

HISTORY OF SPEED SKATING

The roots of ice skating dates back over 1000 years, when people fastened animal jaw bones to their footwear and glided across frozen lakes and rivers.

Canada's first recorded ice skating race took place in 1854, on the St. Lawrence River when three British army officers raced from Montreal to Quebec city. Speed skating races became a regular feature of winter life; in 1887, the Amateur Skating Association of Canada was launched. The name was changed to the Canadian Amateur Speed Skating Association in 1960 and then to Speed Skating Canada in 2000. Ontario skaters can presently join the Ontario Speed Skating Association.

Speed skating is a gender neutral non- contact sport for skaters of all ages and abilities from beginners to nationally ranked skaters.

Long track speed skating has been an Olympic sport for years and short track speed skating is also an official Olympic sport. For several decades, Canadians have won the vast majority of Olympic medals secured by the entire Canadian team.

At the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Turino, Canada won 24 medals. Twelve of these medals were won by the speed skating and short track teams.

OAKVILLE SPEED SKATING CLUB MISSION STATEMENT

To provide speed skating skills and training to people of all ages. We do this with respect and consideration of the needs of our skaters, whether recreational or competitive. Skating sessions are run in a manner to ensure

The Oakville Speed Skating Club was established in 1994.

The Oakville Speed Skating Club fosters FUN !! Our practices combine both technical and recreational aspects of speed skating. At reasonable rates, the club has a large inventory of rental skates available to club members.

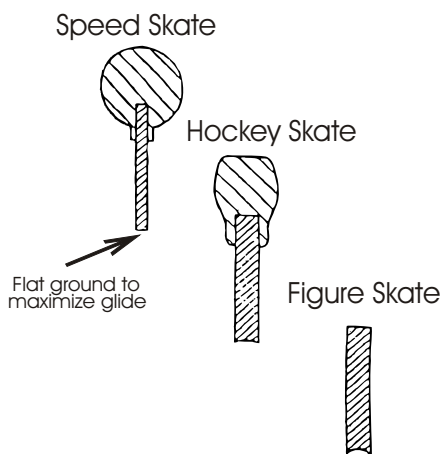
Our certified volunteer coaching staff offer training for all skill levels. We aim to develop a life-long love of the sport. OSSC has made a commitment to the growth and affordability of speed skating.

THE SKATES

Speed skates are designed and built for efficiency, power and speed. The most obvious difference between a hockey skate and a speed skate is the length of the blade. The amount of rocker (curve in the blade) is much less than other skates in order to have more blade make contact with the ice.

A typical top-flight skate boot is molded from lightweight Kevlar or Carbon Graphite compound. A stainless steel blade is mounted to the boot using aluminum brackets. Unlike figure skate or hockey skate blades, the base of the speed skate blade is flat to maximize glides. The blades are adjustable to assist in cornering as the skater becomes more proficient.

Skate blades come in a variety of lengths. The blades must be kept dry when not in use. It is important that the blades are kept sharp at all times. Blades must be sharpened by hand on a specialized jig.

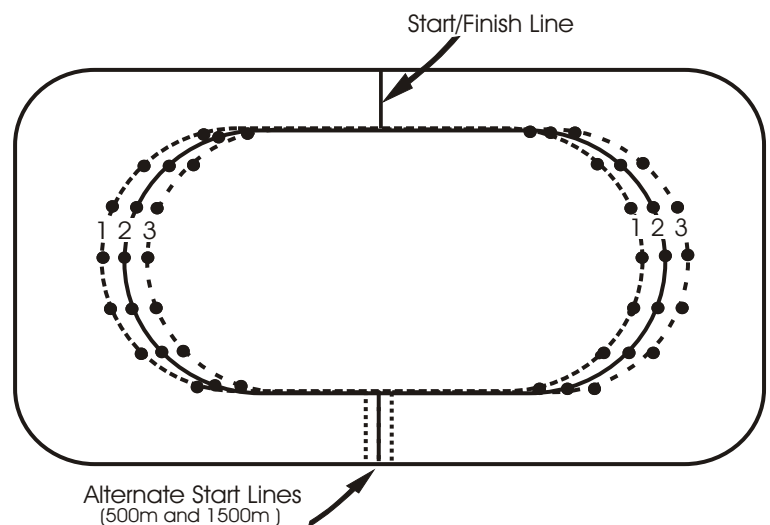


SKATE BLADE COMPARISON
(TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION)

THE SHORT TRACK OVAL

One lap around the oval measures 111 metres. A top-level skater can cover this distance in under ten seconds. Races are started from either side of the rink but the finish line is always in the same location. This is done to accommodate races that are not even increments of the track length such as the 500m and 1500m distances which would be 4-1/2 and 13-1/2 laps respectively. The corner radius is laid out at 8m and is marked at each end of the track with seven blocks.

The ice on the corners becomes rough from the racers skating over the same area of the track. To provide all skaters with the best possible ice, a number of tracks are marked out and the entire track is shifted prior to each race. Water is then poured onto the worn track to allow it to heal itself without needing to be resurfaced.



GENERAL SAFETY EQUIPMENT

1. Hard shell helmet.
2. Neck guard with chest protector.
3. Cut proof gloves (eg. leather or garden).
4. Volleyball knee pads (no roller blade pads with plastic knee caps).
5. Soccer shin pads.

AGE CATEGORIES

Racing at this level is based on age groupings as on June 30th prior to the competition. This helps foster keen and fair competition for one and all. The categories accommodate both young and old.

Cradle	(under 6)	Junior	(14 & 15)
Peewee	(6 & 7)	Intermediate	(16 & 17)
Bantam	(8 & 9)	Senior	(18 & over)
Midget	(10 & 11)	Masters	(30 & over))
Juvenile	(12 & 13)		

Apart from age class meets, there are also ability meets where skaters are placed in groups based upon their skill levels.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

A few simple rules govern the sport and are enforced by the Chief Referee of the meet who closely monitors the racing from the ice.

1. Body contact is not allowed at any time during the race.
2. Each skater is allowed one false start without penalty or disqualification.
3. Safety equipment is mandatory.
4. Corner blocks may be hit, but not skated inside of.
5. Shorter distance races allow a maximum of five skaters at the start line. Longer distance races can have up to six racers.
6. The skater in the lead has the right of way.
7. Should a skater fall before the apex block at the start, the starter can call all the skaters to restart the race.

IT'S RACE DAY !!!

Here is a primer on what's going on at the races. All skaters are assigned a numbered helmet cover and are identified by it for the duration of the meet. The starting position on the line is randomly assigned prior to the racers stepping onto the ice. On ice officials ensure that the order is correct. The Starter instructs the group to the line and starts the race with a shot from a starters pistol. Each skater is individually timed and finish line Judges determine placement.

A race meet typically requires one or two days to complete. In a two day meet each skater will compete in different distances with the lengths dependant on the age category of the skater. The two middle distances are skated on the first day and the shortest and longest distances are skated on day two. Each skater is required to skate a preliminary race called a Heat. The fastest skaters in each Heat are then advanced to a final race of the same distance.

Points are awarded to the top finishers in each Final. The skater in each age category to accumulate the most points from the four distances skated is declared the winner for the meet. Typically, the first three finishers in each category are presented with an award to recognize their accomplishments.

IMPORTANT!!!

At All-Points ability format race meets, skaters are grouped based upon their level of ability in terms of speed, from novice to more experienced and faster skaters. Our coaches will calculate the appropriate times. Each group of skaters are evenly matched to encourage fair and fun participation. All skaters in the Club are welcome to come and give it a try.