

## **New to Figure Skating? Here's some answers.**



### **Group Lessons - Basic Skills**

Most skaters, including Rachael Flatt and Jeremy Abbott (the 2010 US Champions), started skating by taking Group Lessons. The group classes teach the basic skills that are necessary in figure skating and hockey.

This rink offers Group Lessons through the Basic Skills program through US Figure Skating. Check with the Skating School for the details of which days and times the lessons are offered.

The price of the Group Lesson pays for the instruction, and the price of the ice when the lesson is taking place. Also, included in the price of the Group Lesson is one Public Session of skating per week where the skater can practice the skills that are taught in the classes.

### **Testing – Basic Skills**

Usually during the last week of each Group Lesson session, the instructor will give a test to each skater. If the skater passes the test, they can then progress to the next level of Group Lessons. If not, the skater will need to repeat the level. It is important that a skater masters the skills at each level before moving on to the next level.

### **Private Lessons & Coaches**

Private Lessons will be the next step if the skater is having a difficult time learning one of the skills, wishes to advance more quickly, has mastered all of the skills in the group classes, or learns better when working one-on-one with a coach.

To take a Private Lesson, you need to schedule a time with one of the coaches that work at the rink. If you like the coach that is teaching the group lesson, you can ask him or her if they could take on a new skater.

Each coach charges different rates for their instruction. Fees range from \$18 to \$25 per 20 minute lesson. Check with the coach before the first lesson as to their rate. The coach's rate DOES NOT include the cost of the ice. You will have to pay the rink for the skater to be on the ice during the lesson.

Basic Skills Private Lessons are taught on Public Sessions. After a skater has progressed to the skills in Freestyle 1, they may start taking lessons on Private Ice.

### **Private Ice**

The rink schedules several sessions per day, usually before and after school, where only Figure Skaters are allowed to practice. The number of skaters is limited, so that the skaters can work on edges, jumps, spins, dance patterns, programs and take Private Lessons. Your coach will let you know when the skater is ready to start skating on Private Ice.

Stickers are purchased at the rink for either 40 minute or 60 minute sessions. If you purchase 10 stickers at a time, you get a reduced rate. These stickers are placed on a sheet at the desk or rink side for the session being skated. Each skater must put their sticker on the sheet before entering the ice.

### **Competing – Basic Skills**

Most of the rinks in the area sponsor Basic Skills competitions for the students in their Group Lessons. Each student competes at the level of the class that they are taking at the rink. The Skating School will let you know when these are taking place.

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## Testing - US Figure Skating

US Figure Skating (USFS) is the National Governing Body for Figure Skating in the USA. Essentially, this means that USFS is the only organization in the USA that is allowed to send skaters to compete at the Olympics and other international competitions.

For USFS sanctioned competitions, you must take tests before you can compete. You can think of this like earning the colored belts in Judo or Karate. Passing tests teaches skaters necessary skill sets, and makes sure that competitors have at least the same minimum level of skills in each event. The tests in USFS start with Pre-Preliminary and go through Senior. Your coach will let you know when the skater is ready to begin testing.



The **Georgia Figure Skating Club (GaFSC)** is a member club of US Figure Skating. The GaFSC holds test sessions, hosts competitions, and puts on shows and exhibitions at three rinks in the Atlanta area. To test, the skater needs to be a member of the Club. There are several different levels of membership in the GaFSC. Check the website: [www.gafsc.org](http://www.gafsc.org) for more information. The dates of the test sessions are posted on the club's bulletin board and website.

Before the skater's first test session, you may want to attend a test session to see how test sessions are administered. They are more formal than the tests that are conducted in the Group Lessons.

Your coach may charge for putting the skater "on the ice" for the test session. It depends on the coach and the level of the test. Your coach may also charge a fee for "cutting" the music for a program. Discuss these fees with your coach before the test.

## Competing – US Figure Skating

Competitions that are sanctioned by US Figure Skating follow the rules set forth in the US Figure Skating Rule Book. There are two types of US Figure Skating competitions: Non-Qualifying and Qualifying. Each competition publishes an announcement. The announcement contains the events offered, the entry form, and the cost of each event. Announcements are usually mailed to rinks, clubs and skaters who have attended the event in a previous year. The GaFSC posts upcoming competitions on their email list.

### *Non-Qualifying Competitions:*

Non-qualifying test are held by clubs throughout the year. The GaFSC holds the Peach Open and the Peach Classic competitions each year. These events always have Freeskate, Pairs, and Dance events – programs skated to music. They also usually have events that are not skated to music: Compulsory Moves, Spins, Jumps, Showcase or Interpretive. The announcement will explain all the details of events.

### *Qualifying Competitions:*

The Qualifying competitions start at the regional level. Georgia is in the South Atlantic region. Any skater who has passed at least the Juvenile Freeskate test, can compete at Regionals, usually in October of each year.

At regionals, only the top skaters in each event, "qualify" to continue on to the next competition. The Juvenile and Intermediate skaters go on to the Junior Championships. The Novice, Junior and Senior level skaters progress to the Sectional competitions. Georgia is in the Eastern Section. The skaters compete against skaters from the other regions and only the top qualifying skaters progress to the US Figure Skating Championships, in January of each year. The top finishers at the Championships then progress to World Championships, and every four years the Olympics.

