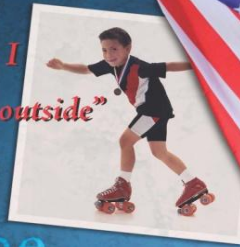




ORGANIZING SPEED SKATING

*“Skating helped me identify who I
wanted to become — inside and outside”*

~ Apolo Ohno
*two-time Olympic gold medalist;
Olympic silver medalist;
two-time Olympic bronze medalist,
short-track speedskating*



USA ROLLER SPORTS

Amateur roller sports competitions have taken place in the United States since 1937. Today, the membership of USA Roller Sports (USARS) includes skaters in four disciplines who, in turn, belong to amateur skating clubs across the United States. In addition to promoting roller sports nationwide, USARS administers competitive roller sports from its national headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska in a variety of ways. Some of these are:

- Program and competition rules development
- Registering skaters and clubs
- Training and certifying judges and officials
- Conducting seminars for skaters and coaches
- Approving requests for amateur roller sports competitions
- Hosting regional and national championship competitions
- Representing USA skaters in conferences at the national and international level
- Registered member skaters/coaches of USA Roller Sports are provided with excess (secondary) accident/medical expense benefits in the amount of \$50,000 for injuries occurring **ON SKATES** limited to organized and supervised practice sessions held within USA Roller Sports chartered club facilities, or during USA Roller Sports sanctioned competitions and/or USA Roller Sports training sessions sanctioned by national headquarters specified to occur outside of club facilities. The event must be supervised by a club officer (or an official USA Roller Sports coach) or the USA Roller Sports designated leader of an USA Roller Sports sponsored event. The individual will be required to certify the validity of the claim being submitted. No coverage is extended to a skater injured while on skates, but who is not in training for USA Roller Sports competitions.

Working both independently and in cooperation with the United States Olympic Committee, USARS seeks to advance medical and technical knowledge of, as well as support for, roller sports in the United States. The USARS Sports Medicine Committee constantly conducts studies to help coaches and trainers better understand the exercise and conditioning needs of roller skaters. USARS skaters are also allowed to train and live at Olympic Training Centers across the United States. USARS, a non-profit corporation under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is the National Governing Body (NGB) for amateur roller sports in the United States under the Amateur Sports Act of 1978. USARS is a member of:



- The United States Olympic Committee (USOC), the premier sports organization for amateur skaters in the United States.



- The Federation Internationale de Roller Sports (FIRS), the governing body of roller sports worldwide. FIRS, which is recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the General Assembly of International Sports Federations, is comprised of 80 national roller skating federations, in all five continents.
- The Pan American Sports Organization (PASO), which governs the amateur sports of all nations located in the Western Hemisphere.

As the sport's NGB, USARS provides skaters of all ages in figure, speed, roller hockey and roller derby with opportunities to compete at the regional, national, and international level.

ABOUT THE SPORT



Regardless of age, speed skaters share a determination to race as fast and as far as they can. This youthful enthusiasm is matched by the sport of speed skating, a discipline demanding a blend of quickness, stamina, and strategy. It's fun, exciting, healthful, social, and rewarding. USARS speed skating is a non-contact sport, requiring skaters to display their skills to maneuver cleanly through the pack and into winning position. Skaters are disqualified for pushing, blocking, forcing another racer out of

position, or using their arms, legs, or hands in any way that impedes the progress of other competitors. For added safety, skaters are also required to wear approved helmets during competition.

Speed skating, like other organized sports, requires skaters to be disciplined as they train and compete in an effort to attain peak performance. The benefits, however, go beyond winning. Skaters learn the importance of teamwork, of being persistent and organized, and of setting and reaching goals. It builds health, strength, and discipline. Speed skaters also learn to value good sportsmanship. Although the sport is at home in a variety of locales, the two basic divisions are for indoor and outdoor events.

