



**SPEED
SKATING
ONTARIO**

Interclub Meet Guidelines

September 2022

ONTARIO INTERCLUB MEETS

Introduction

Speed Skating Ontario (SSO) recognizes the need for our skaters to return to meaningful racing following the lockdowns and restrictions associated with COVID-19. SSO has adopted Speed Skating Canada's (SSC) modified racing ages and distances from the updated Red Book. SSO remains focused on the need for improved skater and racer development 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 strengthen the base of the Speed Skating Ontario pyramid and to provide fun introductory racing opportunities.

Ontario Interclub Meets

The purposes of Interclub Meets are to:

- Racing in 3 regions across the province for new and developing racers limiting the amount of travel for families to access competitions.
- Skaters experience local racing with a skater pool that includes skaters from other Clubs.
- Simple structured meets run by Clubs.
- Introduction to meet formats and racing skills.
- Refinement of racing skills for intermediate racers who are also eligible for Ontario Provincial Circuit Meets.
- Use regular practice times for competitions
- Require little to no certified officials
- Allow skaters, in a fun format, to practice new skills learned
- Allow skaters to be introduced to developmentally appropriate activities
- Allow skaters to challenge themselves individually
- Provide a feeling of belonging to a team
- Provide an opportunity for social interaction including parents and coaches
- Provide an opportunity to support others in their community in a meaningful way
- Provide an opportunity for older skaters to take on leadership roles
- Interclub events will also allow skaters to obtain seed times for their first Ontario Provincial Circuit.

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.

The regions for Interclub racing are:

East: Ottawa, Gloucester, St. Lawrence, Kingston, Quinte, Kawartha

Central: Durham, Markham, Newmarket, Barrie, Toronto, Brampton

West: Milton, Oakville, Hamilton, Niagara, Cambridge, Kitchener Waterloo, London

Flex: Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay

The general format of Interclub Meets:

- All races are mixed gender. Mixed gender racing increases the pool of skaters in any given group/cohort and promotes quality racing.
- Racing development and skill development camps could precede a meet for older skaters
- Club and Interclub meets can include both individual and final team events. Teams can be made up after registration is received and should be flexible to accommodate skaters who arrive after registration or for registered skaters who do not attend the full event.
- Coaches will determine which skills will be introduced and practiced prior to the event. This will guide the races included in each meet schedule.
- Clubs should consider asking older skaters to assist with meets for younger skaters.

What is required to hold an Interclub Meet:

- Event sanction submitted to SSO 2 weeks prior to event. There is no fee associated with the sanction; instead, it allows SSO to be aware of where events are occurring across the province, an insurance requirement.
- Event announcement to be shared by the club 1-2 weeks prior to event
- Volunteer sign-up sheet or electronic document
- As a general guideline, 2-3 hours of ice for Club Meet, 3-6 hours of ice for Interclub Meet
- As a general guideline, 30-60 skaters. More skaters may be appropriate if enough ice time is secured and facility guidelines allow.
- All distances are run as finals
- All events should include at least one real distance race
- A designated volunteer who is currently certified with First Aid and CPR training

Officials and Volunteers

SSO recommends the following officials and volunteers to host Interclub Meets:

One referee, one starter, 4 track stewards, timers/line judges as needed, 1-2 recorder, one clerk.

Additional Interclub Information

Times from Interclub Meets are not eligible for SSC or Elite events and will not be included on the SSO Ranking List.

Clubs hosting Interclub meets are responsible to share the meet results with the clubs that attended.

OSSA will promote Interclub events on Social Media if photos and details are shared in advance of the event.

Skaters DO NOT need to upgrade their OSSA membership to Competitive to participate in an Interclub event.

