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SECTION 3

OFF-ICE PLANNING AND PREPARATION

OFF-ICE PLANNING AND PREPARATION



CANSKATE PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS FOR SKATE CANADA CLUBS

The following delivery standards are required for Skate Canada clubs to operate high quality CanSkate programs:

ON-ICE DELIVERY

- Ensure minimum of one NCCP CanSkate trained coach teaching on the ice; program assistants (PAs) assist as required.
- Ensure 1:10 coach/PA to skater ratio.
- Provide minimum 10-minute lesson to each group by Skate Canada professional coach per session.
- Ensure 90% continuous movement using circuits to ensure little standing around and no waiting to take turns to practice skills.
- Operate all sessions with the following components – warm-up, lesson time, group activity and cool-down.
- Use entire ice surface for warm-up, group activity and cool-down components.
- Use circuits to teach and practice skills.
- Use station rotations and session formats as per or similar to the recommended formats.
- Incorporate the Fast Track and Fun Zone.
- Use age-appropriate music for entire session.
- Use teaching aids, props and station identification signage.
- Use CanSkate awards and incentives; may use additional incentives such as stickers, stamps, etc.
- Award CanSkate ribbons and badges no more than one week following the mastering of the skills for each level.

OFF-ICE DELIVERY

- Maintain records of skaters' progress using CanSkate tools (group and/or individual progress sheets).
- Communicate regularly with parents/ participants; provide CanSkate session information sheets, equipment, safety and club policy information in person or

via e-mail or website. Hold a minimum of one parent information session per term or session.

- Communicate skater progress to parents/ guardians using the CanSkate report card at the end of each term or session, depending on how clubs divide their seasons and registrations.
- Maintain a small supplies inventory including CanSkate badges, ribbons and other incentives, plus teaching aids and props.

THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

The CanSkate program curriculum is organized into three Fundamental Areas, divided into six stages of learning. The Fundamental Areas are:

- Balance: Concentrating on most forward skills, pushing technique and edges.
- Control: Concentrating on most backwards skills, stopping and speed elements.
- Agility: Concentrating on most turning and jumping skills.

The awards consist of:

- Three Fundamental Area ribbons for each stage
- Six stage badges

To receive a stage badge, skaters must achieve all Fundamental Area ribbons (Balance, Control and Agility) from the corresponding stage. The skill requirements for each Fundamental Area are indicated on the report card.



More detailed technical information can be found in the On-Ice Technical & Teaching section of this manual.



PREPARATION – PARTS OF A SESSION

A CanSkate session consists of four main components:

- Warm-up
- Lesson time
- Group activity
- Cool-down

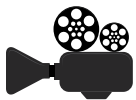
WARM-UP

The warm-up is a time to welcome the skaters to the ice in a motivational, high energy environment. Every CanSkate warm-up must:

- Be choreographed to music (e.g. 5-10 minutes).
- Use upbeat action songs and audio cues to indicate changes in direction, etc.
- Be led by the coach/PA.
- Include both forward and backward skating in both directions (clockwise and counter clockwise).
- Use entire ice surface.
- Incorporate all major muscle groups and focus on warming up the joints in their full range of motion to promote flexibility.
- Add time frames for skaters to skate as fast as they can!

Skills that may be included in a warm-up:

- Double sculling (forward or backward) with arm circles
- Alternate push/glide sequences adding knee-ups, heel touches or hand pumps
- Running on the spot
- Falling down and getting up
- 2-foot or 1-foot slaloms
- Fast forward skating
- Forward and backward skating in both directions



Warm-up

LESSON TIME

Lesson time is essential for learning and practicing skills. The parameters for the lesson time are:

- From 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the total session length, with designated rotation times.
- Every group must have a minimum 10-minute lesson with the coach.
- Groups must rotate to different stations on the ice.
- Each station should focus on a different Fundamental Area (Balance, Control, Agility) or Fun Zone.
- Circuits must be used.
- Every inch of ice possible should be used to maximize skating development. Circuits should cover the full designated station area.
- The Fast Track may be used at any time during the lessons to allow coaches to work perimeter skills.
- The Fast Track may also be attached to the Fun Zone for more movement opportunities.
- Music must be played at all times (soft background music during lesson time). Musical cues should be used to indicate when it is time to rotate to the next station.
- Must use teaching aids and props to bring a visual component to lessons and practice areas.

