



Skate Canada

Eastern Ontario

PARENT'S GUIDE

Passion

Spirit

Triumph

Skate Canada - Eastern Ontario
555 King St. West, Unit #2
P. O. Box 2209
Prescott, ON
K0E 1T0

Tel: 613-925-1441
Fax: 613-925-1314



www.skate-eos.on.ca

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
WHO IS THERE TO ASSIST OUR CLUB?	3
Skating Ability	4
STARSKATE	5
Skate Canada STARSkate Program	5
How is progress assessed?	5
How is it decided that it is time to try a test?	5
Evaluators	6
STARSkate Competitions	6
THE COMPETITIVE STREAM	7
Competitive tests	7
“Competitive” events at competitions	7
Qualifying Events	7
Conclusion	8
WHAT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE IN EOS FOR MY CHILD TO ASSIST IN HIS - HER DEVELOPMENT?	8
JumpStart Program	8
Region Seminars	8
Male Seminar	9
EOS Youth Camp	9
Specialty Seminar for Dance and Pairs	9
SKATER SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR TEAM EOS	9
Monitoring	9
Team Managers (Team EOS)	9
EOS Skater Support	10
Skate Canada National Teams	10
THE TRIANGULAR TEAM	10
PARENT	11
THE COACH	11
THE SKATER	12
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	12
A PARENTS CODE	12
NOTES	13

MISSION STATEMENT

“To encourage the love of skating by assisting the clubs of the Eastern Ontario Section in their efforts to provide opportunities for everyone to participate in skating for fun, interest and/or achievement”

INTRODUCTION

The Skate Canada – Eastern Ontario Parent's Guide is an initiative of the EOS Skater Development Committee in consultation with the EOS Skating Programs Committee. Its purpose is to help provide information about our sport and our programs to the parents of our athletes. It is intended to compliment the Skate Canada Parent's Handbook and to reflect the current programs and policies within Skate Canada – Eastern Ontario.

For most parents, having a child involved in the sport of figure skating is like learning a second language. When your child achieves CanSkate Stage 7, the decision is usually made to start private lessons and enter the world of test skating. With further progress, your child may express an interest in competitive skating and your coach may encourage it. New terminology and stories of excessive expense have parents confused and apprehensive. Hopefully this booklet will help you understand the various programs available and assist in planning for your child's future within the sport.

Skate Canada-Eastern Ontario would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the development of this manual by sharing their knowledge and expertise.

WHO IS THERE TO ASSIST OUR CLUB?

The Section is the bridge between the club and the national administration of Skate Canada. The Section's mandate, in part, is to provide training for volunteers (club executives etc.), administer the training and certification of coaches and officials (evaluators, judges, technical officials and data specialists), and provide developmental and competitive opportunities for all skaters.

Skate Canada-Eastern Ontario is administered by an 18 member volunteer board that strives to fulfill that mandate. The Eastern Ontario Section stretches from Whitby to the Quebec border and includes the Ottawa Valley and the Haliburton regions.

This geographic area is divided into six regions to help provide better service to the clubs. Each Region has the opportunity to elect a representative to serve on the Section Board and who is the liaison between the Section and clubs within that Region. The “Region Rep” also assists clubs in volunteer training and provides information on current programs and policies.

Of the 189,500 members within Skate Canada including 4,700 coaches, 75,000 plus reside in the province of Ontario. Except for Ontario, each Section represents a province. Ontario is divided into four Sections Eastern, Central, Northern and Western. The provincial government will only recognize one provincial body for each sport and for this purpose, the four Ontario Sections form one sport body called Skate Ontario. Skate Ontario speaks on behalf of figure skating within the Province and administers the provincial program funding. This includes the Provincial Training Camp, the participation of skating in the Ontario Winter Games and the staging camp for Canada Winter Games.

Skate Canada-Eastern Ontario has 16,570 members including 406 coaches, 93 clubs, one skating school and three varsity teams.

How do I encourage my child but still be realistic in my expectations and in assisting my child to set goals?

