



SKATING CLUB OF WESTERN NEW YORK

Frequently Asked Questions

Everything you always wanted to know about figure skating at the Skating Club of Western New York – but were afraid to ask!

1. My child has been taking lessons in the Learn to Skate program, but we have noticed that some skaters work on an individual basis with the coaches. How does that work?

Your child may begin taking private lessons at any time. He or she does not have to complete all the Learn to Skate levels first. The main reasons for taking private lessons are:

- a. to help your child progress at a faster rate,
- b. to receive the benefits from individualized instruction geared to your child's learning style and personality,
- c. if you think your child would like to enter skating competitions.

2. How do I set up private lessons and how would I know which skating pro to choose?

If you are in Learn to Skate or other Skate Great programs and you like your instructor, you can approach them and see if they have availability. If another coach on the ice interests you, you may approach that coach. If you would like Skate Great to help you find a coach that works with your price range and availability, you can call the Skate Great office at 716-580-3458 and we can place you with a coach. You can also look at the coaching staff page on the Skate Great web site www.sk8gr8.com or you can email sk8gr8info@gmail.com **The board cannot recommend a coach.**

3. When are these private lessons given?

Private lessons are given on Skate Great Inc. ice at Leisure Rinks, Holiday Twin Rinks and Hamburg Town Arena. Monthly calendars of when ice time is available are on the Skate Great website.

4. How much do the professional coaches charge for their lessons?

It varies. Their fees are based on 15-minute lessons. Some beginners take 15-minute lessons. Others prefer a half-hour lesson. The coaches' fees are posted on the coaching staff page on the Skate Great website Sk8Gr8.com. Coaches will bill you for your child's lessons separately.

5. How often should my child have a lesson?

That question has many answers. Some coaches prefer to have their students have a lesson each day they skate. Other coaches leave that decision up to the parents. (For example: some skaters have two lessons per week, and on the third day, they practice the things that they learned previously that week.) You will make these decisions together with your coach.

6. How often should my child skate per week? For Learn to Skate lessons, he/she was only skating one day per week.

Again, that answer is up to you and the coach. You will pay for each session that your child skates on, so cost may be a factor. Another factor is the learning curve. Skaters will learn new skills faster if they are skating more than once a week. You may choose as little as one lesson per week. Many beginners skate 2-3 sessions per week. This decision also depends on whether the skater is a recreational skater, or wants to begin entering competitions. A competitive skater typically skates three or more sessions per week.

7. What should my child wear?

Your child can wear anything that is comfortable for practice. Coaches like to see a skater's body positioning, so stretch pants (such as Under Armor or Danskin) are popular choices. Many of the girl skaters prefer to wear skating tights and skating dresses. Fleece jackets and fleece headbands are popular choices, and gloves are a necessity. Some of the very young skaters start with a helmet as well.

8. What about skates? My skater wants a pair of skates like she sees on the more accomplished figure skaters.

A new pair of beginner level skates can be purchased for about \$100. You need to be sure that they provide good support for the ankles. As your child progresses and begins doing jumps and more difficult moves, they will need a stiffer boot that will provide more support. We recommend that our skaters visit The Skaters Edge, in Williamsville, Claire will ensure that your child is fitted for a quality skate within the particular price range you desire. (Higher level skaters also purchase the blades separately from the boots. These specialized blades hold their edges better and can take more punishment.) You should talk to your child's coach about the type of skates she needs and whether there might be someone they know of who has a used pair in your child's size. Skater's Edge can sharpen your child's skates as well.

9. Is there anything I need to do in order to have my child compete and/or take US Figure Skating tests?

Yes. Your child will need to join the Skating Club of Western New York and membership applications can be found on the forms page on the SCWNY web site – www.skatingclubofwesternnewyork.org. You will need to choose a membership for your child. SCWNY offers several types of memberships – Full membership, Introductory Membership and Collegiate Membership. Membership options are explained in full on the application. You will also need to join United States Figure Skating for a small fee which is included in your membership cost.

10. What is the Difference between Skate Great and the Skating Club of WNY

Skate Great offers the Learn to Skate programs and is a skating school. The Skating Club of WNY and other skating clubs are for those skaters wanting to take their skating to the next level. For example – testing and competing. The Skating Club of WNY also offers its' club members scholarships, grants, seminars, annual ice show and banquet as well as progress trophies and various awards.

11. This sounds expensive. How much could it cost?

Here is a cost breakdown for a beginning skater. There will be yearly membership dues to SCWNY. The amount of dues depends on the type of membership you choose. All types of memberships cover the cost of United States Figure Skating (USFS) dues. The rest is up to you. You can decide as to the amount of lessons your child receives and the number of sessions they skate per week. You will make these decisions depending on your budget and how involved your child becomes in figure skating.

