



Competition
Handbook

Yankton Figure Skating Competition Information

WHO? – Who is eligible for competing at a figure skating competition?

- Any skater that has passed the lowest level eligible for competition
- Commonly skaters who have passed pre-alpha+
- Each competition is different, but all the information is in the competition packet for the respective competition.
- Competition information packets and registration forms are available on the www.yanktonice.org website.

WHERE? – Where would my skater be able to compete?

- Any ISI District 10 Ice Skating Institute (ISI) Competition
- Check out the competition dates on the www.yanktonice.org website or on the ISI website at www.skateisi.com.
- Competitions for District 10 are held in Woodbury, MN; New Ulm, MN; Brookings, SD; Luverne, MN; Blaine, MN; Yankton, SD; Minneapolis, MN; Sioux Falls, SD; and Cottage Grove, MN

HOW? – How do I sign my skater up for a competition?

- First, contact a coach!
 - You will need a registered ISI coach to sign your competition registration form.
 - Private lessons are not required but coaches can help skaters perfect their routines and help ensure they complete the required elements for their events.
- **Second, complete a competition packet!**
 - Competition packets can be found on the www.yanktonice.org website.
 - Please turn in registration forms to the competition coordinator for each competition by the required deadline.
 - Competition fees vary for each competition and are dependent upon the number of events the skater participates in.
 - Competition registration forms must be signed by the skater, a coach and the competition coordinator.

NOTE: Participation in competitions is voluntary. Skaters are responsible for all related fees, transportation and accommodations.

What to Expect at Competitions

No question about it, your first competition will be one of the most exciting, most confusing, and most stomach-churning days you will ever experience in skating! Just remember, you're doing this for fun, so go out there, show off a little, and enjoy the experience. Do your best job, but always remember to keep an even perspective on the day... Parents, too, remember how much courage it takes to get out there all-alone on that huge sheet of ice in front of all those people. Make sure your child knows about that fluttery feeling of pride you feel in your chest when you see them out there.

First, Just a Little Bit of Philosophy

An important thing to remember as you go into a competition is to skate against yourself -- not the other skaters. It's great to "win" or to earn a medal, and we all want to strive for that as a goal, but if that is your only goal, you're bound to come away disappointed very often. It's important to remember that you can control how well you skate, but you have no control over who you are competing against. At any given competition you might face competitors who are more advanced, equally advanced, or less experienced than yourself. Your final position will be greatly affected by the level of that field. You could skate exactly the same performance in 2 different competitions and end up in first place one day and last place the next, depending on the abilities of the other skaters. Strive instead to always "better" your last performance. Every time you go out on that competition ice, try to do just a little bit better than you did the last time. If you do that, the medals will take care of themselves. If you can come off the ice feeling good about your performance, knowing that you've done your best job, then you should be happy.

How to Find Competitions

We have all the surrounding competitions listed on the website www.yanktonice.org/fscompetitions. For further information ask the coaches or the Skating coordinator.

Information, Announcement and Application Packets

Information and announcement packets and application forms can be found on the website for our district at www.yanktonice.org/fscompetitions. This packet will list all events, the eligibility requirements, and the required elements for programs. Please note that events and elements may change per competition so read the information packets carefully.

Application forms are usually included in the Announcement Packet. You may enter more than one event if you wish, and in general, "additional" events are cheaper than the "first" event. In

our area, local competitions usually cost around \$75 for the first event and \$15 for additional events. This may differ per competition. There will be an entry deadline listed in the packet -- make sure you get your form in on time! Usually the form will require signatures by the skater, parent, coach and competition coordinator to attest to your eligibility. Don't wait until the last minute to get this signature -- sometimes people go out of town, or don't show up at the rink on that one day you left to try to find them.

With help from your coach, decide what events you will enter, fill in the form, get the necessary signatures, make a copy (I never mail anything without keeping a copy), write a check, and turn it into the competition coordinator.