Indoor Competition

Indoor skating, a variation characteristic of competition in the United States, uses a 100-meter oval track in individual and relay events. In both events, the age groups determine distances and divisions. In individual events, champions are determined by the points they earn in the final races of each distance skated. Relay events, either for two or four skaters, single gender or mixed, give teams of skaters the opportunity to combine their skills against other relay contestants. USARS conducts separate national competitions for quad (traditional 4-wheel skates) and inline roller skates.

Outdoor Competition



Outdoor speed skating, the recognized international standard, is categorized into road and track racing. Road racecourses usually take the form of an irregular closed loop with no bank on either side, or an actual stretch of closed road. These courses require constant power, with little or no opportunity to coast, so endurance is a key factor in success. Track races, however, are on a closed, oval course usually measuring 200 meters and featuring banked sides. The home track for outdoor speed skating in the United States is near the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Outdoor racing is almost exclusively performed on inline skates.

Inline Skates

Inline skates have a permanent home in speed skating events throughout the country. Not only are they popular among recreational skaters, the design's dominance over traditional quad skates in speed skating competitions prompted USARS to create separate divisions in sanctioned meets. Recognizing its impact on the sport, USARS also successfully lobbied the Federation Internationale de Roller Sports to permit inline skates in international competition. Inline skates made their debut at the 1992 World Speed Championships and quads have since disappeared from the event.

Novice Speed Skating

The Novice Speed Program is a beginner participation program. The express purpose and intent of the Novice Speed Program is to provide new skaters with competitive events designed to introduce them to the sport of inline speed skating.

Although emphasis will be placed on skating centers for the purpose of this publication, the sport of speed skating can be developed and enjoyed by any organization dedicated to working with people of all ages. All it takes is a little planning and enthusiasm to get a successful speed skating program off and rolling.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

Attracting skaters to speed classes is quite simple; after all, the first thing every child wants to do on skates is learn to go fast. By taking advantage of this natural tendency, a roller speed club can generate profit and media attention for the skating center, while building skating enthusiasm.

Members of a speed skating club pay to participate in their sport. The details vary, but charges can include monthly club dues, practice fees, and private lessons. Some operators may charge only a monthly fee, which includes the use of the facility for all scheduled practices and meets. Others may even use a sliding fee scale to encourage several members of one family to participate in their program. For example, they may charge \$40 a month for the first family member, \$35 for the second, and \$30 for each additional member. At \$35 a month, a club with 30 members can gross \$12,600 a year. But that can be just the beginning. The number of members in a club is only limited by an operator's sales and management abilities. Some clubs have as many as 100 members.

Speed skating competitions and practices are another source of profit. Because dedicated speed skaters are zealots about their sport, they're often willing to practice at times that are not commercially enticing, making it easy to schedule club practices and meets during off hours. This can be a lucrative proposition for the promotion-minded rink operator. However, the operator and the coach should agree upon the number of practice times scheduled during any week.

This same zeal also extends to the speed skater's taste in equipment. Often they demand the top-of-the-line boots, frames, and wheels as soon as they get their first taste of competition. Speed skaters also like to have several sets of wheels of various compounds for the different types of floor surfaces on which they race, further enhancing sales.

However, it isn't advisable to force skaters to buy their equipment from the rink alone if the rink is not competitive in the market place. Often all that's needed is a friendly reminder that the rink services what it sells, not what others sell. Stock what the skater needs and profit from skaters who will spend a few dollars more to buy at the rink instead of having to go someplace else for what they need. Also, a trade-in program holds their loyalty to the rink, recycles equipment for entry-level skaters, and is profitable.

The speed club members often influence the session skaters, who desire to wear the same expensive equipment. Club members who are made to feel a positive attitude toward the rink will motivate their friends and acquaintances to come to the skating center. Recognizing this, many operators give their club members reduced prices at their pro shop and free passes to sessions. The resulting full-price sales to the skaters who want to be speed club members are beneficial for the operator. Sponsorships are another way to supplement a competitive program because they can offset travel expenses, the cost of uniforms, equipment purchases, and entry fees.