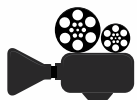


COACH STRATEGIES FOR LESSON TIME

During lesson time it is recommended that:

- The coach stays at the same teaching station for each lesson. This way the coach will be able to adapt the lesson to every stage quickly and efficiently. This also encourages standardization of development throughout the session. The coach will become the master of his/her station for that lesson.
- The coach at a teaching station will be assigned one Fundamental Area per session to deliver (e.g. each group that rotates to that coach's station will receive a lesson from the same Fundamental Area – Balance, Control or Agility).
- The PA or coach at the review station will be given the lesson plan and circuit template from the week before so that the skaters may review/practice the skills taught previously. This encourages solid, well-rounded development and allows skaters who have missed a session a chance to catch up.

See more tips and information in the On-Ice Technical and Teaching section.



Lesson Time

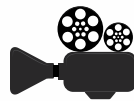
GROUP ACTIVITY

The group activity immediately follows the lesson time and is designed to provide additional practice opportunities in a fun and interactive way. It should also increase the heart rate, encourage speed, balance and control and challenge development. Group activities are to be done to music to encourage coordination.

Examples of a group activity include:

- Action songs
- Skill development activities (e.g. four-lane highway)

Full ice must be used to allow skaters to develop length of stride and acceleration. The group activity must be a minimum of 3-10 minutes.

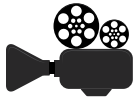


Group Activity



COOL-DOWN

The cool-down is a time to reflect on the successes of the day. It is also designed to lower the heart rate, decrease the energy level and give skaters' bodies the opportunity to begin the recovery process before leaving the ice. A cool-down consists of choreographed movements to music that include long, slow glides, static stretches to promote flexibility such as gliding toe touches and drags. The duration of a cool-down must be two to three minutes.



Cool-down

SESSION FORMAT

Choosing the session format that is right for the club is essential to quality delivery of the program. This will allow the session to be organized, run smoothly and ensure each group is receiving adequate attention from the Skate Canada professional coaches.

Before selecting a format that works best for the club, the following must be determined:

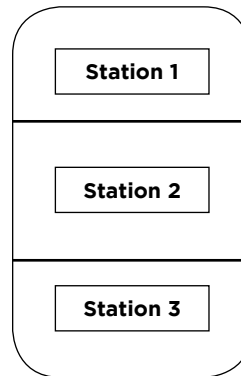
- The number of coaches available for each session
- The estimated number of skaters per session
- The length of the session

There are two formats provided:

- 3-station format
- 4-station format

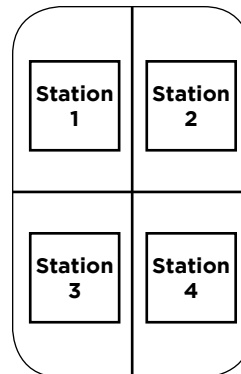


SESSION FORMAT EXAMPLES



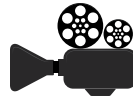
3-station format

Station 1: Teaching station
Station 2: Teaching or review station
Station 3: Fun Zone and/or teaching station



4-station format

Station 1: Teaching station
Station 2: Teaching station or theme of choice
Station 3: Teaching station or review station
Station 4: Fun Zone



Session Formats

The distribution of skaters/groups, coaches and PAs will depend on the specific logistics of each club/session. Refer to the following Session Format Information Chart to determine the appropriate option(s) for each session.

SESSION FORMAT INFORMATION CHART

# of Skaters	# of Coaches	Preferred # of PAs	Session Format	# of Groups	Specifications	Fundamental Areas Taught
Approx. 30	1	5	3-station rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	3	Station 1: Coach – teaches 1 Fundamental Area (FA) per session. Station 2: PA 1 – runs circuit from previous lesson taught by coach for review Station 3: PA 2 – Fun Zone 3 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation.	1 Fundamental Area taught per session
Approx. 30	2	4	3-station rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	3	Station 1: Coach 1 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: Coach 2 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 3: PA 1 – Fun Zone 3 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation.	2 Fundamental Areas taught per session
Approx. 30	3	3	3-station – rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	3	Station 1: Coach 1 – Balance station Station 2: Coach 2 – Control station Station 3: Coach 3 – Agility station NOTE: one of these stations must also include the Fun Zone 3 PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation.	All 3 Fundamental Areas taught each session
Approx. 40	1	7	4-station rotation schedule: 4 x 10 min (50 or 60 min session)	4	Station 1: Coach – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: PA 1 – runs circuit of choice created by coach to match station theme Station 3: PA 2 – runs circuit from previous lesson taught by coach for review Station 4: PA 3 – Fun Zone 4 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	1 Fundamental Area taught per session
Approx. 40	2	6	4-station rotation schedule: 4 x 10 min (50 or 60 min session)	4	Station 1: Coach 1 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: PA 1 – runs circuit from previous lesson taught by coach for review Station 3: Coach 2 – teaches 1 FA per session. Station 4: PA 2 – Fun Zone 4 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	2 Fundamental Areas taught per session
Approx. 40	3	5	4-station rotation schedule: 4 x 10 min (50 or 60 min session)	4	Station 1: Coach 1 – Balance station Station 2: Coach 2 – Control station Station 3: Coach 3 – Agility station Station 4: PA 2 – Fun Zone 4 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	All 3 Fundamental Areas taught each session