When do I find out my event schedule?

Usually, you will get a mailing from the host club about 10-14 days before the competition. This mailing will list your event day and times. In general, it won't be any earlier than that, since they can't make up a firm schedule until they have all the entries and go through a huge scheduling effort to make it all work. They'll mail it as soon as they know it's a solid schedule.

Will I have to miss any school?

Probably. Most competitions run over a weekend. But because of the number of entries that most get, many have to start before Saturday. Sometimes Friday, once in a while Thursday too. In general, they start with the lowest level skaters on the earliest days and save the weekend for the high level skaters and the "final rounds". So if this is an early competition for you the chances are pretty good you'll miss a little bit of school.

Who will you compete against?

You will compete against other skaters of approximately similar experience. You may or may not be competing against skaters of similar age. The basic separation is by test level. This means you will be competing against other skaters who have tested "no further" than you have. Many competitions allow skaters to "skate up" one level (skate in a level that is one test more difficult than they have actually passed), but no competition will let skaters skate in a level below where they have passed.

Of course, even within a test level, you will find people of widely varying experience and ability.

Generally, you will skate in a group of no more than 8 - 10 skaters. Most clubs try to schedule so that this can happen. If there are substantially more than 10 people entered in a single event, they will break up the group into separate "flights", which will then be considered completely separate events. Usually if this is done, the flights are grouped according to the skater's ages.

When should you arrive at the Rink?

Arrive at least an hour and a half before your warm-up starts. When you get to the rink, they will usually have a "check-in" table near the doors. You need to go to that table and say your name and event (if there is an "event number" associated with your event you should be prepared to tell them that also). They will find your name on their list and "log you in". If your event requires music, you should give them your CD at this time (see elsewhere in this document for more information on music). They will probably have "Program Booklets" available at this table for a nominal charge. You'll probably want one for your scrapbook. Once you are checked into the competition, relax until you have practice ice or your group warm-up. You can watch other events until it's time for you to get dressed. The club will provide locker rooms for you to change in, and you can usually leave your clothes, skating bags and props in that room while you're competing. You can talk to other skaters or coaches, watch other programs, explore the rink, or look through the racks of skating items that vendors are usually selling. Once you're checked in,

When should you get dressed? When should you get on the ice?

Again, your Coach may explain their special expectations. However, the general rule is that you should be fully dressed an hour before your scheduled event. Usually there will be an Ice Monitor standing somewhere near the skater's "entry door" (usually with a clipboard in her hand). You should find the Ice Monitor within 20 minutes before the event and tell them who you are and that you are present and ready. Then don't go too far away, but don't hover too close and bother everybody either... The Ice Monitor will tell you when it's time for your flight's warmup. Some competition schedules can start up to an hour early before the event's schedule time so it's best to be prepared to skate early.

Generally, you should say your "good-byes" to your parents up in the bleachers, then report to the Ice Monitor along with your Coach. The coach can usually stay with you up to and during your event. Your parents can not.

What's a Warmup?

The "Warmup" is a short opportunity (usually about 3-4 minutes) for you to get out on the ice and warm up your muscles before you compete. Your coach may have a few specific instructions for you to work on during this time, but in general you should use it to stroke around and loosen your muscles. Do a couple jumps to get a feel for the ice quality. Try to familiarize yourself with the size and "look" of the rink so that you don't get surprised during the competition if the rink is smaller or larger than your home rink. Visualize where you will start, and where key elements of your program will occur. You should probably not run through your entire program, but you might want to try out a few of its key elements. The judges will not be judging your activities during this period, although

some will watch to help them get a general feel for the "level" of skating that they will see in the group.

They will generally sound a horn or make an announcement when you have 1 minute left in the warmup, then tell you to leave the ice when it's over. Don't go too far, and try to keep your muscles warm and loose. If you choose to watch the other competitors you may do so.

