

Figure Skating

Demystifying Figure Skating



This document serves to help break down and explain the sometimes daunting world of figure skating. If your child has decided to further pursue skating and move from Basic Skills upwards into the world of figure skating, this page is here to help you make some sense of it all.

Learn to Skate Program

This is where your skater will learn how to ice skate. Our Club coaches will teach your skater the basic fundamentals in a group setting. Centerpoint Community Ice is home to the Independence Skating Academy, which follows the Basic Skills Curriculum created by the United States Figure Skating Association. Come to class regularly and spend ample time practicing outside of the lesson. This page is geared towards parents and skaters already enrolled in the Learn to Skate program. Contact Skating Director, Nick Kraft, 816-859-9920, nkraft@silversteineyecentersarena.com for more information. US Figure Skating has a site dedicated for [Basic Skills Parents](#).

USFS Membership

Each skater must be a member of US Figure Skating (USFS) or another skating club to take part in any USFS sanctioned event. Membership is valid from July 1 – June 30 each year and dues cannot be prorated. When renewing or purchasing your USFS Membership, please be aware of the dates the membership is valid.

Independence Skating Academy (ISA) – Basic Skills membership available through the rink for \$12. This membership is appropriate for skaters in Learn to Skate (LTS) classes. Skaters may attend competitions with Basic Skills events. However, skaters looking to test and compete above the Basic Skills levels need full USFS membership.

Heartland Figure Skating Club (HFSC) – Full and associate memberships are offered for skaters that would like to test and compete above the Basic Skills level. HFSC calls Centerpoint Community Ice its primary skating headquarters – most of its members train here. HFSC offers a variety of memberships, based on the needs of its members. You may download the membership form or join online at www.heartlandfsc.org. Benefits of membership include the ability to represent Heartland FSC in competitions, discounts on HFSC sponsored educational seminars and exhibitions, a subscription to SKATING magazine, discounted HFSC test session fees, and ability to wear Heartland jacket and spiritwear.

- **Introductory Membership** – Open to anyone who has not previously held a regular USFS membership. This would include those who have previously held a USFS Basic Skills Membership (such as ISA).
- **Regular Membership** – A full USFS skating membership for one skater.
- **Additional Skater Membership** – Open to one additional family member of those who have a regular membership.
- **Parent Membership** – Open to a parent of a Heartland member who has a full USFS membership.
- **Associate Membership** – Open to non-Heartland home club member.

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- **Collegiate** – Four year full skating membership open to a skater enrolled full-time in college.

To help determine which membership you should have:

- Do I plan on pursuing other badge programs, like Free Skate 1-6, after Basic 8?
- Do I plan on going to many figure skating competitions throughout the year?
- Would I like voting privileges within the HFSC?
- Am I skating three or more times a week?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you may want to consider the Introductory or Full Membership options through Heartland. If you are only skating one or two times a week, and don't plan on competing much, then you may be best off with the Basic Skills Membership through ISA.

Becoming a Figure Skater

Most of you started skating by joining the Learn to Skate program offered through ISA. You are aware that there are eight basic levels ([The Basic 8's](#)), and it serves to teach the fundamentals of ice skating for any discipline, but what comes after Basic 8?

A skater will eventually choose a discipline, typically starting with [Freestyle](#) skating. This discipline includes the jumps and spins that everyone is familiar with and thinks of when they hear the term, "figure skating." A skater is free to dabble in more than one discipline, of course. Other popular options include [Ice Dance](#) and [Synchronized Skating](#). Centerpoint Community Ice is lucky to have a thriving synchronized skating program, [Team Amore'](#). *For more information on Synchronized Skating and joining Team Amore', contact Synchronized Skating Director, Jennifer McPike.* Eventually, the better a skater becomes, they will focus on one discipline, but early on it is encouraged for skaters to try lots of different avenues. Independence Skating Academy offers free skating classes during LTS times and Team Amore' offers introductory classes throughout the year.

US Figure Skating Levels When a skater has decided this is something they love and want to pursue it further, the next step is taking official USFS tests. Your coach will recommend when to begin preparing for tests. There are eight different levels:

1. Pre-Preliminary
2. Preliminary
3. Pre-Juvenile
4. Juvenile
5. Intermediate
6. Novice
7. Junior
8. Senior

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There is a separate Adult Track, which is Pre-Bronze, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. After an Adult has passed their Gold Test, they would proceed to take the Intermediate test if they choose to continue. See the [Pipeline of US Figure Skating](#) for a diagram further explaining the test and competitive levels.

Moves in the Field A skater must first pass the prerequisite Moves in the Field Test for each level before the respective free skating or free dance tests. A skater may test consecutive Moves in the Field (MIF) levels without having passed any Free Skating (FS) levels. An example would be a Juvenile MIF level skater competing at the Pre-Preliminary FS level.

Moves in the Field are basically, edges and turns. Collectively, they encompass any extended edge move, or connecting moves, and can be included in footwork or step sequences. In the mid 1990's, MIF replaced compulsory figures with tests of progressively difficult edge and step patterns. Before, a skater would learn turns such as brackets, rockers and counters by tracing a precise figure on the ice, whereas now, skaters are expected to perform the turns with power, quickness, carriage, extension, and flow. Here is a video of a [Pre-Preliminary MIF test](#) and a [Senior Level MIF demonstration](#).

