



## RICHMOND ROCKETS SPEED SKATING CLUB EVALUATION PROTOCOL

### Purpose of Skater Evaluation

The main purpose of skater evaluations is to place athletes in appropriate skill level groups, both for training and competition.

### Objectives of Skater Evaluation

- To provide a fair and impartial assessment of an athlete's total skating skills
- To ensure that athletes have a reasonable opportunity of being selected to a training group appropriate to their skill levels as determined during the on-ice evaluations of the current season.
- To provide coaches with the opportunity and flexibility to build a training group based in part on their own coaching criteria and knowledge of an athlete's skill and attitude.
- To provide uniformity and consistency in the evaluation process such that an athlete's and parent's expectations are consistent from year to year as athletes move through the various levels of the speed skating association's programs.
- To form competitive groups that are able to maintain balance and competitive skating where athletes can develop and participate equitably and have fun racing against each other during the season.
- To provide feedback in order to develop skaters.

### The Core Values of Long Term Athlete Development

Long term athlete development is anchored in the belief that each child, player and athlete is different, with individual needs and rates of development.

Long term athlete development provides a framework for planning and decision-making on athlete development, NOT a rigid template .

Long term athlete development is concerned with the holistic development of children, players and athletes.



Long term athlete development stages overlap and are unique to each individual.

Long term athlete development recognizes the significance of transitions in the development of children, players and athletes.

Long term athlete development recognizes that the accumulation of deliberate practice and training age is linear and that the development of key capacities is nonlinear and individualized.

### The 5 Stages of Speed Skating Canada's Long Term Athlete Development Model





Note: The ages suggested for each stage, are based on average growth and development of participants and the acquisition of specific sets of skills by those participants. The specific ages will vary for each individual.

### **Prerequisites to Join Richmond Rockets Speed Skating Club**

All athletes who wish to join Richmond Rockets Speed Skating Club (RRSSC) are expected to have a strong basic skating foundation. RRSSC does not teach young athletes how to skate. It is a prerequisite that they can start, stop, turn and skate, get up from a fall without assistance and perform glide on skates. *As a minimum, the skater must be able to glide across the length of the ice in a forward direction unassisted and without having to hold onto anything or anyone, away from the boards. Skaters should be able to perform proper crossovers and maintain skating in a lane. They must be able to maintain situational awareness at all times while on the ice surface.*

Skaters must already have fulfilled the requirements of Stage 1 in order to be considered for club membership. We will develop speed skating specific skills as outlined in Stages 2 and 3 upon entry into Group 1. Group 2 training refines Stage 3 and encompasses Stages 3, 4.1 and 4.2. Richmond Olympic Oval's High Performance Training Group comprehensively covers Stages 5.1 and 5.2.

### **Richmond Speed Skating Club Evaluation Protocol**

The ABCs of athleticism (Agility, Balance, Coordination, Speed) are the foundation on which sport skills are built. When combined with fundamental movement skills they define what is best described as the "physical literacy" of the participant. Physically literate individuals are those that people tend to refer to as the "natural athlete". Speed Skating Canada recognizes the importance of the ABCs of athleticism and recommends practicing these skills during all training sessions. These skills can be defined as follows:

- Agility refers to the ability of a participant to rapidly and voluntarily displace their body in all directions or to maintain their body in a stable position while displacing their base of support.
- Balance refers to the capacity of a participant to maintain their centre of gravity in a stable position, or travelling in a continuous line with the assistance of small muscle contractions.
- Coordination refers to the capacity of a participant to perform rapid movements which are voluntarily synchronized or desynchronized.
- Speed is defined as the time required to cover a specific distance. In reference to speed as a fundamental skill we are referring to both the frequency of movement and reaction time.

At Richmond Rockets Speed Skating Club, our coaches develop their individual skating evaluation programs based on criteria provided by Speed Skating Canada, which may include but are not exclusive to: Physical (Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed), Mental (Maturity and Safety Consciousness,



Attitude and Ability to Learn) and the General Ability of the Training Cohort (if an athlete has met the requirements for advancement from their training group but is considerably below the standard of the training group above the athlete, they may not necessarily be accepted by the higher level coach).

### **Procedure**

- RRSSC Coaches have complete authority over the readiness for advancement of their skaters. Every group practice is a trial to advancement into the next higher training group.
- Skaters must display mastery of the requisite criteria on a consistent basis.
- They are recommended as candidates to their appropriate group as soon as they are ready.
- The lower level coach will invite the higher level coach to review the candidate(s) during their current group practice. To ensure fairness and consistency, this process will be on an ongoing basis over a period of at least 4 weeks.
- Then the athlete will be invited to the higher level practice for a period to be determined by the higher level coach depending of space in the training group.
- If it determined that the athlete is a good fit, then the athlete will be offered a position.
- If the athlete accepts, then the athlete's parents are given the option of paying a pro-rated amount for the higher fees in order to advance.

At no time shall the skater or parent request for advancement. Advancement will be offered to the skater once the skater has mastered the skill of their current level. During the quarterly reviews coaches will review the skater's progress with the skater and parent to clearly define the path forward. A level progress report will be discussed and provided to the skater at regular intervals throughout the season. The emphasis at the Rockets is to focus on the joy of speed skating while advancing skaters safely over time.

These protocols will reduce side conversations with the coaches when they should be coaching, while allowing skaters to develop without constant pressure to develop at unreasonable rates. The focus must be on actual skill and muscle memory development, not simply speed.

A parent or athlete is encouraged to ask what areas an athlete can work on or further improve in order to increase their eligibility for advancement. This is a collaborative effort on the part of the athlete, the athlete's support group (parents and siblings), coaching staff, teammates, and club executive.