Warmup Groups

Sometimes when your flight is large, it will be divided into 2 or 3 "sub-groups," each of which gets to warm up separately. For instance, if you are in a flight of 12 skaters, it might be broken up into 2 groups of 6. The first 6 would warm up at the time listed on the ice schedule, then they would skate their programs. Then the next 6 would warm up, then skate their programs. All are judged as if they were one group, it just ensures that the final skaters don't cool off waiting for their turn to skate. It is generally done when the flight size is greater than 9, and generally only at levels of about Intermediate or higher (when the programs start to get long).

Make the most of any practice time you get. Don't spend time talking to fellow skaters, or working on moves that aren't in your program, especially riskier ones. Run through your program as much as you can. Remember to look up and smile, and time yourself using the stopwatch if you will be having a time limit.

Before an Event

Around thirty minutes before your event, depending on what you need to do, start getting ready. Use the restroom, spray on some more hairspray, touch up your make-up, brush your teeth... whatever you need! This is a good time to start stretching.

Before going on the ice, do what makes you feel best. Visualize yourself winning, practice your program on the ground, talk to your coach, jump around to get your jitters out; whatever makes you feel good is fine. Remember to take off your warm-up jacket and gloves and take deep breaths. Believe that you're going to win; a positive attitude helps!

Skate your best! Look up and smile like you practiced, and don't feel rushed. Do all your elements as best as you can, and be proud of yourself, no matter what place you take.

Your "Skate"

When it's your turn, the Ice Monitor will give you instructions to go on the ice. Skate out to wherever you will strike your initial pose, and indicate your readiness to the judges and the music person. If this is a competition with music, then they will start it as soon as they know that both you and the judges are ready. If your program is not done to music, you should wait until they announce something like "skater, you may begin".

Take a deep breath, relax, and skate your best...

When you are done, take your bows then skate off the ice. If you are in a "half-ice" competition and someone else is skating on the other half, it would be courteous to wait until they are finished before you skate off the ice.

Results

Usually it will take about a half-hour or so for results to be posted. You will generally find them posted in the same place where the skating orders were. The results sheet shows your final position, and shows the ordinal (position) marking that each of the judges gave you.

Medals, Ribbons

Awards will usually be spread out at the check-in table and you sign for each one you earn. At many competitions, those skaters who placed below the "medal positions" will be eligible to receive a ribbon. Check at the registration table to find out where you go to get these.

Before you leave the arena

Don't forget to pick up your tapes (audio, and video)!! Make sure you have all your costumes, props and skates.

Music CDs

Unless otherwise instructed, you should bring your music on standard CDs. The competition announcement will give you specific instructions -- check it! Usually, you should bring 2 copies of your CD. Give one to the registration desk when you arrive, give the other to your coach or someone else close to the ice for emergencies. Your CD should be well labeled with your name and your event (do not put sticky labels directly on CDs -- label them with indelible marker instead). Your music should be the first and only song on the CD. When burning your music to the CD, it is best to use CD-R disks rather than rewritable CD-RW, and it is important to burn the music as an AUDIO disk rather than a DATA disk.

Dress

Appropriate dress for skaters varies according to their age and level.

At higher levels, competitors will often have special custom skating outfits for each event.

At beginning levels, boys may be very appropriately dressed in dark pants, shirt, and turtleneck or sweater. Girls may be in a simple skating dress or skirt and sweater. Warmup suits, windsuits should not be worn during a competition program. Gloves or mittens may be worn during warmups, but usually are not worn during a competition. Warmup jackets or sweaters are appropriate during the warmup, but should be removed for competition (remember that pullover sweaters or sweatshirts may muss the hair when removed).

Skates should be cleaned and polished for every competition. Make sure your laces are in good shape before you get to the rink -- old laces tend to break at the most inconvenient times!

Hair should be done tidily and securely. Bobby pins, scrunchies, rubber bands, etc, if used should be very securely placed. These items present a hazard to skaters if they should fall off and lay on the ice.

