



# **Regional Racing Program Bulletin**

**Updated January 2025**

# ONTARIO REGIONAL MEETS

## Introduction

Speed Skating Ontario (SSO) remains focused on the need for improved skater and racer development for skaters aged 4-8 across the province, which includes technique, speed, fitness, and racing tactics. SSO also recognizes the need to welcome and attract new racers at the grassroots level as we build the speed skating community. To do so, we need to provide fun introductory racing opportunities. There is a need to ensure young skaters and families are not travelling excessive amounts or spending excessive time in the arena to access quality competitions.

## Ontario Regional Meet Purposes

- Provide racing in 3 regions across the province for racers aged 4-8 years old and other novice skaters.
- Limit the amount of competition travel and time spent in the arena for families of skaters in this age group.
- Give skaters a local racing experience with a skater pool that includes skaters from other Clubs.
- Provide simple structured meets run by Clubs.
- Introduce skaters to meet formats and racing skills.
- Use regular practice times for competitions, where possible.
- Require little to no certified officials. Encourage parents to volunteer.
- Allow skaters, in a fun format, to practice new skills learned.
- Allow skaters to be introduced to developmentally appropriate distances.
- Allow skaters to challenge themselves individually.
- Provide a feeling of social interaction and belonging to a team.
- Provide an opportunity to support others in the community in a meaningful way.
- Provide an opportunity for older skaters to take on leadership roles such as coaching or officiating.
- Provide an opportunity for new volunteers and families to gain experience at meets in preparation for higher level competitions.

The recommended racing formats provided in this bulletin aim to maximize resources, shorten meet set up and takedown times, limit the use of complicated equipment and software, shorten the length of time spent in the arena, and eliminate the need for volunteer snacks and lunches. Our research has shown that SSO Clubs have excellent ideas to deliver fun and efficient competitions that meet the needs of their members. The recommended racing formats in this bulletin aim to build on Clubs' existing mini meet formats.

## Regional Meet Regions

East: Ottawa, Gloucester, St. Lawrence, Kingston, Quinte, Kawartha  
Central: Durham, Markham, Newmarket, Barrie, Toronto, Brampton, Meteor  
West: Milton, Oakville, Hamilton, Niagara, Cambridge, Kitchener Waterloo, London  
Flex: Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay



## Regional Meet Format

- All races are mixed gender. Mixed gender racing increases the pool of skaters in any given group/cohort and promotes quality racing.
- Regional meets can include both individual and team events.
- Clubs can host specialty races with specific skills. Plans for specialty or team racing should be shared in advance of the meet so that coaches can introduce skills to be practiced prior to the event.
- Clubs should consider asking older skaters to assist with meets for younger skaters.
- All distances are run as finals.
- The Modified False Start Rule should be used: the first false start results in the skater moving 2m back and to the outside lane. Subsequent false start(s) should NOT result in penalty, and the skater should also move 2m back and to the outside lane.

## Regional Meet Hosting Requirements

- The Host Club must submit a Regional Meet Sanction request which includes a Meet Announcement with SSO 2-3 weeks prior to event. Sanction requests can be made [HERE](#)
- The Host Club is encouraged to make a volunteer sign-up sheet.
- 2-4 hours of ice time.
- Recommended number of skaters is 60 to ensure skaters get lots of racing.
- A designated volunteer who is currently certified with First Aid and CPR training must be present at all times skaters are on the ice.
- A minimum of three 100m tracks marked in the ice. A surveyed track is preferred but not required.
- Level 2 padding.
- One Level 2 Official must be present at the meet, where possible. In the absence of one Level 2 Official, an experienced Official from Provincial or Elite Circuit competitions should be present.

## Regional Meet Officials and Volunteers

SSO recommends the following officials and volunteers for Regional Meets:

One referee, one starter, 4-6 track stewards, timers/line judges as needed, 1-2 recorders, 1-2 clerks of the course.

