

The Four Figure Skating Disciplines

There are four separate disciplines in figure skating: Singles (Men and Ladies), Pairs, Ice Dance and Synchronized Skating. Each discipline offers multiple levels for competition and testing, with each level building on similar techniques and adhering to level-specific rules and guidelines. Skaters are not limited to one discipline and may choose to test and compete in multiple disciplines. All four disciplines can lead to the High-Performance pathway.

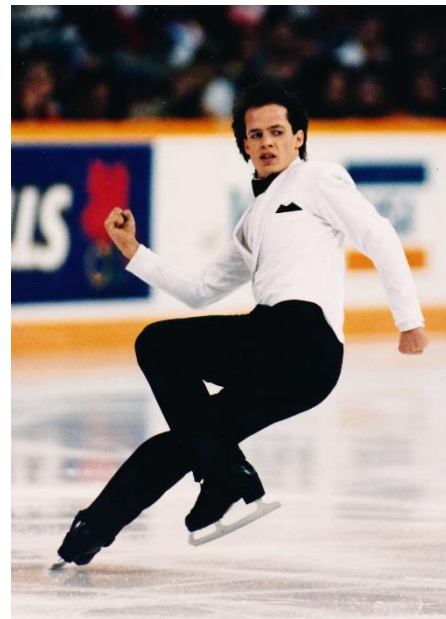
Multiple disciplines in figure skating have developed over time. Each discipline is unique and comes with its own set of rules yet there are common rules shared by all disciplines. Exposure to different disciplines helps to develop a well-rounded skating athlete and allows for an individual to find their passion in the sport that they love.

Quality of movement, aesthetic lines, good carriage, and effortless flow are all attributes of good skating and are reflected in the skater's component score in all disciplines. Technical skills required for each discipline are difficult to master and require a great deal of practice. The pace at which a skater progresses through the sport is very individual. Achievement of difficult skills are dependant upon many factors. Consistency of practice and good practice habits are basic ingredients of the recipe of achievement.

Some like skating beside another person as in Ice Dance or Pairs. Perhaps they love the art of edge skating and love team sports so may be drawn to Synchronized Skating. Others may really enjoy the singular spotlight and stick with Singles skating. Wherever a skater is drawn to there is a place for fun competition, and meaningful achievement.



Kurt Browning competed in ice dance!



Singles Skating - Men and Women

Most skaters begin their career in the singles category. This is a time when basic figure skating skills are developed. Skaters are taught how to skate correctly on edges, how to execute turns and will learn the fundamentals of spinning and jumping.

Jumping is easy for some individuals and more difficult for others. Some individuals will have preferences for different jumps based on the take off. Others may simply like flying through the air for

the sheer thrill of it and excel at jumping. Spinning is a basic skill that develops into intricate difficulty as a skater progresses. Good spins are necessary in all disciplines and the foundation on which other skills are built.

As they become more proficient, skaters may be assessed to standards of increasing difficulty and may be introduced to competition. Skaters will demonstrate their proficiency at all levels through performance of programs that are choreographically created for their skill level.



Jamie Sale and David Pelletier both had successful singles careers as well as Pairs!

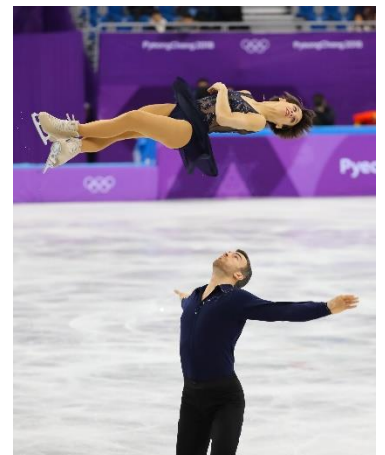
Pair Skating

There are many qualities that may draw skaters to Pair Skating. Solid technical ability of jumps and spins is a good basis for those interested in pairs. The female pair skater may have a love of flying and being lifted. Male partners will develop the ability to lift and must have good skating skills in order to be a solid foundation for their partner. Both partners may enjoy the challenge of mastering the unison of side-by-side skating.

Pair skaters usually continue a competitive singles career as well as pair skating as these disciplines compliment each other immensely.

Fun Fact: Eric Radford won the Junior Men's (Singles) Canadian Championship.

Based on skating strength and current potential, a skater may be identified as someone who would excel as a pair



skater. Young skaters interested in pair skating would skate in shadow style which is the typical developmental starting point. Lifts are taught as a progression. During the early stages of pairs skating, athletes develop important spatial awareness and experience a lot of fun learning the side-by-side elements. It is a great way to practice technical skills and master the basics.

Ice Dance

Ice Dance may interest skaters with a variety of strengths. Effortless flow and good technical ability for turns are a must in Ice Dancing. Skaters will continue to develop good spinning skills and gain flexibility for dance lifts and spins. Skaters must have good musicality and the ability to move and make music come alive. They must have good skating skills in order to be solid for their partner. A demonstration of musicality and performance skills will allow the couple to tell a dancing story on ice.

Ice dancers can have a competitive singles career as well as one in ice dancing. Continuing to free skate is a great way to enhance skating strength as an ice dancer.



Fun Fact: Paul Poirier competed in Singles up to the Senior Men's level at the Canadian Championship.

A skater may be identified as having potential to excel as an ice dancer based on their strong skating flow, line, and the ability to translate movement through music. Young skaters investigating ice dance would skate pattern dances, for development, which would lead to a free dance. During the introductory phase, they develop spatial awareness, have a lot of fun learning the side-by-side elements and improve the basics of skating.

Synchronized Skating

Synchronized Skating requires a different mix of strengths. Effortless flow and good technical ability are important for turns and spinning. Flexibility is an asset for lifts. Skaters must have good musicality and the ability to move and make music come alive. Skaters will enjoy training together and experience the "team support" that is part of synchronized skating. Teamwork is essential for executing difficult maneuvers in unison with 16 people. Synchronized skaters can continue a singles, dance, and/or pair career as well. Continuing to train in free skating is a great way to gain the skating strength necessary as a synchronized skater.

Synchronized skating is considered a Skate-for-Life discipline. Many former competitive skaters in other disciplines have moved into Synchronized skating and found a renewed passion and an avenue for new opportunities within the sport they love. This new passion can continue for years and decades.

Fun Fact: Sheri Moir competed at Junior Worlds in Ice Dance, went on to win the World Synchronized Skating Championships with her team, and is now a member of the Skate Canada Hall of Fame.



Athletes with good flow, line, turns, and the ability to translate movement through music, may be identified as a skater who would excel as a synchronized skater. Synchronized skating combines artistry and athleticism with the comradery of team sport. It is a great option for skaters to strengthen their teamworking skills for sport and for life.

Competitions:

Skate Canada figure skating competitions are constructed to ensure the skater has a meaningful competitive experience. They are designed to reflect the developmental stage of the athlete with consideration of the chronological age.

There are two competitive pathways: STAR and Competitive. These two pathways can and do intersect dependant on a skater's developmental stage. Once a skater achieves a certain competitive level, the skater's pathway can evolve in many different competitive directions.

As a skater progresses, the coach will guide the skater towards meaningful, enriching competitive experiences that are appropriate to their level. There are many pathways that a skater can follow to foster their individual development and life-long love of skating. There are competitive opportunities in all disciplines for skaters to explore, should they desire.

For information regarding any of the figure skating disciplines, please contact:

Holly Henderson
Section Technical Director
holly@skateabnwtun.ca

Written by: Holly Henderson