

New Prague Area
Figure Skating Club

Member Handbook



This handbook is intended to answer basic questions about the
New Prague Area Figure Skating Club and the United States
Figure Skating Association. *(updated 2016)*

ABOUT NEW PRAGUE AREA FIGURE SKATING CLUB

The New Prague Area Figure Skating Club (NPAFSC) is a non-profit member owned skating club. We were organized in 1998. Our purpose is to promote the discipline of figure skating while sharing enthusiasm for the sport. We are sanctioned by the United States Figure Skating Association (USFS).

UNITED STATES FIGURE SKATING ASSOCIATION

United States Figure Skating Association is the governing body for the sport of figure skating on ice in the United States. It is a member of the International Skating Union and a member of the United States Olympic Committee.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE NPAFSC

Members are part of a wonderful organization dedicated to maintaining the positive spirit of figure skating. With membership in NPAFSC, skaters also are members of USFS. Members receive the NPAFSC newsletter and the USFS Skating Magazine. They are eligible to compete in USFS sanctioned competitions and take USFS tests. Members have the opportunity to perform in annual NPAFSC productions.

FEES AND ICE TIMES

NPAFSC has a fee schedule covering our season from September to March including membership fees, contracted ice fees, and show fees. Refer to the <http://npafsc.org> website Join the Club link for available ice contracts and fees. NPAFSC members must contract at least one session of club ice per week. Prices may change throughout the season. The lowest fees are generally available for members who join before the September season begins and contract for the full season. For additional ice time beyond the available club ice, the New Prague Area Community Center (NPACC) may provide freestyle ice contracts. This is ice time

available to figure skaters but paid through the NPACC. Information on freestyle ice contracts can be found on the <http://npafsc.org> website under the Join the Club.

Depending on the skater's ability and involvement, the costs can vary. There are additional coaching fees for private or group lessons. Figure skates, apparel, competition, testing, recognition items (i.e. pins and badges), costumes, choreography, music cutting, walk-on ice sessions, and fundraising commitments are additional expenses. There are multiple fundraising opportunities to help off-set NPAFSC expenses.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A CLUB MEMBER?

As a club, we help each other on and off the ice. We encourage and cheer each other on to excel at each level. As an individual, be timely and respectful of others while on the ice. Represent the club in a positive manner at all times. Be open to learning and growing in the sport of figure skating but do it at your own pace. Have fun!

A USFS member is in good standing as long as dues are current. You register with USFS when initially joining the NPAFSC Club and renew every year in June. The NPAFSC secretary will contact every member with renewal information before the due date. Your USFS identification number will remain the same with your renewal.

NPAFSC parents are also required to volunteer in various roles by promoting figure skating activities, monitoring at the rink, fundraising, and preparing for shows. Refer to the <http://npafsc.org> website Join the Club link for the Volunteer Commitment and the Fundraising Commitment forms.

The sport of figure skating is organized much differently than most other organizations in which your skater may have participated. Figure skating participation requires more parental involvement.

The NPAFSC will arrange for an adequate number of coaches for the size of membership, schedule ice time, provide performance, annual testing, and social opportunities, and handle membership, promotions and payments. However, the NPAFSC does not manage coaching, private lesson schedules or billing, costuming, additional testing, or competitions. Frequent communication with coaches is necessary and communication with other skating parents is extremely helpful. It can be difficult the first year to learn the ropes. The NPAFSC board and club parents are open to the many questions you will have. Please feel free to stay at the rink during your skater's lesson to watch and to talk with more veteran skating families.

PRIVATE COACHES

Selecting a Coach

Private lessons with a coach are the best way to develop as a figure skater. To pick a coach you may want to observe a few ice skating lessons taught by the NPAFSC professional coaching staff. Refer to the <http://npafsc.org> website under the Coaches tab to view current biographies. Contact the coaches to determine if they are taking on new skaters and to compare schedules. You should take a trial lesson from a potential coach. After you have a trial lesson, you can decide with whom you would like to work.

Each skating coach sets their own rates based on experience and qualifications and will bill you separately. The cost varies depending on the coach and the length of the lesson. Refer to the <http://npafsc.org> website under the Coaches tab to review rates. Lessons can vary but are typically in 15, 20, or 30 minute intervals.

You and your coach will decide on a lesson time, either during your contracted ice session, a public session or a freestyle session. It is a good idea to practice between lessons. Consult with your

coach about the amount of time you should practice and how many lessons you should have.

To get the most from your lesson, focus on your skating. Come rested and mentally prepared to work and learn. Eat a healthy meal or snack, warm up and stretch properly before each lesson. Ask questions early and often during the lesson. Practice, practice, practice! Either ask your coach to provide a practice plan or use the basic skills practice cards available at the rink monitor booth.