All skaters uniquely develop their technical skills. Development is contingent on body shape, body growth, training environment and availability of certified coaches. Some athletes will master some skills quite quickly while others will need to practise for longer periods to achieve the same results. However, speed of acquiring skills is not always the ultimate determination of success for all athletes.

Skaters also tend to plateau at times and frequently get discouraged when they do not seem to be progressing. This is a normal part of development and skaters and parents should discuss the skill development with the coach when this occurs. Athletes may have to adjust techniques to compensate for a sudden growth spurt when timing may change. Effective coaching will assist the skater to adjust their mental and physical preparation. Skating technique is not a static entity. Jumping technique develops from strong single jumps that gradually develop into the technical ability to attempt doubles and triples.

Skating is both an athletic and artistic sport. Both these components should be developed to produce a competitive athlete. Jumping prowess alone does not well serve an athlete long term in this sport.

Musicality, body awareness, expression and an ability to communicate with an audience are all important skills a competitive skater must develop. The winning performance at a Sectional championship level should be "the total package"; skater + music + technical skills + performance.

If parents are concerned about the development of their child, they should consult the coach to gain insight into his/her strategy for progressive development. Coaches are trained in lesson planning and athlete long-range development. This knowledge should assist both the skater and the parent to understand the learning process with which they are now proceeding. Coaches may also request that a skater be seen by a resource coach (highly qualified master coach) for assessment of the skater's skills and to receive additional input. Skaters at all levels should participate in an off-ice fitness program.

SKATING ABILITY

Skaters differ in capability and they should not be compared one to the other. The fact that one skater develops certain skills and masters a particular test in a few months, and another skater takes longer is not necessarily a measure of their abilities.

Most skaters have more ability in one area of skating than another, with few skaters having pronounced ability in all areas of skating. If a skater takes a little longer learning a certain level of test, it is quite possible that this same skater will move quite quickly through another level of test where the skills to be learned are different.

Following CanSkate, Skate Canada offers two standardized streams of tests and competitions for those skaters wishing to pursue figure skating: the STARSkate program and the Competitive stream. Usually skaters start in the STARSkate program and as they progress decide to remain in that or elect to pursue the more competitive route.

STARSKATE

The STARSkate stream provides a structure of tests which can assist in measuring the development and progress of the recreational skater.

SKATE CANADA STARSKATE PROGRAM

Skating Skills	Freestyle	Dance	Interpretive
Preliminary	Preliminary	Preliminary	Introductory
Junior Bronze	Junior Bronze	Junior Bronze	Bronze
Senior Bronze	Senior Bronze	Senior Bronze	Silver
Junior Silver	Junior Silver	Junior Silver	Gold
Senior Silver	Senior Silver	Senior Silver	
Gold	Gold	Gold	
		Diamond	

Most Free Skate tests are offered in two parts, the “elements” and the “program” which is choreographed and skated to music. These can be tried separately or at the same test day. A skater can progress through the elements portion, or the program portion independent of the other portion. However, in order to get credit for the Free Skate test, they must have passed the complete test.

The skater may also progress through a series of tests in other disciplines: Dance tests (there are usually at least three individual dances in each level of dance) including Creative Dance; Interpretive tests, and Skating Skills tests.

HOW IS PROGRESS ASSESSED?

Under this test system, tests are evaluated by one person (an Evaluator) who assesses a skater’s proficiency against a standard using a word scale (excellent, good, satisfactory, or needs improvement) identifying skills performed well and those requiring further development. Such standards are listed in the Manual for Evaluators, a copy of which is owned by every evaluator and coach.

This system allows for a close rapport between the evaluator and the skater and is, therefore, more conducive to a fairly relaxed atmosphere during the skating of a test. It also allows improved communication between evaluator, skater and coach, allowing them to work together as a team.

HOW IS IT DECIDED THAT IT IS TIME TO TRY A TEST?

A test should never be attempted until the skater consistently exceeds, in regular practice, the listed standards for a particular level of test. The reason for this is that, on test days, most skaters are somewhat nervous. Therefore, it is quite likely that their quality of skating at test day will fall a little short of their normal level of performance during practice. If they attempt a test before their ability for skating this particular test has been fully developed, it is more than likely that they will not succeed and therefore be discouraged.

