



Members' Guide

Champlain Valley Skating Club
champlainvalleyskatingclub.org

Welcome to the Champlain Valley Skating Club (CVSC)! Our club, which is part of the US Figure Skating Association (USFS)

- promotes figure skating in Vermont
- encourage each member to reach his or her own goals
- cultivates a spirit of unity among figure skaters
- promotes the objectives of US Figure Skating

We offer year-round skating, including individual professional instruction, US Figure Skating test sessions and the annual Champlain Valley Open Competition. We are proud to be the home club of the Vermont Children's Theatre on Ice troupe and the On Thin Ice Adult Theatre on Ice troupe. Vermont's largest non-profit supporting figure skating, we are entirely volunteer-run.

Skating teaches not only athleticism and artistry, but discipline, self-reflection, dedication, attention to detail, and persistence. It involves physical and mental skills which are useful throughout one's life. There are many ways to enjoy figure skating. Members of our club participate in private lessons or group lessons; they skate alone or with groups; some pursue freestyle skating and some ice dancing (which can be done solo or with a partner). Some seek out many competitive opportunities and others skate in exhibitions or purely for their own pleasure. We welcome members—skaters and non-skaters alike—and encourage each skater to find his or her own path through the sport.

This guide provides an overview of club membership and skating opportunities in our area. Questions about the club? Contact any board member or write to cvsc_us@yahoo.com. Board member info is available on the club website: <http://champlainvalleyskatingclub.org>.

What does the CVSC do?

The club promotes figure skating by

- providing access to practice ice for members
- approving coaches, ensuring that members have access to coaches with professional credentials
- hosting periodic testing sessions
- offering theatre on ice teams
- offering special intro to private lessons
- hosting competitions
- hosting occasional seminars with guest coaches

Why Join?

All skaters are welcome to join CVSC (and non-skaters can join as affiliate members to support club activities). Club membership is required for skaters who want to

- enter competitions beyond the basic skills level
- Join the adult or children's theatre on ice team
- take USFS tests
- regularly skate at club-sponsored ice sessions

Full club members can vote on club policies (parents exercise voting rights on behalf of child members).

Skaters who are taking the Introduction to Private Skating lessons must become basic members of the US Figure Skating Association (this membership is also open to any skater in group classes). This low-cost membership helps support introductory skating programs.

Ways to Be involved—volunteering

The Club needs volunteers all year long! You can get involved and help by

- Being an ice monitor! Playing music and checking in skaters during club freestyle sessions is a great way to get to know the skaters.
- Providing hospitality during competitions or test sessions. Well-fed judges are happy judges and the club typically provides meals and snacks for our unpaid officials during events
- Helping with registration or publicity for competitions or other events
- Serving on the board, helping to make policy and monitor club operations
- Curating the bulletin board

Pathways in Skating

Skating Disciplines

There are several different disciplines within figure skating:

- Freestyle: individual programs featuring footwork, spins, and jumps
- Ice Dance: solo or partnered skating, with moves based on dance traditions
- Pair Skating: freestyle skating in mixed-gender pairs, program elements include throw jumps, jumps, spins, and footwork
- Synchronized skating: team performance with members in precise formation
- Theatre on Ice: team performance, with use of props and costumes, emphasizing narrative

Most CVSC skaters pursue freestyle skating or ice dance. The club sponsors an adult and children's theatre on ice team (and many members of those teams also pursue freestyle skating or dance).

Group Lessons

Many skaters start off taking public group lessons (perhaps offered in school or through a local parks and recreation program) or simply skating at public ice sessions or frozen ponds with family and friends. In northwestern Vermont, there are opportunities for children and adults to take group lessons at many area rinks. Group lessons are typically geared toward a variety of ability levels, and are usually offered in 6-8 week sessions. They usually follow the USFS Basic Skills curriculum, which has 8 levels. The Burlington Parks and Recreation program and Vermont Skating Academy at the Essex Skating Facility usually offers some advanced group lessons; even advanced skaters can benefit from group lessons. Group lessons are a great way to test out whether someone enjoys skating, and also a great way to learn with others.