Proper Procedures for Changing Coaches

If you are considering a coaching change, the following steps must be taken. First, before contacting a new coach, discuss concerns with the current coach. There may be a way to resolve the situation. It is important to always give a coach a chance to correct the issue or clear up a misunderstanding. Don't be shy. Communication is key in any successful relationship.

If the situation cannot be resolved and the decision is made to switch coaches, contact the current coach and express the reasons for switching to another coach. Make sure your account balance is paid in full with the current coach. Next, discuss the coaching change with your skater to help him or her become comfortable with the change. No discussion or explanation is necessary to other parents or the NPAFSC board of directors.

If you have a situation that you feel warrants attention, take it privately to the NPAFSC board of directors and allow them to handle it appropriately. The board can provide you with a list of coaches currently accepting new skaters should you decide to make a coaching change. The NPAFSC board respects the skater-coach relationship and will typically only intervene if action is requested by a parent or coach or attention is needed based on an ethical or safety reason.

Switching coaches should not affect a skater's relationship with other skaters. Skaters may not isolate or make an outcast of a skater who has switched coaches. Skaters should not encourage others to switch coaches. All skaters must be treated with equal respect regardless of coach.

NPAFSC PERFORMANCES

Winter Exhibition

The Winter Exhibition is a fun, informal production in which we kick off the holiday season by inviting the community to attend this free event. All NPAFSC skaters are eligible to perform in group numbers to holiday songs. Skaters will have input into group formation and song selection. Other numbers, such as individual competition programs, may be added by the planning committee. Extra practice time and coaching may be required for this show. Since ice and coaching time is limited, flexibility in private lesson schedules and show number practice times is often needed.

Spring Show

The Spring Show is a showcase of the hard work each skater has put in over the season. Skaters of all levels perform to a common theme decided upon during the previous season. Skaters will be eligible to perform with the entire club, large age-based groups, and/or small ability-based groups. Skaters are assigned small groups or solo numbers by the show committee based on a variety of factors including but not limited to age, years of NPAFSC membership, skill level, and participation in USFS tests and competitions.

JUNIOR CLUB

NPAFSC also offers a Junior Club program for those skaters looking to increase their time on the ice but not looking for competition or the full commitment of club membership. Junior

Club provides an introduction to primary figure skating skills in a small group environment. It expands on skills learned in Learn to Skate (LTS) classes and offers a lower cost opportunity to explore the sport of figure skating. Junior Club members will be able to observe the professional coaching staff and determine if they would like to increase their involvement in the NPAFSC. Junior Club members must be LTS participants and are allowed Junior Club membership for a maximum of two seasons. Hopefully Junior Club members will join in all the fun of the NPAFSC the following season!

Junior Club is to be used in conjunction with required LTS participation to aid in progress. Junior Club members will meet with an assigned junior coach for a lesson followed by self-guided practice one or two times per week. All testing, level advancement, and award recognition will be conducted during LTS.

Junior club members may purchase a small, medium, or large ice contract depending on the number of times per season they would like to skate. Refer to the <http://npafsc.org> website Jr. Club tab for available ice contracts and fees.

Comparison of Junior Club to NPAFSC membership

This document outlines the differences from Learn to Skate, Jr. Club and New Prague Figure Skating Club.

 LTS - JR - CLUB

HIGH SCHOOL LETTERING

Lettering is available to our club's high school competitive skating members. The NPAFSC Board and Letter Chairperson determine if skaters have met lettering requirements with the approval of the coach. Refer to the <http://npafsc.org> website Join the Club link for the High School Letter form for guidelines. Board Members have

discretion to letter/not to letter individual skaters based on these guidelines and unforeseen circumstances.

NPAFSC RULES

NPAFSC rules guide skaters to exercise awareness of one another and use good judgment while they are on the ice and at the rink. Enforcement of these rules will be the responsibility of the rink monitor. Breaking these rules may result in written warning, removal or exclusion from the ice for a determined period, or permanent expulsion from the facility. Coaches will help skaters remember the rules are for the safety of all skaters. All members agree to abide by the rules of NPAFSC with application for membership. NPAFSC reserves the right to modify club rules throughout the year as needed.