Approx. 40	4	4	4-station rotation schedule: 4 x 10 min (50 or 60 min session)	4	Station 1: Coach 1 – Balance station Station 2: Coach 2 – Control station Station 3: Coach 3 – Agility station Station 4: Coach 4 – Fun Zone 4 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	All 3 Fundamental Areas taught each session
Approx. 31- 60	2	8	3-station rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	6	Station 1: Coach 1 & 2 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: PA 1 & 2 – runs circuit from previous lesson taught by coach for review Station 3: PA 3 & 4 – Fun Zone 6 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	1 Fundamental Area taught per session
Approx. 31- 60	3	8	3-station rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	6	Station 1: Coach 1 & 2 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: Coach 3 & PA 1 – runs circuit from previous lesson taught by coach for review to both groups Station 3: PA 3 & 4 – Fun Zone 6 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	1 Fundamental Area taught per session
Approx. 31- 60	4	8	3-station rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	6	Station 1: Coach 1 & 2 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: Coach 3 & 4 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 3: PA 1 – Fun Zone 6 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	2 Fundamental Areas taught per session
Approx. 31- 60	5	7	3-station rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	6	Station 1: Coach 1 & 2 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: Coach 3 & 4 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 3: Coach & PA 1 – Fun Zone 6 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	2 Fundamental Areas taught per session
Approx. 31- 60	6	6	3-station rotation schedule: 3 x 10 min (45 min session) 3 x 12 min (50 min session) 3 x 15 min (60 min session)	6	Station 1: Coach 1 & 2 – Balance station Station 2: Coach 3 & 4 – Control station Station 3: Coach 5 & 6 – Agility station NOTE: One of these stations must include the Fun Zone. 6 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	All 3 Fundamental Areas taught each session
Approx. 65-80* *Must be Skate Canada approved	min 5	10	3-station rotation schedule: 4 x 10 min (60 min session)	8	Station 1: Coach 1 & 2 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 2: Coach 3 & 4 – teaches 1 FA per session Station 3: Coach 5, PA 1 & 2 – Fun Zone 8 additional PAs, 1 with each group to assist and lead groups through rotation	2 Fundamental Areas taught per session

*The maximum number of skaters recommended on a CanSkate session is 60. Skaters must have enough room on the ice to safely explore and develop speed, length of stride, acceleration as well as edges and curves. Clubs wishing to offer sessions with 65 skaters or more must contact the national office for approval.

If extra PAs are available, they may be used to assist the coaches at their stations. PAs can help set up and maintain circuits, as well as lead the circuit and demonstrate skills. Extra PAs may also be used as a floater to check in with coaches, distribute ribbons or badges, assist with any group that needs extra help or other tasks as required.

If an extra coach is available, they may be used as a supervisor or floater coach. This coach can travel to each group to see if any skaters need to be moved or need special attention. They can take attendance, monitor PAs, help out with the younger groups or execute any other administrative or on-ice tasks.

For more specific information on group rotations, lesson scheduling, lesson plans and circuit templates please refer to the On-Ice Technical and Teaching section in this manual.



MUSIC

Music is the backbone of any successful CanSkate session. It is essential for many reasons:

- Helps create a warm and welcoming environment for skaters.
- Motivates and stimulates the senses, adds interest and fun.
- Encourages the development of coordination, rhythm and musicality.
- Ensures the session runs efficiently and on time. Music cues indicate when parts of the session begin and end as well as ensure that the lesson times at each station are equal.

Session component and type of music to use:

- Warm-up – upbeat, action-type songs
- Lesson time – softer background
- Group activity – upbeat, action-type songs
- Cool-down – slower pieces

Music should be matched to the session format chosen.