Speed skating clubs have proven themselves to be a successful method of attracting and keeping lots of young people interested in the rink. The club members quickly develop a positive rink spirit that attracts other young people to the skate center. These ambassadors of skating spread the word through local elementary, middle, and high schools, and they invite their friends to come down to the rink to get in on the fun they're having.

Few sports events can match the head-to-head excitement of a well-skated race. Sportswriters, sports photographers, and television crews made this discovery at the 1979 Pan-American Games and the enthusiasm is just as great among the local media. It's a sport they can readily understand - racing - where the gold medals and trophies go to those who skate the fastest. In addition, it has the human-interest appeal of widely varied ages among the participants. The sheer numbers, as well as the enthusiasm, at a meet usually surprise first-time reporters or photographers, and the skaters win them over quickly, assuring return visits. What better way to get free advertising for your facility?

STARTING YOUR PROGRAM

Call to Order

All it takes to begin a speed skating program is a basic understanding of what's required, knowledge that can be acquired through books, videos, or the coaches program offered by USARS.

Networking is another way new coaches can learn more about their sport. Coaches dedicated to their craft will be more than willing to impart what they know to someone who shares their enthusiasm. Both parties benefit by increasing the quality and quantity of competition available to the skaters.

It doesn't take a world-class skater to begin the program. What's required is someone who is willing to understand and work with people of all ages. Communication skills - not technical skills - best determine who should be selected for the responsibility and who will be a successful sport leader.

Some operators find qualified and interested coaches among those already on their staff, such as floor guards, managers, or coaches in other competitive programs. Also, thanks to progressive USARS rules, active competitive skaters are eligible to coach. Many times, the best prospects for coaching positions are the parents who are interested enough to bring their child down to the rink and watch practices on a regular basis.

No matter who is chosen, it must be someone who can accept the responsibility, which often includes consistently investing several hours a week into the program. They should also possess a genuine concern for people. Choose carefully - the image projected by the coach is the image parents will share with everyone they come into contact with.

As a way to maintain and encourage a club's coach, it's advisable that some form of profit sharing be devised. An example would be a 50/50 or 60/40 arrangement between the coach and operator, whether it is based on monthly club dues, practice fees, or private lessons. Whatever arrangements are made, be certain that they are clearly defined and understood by all parties.

Getting Started

When beginning a new program, start small, map it out, and know where to go next. One of the first steps is to select the age group that will be the target of the rink's promotional efforts. For the rink operator, the group they may first choose to recruit into their program are those of the age most often represented at public skating sessions. Other organizations may also want to focus on age groups that they initially have the best chances of attracting to a competitive program.

Next, select a starting date for the roller speed program. If possible, it's recommended that a new program run from right after Christmas. This time frame eliminates some of the competition represented by football, soccer, and baseball. Once the program is established, subsequent seasons can begin in September or October.

It is also advisable to devise a registration form for the program that asks for some basic biographical information from each applicant, while also explaining the sport and the benefits of the program. In addition, the form should list the various age divisions, schedules (to include practice times), any restrictions (such as rink rules), membership fees, and anticipated expenses (include everything - don't leave any surprises that could sabotage the success of the program).

Each applicant should provide their name, address, phone number, emergency contact person (for minors, this would be the parent or guardian), email address, level of skating experience, t-shirt size, and any insurance coverage. Also, include a space on the form for potential volunteers.

Once the coach is picked, potential members are identified, the starting date is set, and the registration form is designed, all that's left to do is promote, promote, promote. Start by:

- Posting the class time and practice times around the rink.
- Advertising the class by making announcements during sessions and handing out flyers.
- Having some speed skaters give a brief demonstration during a session break.
- Watching session skaters closely. The ones who consistently skate faster than they should during sessions should be personally invited to use their skill in the new speed club instead.
- Posting signs in the rink featuring photos of speed skaters in action. Show a few champions posing with their trophies and medals, too.
- Decorating the rink's bulletin boards with encouragement: "If you can skate, you can race." "How can you stay ahead of the pack? Roller Speed Skating." "Life in the fast lane - It's for you." "Looking for a little excitement? Find a lot of it in the Speed Club."
- Getting the entire operation involved in promoting the club, including having the DJs announce class times or upcoming competitions.
- Giving the parents a flyer that describes USARS and outlines what the club is promoting - sportsmanship, competition, individual growth, etc.