General Rules

- All skaters are to be considerate of other skaters and coaches.
- A skater must get up immediately after a fall if s/he is able.
- Any injuries must be reported to the rink monitor immediately.
- No food or gum is allowed on the ice.
- No socializing while on the ice as crowds of skaters become a hazard. Standing is allowed only next to the boards when stretching, requesting music, receiving instruction, etc.
- Coaches should exercise awareness of other skaters around their students, particularly when using the harness.
- Equipment and personal items are the responsibility of the skater. NPAFSC and NPACC are not responsible for lost items.
- Proper conduct is expected. The use of abusive language, disrespectful actions or words, and uncontrolled temper will not be tolerated.
- Do not use the lobby to put on or take off skates. Use the club room or assigned locker room.

Ice Rules

- Contract skaters must sign in with the rink monitor before entering the ice.
- Walk-on skaters must pay the rink monitor and sign in before taking the ice.
- No more than 30 skaters on the ice.
- Programs are played by rotation in the order requested (see Music Rules).
- Any skater wishing to practice a free skating program will have the right-of way during his/her program music and must wear an orange sash.
- Moves in the Field practice is allowed. Skating flow goes counter-clockwise.
- Large group skating is only allowed during specified practice times.
- If an issue arises during an ice practice, go first to the rink monitor, then a NPAFSC board member if the rink monitor is unable to resolve the issue. Please do not go to the NPACC employees.
- Practice of spins to the center of the ice.
- Practice of jumps to the ends of the ice.

Music Rules

- Music should be turned in to the rink monitor at the beginning of the ice session.
- Music may be left at the rink for future practices.
- Each skater must put on an orange sash and signal the rink monitor when s/he is ready.
- Music will be played in order as requests are taken.
- Lessons have priority.
- Second requests are honored after all first requests are played. Third requests, after all second requests and so on.

NPACC Rules

- No smoking or alcoholic beverages allowed in the building.
- Enter ice through doors.
- No one is allowed on ice surface until Zamboni is off the ice and operator signals for your group to take the ice.
- Adults must supervise their children while in facility.
- Locker rooms must be left clean after each use.
- Parents can watch skaters from the NPACC lobby, arena bleachers or from behind the boards but should stay off the ice for safety reasons.
- Please do not approach the staff of the NPACC with questions unless it directly pertains to the arena.

Accident Report Procedures

An accident report is to be completed by the rink monitor and returned to a NPAFSC board member whenever an accident occurs. Whether the person involved is a participant or bystander, whether the injury is considered minor or major, or whether or not you feel the incident will result in a claim, the form must be completed.

In case of a serious injury, immediately notify the rink monitor. It is vital you contact them as soon as possible in the event of an injury involving a participant or bystander who has been injured seriously enough to require medical attention.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Be supportive. Improvement and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Do not judge your child's progress based on the performance of other skaters.

Develop a cooperative and professional relationship with your coach. The bond between coach and skater is a special one which contributes to your child's success as well as their enjoyment. Do

not criticize the coach, especially in the presence of your child. Remain positive and encouraging when talking to your coach and child. Your responsibility is to support your child by managing schedules, club responsibilities, and equipment. The coach's responsibility is to manage the technical aspects of your child's on-ice development.

Be positive at competitions and performances. Always strive to set a good example for your child and help make competition a positive experience. Be supportive of your child, other children, parents, judges, coaches, and officials.

Help your child develop good sportsmanship. Do not complain about the judging or results at a competition. Remind your skater their behavior reflects on your family, our club, and our community. Encourage your skater to review the judges comments with their coach and use feedback to improve.

Set goals outside of just winning competitions. Giving an honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning. Setting and achieving goals creates a greater sense of self, of self-control, and confidence to last a lifetime.

Keep the focus of youth sports on enjoyment. Children are constantly changing, and their goals, interests and participation in activities will change as well. Parents should remain flexible, patient and always supportive as children develop their interests.

Set realistic expectations. While not all skaters become elite athletes, figure skating teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship. It will build friendships, self-esteem and fitness. Figure skating can help your child develop the necessary skills to succeed in life.

SKATER CODE OF CONDUCT

NPAFSC members pledge to be positive about their skating experience and accept responsibility for participation by following these guidelines.

- Demonstrate and encourage good sportsmanship with fellow skaters, coaches and parents at every practice, competition, and other skating events.
- Treat coaches, other skaters, parents and rink volunteers with respect regardless of race, gender, creed or abilities. Expect to be treated accordingly.
- Do the very best to listen and learn from the coaches.
- Work hard to improve skills.
- Deserve to have fun during the skating experience and alert parents or coaches if not.
- Pledge to support a zero tolerance policy regarding the presence and use of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.
- Encourage parents to be involved with skating in some capacity because it is important to success.
- Welcome skaters from other clubs and rinks.
- Maintain a high level of safety awareness while at all ice arenas.