Examples:

	45-minute session	50-minute session	60-minute session
3 stations	7 min – Warm-up 3 x 10 min – Lesson time rotation 5 min – Group activity 3 min – Cool-down	7 min – Warm-up 3 x 12 min – Lesson time rotation 4 min – Group activity 3 min – Cool-down	7 min – Warm-up 3 x 15 min – Lesson time rotation 5 min – Group activity 3 min – Cool-down
4 stations		5 min – Warm-up 4 x 10 min – Lesson time rotation 3 min – Group activity 2 min – Cool-down	10 min – Warm-up 4 x 10 min – Lesson time rotation 7 min – Group activity 3 min – Cool-down

An auditory signal should be used to help keep your session on track (e.g. to indicate station rotations, start/end of lesson time, etc.). The auditory signal should be short and identifiable. Skaters will quickly learn what is expected when they hear the signal.

Playlist example: 50-minute session – 3 stations

Part of the Session	Time	Song Title Example
Warm-up	7 minutes	Let's Twist Again Jump I Like to Move It
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Lesson time #1	12 minutes	Background music of choice. Record at a lower level to ensure coaches can be heard over the music. Music should be upbeat and happy.
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Lesson time #2	12 minutes	Background music of choice. Record at a lower level to ensure coaches can be heard over the music. Music should be upbeat and happy.
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Lesson time #3	12 minutes	Background music of choice. Record at a lower level to ensure coaches can be heard over the music. Music should be upbeat and happy.
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Group activity	4 minutes	Cotton Eyed Joe Locomotion
Cool-down	3 minutes	Good Night Sweetheart

ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS

To increase movement and speed on a session, a Fast Track lap opportunity can be built into the music to allow skaters to skate around the perimeter in between station rotations.

Advantages include:

- Allows the skaters to increase their heart rates between stations.
- Encourages speed and length of stride by using the full perimeter of the ice.
- Allows coaches time to check off any skills mastered in the lesson before teaching the next group.



Playlist example: 60-minute session – 4 stations with Fast Track laps between station rotations

Part of the Session	Time	Song Title Example
Warm-up	8 minutes	Let's Twist Again Jump I Like to Move It
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Lesson time #1	10 minutes	Background music of choice. Record at a lower level to ensure coaches can be heard over the music. Music should be upbeat and happy.
FAST TRACK LAPS	:30 seconds	Fast upbeat music (e.g. William Tell Overture)
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Lesson time #2	10 minutes	Background music of choice. Record at a lower level to ensure coaches can be heard over the music. Music should be upbeat and happy.
FAST TRACK LAPS	:30 seconds	Fast upbeat music (e.g. William Tell Overture)
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Lesson time #3	10 minutes	Background music of choice. Record at a lower level to ensure coaches can be heard over the music. Music should be upbeat and happy.
FAST TRACK LAPS	:30 seconds	Fast upbeat music (e.g. William Tell Overture)
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Lesson time #4	10 minutes	Background music of choice. Record at a lower level to ensure coaches can be heard over the music. Music should be upbeat and happy.
SIGNAL	:10 seconds	Song/sound of choice
Group activity	7 minutes	Cotton Eyed Joe Locomotion
Cool-down	2 minutes	Good Night Sweetheart

See appendix A: CanSkate Session – Suggested Songs for more music suggestions. Sample tunes from the CanSkate CD are also available on the Members Only website which may be downloaded for club use.



STATION IDENTIFICATION

All stations on the ice should be clearly identified with signage for easy recognition and organizational purposes. Labeling stations will allow skaters and parents to easily identify what is happening at each station.

Station identification signs have been designed for clubs to post during their session.

GROUPING SKATERS

Grouping skaters is an ongoing process as skaters will come into the program at different times and will progress at their own rates. Skaters may get shuffled from group to group from time to time, therefore, it is important to ensure that every group is always working on more than one stage. This will allow the club/coach flexibility in movement and will also encourage development at a much faster rate. Skaters will be challenged in attempting higher skills while continuing to practice and develop previously passed skills.

Some tips for grouping skaters:

- All skaters must be pre-grouped before the first day of skating.
- If skating level is unknown, try to place skaters together in an environment that will be welcoming and encouraging, e.g. group by age or interest.
- 1:10 ratio is the minimum standard for group lessons (1 coach/PA for every 10 skaters in a lesson).
- Consider the following when grouping: age, stage, gender, interest if known (e.g. geared to hockey/ringette, etc.).
- To ensure effective group rotation between stations, the CanSkate team must agree on a method for moving the groups. Options for rotation include:
 - Coach leads group to its next station
 - Assign PAs to each group to be in charge of leading group to proper station
- The method for rotation must be planned before your session starts and should remain consistent so that skaters know what to expect each week.
- Most clubs will not have the perfect amount of skaters in each stage to make a group; therefore, they are encouraged to combine more than one stage together.



GROUP IDENTIFICATION

Skaters must be organized into easily identified groups. An easy and effective way of distinguishing the different groups is by using colours.