It's also imperative that the coach attends session skates to promote and recruit for the club. Tell them to keep an eye out for the skaters who go the fastest around the rink and give those skaters coupons for free classes. If possible, do the same with session skaters who win speed contests. The important thing is to get the word out.

Formative Years



Many operators have found that the Novice is an excellent way to begin a competitive program. Often getting a Novice club going is a simple matter of redefining a rink's existing beginner or entry-level skating programs.

Not only do the skaters get to start from the beginning with basic moves and techniques, but they'll also be eligible to compete in a Novice Program against other clubs across the country. It builds the confidence of recreational skaters while easing them into a competitive program.

The Novice Program also shares many of the benefits enjoyed by skaters in the USARS Elite Program, such as insurance benefits and ability to participate in sanctioned competitions. If not done initially, it will eventually become advisable to merge the Novice club into the Elite club. This gives more accomplished skaters an opportunity to continue in competitive skating long after their eligibility for the Novice program has expired. In addition to regional and national championships, exceptional skaters have the opportunity to advance to international competition.

Except for the stipulations outlined in the USARS [Speed Roller Skating Rulebook](#), the guidelines each club uses to move skaters into a Elite Program is largely handled at the club level. It basically depends on each individual skater's skill level and their willingness to advance to an Elite Program. It's good advice, however, to set a minimum limit for the Novice Program.

But don't move a skater up too fast - doing so inevitably leads to disappointments, which may discourage a skater and lead to their dropping out of the program. After all, not all skaters want to tear up the track and win every conceivable award. Some skaters simply want to belong for the social aspects of being in a club atmosphere. Cater to both groups of skaters by making them each feel that they are special and the club will appeal to a broader group of skaters, increasing its potential to grow in size and strength.

Alternatives

In many communities, rink operators can take advantage of organizations in their area that already have programs for people of all ages. Opportunities include having a cooperative arrangement with a local school's physical education class, or helping a youth group find alternative activities for its members.

A commonly used community level organization is the local parks and recreation department. In many cases, the department will offer to promote the program and handle registration (services usually provided on a commission basis).

For example, the rink could charge \$30 for a six-week speed clinic that meets for 1-1/2 hours each week. It's easy to see how the profit potential can add up, especially when compared to what little time is required to run the program. In addition, the participants could be offered free or reduced price admission into the speed program at the end of the clinic. Be sure to mention the insurance benefits available through USARS membership.

No matter what method you choose, the end result is increased exposure and greater involvement, without having to rely on moving session skaters from one program to another.

Membership Privileges

Each individual in a competitive program must purchase a USA Roller Sports membership card. The membership card application may be obtained through their club officers. Once signed by the proper club officer, the skater submits the form, along with the membership fee, to USA Roller Sports. In addition to the membership card application, each first time applicant will need to provide a photocopy of any legal document that verifies their date of birth - i.e., driver's license, birth certificate, school record or baptismal record (don't send the original - it will not be returned). The card will only be valid for the competitive season that is active during the date of application. The USARS competitive season is from January 1st through December 31st.

Benefits of USARS membership to the skaters include:

- Participation in competitive events authorized by USARS, including sanctioned exhibitions and roller skating shows.
- Free subscription to USA Roller Sports, The Magazine.
- Official Notice of Board of Director actions mailed to each skater twice a year.
- Opportunities to hold office in USARS and local clubs if of legal age, and, upon passing the required tests, to become a commissioned USARS official.
- Officiating in other capacities at sanctioned USARS activities.
- Registered member skaters/coaches of USA Roller Sports are provided with excess (secondary) accident/medical expense benefits in the amount of \$50,000 for injuries occurring **ON SKATES** limited to organized and supervised practice sessions held within USA Roller Sports chartered club facilities, or during USA Roller Sports sanctioned competitions and/or USA Roller Sports training sessions sanctioned by national headquarters specified to occur outside of club facilities. The event must be supervised by a club officer (or an official USA Roller Sports coach) or the USA Roller Sports designated leader of an USA Roller Sports sponsored event. The individual will be required to certify the validity of the claim being submitted. No coverage is extended to a skater injured while on skates, but who is not in training for USA Roller Sports competitions.