12. Will I be required to volunteer my time as a member of SCWNY?

All members of the Club must volunteer their time for the good of the club. The number of volunteer hours required for the Spring Skate Festival in May is determined by the number of members in the club. In addition to the May Spring Skate competition, the club has other fundraisers that volunteers are needed and required. **The Skating Club of Western New York is run solely by volunteers. Please follow us on Instagram and Facebook or check our website for more information.**

13. I've heard that SCWNY offers a grant to its skaters. What does the grant involve and how will my child be eligible to receive it?

The SCWNY will provide skaters who choose the Full Membership the opportunity to receive a Monetary Competition Grant to help offset the entry fees for qualifying competitions/Empire State Games and State Games of America and travel/training expenses for national/junior national competitions. In addition to the Competition Grants, all Full members are eligible for the Banquet/Spring Skate Festival Grant. A Grant Application can be found on our website under forms.

The skater must meet the following eligibility requirements to receive a grant:

1. The skater must represent SCWNY for the entire 2026-2027 competitive season. If the skater leaves the club during the course of the skating season, the grant must be repaid within 30 days of termination of membership.
2. The skater and/or family must meet the current volunteer requirements for the current competitive season.
3. The skater must be in good financial standing with the Club.
4. Grant applications must be submitted for each competition within 30 days of the competition.
5. Proof of registration for Competition Grants must be provided.

14. You mentioned competitions. How does that work and when can my child expect to begin competing?

There are competitions at all skill levels for figure skaters. Your coach can help you decide when your child is ready. The coach will plan a skating routine, (a "program"), which incorporates the necessary required elements for your child's level. There is often music involved, but not always. The coach will provide your skater with his or her music. There is an entry fee for competitions as well as coaching fees. At competitions, medals are given to the first, second and third place skaters, and sometimes to the 4th place skaters. The Basic Skills levels often receive ribbons for participation and placement. Every competition is run differently.

15. What competitions are offered by the Skating Club of Western New York and Skate Great?

The SCWNY hosts the annual **Spring Skate Festival in May**. This competition is open to all skaters, including beginner skaters at the Basic Skills levels. In late winter (March/April) we also host The **Janice Smith Basic Skills Competition**. This competition is open to skaters beginner through preliminary level. There are plenty of other competitions available for skaters in our area. Once you express an interest in having your child compete, your coach can inform you of other competition opportunities. We also host a **"Skating Under the Sun"** showcase every Summer in August for all club members and learn to skate members to participate in for fun. This is a great no-pressure event for everyone to showcase their skills for their friends and family!

16. What does my child need to wear for a competition?

For competitions, you will want your child to wear dressier skate wear. They can be purchased new or used, made by a seamstress, or if you are handy with a needle and thread, you can make them yourself.

17. I have heard of the other skaters "testing". What does that mean and should my child do this?

Testing is the natural progression in figure skating as skaters learn new elements and skills. When your coach thinks your child is ready, your child can participate in testing at SCWNY. Judges sit at the side of the ice as your child skates the particular elements required for that test. Tests are scored only on a "pass" or "retry" basis. If the skater performs adequately, that skater receives word from the judges that they have passed their test. Later, at the SCWNY annual banquet which is held in April the test chair will provide your skater with a certificate from US Figure Skating. There are pins and patches that parents can purchase from USFS that the skater can proudly wear to show the level they have passed. Most of our skaters strive to get to higher skating levels. For the skater who shies away from competition, testing through the levels is a great way to mark progress and set new goals to achieve.

18. My child is spending more and more time at the rink. How can I get involved in what he/she is doing? The other parents seem so knowledgeable. I don't know much about figure skating, but I am willing to learn.

SCWNY is always looking for more volunteers. You need no previous knowledge about skating in order to assist the club. You can ask your coach to introduce you to a current SCWNY Board member. They will find an area you are comfortable helping with. They will also introduce you to some of the other club parents like you! You can also look on our website to see some of the ways you can become involved in our club.

19. What other skating opportunities are there for my child at the Skating Club of Western New York?

Some skaters show an interest in Ice Dance, which is a beautiful and powerful aspect of figure skating that does not require jumps and spins. Learning dances also strengthens a skater's edge quality.

20. How do I get more information about the Skating Club of Western New York or any of its programs?

You can access our website at www.skatingclubofwesternnewyork.org. Or feel free to reach out to any of the club's board members. They can be found on the board member's page on our web site. There are no silly questions. Figure skating can be confusing to beginning skating families, but we will help you every way we can.