All skaters need a name tag that can be clipped onto their clothing. See sample name tag template in the Technical Resources section. Name tags should not be placed on helmets.

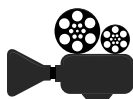
Ideas for colour identification for skaters:

- Coloured sticker on name tag
- Coloured piece of felt (cut into a square) pinned on skater's skate lace
- Coloured pipe cleaner or piece of wool/yarn on skate



Ideas for group identification on the ice:

- Coloured Bristol board or felt banner on a hanger to move with group from station to station.
- Coloured flag to stand in a pylon and move with group from station to station.
- Program assistant to wear coloured clothing to match group colour, e.g. red scarf for the Red group, or yellow T-shirt over jacket for the Yellow group, purple hat for Purple group. This PA would stay and rotate with the group for the entire session.



Group Identification



Please note: Group Identification needs to move with the group from station to station during the session to indicate where each group is located during the lesson time. This will reinforce the organization and communication of the session format. If a skater gets lost they will be able to easily find their group through the group identification.

RECORD-KEEPING AND TRACKING TOOLS

There are several ways to track a skater's or group's progress. The following are examples of record-keeping methods. Samples of these tracking tools are included in the Technical Resources section.

GROUP PROGRESS SHEETS

When using the group progress sheets coaches must ensure that each group's skaters are listed on the correct sheet and that each group has a progress sheet for all three of the Fundamental Areas. In a case where groups are identified by colour, progress sheets can be colour-coded to coincide with the correct groups, e.g. a blue stripe across the top of the progress sheet would identify it as the blue group.

There will be a minimum of three progress sheets for each group on the ice as the groups will each need a separate sheet for Balance, Control and Agility.

In the teaching station, the coach will only be teaching one Fundamental Area per session and therefore will only need the group progress sheet for those skills.

Examples:

One teaching station scenario – Balance lesson day: The coach(es) at the Balance station will use the Balance progress sheets to track the Balance skills for all groups.

Two teaching stations scenario – Balance & Agility lesson day: The coach(es) at the Balance station will use the Balance progress sheets to track progress for the Balance skills and the coach(es) at the Agility station will use the Agility progress sheets to track the Agility skills.

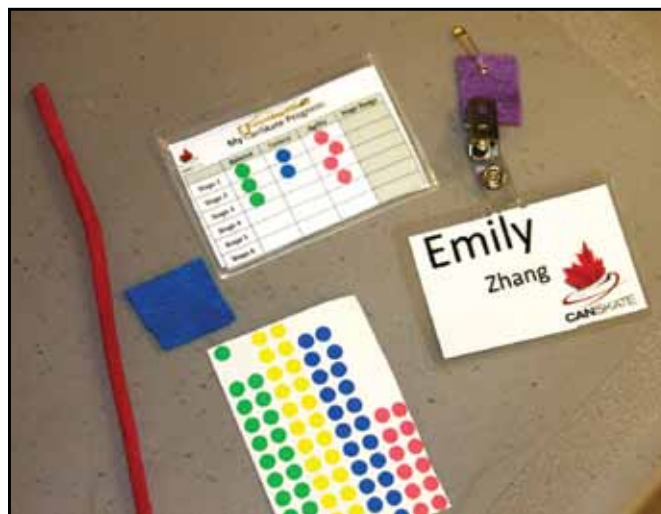
Three teaching stations scenario – Each teaching station will be assigned a coach and a Fundamental Area. Each coach will track the progress for the Fundamental Area they are teaching.

No matter what session format scenario the club uses, all progress sheets should be kept in one main folder or binder per session. For example, all sheets for Monday 5:00 p.m. should be kept in the binder or folder labeled Monday 5:00 p.m. At the start of the session, coaches take out their Fundamental Area's progress sheets and track each group's progress for the applicable lesson.

GROUP TRACKING SHEET

The group tracking sheet is a great way to track the awards (ribbons and badges) presented to each skater. Once a skater has accumulated the required checkmarks to complete a Fundamental Area, he or she is awarded a ribbon. The date that each ribbon is awarded is recorded on the group tracking sheet which helps to visually identify when a badge has been completed. The date of completion for each badge is also recorded on the tracking sheet.

At the end of the session coaches must ensure that their group progress sheets are up to date. Any completed Fundamental Areas can then be added to the group tracking sheets, either by the coach or by the CanSkate administrator. After recording all of the information the group progress sheets must be returned to the main folder or binder.



