

The True Cost Of Skating

by Ruth Sweet

The cost of skating needs to be considered as separate phases. The first is acquiring the basic skills of performing the edges and turns as 2 and 3 lobe figures. The fundamental body positions and control are essential to perform Moves In The Field (MITF), free skating jumps and spins, and connecting dance steps.

Skaters normally learn the early skating skills in group lessons. Ice Skating Institute and USFSA Basic Skating Skills learn to skate programs offer badges and competitions to provide a positive environment that nurtures developing skaters. Gradually parents recognize the need to acquire better skates and hire a coach to choreograph a program so their son or daughter can compete locally.

At this point the skater is generally practicing 1.5 to 2 hours per session 4 to 5 afternoons, continue to take group classes, and take 15 to 30 minutes of private lessons a week. An investment in one or more costumes and DVD has been made in preparation to pass badges to qualify to enter competitions hosted locally by the San Diego FSC, La Jolla FSC, and Escondido FSC.

Before long a skater starts working on their axel jump. As they prepare to take the appropriate ISI or Basic Skills free skating badge, the coach will suggest taking the USFSA Pre-Preliminary MITF test.

An excellent time to undertake this transition is during the summer when the skater has extra time to advance their training to a higher level. At this point parents need to consider joining the San Diego FSC so they can participate in the Summer Workshops the club hosts at the San Diego Ice Arena (SDIA) and the Kroc Center. Forms are available at
<<http://www.sdskate.org>>

Parents need to factor into this cost the round trip distance to the rink and the cost of traveling to competitions, including hotels, meals, and competition entry fees when arriving at the total cost on an annual basis.

Joining the USFSA opens up amazing opportunities to take tests and eventually compete in competitions that qualify skaters to enter our Junior and Senior National Championships.

The training costs of every skater increase as the level of testing introduce more difficult elements. Passing the MITF tests must occur prior to a skater passing other test to compete in single, pair, dance, synchro, or showcase events.

The skater must then take the appropriate free skating, pair, or dance tests to qualify to enter the respective events. Synchro skaters must have passed the tests and compete for a position on a team.

The minimum costs of costumes, skates, practice time, lessons, off-ice training, etc. are approximately equal for every skating level for all events.

There is a big difference in the time, energy, and financial expenses of an elite track skater who has reasonable expectations to enter the Regional Championships and qualify to skate in the Pacific Coast Sectional Championships.

For years the cut off age of 12 for the juvenile skaters excluded older skaters. The "Open Juvenile" event was created to provide an opportunity for them to compete.

The USFSA has expanded this concept for skaters who elect at the start of each competitive season to skate against other skaters whose skills and goals are inline with other "Test Track" skaters.

There is a considerable difference in yearly expenses if the skater is training away from home for the summer or on a year round basis. Pair, dance, and synchro events start at the Sectional Championships. Skaters in these events don't have the expense of single skaters who must qualify at our regional competitions to get to the Sectional Championships.

To be continued in the next issue