SKILL LEVELS AND TESTING

While competitive skaters are required to participate in testing in order to compete in USFS sanctioned competitions, recreational skaters can also opt to take tests in order to continually challenge themselves and their abilities.

Basic Skills

There are eight basic skating skills level, referred to as Basic Skills 1-8. In Basic Skills, testing is used to advance skaters and is informally conducted by the skater's coach in a private or group

lesson. When a skater has mastered all Basic Skills levels, s/he is eligible to begin working on USFSA skating levels.

USFS Skating Levels and Test Structure

Tests are judged by USFS-appointed judges at formal test sessions. The results are forwarded to the USFS which keeps official records of each skater's test accomplishments.

NPAFSC members participate in two types of tests, Moves in the Field (standard track or adult) and Free Skate (standard track or adult.) Moves in the Field tests help develop all basic fundamental edges and turns while emphasizing edge quality, extension, quickness and power. The standard Moves in the Field test of the same level is the prerequisite to a standard Free Skate test. The Free Skate test is a choreographed routine often skated to music which incorporates required elements. Refer to the USFS website <http://www.usfsa.org> for specific skills and rules for each level.

Moves in the Field/Free Skate Levels	Adult Levels
Pre-Preliminary	Adult Pre-Bronze
Preliminary	Adult Bronze
Pre-Juvenile	Adult Silver
Juvenile	Adult Gold
Intermediate	Senior
Novice	
Junior	
Senior	

CARE OF SKATES

Skates are expensive! It is important to purchase quality skates and protect your investment. Coaches are an excellent resource when selecting boots and blades. Consult your coach to determine where

to purchase and what type of skate will best meet your individual needs.

Caring For Your Blades

Keep them sharp, but not too sharp. A sharp blade grabs the ice better than a dull one. Sharpen your blades when they start to slide uncomfortably when you land. Make sure the person sharpening you blades specializes in figure skate sharpening. Sharpening too frequently will decrease the life span of the blade.

Protect the blades. Wear skate guards when not on the ice to avoid damage.

Avoid water damage. Off the ice, the biggest killer of blades is rust. Once a part of your blade is rusted that spot will not hold an edge. Some rust spots may be removed by sharpening. To prevent rust, always dry off your blades when you get off the ice by carefully removing snow. Be sure to wipe the blade area and the mounting surfaces, including the screws, with a towel. Let them sit for a few minutes and wipe them down again before storing them in your bag. You almost always see more water form from condensation as they warm up. Use soakers, fabric blade covers, before storing skates to absorb remaining moisture and provide a cushion for edges.

Caring For Your Boots

It is important to have a good quality boot at all levels of skating. Replace your boots when the leather is thinner, creased, and the outer color of the boot starts to break down. This indicates the boot is no longer offering adequate support. Your coach can assist you in determining boot condition. Your safety and the quality of your jumps rely on the support that only a well cared for boot can provide.

Protect the leather of your boots. Your boots are just as susceptible to water damage as the steel in your blades. Keep your boots well polished. Polish improves the appearance, seals the leather and repels water. This is especially important if the surface is nicked or scratched and unfinished leather is exposed.

Care for the inside of your boots. Moisture can get trapped inside your boot and cause damage. To help avoid this, open up your boot as much as you can when it is off your foot. Loosen the laces as far down as you can. Pull the tongue up and out from the boot to help expose the inside of the boot to air. When you get home keep your boots outside your bag until completely dry inside and out. Store skate bags unzipped to allow air to circulate.

Care for the mount. The blade is held to the boot sole with screws. It is important you maintain the proper tightness of these screws; they will loosen over time. Loose screws are dangerous and promote wear of the leather. Avoid over tightening to prevent the leather from stripping. New skates may initially have a temporary mount. Once the blade has been tested on ice, and the skater is confident in the placement, the blade should be permanently mounted by adding additional screws. Any remaining unfilled screw holes can be used should any of the existing holes become stripped.

Caring For Your Laces

A lace that breaks at an inopportune time can cause stress and possible injury. Replace laces when they start to wear, develop loose threads or when the aglets, plastic ends, come off. Always keep a spare pair of laces in your bag.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

It is important your clothing is neither too tight as to restrict motion nor too loose as to present a safety hazard. You should never wear anything that drags on the ice or hangs close to your

blade. Sweatshirts with hoods or ties should be avoided. It can be cold on the ice, especially for younger or beginner skaters. Dress warmly and in layers. Shed layers as you heat up. During practice most skaters choose thick tights, lined leggings or athletic pants.

Gloves are always a necessity. Most skaters wear stretchy one-size-fits all gloves. Buy multiple pairs because they seem to disappear even faster than socks!