Active Start (0-6) & FUNdamentals (girls 6-8, boys 6-9)

Time allotted	Half-day
Number of participants	30-60 skaters
Warm-ups	Off-ice to save on ice time. Learning opportunity for young skaters to practice off-ice warm up routines.
Distances	2 “real” distances – all short in duration: 50m, 100m, 200m, 300m, 400m, 500m, 800m, 1000m, 1500m (100m track)
	Using a final-only format rather than a heats-finals format is desirable due to time limitations and to allow a greater variety of distances. At this level, race variety is more important than learning to race for advancement. Most skaters at this level skate as fast as possible each race, regardless of the advancement.
	If time for 3 distances, skaters should race 2 real distances + 1 “special event” chosen by the club. Special events include: (see Appendix A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Skills based” ● Team event ● Endurance event
	Optimal format would include 3 real distances plus 1 special event, but 2 real distances plus 2 special events (or more) is also an option.
	Because there is no need for heats/finals/seeded super finals, real distances and “skills based” distances can be run in any order, but a team event or endurance event should be last in the program.
Number of distances/events	This will depend on number of skaters and available ice time, but the number of events should be maximized based on ice time available.
Racing format	Cohorted ladder format Cohorts of 12-18 skaters, depending on total number of skaters First distance: skaters in each cohort are randomized into races Subsequent distances: “one up, one down” format as follows: (assuming 3 races of 4 skaters) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Race A of distance 2 = the skaters who placed 1-2-3 in race A of distance 1 + the skater who placed 1st in race B of distance 1 ● Race B of distance 2 = the skater who placed 4th in race A of distance 1 + the skaters who placed 2+3 in race B of distance 1 + the skater who placed 1st in race C of distance 1 ● Race C of distance 2 = the skater who placed 4th in race B of distance 1 + the skaters who placed 2-3-4 in race C of distance 1 DQ skater is last in their race and moves down for the next race.
Reasoning behind race format	To ensure variety in competition for each skater in a manner that does not heavily burden volunteers, who must produce heat sheets quickly. Volunteers only need to know skater placements to seed the next race. No need to track race points.

	Skaters experience racing that promotes the importance of placement, while offering the flexibility to run a greater variety of events, because each distance does not need to be run twice.
Recording	Excel spreadsheet or Google Sheet to keep track of advancements. Times can be recorded for PBs or for awards if enough volunteers.
Awards	Fastest time in each distance (regardless of which race it occurred) Top 3 skaters in the last Race A of the event receive ribbons Honorary mention/most improved for any skater who improves from the bottom all the way to the top or the skater who made the biggest improvement from their original randomly assigned race.

To avoid:

- Except as described in Appendix A, clubs should avoid backwards racing on the track due to safety hazards.
- Clockwise racing should be avoided, unless the whole event is clockwise, and the mats are set up appropriately for clockwise racing.
- Avoid any other events that have track patterns/directions that require the moving of mats. Moving mats between events can waste valuable ice time and create more touch points.

Learn to Train (girls 8-11, boys 9-12)

Time allotted	Half day, or 3 to 3-½ hours practice ice time weeknight or weekend. Aim for 30-minute flights, including floods if possible.
Number of participants	30-60 skaters
Warm-ups	To save on time, and because younger athletes don't require full on-ice warm-ups, here are some options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation warm-ups off-ice • Warm-up as you put up the mats • Very short warm-ups on ice if necessary (<5 min) • Allow the skaters to complete a couple laps when they enter the ice for their first race.
Distances	200m, 400m, 500m, 800m, 1000m, 1500m (100m track) Purpose of the 800m event is to begin to expose skaters to racing with strategy and tactics. This distance is long enough to introduce strategy but not too long to fatigue skaters and spread out the pack. Option to run 200m and 400m distances one event and 800m at another, relay competition at another. Finish each competition with a fun skill such as crazy starts, a pivot competition etc.
Number of distances/events	Aim for six races per skater per competition.
Racing format	Simple advancements based on place, or cohorted ladder format
Reasoning behind race format	More racing of short distances creates more fun. Grouping skaters from different clubs together at events provides exposure to more meaningful racing for skaters that are usually isolated.
Special events	Relays, start relays (or any suggestions from FUNdamentals and Appendix A)
Recording	Use the system that is the simplest for the club. Recording 200m times can give a good reference point for seeding for future events.
Awards	Awards can be given at the discretion of the host club.

