S. Figure Skating website.
5. Display the certificate throughout the duration of the competition.

Please contact Headquarters if you have any questions about hosting a Basic Skills Competition at 719.635.5200 or www.usfigureskating.org.
U.S. FIGURE SKATING BASIC SKILLS COMPETITION APPROVAL REQUEST FORM

Please complete this form and send it with a copy of your competition announcement to your U.S. Figure Skating Regional Basic Skills Approval representatives for approval. Once approved, your competition information will be posted on the U.S. Figure Skating website.

Title of Competition:
_______________________________________________________________________________

Hosting Club/Program Name:
_______________________________________________________________________________

Hosting Club/Program U.S. Figure Skating Number: __________

Competition Dates: ____________________________

Type of Competition (please circle one):    Open         In House

Competition Contact: _____________________________________________________________

Mailing Address:_________________________________________________________________
City: _______________________________ State:  ___________ Zip:  _____________________

Phone: (          ) ______________________________E-mail: _______________________

FACILITY INFORMATION:

Name of Facility:  _______________________________________________________________
Address________________________________________________________________________

City: ________________________________State:  __________ Zip:  ______________________

Signature                      Date
U.S. FIGURE SKATING
BASIC SKILLS
Performance Approval Application Form

Please complete this form and send it to headquarters for approval with the application fee of $25.00.

Hosting Program Name: ______________________________ Program #: __________

Title of Performance: ____________________________________________________________________________

Type of Performance (circle one): Ice Show/Carnival Exhibition Recital Other

Performance Dates: _____________________________________

Name of Facility: _______________________________________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: _______ Zip: ____________________

Director/Contact: ______________________________ Member #: ______________

Mailing Address: _______________________________________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: _______ Zip: ____________________

Daytime Phone: (____)____________________ E-mail Address:______________________________

List of invited guest skaters: (attach an additional page if necessary)

Name ________________________________ Member # __________________________

Name ________________________________ Member # __________________________

Name ________________________________ Member # __________________________

Name ________________________________ Member # __________________________

Name ________________________________ Member # __________________________

Name ________________________________ Member # __________________________

List of invited guest skaters: (attach an additional page if necessary)

Payment Information

___Cash ___Credit Card #

___Check Name on Card Exp Date Sec. Code

Billing Address

BASIC SKILLS PERFORMANCE APPROVED BY
(for headquarters/committee use only)

Name: __________________________ Date: ____________________

Signature: __________________________ Member #: ______________
Basic Skills Transmittal Form


Skating Director/Contact:
To avoid delays in processing, please complete & include this transmittal form with each mailing of registration forms for the 2012 season. Allow 2-4 weeks for your registrations to be processed & for materials to be shipped. For a faster turn-around time, contact us to register your members online!

Mail this form, registrations & payment/P.O. to:
U.S. Figure Skating | 20 First Street | Colorado Springs, CO 80906

PROGRAM/CLUB NAME _____________________________________________________________  PROGRAM # __________

Basic Skills Contact: ____________________________________________________________

☐ Check here if you are the assistant contact we have on file for this program.

MAILING ADDRESS VERIFICATION. Please make sure that our records are up to date.
Contact us immediately with any program/contact changes at 719.635.5200 or cpacheco@usfigureskating.org.

Street: _______________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________ State: ________ Zip Code: ____________

ENCLOSED ARE NEW/RENEWAL REGISTRATIONS FOR:

_____ # Skaters/Participants
+ _____ # Instructors/Skating Director
= _____ # Total Registrations Enclosed @ $12.00 each = $______ Total Membership Dues

+ $______ Shipping & Handling
= $________ TOTAL DUE

If you use the online portal to register your members, there will be an administration fee that allows U.S. Figure Skating to deliver important services via the Internet. The administrative fee is calculated based on the table below. Alternatively, you may pay by E-check (electronic check) with a $1 fee per transaction instead of incurring the administrative fee. To use this option, on the payment screen after you input your registrations, select “Check” from the drop-down menu to submit payment via an electronic check.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transaction Amount</th>
<th>Administrative Fee</th>
<th>E-check Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.01–$33.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$33.01–$100.00</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100.01–$250.00</td>
<td>$7.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250.01–$500.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500.01–$1,000.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000.01–$2,000.00</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,000.00–$3,000.00</td>
<td>$90.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,000.01–$4,000.00</td>
<td>$120.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,000.01–$5,000.00</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000.01+</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over $1000 =

Note: If mailing in registrations and paying by credit card, the above applicable Administrative Fee will apply. If mailing a check or if you are set up to utilize a PO, there is no fee.