In addition to many of the above benefits, USARS membership holds advantages to the rink operator or sponsoring organization as well, including the ability to obtain \$1,000,000 in liability coverage for sanctioned competitions.

Staying Motivated

Keeping speed skaters excited about their sport is one of the best ways to ensure that the club will continue to grow and develop.

Involvement in local, state, regional, and national competitions is one way of retaining a high-level of interest for the club's members. This could include just taking the club down the street for an exhibition against another club. People like to win and test their skills against other skaters, so, given the proper support and opportunity, they'll do their best to put their rink's club on top.

Depending on the number of skaters that are active in the program, it also may be advisable to hold competitions among the club's members. Be sure to keep the competition even by accommodating the various age groups in the club.

The winning skaters can have their pictures posted at a prominent location in the facility. Not only will this encourage the existing club members, but it will also go a long way toward attracting the attention of session skaters.

However, improving a club's chances of competing successfully ultimately depends upon the quality of training available within their club. This often involves something as simple as having the more advanced skaters share their expertise with less experienced skaters. Not only will this improve the technical merit of a program, but also the resulting camaraderie is invaluable in maintaining the skaters' loyalty to their club and their rink.

The rink operator benefits from this positive attitude as it is sure to attract others to the rink. Even session skaters begin to emulate their competitive peers, a group made confident by their comparatively advanced skating skills. And, as mentioned earlier, the session skaters often begin buying the same expensive equipment.

Once the skaters begin competing against other clubs, their morale can be given a boost by keeping the local media apprised of their accomplishments. Photos in the newspaper, television interviews, online media attention and magazine articles translate into free advertising for the club and the rink. However, space or time is a premium for electronic and print media, so make sure that when the results are clear and accurate when they are called in. Better yet, hand deliver the results.

Another way to help maintain a program is to get the parents on the floor with their kids. Not only do the parents discover that the sport is fun and healthy, they also quickly appreciate the fact that it's not as easy as it looks. The result is a parent who is more empathetic toward their skater's rate of progress.

Everyone enjoys being recognized as part of a group, so encourage this by making available "official" silk-screened club and/or team shirts. Many clubs award these shirts as soon as the member has a membership card and has paid the first month's club dues. Others offer the shirts for sale through their pro shop.

PEOPLE SKILLS REQUIRED

Volunteers Wanted

Although rink operators may initially use their own staff in order to get their program up and running, they invariably turn to volunteers wherever and whenever they are available in order to maintain the club.

Parents may be the best bet for a ready supply of dedicated volunteers. They already have a vested interest in at least one of the club members, and they can be counted on to take a serious approach when it comes to important concerns like safety. Plus, being involved can make the time pass faster than if they just sat around watching from the sidelines.

Many operators have, however, found a ready supply of volunteers right in the ranks of already existing programs. Figure or hockey skaters already have many of the skills to make the transition to competitive speed skating. Former and current competitors in figure, hockey or roller derby may be willing to volunteer their experience to the beginning speed program.

As suggested earlier, a request for volunteers could be placed directly on the skater's registration form. Be sure to stress that volunteers do not have to know how to skate. If the numbers allow for it, give the volunteers only one responsibility. By giving one person one job, and only that job, they will do their absolute best to do that job well.

Getting the volunteers up to speed often can be done in as little as an hour by the club coach. Volunteers can be trained to be corner judges, referees, timekeepers, lap counters, or any number of other positions. Once a volunteer understands the importance of their contribution, they'll give it their best and the rink will have a more successful program. One coach summed it up when he said, "It's not too hard to get somebody to come out and help if you give him or her some direction."

