# A Skating Support System

by Claude Sweet

Coaches, with a PSA rating, may specialize in teaching different areas: recreational skaters, test preparation, and competitive figure skating. Skaters should prepare to re-think and prioritize their skating goals and ambitions with realistic strategies to achieve their dreams.

Lower level figure skating coaches may have passed USFS tests, but it takes specialized education to earn the qualifications and expertise to bring the skills of a professional trainer to the sport.

Parents help to bring out the best in all beginning skaters, especially children and young adults so they may achieve their athletic potential for the time and resources they commit to training.

Most coaches of school and independent leagues/sporting associations need to re-think their goals for developing athletes of all skills and potentials to repeat the emphasis on winning at any cost.

This is a serious assertion to make. Continue reading this article to understand my concerns. I hope you will join me in bring about a vital change.

Young coaches begin to coach to afford to be able to continue their pursuit of ultimately placing in our national championships and being selected to represent the USA in International, Worlds, and ultimately to be selected for the Olympic Team.

There are different kinds of training for recreational, social, test, and elite track skaters. What training is right for young athletes and what kinds of training aren't?

Parent and coaches should "remember not to treat young athletes as adults in miniature". They should not transfer their failed personal goals and personal ambitions onto the skater.

The training of adult bodies has been extensively studied. The training theory and coaching methods that is based on the physiology of adults fails to consider the differences in the physiology and physiology of younger age groups.

The exercise physiology of children is different from that of adults. Children, from early childhood to late adolescence, are in the process of developing their physiology.

They have different capabilities and adaptations to perform basic fundamental skills throughout their physical, mental, and emotional development phases. The training program of a young athlete should not be just scaled-down version of adult training.

Expectations of performing jumps depend on physical strengths to spring into the air and core body positions to rotation around a central axis. Growth (height and weight, plus measurements of hips, and busts) of adolescence's body can alter their balance and thus their ability to transfer skill sets from pre-adolescence to a young adult's body.

The current training patterns for young athletes has a long history. The 2009 economic recession is increasing pressure to reduce school budgets. Sports, arts, and music programs are being considered for major cuts. Now is the time to consider the budget impacts of our schools and young athletes.

The central premise of physical education program in our public schools is to expose every student to a range of sports. Ideally each child will find a sport or ac-

tivity in which he or she has some ability and can continue into their adult life.

We all should understand that a PE teacher is a generalist, not someone who has not played at a high level or specialized teaching each sport or activity. Coaches of a school sport are expected to have far more extensive experience playing the sport and subsequently communicate to students in a competitive environment.

However, what actually happens is that physically gifted children dominate every school-based activity, with the primary emphasis on male sports such as football, basketball, track and field, and baseball. Title 1 has actually resulted in major cutbacks in minor sports such as: tennis, golf, and swimming.

For most students, the physical class does not serve to stimulate and mutative them to achieve competence in any sport or PE activity team activity or individual performance skill like rope climbing or dodge ball. Lets face it too many students have had a negative experience from the activities normally available within the PE curriculum at the school they attended.

It is true that a child of 13 is usually able to throw a javelin further than she could the previous year; however, the improved performance will not necessarily be the result of acquiring improved technical skills. Steady improvement requires constant monitoring to prevent the development of bad work habits and technical problems

Clear standards are generally established as necessary if athletes are to build core body skills in each sport. Schools and sports organizations must reduce the emphasize placed on winning that currently exists. Physical activities must be fun if we expect an individual to continue, especially if the environment is filled with negative comments and coaching behavior rises to “Bullying” and “Harassment.

The practice atmosphere of children, who are training in a sport controlled by a private association/league or as part of the school curriculum, must be positive.

A regular practice schedule is required if an athlete hopes to become successful in all individual and team sports. Age and skill regulated competitions are essential if a level playing field of participation is to exist in competitive activities; however, the definition of a competition is to rank the athletes and select the best on that day.

While practice does not make perfect, it does make permanent. Work on core skills needs a great deal of repetition, in the process of which the percentage of inferior efforts gradually diminishes, before competence is achieved. Without a minimum level of competence, the individual will usually drop out and look for other activities in which they can be more successful.

Each sport usually has established a guideline of technical skill progression based on a combination of the individual’s raw talent, quality and frequency of coaching and practicing.

An improvement of technical skills and performance levels achieved in all sports has occurred on an annual basis. The introduction of public and private funding of athletes has evolved as the definition of an amateur has changed each year until Olympic Athletes pursue their quest for medals on a full time basis which is required to achieve the practice time to achieve the repetition required for performance consistency and stamina.

Performance outcomes in many sports are never officially tested except for measurements by the coach. Associations like the US Figure Skating Association have established a system of skill tests as a means of measuring the level of technical skills a skater has achieved as a direct product of his taking lessons and practicing.

There is empirical evidence that suggests almost all beginning skaters can master the basic skating skills. Parent, skaters, and coaches need to have a realistic expectation of almost all skaters are to earn a gold medal in Moves In The Field and compulsory dances.

Experience tells us that while most skaters can learn the basic jumps and spins, relatively few will endeavor to master the multi-revolution jumps and advanced spins required to earn a gold free skating medal. Even fewer male and female skaters will be able to secure a pair or dance partner with matching skills to succeed as competitors.

Without enjoyment, an athlete will not continue to participate in the sport to the exclusion of other life goals.

No one enjoys coming to a realization that he or she does not have the ability the level of competence that they demand of themselves. However, some individuals are able to reduce skill their expectations and balance their sports participation with jobs and family commitments.

Every parent and coach should encourage the athlete to acquire the basic technical foundation of the sport. This will increase the prospect of adults continuing to participate in sport. We will give our children roots to grow and wings to fly. Topics covered on this site include:

- Improving performance safely
- Avoiding repetitive strain injury
- Efforts to prevent training injuries
- Setting coaching priorities
- Differences between training goals in male and female athletes
- Targeted muscle growth and development
- Increasing Flexibility
- Boosting Stamina/Endurance
- Ideal body weight
- Increasing strength training
- Aerobic and anaerobic development
- Aerobic training priorities
- Developing core skills
- Boosting performance levels
- Preventing 'Unexplained Underperformance Syndrome' (UPS)
- Overreaching verses overtraining
- Avoiding burnout, staleness, and overtraining syndrome
- Effective endurance training
- Designing programs to maximize points
- Resistance training
- Relate training to raw ability
- Boosting endurance capacity