Many experienced skaters bring a "backup" outfit to every competition. Emergencies do happen and it's pretty nice to have an option available. If you don't bring a spare outfit, girls should at least bring a few spare pairs of tights, and all skaters should have spare laces available.

Costumes

Costumes and props are allowed for some events. These must be brought onto the ice by the skaters. Coaches can assist getting these items onto the ice but the skater must move them from the rink entrance to the location on the ice by themselves without assistance. They have approximately 30 seconds to get all props on and off the ice.

Competition Conduct

Remember, every child 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. There's plenty of time in between skaters to move around. Be supportive of your skaters, but refrain from obnoxious calling and activities. Never "Boo" or otherwise harass other skaters. Be attentive to and appreciative of the efforts of all skaters.

Skaters, refrain from displays of temper or displeasure. Nobody wants to watch them. Be respectful of coaches, judges and those around you. Never discredit the rulings or the judges as you may be overheard and those judges may be at your next competition.

Photography/Videography

For the safety of the skaters, NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY is permitted during competition events at any Figure Skating Competition. Still photos may be taken with available light (use a "fast" film). Video taping is usually permitted as long as courtesy is observed (most competitions request that only handheld, battery operated video cameras be used).

At some competitions a professional videographer is available to take videos on your tape for a nominal charge. Their professional equipment and operators get better pictures than you can, and you can spend the time watching your skater perform. Many skaters keep an on-going tape that has their entire competitive history on it. They take it to every competition (pre-positioned to the end of the last prior event), and have their new events appended to the tape

Packing List

- Skates
- Tights without holes (one pair for each day at least)
- Dresses/ Costumes and a backup outfit
- Two Copies of Music (one for competition and one for backup)
- Extra Laces
- Your Schedule
- Skate Guards (soft and Hard if you have them)
- Warm ups (Jacket/ Gloves)
- Make-up
- Hairspray
- Brush
- Bobby Pins
- Hair ties
- Water, Snacks (Healthy snacks)
- Money for souvenirs (optional)
- Camera
- Blankets
- Band-Aids
- Props (if needed)
- Cell Phone/ Charger
- Competition information/ Hotel Information/ Maps

From the Judges Perspective: Tips from the Judge

By: Carolyn Clausius, National Freeskating and Pair Skating Judge

Most judges are former skaters who still enjoy being actively involved in the sport. They want everyone to skate well and have fun in spite of their serious expressions of concentration! Judges don't always agree, but there are a few things that they would all like to see included in your program. Your goal should be to demonstrate a well-balanced program that includes a variety of jumps, several spins, footwork, spirals and strong edges. Jumps only count for a portion of your total score and only cleanly landed jumps will qualify. It's best to include only jumps that you have consistently mastered, as you will not be given credit for falls or jumps that were not complete. You and your coach may agree to include one risky jump that you have recently learned, but that should be the limit.

Judges look for spins that are well centered and have good speed. Advanced skaters need to include three spins, one of which should be a flying spin and another should be a combination of positions. Strong edges spirals and footwork, not just forward or backward crossovers, should connect your elements.

When you are judged, you'll be given two marks. The first is the technical merit mark that includes all the elements you successfully completed as well as your speed and sureness throughout your program. The second mark is for your presentation. This mark is equally important and counts for half of your total score. For this mark, the judges will consider how well you skated your program with the music. They will pay attention to your choreography and how well you demonstrate good timing and expression. Very often when the technical difficulty of the skaters is similar, the skaters with the best interpretation will place higher.

If you find, when the results are posted, that you received a variety of ordinals, it means the skaters in the group were equally matched and the event was difficult to judge. Your Goal should be to skate your best performance and not worry about what the other skaters are doing. Don't be discouraged if you make mistakes, a strong finish can make a positive impression. Be confident and proud of yourself and it will show in your skating. Good luck and have a great time on the ice!