BOPARC
MORGANTOWN BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Freestyle Figure Skating
Rules & Etiquette Handbook

Purpose

- Freestyle sessions are designated practice sessions for figure skaters to develop skating skills, jumps, spins, footwork, choreography, and complete programs.
- Because freestyle ice is shared by multiple skaters and coaches, everyone is expected to contribute to a safe, respectful, and cooperative practice environment.
- No skater, coach, or lesson has exclusive use of any portion of the ice.

1. Freestyle Session Rules

1.1 Shared Ice

Freestyle is **shared ice.**

- All skaters and coaches must remain aware of others on the ice and make reasonable efforts to avoid interfering with another skater's practice.
- Skaters may not claim, reserve, or control a particular area of the ice.
- Do not stand, sit, or gather in the middle of the ice. If you need to stop and talk with a coach or another skater, move toward the boards whenever it is safe to do so.

1.2 Private Coaching

Only 1-on-1 private coaching is permitted during freestyle sessions.

Group lessons, group practices, and group coaching are not permitted during freestyle.
Semi-private instruction involving multiple students is also not permitted unless specifically authorized by rink management.

Coaches and skaters are expected to keep lessons moving and avoid occupying or blocking a particular area of the ice.

1.3 Coach Responsibilities

Coaches are responsible for modeling appropriate freestyle etiquette and ensuring that their students understand and follow these rules.

Coaches should:

• Keep moving with their skater rather than establishing a permanent teaching area.
• Avoid standing in high-traffic areas.
• Avoid blocking jump entrances, spin areas, or the normal flow of traffic.
• Remain aware of other skaters while teaching.
• Reinforce appropriate yielding and right-of-way practices.
• Address unsafe behavior by their student when it occurs.

A coaching relationship does not give a coach or skater priority over the rest of the session.

2. Program Music & Full-Routine Practice
Freestyle sessions may include an opportunity for skaters to practice a complete routine using the rink's music system.

2.1 Signing Up for Music
A skater who wishes to run a complete program must sign up according to the rink's designated music procedure.

Only skaters who have signed up for a music run may use the designated Program Vest.

2.2 Program Vest
- The skater running their program must wear the designated Program Vest.
- The vest allows other skaters to immediately identify that a skater is performing a complete routine and may need additional space to safely complete the program.

2.3 Yielding to the Program Skater
When a skater is wearing the Program Vest and their music is playing, other skaters should yield to the program skater whenever reasonably possible

This means:
• Avoid skating directly into the program skater's path.
• Move out of the way when you have a safe opportunity to do so.
• Avoid beginning an element directly in the program skater's anticipated path.
• Give the program skater additional space when possible.
• Remain alert to changes in direction.

The Program Vest does not provide exclusive use of the ice.
The ice remains shared by everyone. Program skaters must also skate responsibly, remain aware of other skaters, and avoid creating unsafe situations.

2.4 Program Runs Are Not Exclusive Ice Time
A program run is a courtesy that gives the skater increased priority while their music is playing. It does **not** mean that all other skaters must leave an area of the rink or stop skating.

Other skaters may continue to practice, but should make reasonable efforts to allow the program skater to complete their routine.

Likewise, a program skater must understand that other skaters are also entitled to use the ice.

3. Right of Way
Right of way during freestyle is based on safety and awareness, not simply on who is performing the most difficult skill.

General principles
Skaters should:
1. Look before entering a skating pattern or performing an element.
2. Be aware of skaters around them.
3. Avoid cutting directly across another skater's path.
4. Yield when appropriate.
5. Avoid stopping unexpectedly in the middle of the ice.
6. Give additional space to skaters performing programs.
7. Communicate when necessary using a polite verbal warning.

Jumping
Skaters preparing for a jump need adequate space to safely complete the element.
However, a skater setting up a jump does not automatically have unlimited right of way.

Look before you jump.
Skaters must make reasonable efforts to avoid collisions and should not knowingly enter another skater's path.

Spins
Skaters performing spins should choose an appropriate area and remain aware of surrounding traffic.

Other skaters should avoid intentionally entering a spinning skater's immediate space.

4. Traffic & Ice Awareness
Freestyle ice does not have designated "ownership" zones.

Skaters should use good judgment when choosing where to practice.

Please avoid:
· Standing in the center of the ice.
· Holding lengthy conversations on the ice.
· Sitting on the ice.
· Blocking the entrance or exit to the rink.
· Gathering in groups.
· Repeatedly practicing the same element in a high-traffic area.

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· Cutting across another skater's established pattern.
· Purposely skating into another skater's path.
· Remaining stationary while receiving a lengthy lesson in a busy area.