Train to Train (girls 11-15, boys 12-16)

Time allotted	Half-day to all-day meet Schedule 3-5 minutes per race, which includes debriefing after each race (~40 minutes per series) plus a 10-min flood.
Number of participants	20 boys, 20 girls for a short event (more if the day is longer)
Warm-ups	See Learn to Train suggestions or provide short on-ice warm-ups if time allows.
Distances	200m, 400m, 800m (100m track) for Youth Skaters (11-13 years old) 500m, 1500m, 1000m (111m track) for 14-16 year old skaters Relay and/or Special event Clubs should consider choosing a focus distance for the day of racing and alternate distances, i.e. first competition only 1000m + relays, next competition: 2 x 500m + 1x1500m
Number of distances/events	3-6 races.
Racing format	All races seeded from fastest to slowest, based on a distance time that can be collected by the club. Heats could be seeded based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serpentine, with place advancements, or • Fastest to slowest, with time advancements. <p>Have coaches rotated off the bench to talk to skaters right after their race to discuss strategy, thought process and technical skills during the race.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for different coaches to provide strategies and feedback for skaters from different clubs.</p> <p>Referees could also connect with skaters and their coach to explain penalties and share information from the referee's perspective.</p>
Reasoning behind race format	Treat these events as learning opportunities so that skaters can explore different strategies, mental skills and refine their technique at high speeds.
Special events	See FUNdamentals, Learn to Train and Appendix A
Recording	Use the system that is the simplest for the club. Recording 500m times is recommended for seeding for future events.
Awards	Awards can be given at the discretion of the host club.

Learn to Compete (women 15-17, men 16-18)

Time allotted	3h to a 1 day Schedule 3-4 minutes per race, which includes debriefing where possible (~40 minutes per series) plus 10-min flood.
Number of participants	20 men, 20 women for a short event (more if the day is longer)
Warm-ups	See Learn to Train suggestions or provide short on-ice warm-ups if time allows.
Distances	500m, 777m, 1000m, 1500m Relays or special events
Number of distances/events	As many as possible based on ice time and number of skaters.
Racing format	Groups based on ability to assure good racing opportunities for all skaters (taking size/age into account). Heat - final: advancement based mostly on placement. Emphasis on strategy, not on time.
Reasoning behind race format	Optimize the engine and learn to compete. Speed Skating specific skills and fitness. Offer real race experiences in a low risk environment, where results do not matter, to encourage trying new things.
Special events	Ladder format based on placing – emphasizes strategy and place over time Relay competition (relay day) – evenly-matched teams based on speed (skating order could be assigned so that skaters of a similar ability are on the track at the same time to keep teams together). If possible, run a relay heat and final to: encourage learning how to race a relay; create the opportunity to skate at higher speeds in a pack; and do more laps at a high speeds. Points race – to train for strategy during longer distances. Points amounts could increase as race progresses to encourage strategy (ex: first points lap is 1x points, next is 2x points, 5x points at finish; or mimic long track Mass Start)
Recording	Use the system that is the simplest for the club and/or use event to train new volunteers. Recording 500m times is recommended for seeding for future events.
Awards	Awards can be given at the discretion of the host club.

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

- Reason behind race format: emphasizes agility and quickness, balance, athleticism
- Start options:
 - Starting from kneeling (2 knees down or 1 knee down)
 - Starting from prone position (ie. 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 (ie. a left over right crossover)
 - Etc.

1-Lap Race with Alternative End

- Reason behind 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 1st blue line
- Skaters slalom from blue line to blue line
- Race ends at 2nd 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 1st blue line, skaters skate forwards to 2nd blue line, backwards to red line, forwards to 2nd 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.
- If needed to meet COVID restrictions, skaters can tag rather than execute a full relay push or a skate guard can be used as a baton. Check with your public health guidelines.
- 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.

Team Sprint

Teams must be evenly matched in size. Smaller teams are better (ie. in a group of 14 skaters, a team of 2 is preferred over a team of 7) *Resource coming soon*

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 amount of speed-controlled laps behind a specific skater or coach.