As a rule, it takes many months of diligent practice before a skater is ready to try a test. It is a very poor idea to try a test “just for experience”. The practice of skaters trying tests before they have had a chance to succeed takes up expensive ice time and ties up evaluators’ valuable time. It also undermines the self-confidence of the skater.

One of the basic principles of good teaching is to pave a skater's path of progress to his/her ultimate skating goal with a series of small successes and a minimum of setbacks. By trying a test before being fully ready, a skater will almost certainly experience a sense of discouragement and defeat when told that the result of the test is "retry".

At times, parents feel that a child certainly must have spent enough time practising for certain test and wish their child to be tested. The coach should resist bowing to parental pressure and put the test in although he/she personally feels the skater is not ready. In such a situation, the skater is almost always the unfortunate loser.

EVALUATORS

All evaluators are volunteers. They receive no remuneration for their work but are reimbursed for their expenses. It takes many years to train as an evaluator and not many people can give so freely of their time. As a result of this, we have a chronic shortage of evaluators.

Because of this problem, it is often necessary for clubs to hold their test days in conjunction with other clubs (centralization) and to also limit their number of test days.

STARSKATE COMPETITIONS

In addition to tests, there are many invitational competitions available for STARSkaters. The eligibility for different levels of competition is usually based on test level and sometimes include an age qualification. Each competition will publish an "announcement" which will detail the level of events and qualifications (rules). Eastern Ontario annually offers **EOSIC** (Eastern Ontario STARSkate Invitational Competition) which is open to all STARSkaters in the Section. Skaters in the competitive stream are not eligible – please refer to the EOSIC competition announcement for eligibility requirements. Skaters may qualify from EOSIC to the Trillium STARSkate Championships which is the Provincial level STARSkate Championships or to the National STARSkate Championships. Additional events such as the Biathlon and Triathlon are also offered at EOSIC.

At EOSIC, for skaters at the Juvenile level and up, certain restrictions are applied which excludes skaters from competing in the same discipline at both Sectionals and the STARSkate Championships. The rationale being that skaters who compete at Sectionals have entered the competitive stream and hence do not fit the objectives of the STARSkate program. Please Note: Competitive skaters are only those who intend to compete at Sectionals and higher at the Juvenile to Senior events during the current year. Pre Juvenile skaters are considered at the "pre competitive" level and are not limited to events at EOSIC. The Skate Canada membership year starts on September 1st and skaters must declare their intention to be either part of the STARSkate or Competitive stream, for that year, at that time.

Varsity (Collegiate) teams training for the Ontario University Association Championships, High Schools and Adult programs all follow the STARSkate program.

There are also Synchronized skating programs which offer a team aspect of the sport in both competitive and recreational (Festival) streams. Eligibility for competitive teams is based on the STARSkate system as well as age. Festival teams have more lenient prerequisites.

THE COMPETITIVE STREAM

There are three competitive disciplines: *Singles, Pairs and Dance*

And each discipline has the following levels of tests and competition:

- Juvenile
- Pre-Novice
- Novice
- Junior
- Senior

COMPETITIVE TESTS

In order to compete in the Juvenile to Senior levels of all disciplines, skaters must first pass a qualifying test, known as a “competitive test”. These tests may be tried by a panel of three competitive judges at a test day or during a competition. Judges, like evaluators are also volunteers who have taken years to achieve their level of competence and as a result they too are in short supply. In Eastern Ontario we also offer Pre-Juvenile level of competition and skaters qualify for this using STARSkate tests. Skaters who pass a competitive singles test are credited with the comparable test in the STARSkate test stream. Skate Canada Rule Book 4000 E 3.1.

“COMPETITIVE” EVENTS AT COMPETITIONS

Currently, in most competitions within the Section level, the first skater in the event usually is used as the standard for the event. All subsequent skaters’ performances are assessed as being better or worse than the first skater’s and are marked on a scale of 0 to 6.0 depending on the skating performance of each individual skater. This system is referred to as OBO.