The template Regional Meet Recording Spreadsheet can be viewed [HERE](#). Host Clubs may request access to the sheet from SSO and create their own copy to use for their Regional Meet.

## Racing Times from Regional Meets

Times from Regional Meets are recorded for development purposes, not ranking. All times should be manual and DO NOT need 0.2 seconds added. Times will be shared on an SSO Skater's Best Time List posted on the SSO website. Clubs hosting Regional Meets are responsible to share the meet results with SSO and with the clubs that attend the event.

Within 1 week of the event, host Clubs must submit to SSO the fastest 200m time skated by each skater and the fastest 400m skated by each 9 year old skater.

## Additional Regional Racing Information

SSO will promote Regional Meets on the SSO website [HERE](#). Regional Meet resources will also be posted on the SSO website.

Skaters DO NOT need to upgrade their SSO membership to Competitive to participate in a Regional Meet. Skaters may participate in a Regional Meet with a Club membership.

SSO will provide Regional Racing Program certificates and stickers for skaters aged 4-8 years old at all sanctioned regional meets.

Helmets covers are available from SSO. Please contact [events@ontariospeedskating.ca](mailto:events@ontariospeedskating.ca) 2 weeks in advance if you would like to borrow the helmet covers so delivery arrangements can be made.



# Regional Meet Guidelines

<b>Ages</b>	Regional Meets are for skaters aged 4-8 years old. Clubs may host racing groups for older novice skaters at their discretion, but if the schedule is long, the racing for these novice skaters should be at a separate time from the 4-8 year old races so that the day does not become too long for the 4-8 year olds.
<b>Time allotted</b>	2-4 hours
<b>Number of participants</b>	30-60 skaters
<b>Warm-ups</b>	Off-ice warmups can be considered to save ice time for racing. This provides a learning opportunity for young skaters to practice off-ice warm up routines. On-ice warmups could be considered if time allows.
<b>Seeding</b>	Skaters should be seeded on their 200m time.
<b>Distances</b>	<p>The fastest group(s) should race: 200m x 2 and 400m x1. A longer distance (i.e. 600m or 800m) could be added if time allows.</p> <p>The next fastest group(s) should race: 200m x 2 and 300m x 1. A longer distance (i.e. 400m or 600m) could be added if time allows.</p> <p>The next fastest group(s) should race: 200m x2 and 100m x 1. A longer distance (i.e. 300 or 400m) could be added if time allows.</p> <p>The youngest or slowest groups should race: 200m x2 and 100m x2. A 50m race could also be considered in lieu of the recommended distances.</p> <p>Additional distances, special events, team events or technical training can be added as time allows. See Appendix A for suggestions.</p>
<b>Racing Format</b>	A super final format with consistent groups, rather than heat-final format, should be used. Ladder racing can also be considered (see format below)
<b>Number of distances/events</b>	3-5 events is ideal, but will depend on number of skaters and available ice time. The number of events should be maximized based on ice time available.
<b>Recording</b>	Excel spreadsheet or Google Sheet to record finishing times.
<b>Awards</b>	Every skater will receive a Regional Racing Program ribbon or prize or sticker from SSO. Clubs can provide additional awards at their discretion.

## To avoid:

- Except as described in Appendix A, clubs should avoid backwards racing on the track where possible due to safety hazards.
- Clockwise racing should be avoided unless the mats are set up appropriately for clockwise racing.

## Cohort Ladder Meet Format

If Clubs prefer to use a Ladder Meet format, cohorts of 12-18 skaters can be used, depending on total numbers.

For the first distance: skaters in each cohort are randomized into races.