Keeping volunteers, however, can be more difficult. Treat them right and make them feel that their contributions are both important and appreciated and the rink can benefit from their efforts for as long as they are needed. Possible ways to do this include giving them reductions in admissions, club fees, or equipment purchases. It can also mean simply giving them refreshments from the snack bar during the times in which they volunteer.

Volunteers, who quickly understand that having more people involved spreads the load, will soon become a program's best recruiters for additional help.

Parents

Parental support goes beyond looking for volunteers. Parents also provide the emotional and financial support that is essential in the continued success of any competitive program that involves youth. Leave the parents out of the picture and they'll take their kids out of the rink.

Parents are more likely to support the program if they are kept informed of their child's progress. Let them know how their child is doing and offer helpful remarks on how the youth can improve his or her performance. Maintain a one-on-one approach, making the parents feel that they and their children are important, and the program will benefit from their continued support. If this is done properly, the parent will encourage their child to continue in the competitive program.

Another successful method used to retain parental support is a booster club. Booster clubs not only keep the parents active in their child's sport, but they often provide a social climate that actually encourages the parents' continued involvement.

Through regular meetings, booster club members can help plan and host competitions, recruit additional volunteers, and develop ways to raise funds for upcoming events. This is also a great opportunity for the rink operator or coach to "educate" the parents on the importance of proper equipment, continued practices, and even private instruction.

An up-to-date web site is a great way to help assure parents have accurate club information. Some operators design monthly newsletters that promote rink programs, announce scheduled practices, list upcoming competitions, and highlight team or individual accomplishments (including the parents). To produce the newsletter, it might be possible to use the creative talents represented by some members of the booster club.

Another important means of retaining parental support is to provide an atmosphere of goodwill. Some recommendations include:

- Keep lessons affordable
- Provide good service
- Avoid favoritism
- Maintain a personal, one-on-one approach
- Show professionalism

If the parents see that their children are safe and that the rink's operator and management are attentive to their individual concerns and growth, they'll continue to provide the financial and emotional support their children will need to stay active in the program.

Mutual Respect

From an operator's perspective, it is important to understand that practice times should be scheduled as consistently as possible. Operators and managers don't like late or absent employees, or suppliers that can't meet an agreed upon shipping date. Unless they have unlimited patience and resources, they'll probably find another employee or supplier.

The same holds true in the relationship with the club members - they expect and deserve consistency in the announced practice times. If the members can't count on their club, it won't take long for them to find something else to do with their time and money. Make an effort to respect established practice times. If it becomes necessary to cancel a practice, try to reschedule it during an available time that is convenient for the majority of the club's members.

On the other hand, it's also important for the coaches and skaters to understand the needs of their host. The rink is in the business of making money, which often means that birthday parties or other special events must take priority over less profitable speed practices.

An adversarial relationship will quickly spell doom for the club - after all, the rink operator will eventually "win." However, a discontinued club also means an end to the benefits enjoyed by the rink operator, a clear "lose-lose" situation.

By maintaining cordial communications between both groups, misunderstandings can be quickly and painlessly resolved. The result will be a fun and profitable competitive speed club.

TEAM EFFORT

Clubs

In order to give skaters the best opportunities for participation in speed skating at the skate center and in competition with other clubs, plan on obtaining an official USARS charter as soon as the club is organized. It is USARS that gives the club written, official permission to compete with other clubs, while protecting skaters from unsafe competition. In addition, USARS conducts regional and national championships, selects teams to represent the United States in international competitions, and provides credentials and testing for referees and officials.

The club charter requires a minimum of two card-carrying officers (five members are required to vote at the league and regional level). Call USARS for the current fee for a club charter.

Skaters must also be registered with USARS in order to participate in any sanctioned meet, regional, or national competition. USA Roller Sports also has Team selections for Junior and Senior World Teams. These Teams represent our country in international competitions.

Leagues

Leagues are subdivisions of state or regional associations and may be formed only for the purpose of creating or promoting inter-club competitions between league members. Contact the national office or refer to the [Speed Roller Skating Rulebook](#) for specific guidelines on forming a league.