In 2004, the International Skating Union (ISU) approved a new judging system called "Cumulative Point Calculation" (CPC) that is used in Canada for the qualifying events which include Sectionals, The Eastern Challenge, Junior Nationals and the Canadian Championships as well as competitive events at certain designated invitational competitions. Gradually in succeeding years, all competitions will use the new system and it will eventually also be used in the STARSkate system.

In Eastern Ontario some competitions offer STARSkate events only, and some offer a combination of STARSkate and Competitive events.

QUALIFYING EVENTS

Qualifying events or competitions are called so because they are used to qualify skaters for a higher level of competition. Each of the thirteen Skate Canada Sections offers a “Sectional” competition usually in November. Skaters placing in the top 4 in the Pre Novice to Junior levels then qualify for the Eastern Challenge, where the skaters compete against skaters from Central Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and PEI. Junior level skaters placing in the top 10 or top half at the Challenge will proceed to the Canadian Championships.

Senior level skaters compete in a qualifying round at the Challenge against skaters from across the country and from all Sections. The top 18 in the men’s and ladies events as well as the top 12 pair teams and the top 15 dance teams will proceed to Canadians. These numbers include byes which are awarded by Skate Canada based on international assignments.

Skaters placing first in all Juvenile disciplines (singles men and ladies, pairs and dance) at Sectionals qualify to compete at Junior Nationals. Joining the Juveniles are those placing in the top 8 or top third in the Pre Novice and Novice events at the Challenge.

CONCLUSION

Both Skate Canada streams, whether the STARSkate system or the Competitive system, have been designed with the skaters progress and well-being in mind. They are constantly being monitored and fine-tuned. However, in order for the system to work to the advantage of the skaters, the cooperation of all involved (coaches, parents, skaters, evaluators or judges) must be assured.

Ability should not be the only factor when a skater and his/her family and coach discuss which route the skater should pursue. Factors such as dedication, time commitment as well as financial considerations should also be taken into account. A skater may decide on an annual basis which stream works best so a commitment may not necessarily be a permanent choice. Both streams provide wonderful developmental and competitive opportunities for the athlete as well as an association with one of the most well respected sport bodies in the world – Skate Canada!

WHAT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE IN EOS FOR MY CHILD TO ASSIST IN HIS - HER DEVELOPMENT?

JUMPSTART PROGRAM

This program is offered to Pre Preliminary and Preliminary skaters in the STARSkate program. It is part of the Skating Programs portfolio.

In November there are usually two or three seminars held at different locations across the Section. At the first stage of the program, skaters are assessed by a high level coach. The program is open to all skaters who qualify as below:

Pre-Preliminary

Ladies: 9 years & under

Men: 10 years & under

Preliminary

Ladies: 10 years & under

Men: 11 years & under

Skaters will be divided into groups by age and ability for one hour on-ice and one hour off-ice. Parents will be invited to participate in a parent information session.

Selected skaters will be asked to compete at EOSIC at their own expense where they will be monitored. Based on their performance (not results) at EOSIC as well as the seminar assessment, a final 16-20 skaters will be selected for the JumpStart team.

This team of skaters will be invited to a seminar at no expense in March with a top level coach and/or elite skater and given a “JumpStart Team” vest which will identify them as a member of the JumpStart Team. Their progress will be tracked at succeeding competitions for possible consideration in other competitive programs when they reach the Pre-Juvenile Competitive level.

REGION SEMINARS

These one-day seminars take place in February/March depending on the availability of the conductors. They are for STARSkaters from the Preliminary level and above.

The seminars provide an opportunity for skaters to be exposed to new training concepts or review established techniques with high level instructors. Off ice classes such as movement, nutrition, fitness and mental preparation may also be offered.

MALE SEMINAR

This seminar targets male skaters of all ages and levels in EOS. It is a one day clinic in January/February offering both on-ice and off-ice sessions. A highly qualified male coach and demonstrator will act as the seminar on ice conductors.

This provides an opportunity for male skaters to meet and interact with other male skaters in the Section.

