

## About Competitions

Last Updated Friday, 25 January 2013

The following is a brief overview citing my strategy and beliefs regarding skating competitions.

### Basic Skills through Pre-Juvenile

These levels are simply the BEST times for stress-free competing. Whether you get 1st place, last place, or anywhere in between; creating a positive experience and nurturing a child's love for skating needs to be the first priority of the coach and parent to ensure a long and successful career. What is a successful career? One in which a skater enjoys challenging themselves, setting goals, accomplishing goals, and is truly skating, testing, and competing because they enjoy it. Did anyone notice I did not mention WINNING? This outcome is NOT in control by the skater. The only thing that is in a skater's control is doing all that he or she can each day striving to reach a personal best.

These levels can compete at the Regional level. However, these levels DO NOT advance to further competitions as in the higher levels. These levels are considered as Non-Qualifying. A skater can get great experience competing here but it is truly not necessary because there are many local competitions for these levels throughout the year for them to skate. These levels should be exposed to a basic form of sports nutrition, off-ice training, and any discipline of dance to assist with body alignment and presentation.

### Juvenile through Intermediate

Juvenile and Intermediate levels both advance to Junior Nationals straight from Regionals. Usually the top four skaters from each level qualify to advance. These levels are considered as Qualifying levels. Skaters who make it to these levels have skated for a few years now and have learned some of the discipline required to be a competitor. They have passed multiple tests in both Field Moves and Freestyle and most likely competed several times. At this point, the skater, coach, and parents probably have a fairly good idea of where the strengths and weaknesses exist. The best skaters in these levels typically have all of the double jumps and in some cases a double axel. This is usually the biggest hurdle in skating. Unfortunately, the majority of skaters NEVER get a double axel. It requires a complete understanding and execution of rhythm, technique, and body awareness. The muscle memory a skater from previous years of skating plays a critical role here. A skater who is not a detail oriented or does not have body awareness will have extreme difficulty on this jump. A double axel takes most skaters between one and two years to land with full rotation. I know of skaters who have taken four years to get this jump. A double axel doesn't mean everything... recently at "Junior Nationals", the Intermediate Champion did not even attempt a double axel.

At these levels the competition can be very difficult because of the number of skaters involved. At some of the recent Regionals, the Qualifying (first) Round has had more than 100 skaters in both the Juvenile and Intermediate levels. This makes it very difficult to "break through". It can be done if you are very consistent and stand out with exceptional skating. The IJS is also a new concept to these skaters. Understanding how to maximize your score under the IJS can take these skaters a while to learn. Typically the top 4 from each of the 9 Regions will go to Junior Nationals from here.

Juvenile and Intermediate competitors daily regimen should include sports nutrition, off-ice training and dance .

## Novice through Senior

This is the "big league" of figure skating. These skaters have made it through the developmental phases and are testing themselves against the IJS and learning to be risk takers under pressure. These levels require a complete dedication to the sport if the skater wants to be truly competitive. All events will be IJS and there is no room for the conservative competitor. All of the Novice and up competitors at the National level will have a consistent double axel and triple jumps. Junior and Senior skaters will have all of the triples. The top 4 skaters from Novice through Senior at Regionals will advance to Sectionals. The top 4 skaters from Novice through Senior at Sectionals will then advance to Nationals. The top skaters from Nationals will then be selected by the International Committee to participate in International competitions representing the USA.

The age restrictions and music requirements for each level is as follows:

Level  
Description  
Music Requirement / Length

No Test  
No age restriction  
1:30 +/- 10 seconds

Pre-Preliminary  
No age restriction  
1:30 +/- 10 seconds

Preliminary  
No age restriction

1:30 +/- 10 seconds

Pre-Juvenile

No age restriction

2:00 +/- 10 seconds

Open Juvenile

Must be 13 years of age or older as of Sept. 1 prior to the Non-Qualifying Regional Championships

2:15 +/- 10 seconds

Juvenile

Must be under the age of 13 as of Sept. 1 prior to the Regional Championships

2:15 +/- 10 seconds

Intermediate

Must be under the age of 18 as of Sept. 1 prior to the Regional Championships

Short 2:00 max - Long 2:30 +/- 10 seconds

Novice

No age restriction

Ladies: Short 2:30 max - Long 3:00 +/- 10 seconds

Men: Short 2:30 max - Long 3:30 +/- 10 seconds

Junior

No age restriction

Ladies: Short 2:50 max - Long 3:30 +/- 10 seconds

Men: Short 2:50 max - Long 4:00 +/- 10 seconds

Senior

No age restriction

Ladies: Short 2:50 max - Long 4:00 +/- 10 seconds

Men: Short 2:50 max - Long 4:30 +/- 10 seconds

