

Navigating Private Lessons

Why Take Private Lessons?

- Extra help: Some skaters, particularly the very young, find that starting out for the first time is too difficult. They need some individual attention to get them on their feet and moving: once this is accomplished, they can participate in group activities. For some, they need that extra help to keep them motivated and to help them in keeping up with their group.
- Fast tracking: Skaters who aspire to becoming serious figure skaters or hockey players often use private instruction to get them on their way faster. A talented skater can move through CanSkate skills and on to jumps, spins, etc much faster when their lessons are supplemented with some one-to-one instruction.
- Tests and Competitions: Once a skater reaches a level where they want to try Skate Canada tests or enter competitions, private instruction becomes essential. Free skate solos cannot be learned in a group - each solo is unique for the skater. At a higher level, the fine tuning of elements and steps can only be done effectively with individual attention.

How Private Lessons Work

When you arrange private instruction, **the cost is split two ways: You pay the Club for ice time and the coach for instruction.** Each coach sets their own rate for private lessons, and in the interest of objectivity, the club office does not keep a record of their rates. Most have a preferred procedure for invoicing and receiving payment. To avoid unwanted surprises, you should find out these details when arranging lessons. When you arrange private lessons with a coach, they are working directly for you, their client. Any communication about progress, problems, or absences should be handled directly. Make sure you know your coach's policy on missed lessons. A coach may charge for a missed lesson if you do not give adequate notice

How to Choose a Coach

A good working relationship between a skater and a coach is crucial. Coaches have different styles of teaching (eg. nurturing vs demanding); skaters have different priorities and learn in different ways (eg. ambitious vs cautious). When the coach and skater mesh well, lessons are fun and productive; if the coach and skater do not get along, lesson time will be frustrating and unpleasant for everyone involved. There is no guaranteed formula for picking the coach who will be best for any particular skater. However, there are some things you can do to increase the probability of success:

- Check out coaches' resumes. Many coaches have specialties: a level of skater or a personality type that have been their best success stories.
- Watch coaches teaching other skaters. Even if you can't hear what is going on, body language tells a story: Does there appear to be good two way communication? Are they laughing or serious? Does the coach demonstrate / explain?

Ask your child if there is a particular coach they would like. Ask other skaters who they like. Ask parents for their recommendations.

Talk to the coach. Try to catch the coach when they are not in a lesson. If this is not possible, our executive can arrange for a coach to contact you.

I've Chosen A Coach, Now What?

You (the skater or parent/guardian) must make the initial contact with a coach for private lessons. Coaches are not allowed to recruit students. The best time to catch a coach is before or after a session; please don't interrupt them during group or private lessons.

Availability of coaches

Coaches often have commitments outside the skating club which determine the hours that they are available to teach. It's best to talk directly with the coach of your choice. Sometimes lessons can be juggled to accommodate a new skater.

Changing coaches

The relationship between coach and skater is like any other - it has its up and downs. Usually, you can ride out the rough spots (performance plateaus, disagreements, and many other difficulties). Occasionally, a change is the only solution. Changing coaches is never easy, but there are a few things you can do to minimize the problems:

- Discuss the problem with the coach. You don't have to give a reason for changing, but it should be considered as a courtesy.
- Settle any outstanding invoices. A new coach will not take on a skater who has an outstanding debt with another coach.
- Learn from the experience (the good as well as the bad) and move on