EOS YOUTH CAMP

The EOS Youth Camp is a program for the top 25 Pre-Juvenile and Juvenile level skaters identified by protocol (placement at Sectionals), and is by invitation only. Some young Pre-Novice skaters may also be invited. High level coach conductors and other resource personnel offer on and off ice sessions to assist young competitive skaters enhance their competitive performance, improve technical skills and provide motivation for the competitive season. This seminar is very intense and introduces skaters to a high level training atmosphere. Coach attendance is expected and parents are invited to attend the sessions as well.

A nominal registration fee is charged which covers a very small portion of the costs per skater. The Section covers the balance. This annual seminar is situated at suitable facilities across the section.

SPECIALTY SEMINAR FOR DANCE AND PAIRS

The Section offers support to Pair and Dance teams as required on an annual basis. The type of support and/or opportunities may vary from year to year.

SKATER SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR TEAM EOS

MONITORING

Skaters who competed at the Eastern Challenge and National events are requested to attend a summer competition (preferably Minto Summer Skate) and Figure 8 Autumn Skate. Skate Ontario provides a High Performance Athlete Monitoring program – please refer to the Skate Ontario website for details. The EOS Skater Development Chair will be on site at Minto and Figure 8 Autumn Skate and may request any additional monitoring interviews as required. A copy of the skaters' reports will be retained on file with the Section.

TEAM MANAGERS (TEAM EOS)

The Section provides Team Managers and a Team Room for skaters at the Challenge, Junior Nationals and Canadians. The Eastern Ontario Team (Team EOS) consists of skaters placing 1st to 4th in the Pre-Novice to Senior levels and the top one in Juvenile in all disciplines (singles, pairs and dance) at the Eastern Ontario Sectional Championships.

Following the posting of the final event results at the Sectional Championships, information and registration sessions are held for team members, parents and coaches. Skaters must bring to the meeting, detailed information about the music for all their programs. This form is sent to all competitors with their Sectional confirmation.

Registrations will not be accepted without this information so it is very important that skaters completely fill in the music form and bring it with them to the Sectional Championships.

Team leaders are assigned to supervise and assist athletes and coaches at the Eastern Challenge, Junior Nationals and Canadians Team leaders are trained volunteers who give of their free time to attend these competitions. Team managers are responsible for:

- Arranging accommodation for the skaters and coaches
- Registering the skaters for the Challenge and Junior Nationals
- Providing a team room with cold breakfast foods and nutritious light snacks
- Communications during the event – information from the organizing committee and Technical Representative
- Supporting coaching decisions for the athlete: curfews, rest periods etc.
- Ensuring all athletes understand practice and competition schedules and the transportation schedules
- Attending all practices
- Supervising medical attention for illness or injury
- Supporting athletes and coaches during the skater's competitive events
- Providing information and support to parents.

The organizing committee provides travel arrangements between the host hotel and the arenas. This is free for the skaters, coaches and team managers. Parents are permitted to purchase tickets for transportation.

EOS SKATER SUPPORT

Please refer to the “Skater Support” document which is posted on the Skate Canada-Eastern Ontario web site for details of the financial support provided for competitive skaters

SKATE CANADA NATIONAL TEAMS

Skate Canada provides training, sport sciences, competitive, financial and administrative support to National Team members.

The positions on the National team will be determined by the final results at the most recent Canadian and Junior National Championships. This is unrelated to the selection of skaters/teams for international assignments. There are specific selection criteria for each of those events.

Senior National Team – top five skaters/teams in all disciplines

Junior National Team – top five skaters/teams in all disciplines

*National Developmental Team – top three Novice and top three Pre-Novice skaters/teams in all disciplines
(Additional information about the National Teams can be found on the Skate Canada website)*

THE TRIANGULAR TEAM

The development of an athlete is a shared responsibility. Our “Triangular Team” must work together to build effective communication, trust, and a professional relationship.

To ensure your skater has this working team we will look at the responsibilities of each member.

PARENT

We have all listened to the parent in the lobby exclaim, “I don’t understand this sport all I do is pay the bills”. We as adults must ensure we are not the “weakest link” in the skater’s triangle.