Private Lessons

Private lessons offer more personalized opportunities for growth and instruction. Skaters usually advance more quickly via private lessons than group lessons. Private lessons can be started at any time. Through CVSC, at Leddy Arena and Essex Arena, some coaches offer a special introduction to private lessons, a series that provides a sharply reduced lesson rate for those taking private lessons for the first time. It is not always necessary to join a skating club in order to take private lessons (see section on ice time for more information about when a skater must join the club). Coaches set their own fees and policies; skaters pay coaches privately. See the section below on questions to ask your coach below.

US Figure Skating Levels

The US Figure Skating Association has a formal structure that guides coaches and skaters in advancing through the sport. For beginning skaters in recreational basic skills programs, there are 8 numbered levels (preceded by Snowplow Sam for children getting on the ice for the very first time), which introduce basic elements of skating. More information is available on the USFS website, <http://www.usfsa.org/content.asp?menu=parents&id=387>. Generally, coaches or staff at a rink offering group classes will help parents determine what level of class is appropriate. Coaches determine when skaters are ready to move up to the next level of basic skills (often, levels are mixed within a group lesson).

Once skaters have completed the basic skills levels, there are eight different levels of tests:

- Pre-Preliminary (sometimes called pre-pre)
- Preliminary
- Pre-Juvenile (sometimes called pre-juv)
- Juvenile
- Intermediate
- Novice
- Junior
- Senior

In addition, there is a separate Adult Track:

- Pre-Bronze
- Bronze
- Silver
- Gold

For pre-preliminary tests and above, as well as for the adult track tests, USFS judges determine whether skaters have passed or not. The club hosts test sessions several times a year.

USFS tests help skaters focus on progressive and comprehensive skill development. **Moves in the field tests** are typically the first tests taken. Moves in the Field tests generally cover edges and turns (sometimes in footwork sequences). If you watched skating competitions prior to the mid 1990s, you might recall skaters tracing figures on the ice. The Moves in the Field tests have replaced those compulsory figures. They are skated without music; all skaters perform the same sequence of moves at each level.

Dance tests focus on progressively more difficult dance patterns; dance can be tested solo or in partnered. All dancers perform the same dance sequences at each level. **Freestyle tests** focus on freestyle programs with spins and jumps; skaters perform programs to music and create individualized programs containing the level's required elements. Skaters must have passed the moves in the field test at a given level before taking the dance or freestyle tests (although skaters can move up in levels with Moves in the Field whether or not they have taken any freestyle or dance tests). Skaters' coaches will advise on test preparation schedules.

Skating Performances and Competitions

Competition

Basic skills competitions, usually hosted by a skating rink rather than CVSC, offer low-stress, confidence-building opportunities. Skaters compete in very small groups at their current level of achievement. Basic skills programs focus on introducing new skaters (adult or child) to the sport. Some skaters pursue opportunities to participate in USFS-sanctioned competitions. Leddy Arena typically sponsors one or two basic skills competitions each year.

Beyond basic skills, there are other competitive opportunities available for skaters who have passed any USFS tests. A skater's coach can advise about how to find the types of competitions that best match the skater's goals. The **Well Balanced events** are the most demanding competitive path. Although the levels in a well balanced competition correspond to the USFS testing levels, skaters at each level compete using elements that exceed what's required for the USFS tests. Once well balanced competitors pass their Juvenile test, they are eligible to compete in the USFS Regional, Sectional and National competitions (skaters advance to sectionals and nationals based on results of the previous level competition). Competitions whose results count toward advancement to USFS Nationals are called *qualifying competitions*. Qualifying competitions—and some other well balanced competitions—use a judging system

called IJS (which awards points for technical skills and a few other criteria such as interpretation and transitions).

Recognizing that some skaters find the mismatch between the test level and competitive events daunting, USFS created **Test Track events**. In test track events, the level of difficulty for each event is limited, creating a more even playing field. Test track competitors do not have the option of competing at the USFS Regional competition's qualifying events. However, competitions may include qualifying and non-qualifying events. Non-qualifying events are open to test track competitors, and use a 6.0 judging system (in which each judge ranks all skaters in a round).