HAIR GUIDELINES

Hair must be fastened out of your face. It is difficult to jump and spin with hair flying in your face. If using bobby pins, make sure they are secure so they do not fall out and put skaters at risk.

SHOW AND COMPETITION CHECKLIST

- Skates (BOTH of them!)
- Costume including tights, accessories, and under garments
- Spare tights
- Extra hair binders, bobby pins, etc.
- Make up
- Comb, brush, hairspray
- Warm-up jacket
- Music (CD, labeled and tested)
- Backup music (CD, labeled and tested)
- Guards and soakers
- Your emergency bag (spare screws, screwdriver, spare laces, bandages, pain reliever, etc.)
- Inhaler or medication (if needed)
- USFS number
- Event number and time
- Directions to the rink
- Money to pay for video (optional)

COMPETITIONS

Competitions will be one of the most exciting, confusing, and stomach-churning days you will ever experience in skating! Just remember, you are doing this for fun, so go out there, show off a little, and enjoy the experience. Every time you go out on the competition ice, try to do just a little bit better than you did last time. You will come off the ice feeling good about your performance, knowing you have done your best job, and feeling proud of all the hard work.

Find Competitions

Your coach is familiar with competitions in your area and will recommend competitions suitable based on your abilities and range of abilities expected. Entry deadlines are generally 6-8 weeks before the competition. Allow plenty of time.

Registration

Application forms are usually included in the announcement packet or online at the hosting club's website. This information will list all events, eligibility requirements, and required elements for programs. You may enter more than one event if you wish, often subsequent events cost less than the initial event. There will be an entry deadline listed. Make sure you get your form or online registration in on time. Usually registration will require a club officer or coach's signature to attest to your eligibility. Plan ahead to schedule a time to obtain signatures.

Event Schedule

Usually, you will receive correspondence from the host club about 1-2 weeks prior to the competition. It will list your event day and times, and will provide directions to the rink and other necessary information. Most competitions run over a weekend but some may start as early as Thursday or Friday to accommodate all skaters.

Competition Day

Skaters should expect to check in at least one hour before the scheduled event time. Music will be dropped off at the check in table (keep an extra copy in your bag or give to your coach). The club will provide locker rooms for costume changes, and usually clothes and skating bags can be left in the room while competing. Be fully dressed and ready to check in when the group before your group takes the ice.

Check in with the ice monitor at the skater's entry door and then wait until your assigned warm-up time. Skaters are allowed a 3-6 minute on-ice warm up before competing.

When it is your turn, skate out and strike your initial pose. If you are skating to music, they will start it as soon as they know you are ready. If there is no music, you should wait until they announce

something like “Skater, you may begin.” Take a deep breath, relax, and skate your best. Friends and family are welcome to photograph the performance. However, for the safety of the skaters, NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY is permitted during competition events at any figure skating competition.

When your program is complete, take your bows then skate off the ice. If you are on a “half-ice” competition and someone else is skating on the other half, hold your ending post to wait until they finish before skating off the ice.

Results, Medals, Ribbons

It typically takes about 30 minutes for the results to be posted. The results sheet will show your final position and the original markings from each judge. Different clubs do this differently, but usually medals or ribbons are given to the top three positions. They may have award ceremonies scheduled during the competition and may take official pictures at this time as well. Remain dressed in your costume and skates for the ceremony and photos session. Some competitions do not have a formal award ceremony but have an area where awards are given and pictures are taken.

Before Exiting the Arena

Pick up your music CD. If desired and available, order professional photos or a video of your performance.

Competition Conduct

Remember, every person competing is special to someone. Skaters and families should be respectful of all competitors. In the audience, refrain from entering, exiting or wandering the bleacher area while skaters are performing. Be attentive to and appreciative of the efforts of all skaters.

RESOURCES FOR SKATERS

For more information on the types of figure skating, events, jumps, spins and helpful hints, please see the following resources.

Figure Skating for Dummies by Kristi Yamaguchi, Christy Ness, and Jody Meacham contains a complete guide and provided some of the useful material in this parent handbook.

Skating Magazine is the official publication of the USFS and is the best way to keep informed. By joining USFS and NPAFSC, your family will receive 10 issues a year at no cost.

USFS Directory provides contact information for all clubs and Basic Skills programs across the country. It also gives contact information for the USFS Executive Committee, board members, committee chairs, committee members, and officials.

USFS Rulebook contains all the bylaws for the association along with the technical rules that govern figure skating.

NPAFSC Directory (distributed after registration) has board member and club skater contact information.

www.usfsa.org the official website for United States Figure Skating Association

www.npafsc.org the website for New Prague Area Figure Skating Club