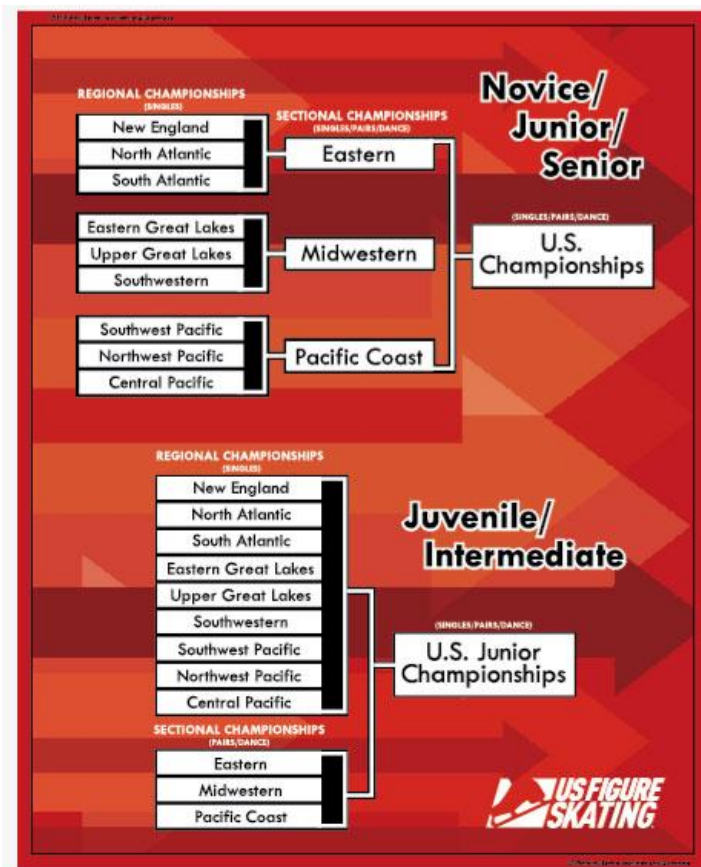
Competition The Basic Skills competitions promote a fun, introductory competitive experience for beginning skaters. Basic Skills competitions are offered throughout the year at various rinks. Skaters in the Basic Skills curriculum are eligible to compete at these events.

Once a skater has tested USFS, there are two different types, or 'tracks,' of competition in figure skating. The **Well Balanced Event** (WB) has been around since the beginning; however it just has a new name. In the past, a skater entered at their level and exhibited their skills. There were few requirements as to what could be done at each level. Some coaches would 'sand bag' by holding their skaters back levels to win the competition, even though the skater could and should have competed at a higher level. USFS created the **Test Track** (TT), with hopes to retain skaters who might be discouraged by the high technical difficulty of some of the elements. This type of competition has more restrictions about what is allowed at each level, so the competition is more at level playing field. Skaters are offered opportunities for success in a competitive atmosphere and stay excited about their abilities.

A skater may begin competing at non-qualifying events before they have tested into the official USFS levels. These TT events are called Beginner, High Beginner, and No Test. Typically, skaters competing at these levels are at the USFS Free Skate levels 1-6, or just starting to enter the competition arena, and have not yet landed their axel. Skaters that would like to compete in qualifying events, such as Regionals and Sectionals, would enter the more competitive WB Event at the Juvenile level, and some regions offer non-qualifying Test Track events at all levels. Skaters competing at the Juvenile and Intermediate levels can qualify to the US Junior Championships, and Novice, Junior and Senior competitors can qualify to the US Championships, often called Nationals. There are international events at the Junior and Senior levels. You see senior level skaters competing at the World Championships and Olympic Games. There are also non-qualifying and qualifying competitions offered at the Adult Levels, and each year there is an Adult National Championship! See the qualifying structure below:

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USFS Qualifying Structure

Group or Private Lessons?

The Independence Skating Academy and Heartland Figure Skating Club encourage beginning skaters to participate primarily in group lessons. If your skater needs supplemental or “booster” lessons to help pass a level, or if they decide to begin competing, then you will want to seek out a coach for private lessons.

When looking for a coach to set up regular private lessons with, be sure to do your homework and take your time. The decision should be approached like any other major purchase. This person will spend hours interacting with your child and will shape their attitude about skating and life. Watch how coaches interact with their skaters on and off the ice. Narrow your choices down to two or three coaches and set up a time to speak with them to see how you and your child interact with them. This is a person you will see regularly, so it is important that you like them! Discuss payment options and charges up front. While you may know their on-ice lesson rate, most coaches charge for fees that take

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up their time off-ice, such as music editing, and competition fees. Will you pay monthly or per lesson? Read the following articles for more information on setting up private lessons.

- [Selecting a Coach](#)
- [Hiring a Coach](#)
- [Changing a Coach](#)

Eventually, private lessons will become the foundation of your figure skater's program. However, Independence Skating Academy offers drop in classes that focus on power and edges, and we encourage skaters at all levels to participate, as these classes contribute to the complete skater. Many skaters respond well to working in a group setting, skaters may ask questions that others might not have considered, and it promotes friendly competition amongst their peers. Their basic skating quality is improved and participants develop a strong foundation in fundamental figure skating techniques.