Skating coaches can advise on competitive opportunities in the region. CVSC sponsors a competition with both Well Balanced and Test Track events, typically in the summer.

Exhibition

The Burlington and Essex rinks both sponsor ice shows several times a year. Qualifications for performing a solo, duet, or group number are set by the sponsoring rink; generally speaking, more advanced skaters—those who have passed a particular test level—will be able to skate longer pieces, and soloists at the Leddy show must be CVSC members. Leddy shows usually feature a group number for CVSC skaters, too, so club members don't necessarily have to perform a solo to be in the show. For skaters in a rink's group lessons, there will be group numbers coordinated by the rink. Skating coaches in the area have experience with the ice shows and can advise skaters on how to prepare and what to expect. The rinks usually circulate information about the shows via email and via posters at the rink. If you are not receiving email announcements from the rink, check with the office staff about how to get added to their email list.

Teams

CVSC's Theatre on Ice Teams offer skaters from 7 to adult the opportunity to enjoy the fun and challenge of team competitions. Theatre on ice involves the athleticism and skills of skating with the costumes and story-telling of theatre or dance. CVSC is especially proud to have been the club that first introduced the discipline to the US! Vermont Children's Theatre on Ice is an open team for skaters from 7-22, and On Thin Ice is the adult team. Both teams generally travel to the national Theatre on Ice Championships and VCTI hosts a Theatre on Ice Festival each spring. For more information on Theatre on Ice, see:

<http://champlainvalleyskatingclub.org/skating-programs/vermont-childrens-theatre-on-ice/>

<http://champlainvalleyskatingclub.org/skating-programs/on-thin-ice/>

Practical Matters: Ice Time and Gear

Where to Skate

There are several options for skating, both for lessons and practice:

Public Skating

These sessions, open to the general public, typically have minimal costs associated with them (about \$5-7/session, paid to the rink). Particularly on the weekend, public sessions can be crowded with recreational skaters doing laps. For information about public skating sessions, see the Leddy Arena, Cairns Arena and Essex Skating Facility websites:

www.enjoyburlington.com/leddyPark.cfm www.Cairnsarena.com www.ccsuvt.org/rink

Freestyle Ice

Leddy and Essex Arenas offer freestyle sessions specifically dedicated to figure skating. Schedules vary during the year, but during the school year Leddy typically offers early morning freestyle ice and Essex offers some evening freestyle ice (info available from each rink). Cost of freestyle ice can vary depending on whether a skater pays simply for one session or pays for a set of sessions in advance (\$13-\$20/session, paid to the rink).

Leddy Arena typically offers fairly extensive Summer Figure Skating freestyle ice, during the day and in the evening.

For information about Leddy's freestyle ice, contact Sarah Jennings at Leddy Arena (SJennings@burlingtonvt.gov). The arena website is www.enjoyburlington.com/leddyPark.cfm. For information about Essex Arena's freestyle ice, see www.ccsuvt.orgskate

CVSC Ice

CVSC books ice at Leddy and UVM's Gutterson arenas and offers it to members (either walk-on or by advance contract). Information about CVSC ice is available on the club website—www.champlainvalleyskatingclub.org—and is emailed to members during the year. Skaters pay the club for access to the ice, and then pay coaches for any lesson time. Per session, it is cheapest to contract for the full year (purchasing contracts makes the cost per session around \$15). Coupon books for access to 5 sessions are available.

What to wear

Skaters need to wear warm, flexible clothing on the ice. Beyond basic skills, skaters usually wear lighter clothing—moving around on the ice generates heat! While female skaters often wear tights and dresses/skirts for performances or tests, most skaters practice wearing flexible athletic pants (Bear Hill Sports, Lululemon or Iviva brands are popular; families can find warm, stretchy practice clothing in athletic stores like Dick's or online).