Competitive Season

The competitive membership season in speed skating runs from January 1st through December 31st. A skater's age on January 1 of that season is his or her "competitive age." Example: A skater who celebrates his 12th birthday on December 2 will compete in the Freshman division for the entire season. Another skater who has her 12th birthday on February 2 will compete in the Elementary division for the entire season.

Sanctions

In order to hold an official meet with clubs outside of their host facility, the club will need formal written permission from USARS, or, in other words, a "sanction." When USARS issues this permission, it means the competition should be conducted fairly, safely, and in compliance with the rules of the sport. For their own protection, skaters should never compete in meets that are not sanctioned by USA Roller Sports. Specific guidelines concerning sanctions are outlined in the [USARS General Rule Book](#).

Competitive Divisions

Indoor Inline Elite Divisions - Beginning with the Tiny Tot division (five years of age and under), individual competitions are subdivided into two-year age increments up to age 18, with separate races for both male and female. Adult age groups start with Classic (27 and older), and are subdivided into five-year increments up to the Grand Esquire division (60 and older). Three distances are skated in each division, ranging from 100m for youngsters to 5000m for the World Class Men. Overall point accumulation determines the age division champions.

Indoor Inline Novice Divisions - Beginning with the Novice Elementary age group (10-11 years), individual competitions are divided into two-year age increments up to 18 years of age. Separate races are held for male and female participants. Adult age groups include Novice Senior (18 and older), Novice Classic (27 and older), and Novice Master (35 and older). Two distances are skated in each division, ranging from 300m to 1,000m. Overall point accumulation determines the age division champions.

Quad Speed Competitions - These races on traditional skates are conducted as an open national championship, without regional qualification. Beginning with Primary division (seven years of age and under), the individual competitions are divided into three-year age increments up to the Junior division (14-16 years of age). Adult events are Senior (17 and older), Classic (25 and older), Masters (35 and older), Veterans (45 and older), and Grand Veterans (55 and older). Three distances are skated in each division, ranging from 200m to 3,000m. Overall point accumulation determines the age division champions.

Relay Divisions - Two-person relays are held including Men's, Women's, and Mixed relays in both the Elite Inline and Elite Quad Divisions. Distances vary by age. Each team member must be from the same club or both of unattached status. Four-person relays are reserved for Elite Inline division competitions only.

Outdoor Competitions – This is structured in four age increments, with separate races for male and female participants: Juvenile (9-12 years of age), Junior (13-16 years of age), World Class (13 years of age and older), and Masters (25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55 and older). Distances vary from 200m to 20,000m, formulated according to international racing standards. Individual races receive medal awards. Outdoor championships are subdivided according to track and road competitions in keeping with international specifications. The Outdoor National Championships currently are used in the Junior and World Class events as trials for the selection of a USA Team qualifying for the World Championships.

REGIONAL EXPERTS TO THE RESCUE

USARS Speed Regions

Each chartered roller speed club becomes part of one of nine USARS Regional Associations. Each club has a vote in USARS regional concerns, and club members have a direct, individual voice in discussions about competitive skating through their regional association. The USARS Regional Association approves the officials chosen for the regional championships and accepts bids for hosting this prestigious competition.

It's within the region that a club sets up a schedule of inter-club and invitational meets during the competitive season, and through regional contacts, it's also possible to become part of a league of teams who host regular competitions. Many of the regions also offer the opportunity for additional recognition through awards banquets held at the conclusion of each season.

The USARS National Office would be happy to provide you with a list of Regional Association officers and Speed League presidents in your area.

Speed Competition Regions

North Central – Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wyoming

Northwest – Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington

Northeast – Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

Southern – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee

Southwest – Arizona, California, Nevada,

Southeast – Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, DC, West Virginia

South Central – Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Texas

Eastern – Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania,

Great Lakes – Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin

USARS COACHING PROGRAM

Coaches are encouraged to join the USARS Coaching Program, a service that involves a variety of education and certification levels. The coach benefits from knowing that they have the resources to be the best in their field, while the rink operator benefits from having a fully-qualified professional in charge of their competitive program.