REPORT CARDS

Report cards are an important communication tool between the coach and the parent/skater. They provide feedback on the progress of the skater—what the skater is doing well and what needs to be improved. Report cards must be completed and distributed to each skater at the end of each term or session. The timing may vary depending on how the club divides its season and registration.

ATTENDANCE

Name tags are important for identifying the skaters on the ice but they can also be used as a means for taking attendance. Any name tags that are not picked up during distribution indicate who was absent for a session. Name tags can be distributed in different ways:

- Set up a main table in the lobby of the arena with all name tags grouped according to colour. One PA, volunteer or coach stays at the table until the start of the session to ensure that all skaters receive their name tags.
- A PA, a volunteer or a coach hands out each name tag at the arena door
- Many clubs have the skaters assigned to dressing rooms; name tags are handed out as the skaters enter the dressing rooms.
- At a designated location off the ice, name tags are attached to their corresponding group identification signs. Parents or skaters remove the tags and attach them to the skater's clothing.
- Name tags are attached to the group identification signs on the ice. When skaters step on the ice for the warm-up, they skate to their colours, remove their name tags and attach them to their clothing (PA may assist as young skaters may have difficulty reading).



Collecting/returning name tag options:

- The skaters give the tags to an identified coach at the end of the session while leaving the ice.
- The skater/parent returns the tag to the table in the lobby where it was originally given out.
- A PA or coach collects the name tags from each group prior to the end of the session (e.g. during cool-down).
- The name tags are reattached to the group identification signs at the end of the last lesson rotation.

Other ways of taking attendance include PAs taking attendance on-ice during the first part of the lesson as skaters pass them on the circuit. A PA or CanSkate coordinator may also be stationed at the door to the ice, checking off names as skaters arrive.

Whichever way the club determines to track attendance, it is important that attendance is taken as quickly and efficiently as possible so that it does not hinder on-ice programming and coach teaching time.

AWARDS AND INCENTIVES

Awards and incentives should be provided in a timely manner to reward and reinforce participation, good effort and/or mastery of skills. The CanSkate ribbon or badge achieved should be handed out as the skater passes the skills required.

WHEN TO AWARD?

The skater may receive his/her ribbon or badge either at the end of the lesson or session or at the beginning of the next skating day (e.g. clipped to his/her name tag at the pick-up table). Other options include setting up an award station along the boards on ice with the ribbons and badges available for easy distribution. Coaches or PAs may then retrieve the award needed for the skater. Proper documentation must be made to ensure that distribution is recorded. The coaches and the club should determine what works most efficiently for them.

Incentives such as stickers, colouring sheets, certificates, etc. should be given out to all skaters at the end of each session.

Please note: stickers should not be affixed to skaters’ helmets as the adhesive used in certain stickers may compromise the integrity of the plastic and may void the manufacturer’s guarantee of the helmet.

The club should display examples of the CanSkate awards, incentives and report cards used so that parents and skaters have a complete understanding of the content of the program and how skaters progress. Please see sample CanSkate Awards Chart in appendix B.












TEACHING AIDS & PROPS













Teaching aids and props help make a CanSkate session more welcoming and fun. They add colour, visual impact, interest and bring a three-dimensional effect to the ice. Some of the benefits include:

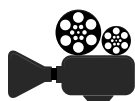
- Stimulating the senses of sight and touch
- Increasing skaters' learning
- Encouraging skaters to remember what skills to perform with each prop
- Encouraging skaters to remember certain teaching points about a skill
- Encouraging skaters to keep their eyes up as well as navigate their paths
- Adding motivation and challenging development



Examples of teaching aids and props and their uses:

Teaching Aids & Props	Picture	Possible Uses
Pylon	  	<p>Pylons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be any type of item used to indicate something of interest on a circuit or to mark a path to travel. • Are effective when used in slaloms (both large and small) and forward sculling (not recommended for backward sculling). • Can be used to mark out a runway where skaters need to perform a skill at each pylon (e.g. 2-ft jump, stop, turn, etc.). • Can be used to indicate the start of a circuit or to indicate the fast track, or to ensure that skaters skate the full path of a circuit.
Arches/Tunnels	  	<p>Arches are an excellent way to encourage skaters to bend their knees. They can be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit glides (fwd & bwd) • Falling down and getting up • Shoot the ducks • Drags <p>IMPORTANT NOTE: Arch must be low enough so that skaters have to bend their knees to go through. An arch that is too high is just a prop and will not encourage the intended teaching points.</p>
Signs	  	<p>Signs can be used :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To indicate a specific skill on the circuit. • To help with directing traffic or indicating an area for speed. • As an option for clubs/coaches where drawing on the ice is difficult or not permitted. • To encourage skaters to keep their heads up and navigate their paths. <p>Signs can be easily changed to indicate new skills when a new group comes to the station.</p> <p>See legend of skill diagrams for more ideas for signs.</p>