Skates and Sharpening

Figure skates need careful sharpening—local shops accustomed to sharpening hockey skates can ruin the blade on a figure skate. Sometimes coaches or other skaters who are traveling to Boston or Montreal will offer to take other skates with them for sharpening.

Leddy Arena's pro shop offers skates and sharpening, although the club recommends that skaters get skates sharpened at a shop specializing in figure skates to preserve the blade.

Skates can be purchased at Leddy Arena's pro shop. In addition, some coaches sell used skates; check with your coach if you are in need of new skates. As skaters advance in the sport, they may need skates beyond those available in Burlington. Coaches can help evaluate options.

More specialized shops and sharpening services are available here:

L'Artiste du Patin
7825 Tashereau Blvd.
Brossard, Quebec
450-678-5443/888-440-5442
www.artistedupatin.com

Jonathan English /The Sharper Edge
50 Nancy Avenue
Peabody, MA 01960
(978) 535-9918
<http://sharperedgeskates.com/>

Cooke's Skate Supply
446 Main St.
Wilmington, MA
978-657-7586
<http://cookesskatesupply.com/>

Costs

How much skating costs very much depends on what kinds of events your skater participates in. There are costs associated with:

- Club/USFS membership
- Access to ice (called ice fees or ice time; skaters pay either the rink or the club, depending on who is sponsoring the skating session)
- Coaches' fees (for lessons)
- Competition entry fees (which help cover costs of putting on a competition)
- Test sessions—there is a separate fee per test (which helps cover the club's cost in bringing volunteer, qualified officials to the rink in order to judge the tests)
- Skates and skating outfits
- Team membership and travel fees

Parents' Roles in Skating

A figure skating coach provides individual instruction and guidance for a skater. It's important that parents support their child in developing an effective relationship with a coach and in developing good practice habits.

Selecting a coach

Things to consider when selecting a coach are personality, learning and teaching styles, experience and technical know-how as well as rates and availability.

The CVSC has information about professional skating coaches in the area (only club-approved coaches can offer lessons on CVSC freestyle ice). Some questions parents might want to ask prospective coaches:

- How long have you been coaching?
- What are your greatest coaching accomplishments?
- What is your skating background? Do you specialize in coaching certain disciplines (singles, pairs, dance, synchronized skating)? What levels have you passed? Did you skate competitively?
- Are you a member of U.S. Figure Skating and the Professional Skaters' Association (PSA) and do you hold any PSA rankings?
- How do you stay current with the sport and the profession of coaching?
- What are your rates? When do you expect to be paid?
- What is your policy if we have to cancel a planned lesson?
- Are there any other policies that we should be aware of in advance?

Goal-setting

Help your child set realistic goals. Is your child interested in competing? Is your child interested in skating with other people? Is your child interested in skill-building in order to work with other skaters? For your child to progress, multiple skating sessions per week will be necessary. Check with your coach about appropriate practice expectations for your child.

The US Figure Skating Association has good resources for parents about ways to foster healthy relationships with coaches and encourage skaters to have fun. See <http://www.usfsa.org/content.asp?menu=parents&id=433>

Member Code of Conduct

CVSC promotes skating through positive motivation, teamwork, and respect for all.

General Rules:

- Members and families will at all times show the greatest respect for all professionals, skaters, Club representatives, and Arena staff.
- No food or drink will be brought near the ice, except plastic or metal water bottles
- Skaters will be on the alert at all times on the ice
- Ice monitors can play requested music when the music player is not in use at their discretion
- All spectators shall be in the stands or snack bar area
- Should any issue arise, contact the Ice monitor, your professional, or any member of the Board of Directors
- No individual music players are allowed on the ice that require the use of ear buds (e.g. iPods, mp3 players)
- Skaters will give the right of way to those skaters wearing the colored vest
- The colored vest must be worn while performing a program with music. If free dance or pairs, both partners must wear a vest
- Music playing will begin after a 5 minute warm-up
- Skaters will have an opportunity for one play for their music before a second cycle begins
- Professionals may request a student's music every 15 minutes during a lesson.