Parents are so often overwhelmed by the technical jargon of the sport that they feel they are on the sidelines; cheering the successes, consoling the disappointments, and paying the bills.

It is important for the parent to:

Understand the Development of an Athlete

This knowledge will prevent unrealistic expectations and allows the parent to encourage the child when they reach plateaus or are experiencing a downturn due to growth or injury. It is important for skaters to maintain a balance in all aspects of their lives.

Understand the Structure and the Programs of Skate Canada and the Section

It is important that parents make informed decisions with their skater and coach about appropriate competitive training programs, participation in competitions, and participation in programs that are offered by the Section or Skate Canada.

Be Realistic on the Progress of the Athlete

The child and the coach need your support not only when the progress is visible and immediate, but also during technical development that may seem tedious and never-ending.

Communicate Regularly with the Coach and the Skater

Communication is the key with components (partners) in the triangle. Arrange a regular time for discussion with your skater’s coach. Waiting for the coach as he or she leaves the ice surface or the arena after a skating session or calling at an inappropriate time at home is not conducive to good communication. The parent should encourage the skater to share his or her daily training experiences. The parent will gain an understanding of the child’s emotional development as well as physical technical development.

THE COACH

The coach is the professional technical expert with the team. They are a source of information and it is this expertise that both the skater and the parent should trust and rely upon.

Most competitive coaches will develop long-range plans for their skaters. Skaters at this level should also be developing long-term and short-term goals for input into the coach’s planning. These plans should be discussed regularly within the team, but especially at the beginning of the competitive season and in the spring when the skater has his or her training break. It is advisable for skaters in consultation with their coach, to develop a Yearly Training Plan. There is information and a template posted on the Eastern Ontario web site.

To facilitate better communication, many coaches have adopted the practice of setting a time frame for parental consultation once a month. Parents are then given an appropriate time when all parties can engage in a discussion that is fruitful and not hurried.

The coach’s guidance in participating in competitions should always be carefully considered. Competitions are not always selected for the potential medal. Competitions may also serve as a way of developing programs, training pre-competition physical and mental skills, and determining a sense of standard. The coach’s opinions on test days are based on knowledge of the standard for successful achievement and the correct timing for competitive development.

THE SKATER

The skater may think their only responsibility is “to skate”, but there are many ways they can also contribute to the team.

Skaters must always feel they can honestly communicate their feelings, whether technical or emotional. It is also important to remain as healthy as possible. Poor nutrition and neglect of injury prevention techniques only retard development or prevent a skater from reaching their potential.

The skater must be confident that he or she desires to be within a training program. All skaters will experience the normal disappointments and discouragement that training brings, but overall there must be a strong commitment for success both on and off the ice.

The “Triangular Team” working together can provide an athlete a positive and stimulating training environment. An athlete well coached and supported can develop meaningful life skills that all participants benefit from whatever their level of achievement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Information is available on the EOS web site www.skate-eos.on.ca as well as the Skate Canada web site www.skatecanada.ca and the Skate Ontario website www.skateontario.org

Also please check your club’s notice board or feel free to contact members of the Section’s Board of Directors (contact information is posted on the Section’s web site)

A PARENTS CODE

- I will remember that my child skates for his/her enjoyment, not mine
- I will teach my child that doing one’s best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of an event
- I will never ridicule or yell at my child for making a mistake or losing a competition. I will provide positive comments that motivate and encourage continued effort.
- I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
- I will remember that children learn best by example. I will applaud good performances by both my child and his/her competitors.
- I will show respect for my child’s competitors, because without them there would be no competition.
- I will respect the officials’ decisions and will encourage participants to do the same.
- I will respect coaches, who give their time to provide technical expertise for my child, and show appreciation for their efforts.
- I will not use bad language, nor will I harass or abuse, verbally or physically, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and team leaders.
- I will not have unrealistic expectations, but I will respect my skater’s aspirations

Please remember, sport and great parents can be a powerful and meaningful combination in the development of young people.

NOTES