For subsequent distances: "one up, one down" format as follows: (assuming 3 races of 4 skaters)

- Race A of distance 2 = the skaters who placed 1-2-3 in race A of distance 1 + the skater who placed 1<sup>st</sup> in race B of distance 1
- Race B of distance 2 = the skater who placed 4<sup>th</sup> in race A of distance 1 + the skaters who placed 2+3 in race B of distance 1 + the skater who placed 1<sup>st</sup> in race C of distance 1
- Race C of distance 2 = the skater who placed 4<sup>th</sup> in race B of distance 1 + the skaters who placed 2-3-4 in race C of distance 1

A penalized skater is placed last in their race and moves down for the next race.

# Appendix A: Special Events Suggestions

## Skills Based Racing

Skills based race examples are below in the next several sections.

### 1-Lap Race with Alternative Start

This race format emphasizes agility and quickness, balance, athleticism.

- Start options:
  - Starting from kneeling (2 knees down or 1 knee down)
  - Starting from prone position (i.e. lying with belly on ice)
  - Start skating backwards and transition to forwards once you hit the blue line
  - Backwards Crossover start with everyone facing the center of the ice (i.e. a left over right crossover)
  - Etc.

### 1-Lap Race with Alternative End

This race format emphasizes balance, positioning on blades/edges, efficient glide.

- Start options:
  - Half lap start + half lap glide in basic position
  - Half lap start + half lap glide grabbing undersides of skates
  - Cannot take any steps after half a lap

### Slalom Race

- Straight line slalom is the safest option if mats do not extend around the entire rink.
- Must have 2 feet on the ice for the whole slalom.
- Standing start from the goal line
- Skaters sprint to 1<sup>st</sup> blue line
- Skaters slalom from blue line to blue line
- Race ends at 2<sup>nd</sup> blue line.
- Each race should have 4-5 skaters.
- If possible, with facilities restrictions, multiple races can be on the ice for quick succession.
- Emphasizes edge control and balance.
- Kicking or missing a block, results in a penalty, which means the skater moves down a race for subsequent rounds.

### Hook Race

- Blocks are placed on only the far corner.
- Skaters start on goal line and sprint all the way down straightaway.
- Skaters skate the far corner and end the race at the far red line.
- Emphasizes straightaway proficiency, plus allows for one well timed pass on the corner.

### Lightning Race

- Starting on 1<sup>st</sup> blue line, skaters skate forwards to 2<sup>nd</sup> blue line, backwards to red line, forwards to 2<sup>nd</sup> blue line where the race ends
- Lanes should be clearly marked with blocks so that skaters do not come too close, or veer into another skater's path when stopping/turning.
- Kicking a block or going out of your lane results in a penalty, which means the skater moves down a race for subsequent rounds.

## Team Based Events

These events allow skaters to work on communication skills, mental skills, reactivity, starts, and endurance as they build connections with their racing community.

### Relays

- Randomize skaters in each cohort onto teams.
- 2 laps 2x each skater
  - This is easy for young skaters to remember (“2 laps, 2 times”)
  - This only works with even numbers of skaters on each team
  - Preferred number of skaters on a team is 4, but this event is possible with any number of skaters on a team, as long as the teams are evenly matched in number:
    - A group of 12 can be 3 teams of 4 (or vice versa)
    - A group of 14 can be 2 teams of 7
    - A group of 15 can be 3x5 (or vice versa)
    - A group of 16 can be 4x4
    - A group of 18 can be 6x3
- Max number of teams on the ice is 6.

### Bucket or Skate Guard Relays

- Randomize skaters in each cohort onto teams.
- 1 lap 2x each skater while either pushing a partner on a bucket or passing a skate guard as a baton.

### Long Track Relay (this is possible on Short Track or Long Track)

Teams must be evenly matched in size.

Similar to a classic relay, but instead of pushing each other, skaters do a standing start on the tightest lane of the track as their partner passes by them. 1 lap “exchange” is skated by each skater. Coaches can mark a “safety zone” with pylons to outline where the standing start occurs. Coaches can also mark a “wide exit” that the currently racing skater must skate outside of to ensure there is space for a safe start by the next skater.

