

## **CHILLER SPEEDSKATING CLUB FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What does it take to become a member?**

Becoming a member of our club simply means that you attend practices on a fairly regular basis, follow our safety rules and the directions of our coaches, and that you have fun.

### **2. What about the coaching staff?**

Our head coach is Charlie King. His list of accomplishments in speedskating is extensive and includes membership on the United States Olympic Short Track Speed Skating team, a former United States National Champion, and a former United States speedskating record holder. When you come to practice, be sure to check out the plaque hanging in the entrance of the Chiller listing more of Charlie's impressive accomplishments.

Assisting in coaching duties are David Lee, Chris Knapp, Diana Harrell, and Glen Gardner, all of whom are elite skaters who have won awards at state/national competitions.

### **3. How much does it cost?**

There is no membership fee. Other than the cost of your equipment, the only charge to be a member of our club is the cost of getting on the ice when you attend practice. We are currently meeting one evening a week for an hour--cost \$10.50, and Saturday morning for one and a half to two hours--cost \$15. You pay at the Chiller front desk when you arrive. You will be given a cash register receipt. Simply write your name on the top of the receipt and hand it to the coach before getting on the ice. There's no cost associated with the practices you don't attend.

The first practice you attend is FREE. Thereafter, be sure to obtain a speedskating "frequent-flier" card at the Chiller front desk. A stamp will be put on the card for each paid session. When you have 10 stamps on your card, you can use your card to attend a session for free. We recommend you use your free pass for the Saturday morning sessions. That gives you "more bang for the buck."

### **4. What equipment MUST I wear to skate with the club?**

You will notice that accomplished speedskaters in competition wear formfitting clothing called "skins", with color-coordinated helmets, gloves, and skates. You'll also notice some of this clothing at our practices. We don't recommend that you make that investment right away. However, you MUST wear the following in order to skate with us:

- a. Helmet -- There are helmets made specifically for speedskating. However, you can wear a bicycle helmet and some skaters even wear one of the helmets available for loan at the Chiller.
- b. Eye protection -- Occasionally, a person skating ahead of you may kick up some ice chips. We don't want you to be hit in the eye. Therefore, if you wear glasses, that will be fine. If you don't wear glasses, you will need to wear some kind of lens to protect

your eyes, such as sunglasses. If you find that the darker lenses distort your view of the ice, you may opt for clear lenses.

- c. Neck guard -- You can pick these up at a local store such as Dick's Sporting Goods. Look for a Kevlar neck guard that uses Velcro. The kind of neck guards used in hockey will be fine.
- d. Long-sleeved jacket or shirt.
- e. Gloves.
- f. Long pants.
- g. Knee guards -- padded knee guards such as those used in field hockey or soccer are fine. Again, these should be available at Dick's Sporting Goods.
- h. Shin guards -- these are generally a plastic guard that fits over the shin and is secured behind the calf with an elastic strap. Again, these are similar to what is used in soccer or field hockey.
- i. Ankle guards -- we require our skaters to wear Kevlar ankle guards. Because these are difficult to find commercially, we have them available for \$5 per pair.
- j. Speed skates -- for younger skaters, we recommend renting skates from us. New skates can be a bit pricey. Therefore, before making the investment you may want to be sure the feet have stopped growing. Rental skates are also available for adults who join us. However, in order to preserve our inventory, we ask our adult skaters to obtain their own skates once they've been with us for a few months. We will be happy to provide you with more about the rental program specifics when we fit you for your skates.

## **5. How do practices work?**

We recommend arriving at the rink at least 20 minutes before the start of practice. This will provide sufficient time to be completely ready to get on the ice the minute practice is scheduled to start. Some of our members arrived even earlier in order to do some stretching or other warm-up exercises -- always a good idea before getting on the ice.

We spend the first couple of minutes "putting out the pads", which means lining the walls of the rink with padding. All skaters assist in this operation, as well as in putting the pads away at the end of practice. While the pads are being moved out, one of our elite skaters will place seven small rubber "blocks" at each end of the rink to mark the track.

Once the pads are in place and the track is laid out we begin a warm-up at a slow to medium speed. The flow of traffic is ALWAYS counterclockwise. After about 5 to 10 laps of warm-up Charlie will come out onto the ice and call everybody to the center. Club announcements are made and new skaters are introduced. Charlie then assigns each skater into one of three groups: (1) younger skaters and new skaters; (2) experienced skaters; and (3) elite skaters. Each group

will be on the track by itself, either doing an accelerated warm-up or a specific drill. Meanwhile, the other two groups will be in the center of the rink, one will be recovering from having been on the track and the other will be preparing to go onto the track.

The key to skating fast and under control is to master speedskating technique. Practices generally include a mixture of exercises involving technique, speed, endurance and starts. Charlie will observe each skater individually and determine what specifically he or she needs to work on. He will continue to work with each skater to be sure his or her technique continues to improve. This applies to new skaters and elite skaters alike. Generally, if he's not talking to you, it's because you're doing it right.

## **6. Is there a minimum age?**

Our club does not have a strict minimum age limit. We've had skaters as young as five years old do extremely well. If your youngster can skate without assistance, he or she should be fine skating with us. It's sometimes surprising how fast young skaters develop skills.

If you are uncertain as to whether your child should join us we will be happy to talk to you specifically about your concerns. In the alternative, your child can join us for a practice session, after which our coach will let you know his recommendation.

## **7. What about competitions?**

Many of our skaters attend meets. However, not all skaters do so and it is certainly not an expectation of our club. If you decide you want to compete, there are a number of opportunities throughout the fall and winter months. Occasionally, we will hold a meet on our home ice. The past couple of years the Ohio State Speedskating Association meet has been held at the Chiller. However, most meets require out-of-town travel to the Cleveland area; Rochester, NY; Pittsburgh; and locations in Michigan and Indiana.

## **8. Important Links**

- a. [www.usspeedskating.org](http://www.usspeedskating.org)
- b. [www.ohiospeedskating.com](http://www.ohiospeedskating.com)
- c. [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com) - search for short track speed skating and find tons of videos
- d. [www.nationalspeedskatingmuseum.org/Photo%20Albums/JerrysAlbums.htm](http://www.nationalspeedskatingmuseum.org/Photo%20Albums/JerrysAlbums.htm) - Jerry Search takes photos at all important/national meets. These photos contain incredible detail of speed skating technique.

## **9. Further information**

For further information please contact: Norm Ullom-Morse – [njulaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:njulaw@sbcglobal.net) or 895-7962 (office number).