Markers	  	<p>Markers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are an excellent way to show the skaters the path of a circuit as well as define the directions for a skill. • Encourage proper edge/lean/curve as well as enable the coach to indicate 1 foot, 2 feet, forward, backward, etc. • Can be used to draw arrows for direction and to indicate the start. • Bingo dabbers can also be used as markers <p>See legend of skill diagrams for more ideas for symbols.</p> <p>IMPORTANT NOTE: When drawing on the ice, it is important to pay attention to the size of the drawing. It should be realistic and “skate-able”.</p>
Plush toys	  	<p>Plush toys may be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As pylons in slaloms, sculling or to help indicate a skill (e.g. a frog could indicate a jump area on the circuit). • To indicate the direction that a skater needs to face (e.g. for walking crosscuts or turns). • To add an element of fun and creativity to a lesson. <p>Small bean bags or animals may also be used to balance on the skater’s head to reinforce good posture.</p>
Fun Zone	     	<p>The Fun Zone must have extra special teaching aids to create a fun environment. Examples of fun props include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foam frogs that can be used to indicate jumps. • “Number 1” foam hands that can be used to indicate 1-foot glides, 1-foot turns, 1-foot spins, etc. • Dice that can be used to indicate the number of times a skill must be repeated (e.g. 4 jumps, 3 slide steps for making snow, 5 spins, etc.). • Dice can also be used to indicate the skill to be performed from Point A to Point B (e.g. power jumps, 2-foot glide, stationary pushes, backward skating, etc). • Balls can be used to pick up (fwd sit glide) and toss into a basket or kick to practice moving forward at the Pre-CanSkate level. If smaller balls, to hold if training certain arm positions (e.g. hold out in front for shoot the duck or hold the ball inside the circle to help lean in the desired direction)



Teaching Aids

PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS

Connecting with the parents/guardians of participants is an integral key to the success of the CanSkate program. Regularly scheduled meetings/information sessions must be offered in conjunction with the program. It is important to ensure that all customers remain well-informed on items such as program objectives and benefits, session schedules, expectations, on-ice safety, equipment, rewards, coaching and club structure. Many parents come to a club program without any skating background or knowledge. The more they know, the more appreciation they will have of the quality of the program being offered and of the benefits that their skater is gaining from participation in skating.

Parent information sessions and communication touch-points may occur at the following times:

- At registration
- First day/week of skating
- Halfway through the session/season
- Last week of programming

AT REGISTRATION

This communication happens as parents come in to sign up (one-on-one interaction) or visit the club website (if club offers online registration). Having a coach on hand (or coach email available) to answer any technical or program questions is a great strategy. Most of the queries at this time are regarding the individual needs of the participant or the logistics of the sessions offered (dates, times, duration, etc.). During this interaction with the parent, clubs should cover the following:

- General program information (what is CanSkate?)
- Equipment requirements and Skate Canada Helmet Policy
- Who to contact to have questions answered
- The date, time and location of the first parent information session

FIRST DAY/WEEK OF SKATING

An information session can be held in the lobby of the arena ten minutes before the start time of the CanSkate session or during the session (warm-up) if the club has enough coaches for this. This information session is very important and should cover the following:

- Introduction to the CanSkate team
- Overview of the program and format
- Overview of how skaters progress and are assessed
- Helmet policy, safety and equipment
- Club information
- Questions
- Thank you

See appendices C, D & E for CanSkate Program Information, Safety and Equipment and Parent Information Session meeting agenda templates.

HALFWAY THROUGH THE SESSION/SEASON

Briefly touch base with parents again in lobby before the session or during warm-up to:

- Remind them of how many weeks are left
- Highlight any approaching club events or activities (e.g. ice show, Element Event, etc.)
- Go over proper care of equipment
- Let them know about registration for the next session
- Answer any questions; let them know when the next parent information session will be

LAST WEEK OF PROGRAMMING

Brief meeting to cover the following points:

- Thank them for participating in the program
- Remind them about the other programs the club offers
- Distribute Customer Satisfaction Surveys (appendix F) or refer to online survey if applicable
- Answer any questions

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Organization is the key to a successful CanSkate program. Below is a task list to assist clubs and coaches in the delivery of the program:

Task	Role	When	Assisted by
Check inventory of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ribbons • Badges • Teaching aids and props • Colouring sheets • Stickers • Station identification signs • Group identification signs • Skater group identification (e.g. pipe cleaners, coloured stickers, etc.) • Name tags 	Coach or CanSkate coordinator	4-6 weeks before program begins	Program assistants or other volunteers or coaches
Decide on session format	Coach and CanSkate coordinator	Once an approximate idea of skater registration numbers and number of coaches available are known	
Create music to match session format	Coach	Once session format has been determined	
Create name tags to match groupings	CanSkate coordinator/coach	After registration	Volunteers
Create welcome handout/newsletter	CanSkate coordinator/coach	Before first lesson	
Train program assistants and schedule additional training sessions throughout the year	Coach	1-2 weeks before the program starts	CanSkate coordinator
Meet with other coaches to review session format and lesson plans	Coach/CanSkate coordinator	2-4 weeks before the program starts	
Organize on-ice record-keeping tools	Coach/CanSkate coordinator	1-2 weeks before the program starts	
Plan and advertise times/days for parent information sessions	Coach/CanSkate coordinator	2-4 weeks before the program starts	
Create a calendar for special days (fun days, cancelled skating days, club events, etc.) to post on website, bulletin board and/or to hand out to CanSkaters	CanSkate coordinator/coach	Either at registration, before the program starts or on the first day of skating	
Assign tasks to specific individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name tag table/area • Start music • Hang up station ID signs • Set out teaching aids • Greet parents • Help skaters onto the ice • Set out group identification tools • Lead warm-up, group activity, cool-down • Help skaters off the ice • Distribute rewards (ribbons, badges, stickers, etc. as needed) 	Coach/CanSkate coordinator	Set up schedule before first day of skating. Consider a rotation so that all members of the team can experience all duties	Coaches, PAs, volunteers

SHARING ICE /PRIVATE LESSONS

CanSkate is a group lesson program. Group lessons have been designed to accelerate skaters through the program and ready them for the ice sport of their choice in a fun, interactive environment. Skaters at this level learn best alongside their peers. As well, cost effectiveness for parents at this stage of learning is a key consideration. In light of this, private lessons in CanSkate are strongly discouraged. Private lessons may be offered in special circumstances in which a skater has special needs and requires extra attention for skill development. In cases like this, coaches may deliver private lessons during the warm-up or group activity/cool-down portion of the session. The number one priority for a club is to ensure that the essence of this program remains true to its objectives; therefore, the needs of the program come first. The program requirements including full use of ice by all CanSkate groups must be maintained throughout the session except in the circumstances noted above.

READINESS FOR CANSKATE - PRE-CANSKATE

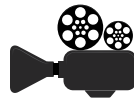
Pre-CanSkate groups are a component of CanSkate. Participants who have never skated before or who are not confident with their balance on the ice are considered Pre-CanSkaters (regardless of age).

Pre-CanSkaters work on the essentials needed to move safely and effectively on the ice so that they can rotate to the different learning stations. There are eight basic skills designed to ready them for Stage 1.

Older skaters may be able to rotate with a Stage 1-2 group and work on the skills for their Pre-CanSkate award as an added incentive for the Stage 1 badge. Younger skaters may be more comfortable staying in a more confined area until they have the confidence to move with the more experienced skaters. Coaches need to familiarize themselves with teaching techniques directed to this age level (see On-Ice Technical & Teaching section).

Clubs will need to have many visual teaching aids and props for the younger-aged skaters in Pre-CanSkate as much of the learning at this stage is motivated by props and play. Clubs will also need to have a plan to be able to incorporate these skaters into the rotational groups after a few weeks as the skaters' skills progress.

Important Note: Pre-CanSkate is not meant to be a program on its own. It is a readiness vehicle to prepare skaters for CanSkate. Once skaters are mobile, they need to be in a group that rotates to the different learning stations. (See Pre-CanSkate sample lesson plans in Appendices).



Pre-CanSkate

CANSKATE ELEMENT EVENT

The CanSkate Element Event is an initiative developed by Skate Canada in support of the organization's ongoing implementation of the Long-Term Athlete Development Model. It has been formatted to introduce participants to the "competition" component of sport while providing them with the opportunity to showcase their skills in a fun and interactive environment. This event ideally takes place after a 10-week CanSkate session so that skaters have had the chance to learn all the skills in their current stages. The focus of the event is on individual skill improvement and therefore performances are not ranked.

The CanSkate Element Event section contains the following valuable information and resource tools for coaches, assessors and organizing committee members wishing to offer this event at their clubs:

- Technical Package
- Onsite Personnel Specifications
- Distribution Schedule
- Performance Standards Charts
- Element Event Certificate
- Circuit templates
- Pre-Event meeting agenda
- Parent information and entry form