Benefits of the program include:

- Full USARS coach membership for designated disciplines
- Subscription to USA Roller Sports, The Magazine, the official USARS quarterly magazine
- Coaching recognition by a U.S. Olympic Committee NGB
- Technical manuals - free distribution of Speed Roller Skating Rulebook and appropriate discipline teaching manuals
- Eligibility for commission as an official without additional fees
- Eligibility to be a club officer in any discipline
- Recognition pins for championship achievement
- Class VI Coach Membership in USARS, with all rights and privileges as enumerated in USARS By-Laws
- Accident/injury insurance as per USARS membership while actively coaching in a registered USARS club facility or a sanctioned competition
- Liability insurance for all USARS certified coaches while coaching in a registered USARS club facility, or in a sanctioned USARS competition
- Eligibility to be certified as a USARS-USOC coach, with traditional competitive floor privileges
- Seminars, training programs, and continuing coach education.

Contact the national office for additional information.



YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Equipment Needs

Skates: For the first few speed skating classes, rentals will be fine. Anticipate these needs and stock the skate shop with some affordable “starter” speed skates and wheels. Skates used in competitions must meet the requirements outlined by USARS for sanctioned indoor meets.

Uniforms: Required only for sanctioned competitions, the speed uniform must be made of a nontransparent material consisting of a long or short-sleeved jersey and trunks. One or two-piece cycling type uniforms are permitted.

Helmets: Helmets with the ANSI Z90.4 and/or SNELL Bicycle Standard and/or ASTM Standard F1447 are required to be worn by all speed skaters at all speed skating competitions. Additional safety equipment would include eyeglass safety straps, which are mandatory in sanctioned speed competitions. Eyeglass wearers must have plastic lenses, not glass, in their eyewear. It is also suggested that helmets be used during practices to help assure that the insurance coverage is kept in force.

Pylons: The official pylon or corner marker approved for use in USARS sanctioned speed competitions should be made of rubber or plastic material with no protrusions or edges exposed to the skating surface. The style of the pylon is similar to that of a traffic or safety cone. The height of the corner marker must be 4” and the base of the pylon no less than 9” across.

Track diagram: Available free of charge from the USARS National Office, if the dimensions of the skating surface are provided.

Stopwatch: The first thing skaters will want to know is how fast they’re going. Chart their progress by keeping a notebook of their fastest times.

USARS SUPPORT MATERIAL

Speed Roller Skating General Rulebook: This comprehensive rule book explains every aspect of competitive roller skating, making it indispensable for every roller skater competing in the United States. The rule book outlines the by-laws governing the Confederation, tells how to conduct competitive events, explains disciplinary proceedings, gives information on competitive officials commissions, and much more.

USARS Technical Manuals & DVD’s: Call USA Roller Sports for a current listing of available educational material.

USA Roller Sports, The Magazine: The single most important tool in our sport is communication. Stay up-to-date of everything that is happening in our competitive sport community with a subscription to USA Roller Sports, The Magazine. This quarterly magazine is packed with results, feature articles, inside comments from the field, and lots of photographs.

Pins, Patches & Apparel: Let everyone know that the club’s members are competitive skaters by encouraging them to wear their discipline’s pin or patch - figure, speed, or hockey. Each offers an attractive depiction of their favorite discipline displayed in a three-color design. Also available is apparel that displays the USARS logo. Contact the national office for a full listing of items available.

Contact the USA Roller Sports National Office for a current list of all available support material and prices.

Web site: USA Roller Sports web site, www.usarollersports.org , features the very latest news and information regarding roller sports competitions, athletes, and more. From a calendar of events detailing competitions all across the nation to dynamic first hand coverage of international world championships, USA Roller Sports provides all the information you need right at your fingertips. The web site contains valuable resources to get your club rolling in the right direction. There are also links to each of the regional web sites as well as a contact list at USARS National Office if you are unable to locate the information you are looking for.

BEST WISHES AND GOOD LUCK !!!