## Endurance Events

These events allow skaters to have fun while working on endurance. Endurance events present skaters with unusual challenges that they must use strategy and tactics to solve.

- Dropout race (the whole cohort races at once). No lapping the last skater.
- Fight for second place. There is a set leader, and all other skaters attempt to move into or stay in second place.
- Keirin races, where skaters sprint for victory after a set number of speed-controlled laps behind a specific skater or coach.

Clubs can use their own Special Events as they see fit, keeping safety, fun and participation as top priorities.



# THE ONTARIO REGIONAL CELEBRATION

The objective of the Ontario Regional Celebration is for skaters in the FUNdamentals Stage of Long Term Development and those who are newer to speed skating (recommended stages 5-8 of the Speed Skating Canada First and Fast Strides program), to experience fun racing in a supportive, interactive, positive, and welcoming environment. The Ontario Regional Celebration is meant to allow skaters to practice their skills learned throughout the season and have fun racing with friends from across the province.

## DATE AND LOCATION

The Ontario Regional Celebration will take place in Milton on Saturday March 15, 2025.

## REGISTRATION DEADLINE

The early registration deadline for the Ontario Regional Championships is Sunday February 23, 2025. To guarantee your t-shirt size, register by the early registration date. Registrations will be accepted until the final registration deadline of Sunday March 2, 2025.

## ELIGIBILITY

All skaters must have a Speed Skating Ontario Club Membership to be eligible to participate in the Ontario Regional Celebration.

The Ontario Regional Celebration is for skaters aged 4-8 years old before July 1, 2024. Other novice skaters who did not participate in the Ontario Provincial Championships or Ontario Elite Championships may register at the discretion of their Club Coach. In general, it is recommended that skaters are in stages 5-8 of the Speed Skating Canada First and Fast Strides program, if the program is used at their Club.


It is strongly recommended that skaters have raced in an Ontario Regional Meet in the 2024-2025 season to race in the Ontario Regional Celebration. If a skater has not participated in an Ontario Regional Meet in the 2024-2025 season, their participation is at the discretion of their Club Coach.

## RACING FORMAT AND GROUPS

The Ontario Regional Celebration will use mixed gender racing where skaters are seeded on ability within age racing groups.

### Racing Groups

Skaters aged 4-8 before July 1, 2024 will race in mixed-gender groups on the 100m track. Within racing groups, skaters will be seeded on their best 200m time from the 2024/2025 SSO Season Best Time List as of the final close of registration.



Eligible skaters aged 9-13 before July 1, 2024 will race in mixed-gender groups on the 100m track. Within racing groups, skaters will be seeded on their best 200m time from the 2024/2025 SSO Season Best Time List as of the final close of registration.

Racing groups and distances for other eligible novice skaters will be determined after the final registration deadline, if required.

Skaters without a 200m seed time on the 2024/2025 SSO Season Best Time List may have their Club submit an accurate 200m time that was recorded in a Club practice race or Club meet after January 1, 2025. The time must be submitted to the Provincial Registrar by the final registration deadline. Please submit times in 0:00.00 format.

## **RACING DISTANCES**

Racing distances will be determined by the Technical Director in consultation with the Chief Referee.

Distances for Club and Youth aged skaters may include 100m, 200m, 300m, 400m, 600m, 800m.

Distances for other eligible novice skaters may include 111m, 333m, 500m, 777m.

The distances raced by each group will be determined after the final registration deadline.

## **SEEDING**

The first distance will be seeded on each skater's seed time coming into the meet as described in the Racing Groups section of this Bulletin.

Subsequent distances will be seeded based on racing results during the competition.

## **EVENT AGENDA**

Warm Up times, Start of Racing and the order of Racing Distances will be at the discretion of the Technical Director in consultation with the Competitor Steward and Chief Referee.

## **AWARDS**

All skaters will receive a Regional Celebration T-Shirt and an award from Speed Skating Ontario.