When the session becomes crowded, everyone **must adjust.**

5. Music Etiquette
Music is a shared resource.

Skaters using the music system should:
• Follow the rink's sign-up procedure.
• Keep music runs within the designated time or routine.
• Use the Program Vest when required.
• Be ready when it is their turn.
• Avoid unnecessary delays between music runs.
• Return the vest according to rink procedures.

Other skaters should respect the program run and make reasonable efforts to yield while the music is playing.

6. Safety Comes First
No practice goal, lesson, program run, or skating skill takes priority over safety.

If a collision or unsafe situation appears imminent, **avoid the collision first.**

Skaters and coaches should never intentionally interfere with another skater's practice.

Aggressive skating, intimidation, intentional obstruction, arguing on the ice, or behavior that creates a safety concern is not acceptable.

7. Respectful Conduct
Freestyle sessions require cooperation.

Skaters and coaches are expected to:
• Treat one another respectfully.
• Communicate calmly.
• Avoid confrontations on the ice.
• Give younger and less-experienced skaters reasonable consideration.
• Remember that skaters have different levels of ability and experience.

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• Follow directions from rink staff.
• Address concerns through rink staff rather than attempting to enforce rules through confrontation.

Do not yell at, threaten, intimidate, or deliberately interfere with another skater or coach.

If there is a disagreement about right of way or freestyle etiquette, continue skating safely and bring the concern to rink staff.

8. Expectations for All Skaters
Every skater is responsible for learning and following freestyle etiquette.

Before entering a freestyle session, skaters should understand:
You are sharing the ice.
You may be working on an important element, taking a private lesson, or running your competition program, but other skaters are also entitled to use the ice.

Good freestyle etiquette means:
Look. Listen. Communicate. Yield. Share.

9. Expectations for Coaches
Coaches are an important part of creating a positive freestyle environment.

Coaches are expected to:
• Follow all rink freestyle rules.
• Teach only within the permitted coaching format.
• Keep lessons appropriate for the available ice space.
• Avoid creating an unofficial "lesson area."
• Encourage their students to share the ice.
• Avoid unnecessary confrontation with other skaters or coaches.
• Bring disputes or repeated etiquette problems to rink staff.

Coaches may not use their coaching relationship to claim priority or exclusive access to an area of the ice.

10. Crowded Sessions
As the number of skaters increases, the amount of available space decreases.

During crowded sessions:
• Reduce speed when appropriate.
• Be especially aware of other skaters.
• Avoid repetitive patterns that create conflicts.
• Move toward the boards when stopping.
• Give additional consideration to skaters running programs.
• Coaches should keep lessons concise and mobile.
• Everyone should adjust their practice to accommodate the number of skaters on the ice.

The more crowded the session, the more important communication and awareness become.

11. Rink Staff & Enforcement
Rink staff and designated freestyle supervisors have authority to address unsafe or inappropriate behavior.

Staff may:
• Provide a verbal reminder.
• Ask a skater or coach to modify their behavior.
• Address repeated violations with the skater or coach.
• Require a skater or coach to leave the session when behavior creates a safety concern.
• Restrict participation in future freestyle sessions for repeated or serious violations.

Rules will be applied to **all skaters and coaches equally**, regardless of age, skating level, competitive level, or coaching relationship.

A skater who believes another participant is repeatedly violating the rules should notify rink staff rather than confronting the individual.

12. Progressive Enforcement
Our goal is to educate first and enforce when necessary.

First occurrence
Staff will generally provide a reminder or clarification of the rule.

Repeated behavior
Staff may provide a formal warning and speak with the skater or coach privately.

Continued or serious violations
The skater or coach may be asked to leave the freestyle session.

Serious safety concerns
Rink management may take immediate action, including removal from the session or suspension of freestyle privileges.

Intentional collisions, aggressive behavior, harassment, intimidation, or deliberate interference may result in immediate removal.

13. The Freestyle Agreement
By participating in freestyle, skaters and coaches agree to:

Share the ice.
Respect other skaters.
Follow the 1-on-1 coaching policy.
Yield appropriately to program skaters.
Use the Program Vest when running a full routine.
Remain aware of the ice around you.
Follow the direction of rink staff.
Put safety before practice goals.
Resolve disagreements respectfully.

Freestyle works best when everyone recognizes that **no one owns the ice.**

Every skater deserves the opportunity to practice, and every skater has a responsibility to help make that possible.

FREESTYLE IN ONE SENTENCE

Share the ice. Respect the skater. Watch your surroundings. Yield when you can. Put safety first.