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There are many benefits to you and your child getting involved in the sport of figure skating. It is one of the best sports to help your child develop their mental focus and helps build strength, flexibility and cardio. As they prepare for test and possibly competitions, all their mental skills will be challenged and developed. With the help of a professional coach they will develop their self-esteem, work ethic and determination. The life skills that they will gain will help them through their teen years and in their future careers. Here is the break down of the Ice Stars program in component parts.

**CANSKATE:** Badge 1-7. Each badge has between 8-14 skills to complete. On every badge there are some skills from **FORWARDS, BACKWARDS, TURNS, STOPS, SPINS, and STROKING**. When a skater starts working on Badge 5 they become an Ice Star in the club.

**ICE STARS:** Level 1-9. Badges and certificates are awarded along with some other incentives. Each Ice Star level has approximately 16 skills to pass. Skills include **STROKING, TURNS, JUMPS, SPINS, FIELD MOVEMENTS and DANCE**.

Ice Star skaters are taught only by professional coaches in a group setting of 5-7 skaters. For the most part, a professional coach is with the group the whole time. Occasionally the group will practice on their own as the coach tests a skater. If a group is a higher level they may even work on their own for 10-15 minutes on the session. It becomes increasingly important that a skater learn how to practice and spend time on their own due to the structure of the next level in the club.

Both CanSkate and Ice Stars are recreational programs taught in group format. In both cases you can supplement with a private lesson. This lesson can help your skater move more quickly through the badges so that more choices are available for your skater at a young age.

At any time in Ice Stars a skater can leave the recreational program and move to our Junior session. At this point the skater moves into the Skate Canada Test Program and is judged by a Skate Canada qualified judge and no longer by the professional coach. This program is private lesson based. Occasionally semi-private lessons can be arranged if two skaters are at the same level and can work well together.

The test program breaks down into the following:

**SKILLS:** Edges, turns, patterns done to skills music.

**LEVELS:** Preliminary, Junior Bronze, Sr. Bronze, Junior Silver, Senior Silver and Gold.  
Each level consists of 3 exercises per test

\*Note: Skate Canada's new Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model is currently revising Skills. The new format is scheduled to be in place in the next 12-24 months. For this reason, some coaches will not put as much focus on learning the Skill patterns. However, the turns, edges and field moves used in each pattern are still essential to quality skating and will still be taught. Speak to your coach for their plans with your skater in regards to Skills.

**DANCE:** Edges, turns, pattern done to dance music, generally with a partner.

**LEVELS:** Same as Above. Each level consists of 3-4 dances.

**FREESTYLE:** Jumps, spins, stroking, choreography to solo music chosen for the skater by a professional coach.

**LEVELS:** Same as above. Each level has part A which has 14 elements and Part B which is a solo done to music.

**INTERPRETIVE:** Theme development to music

**LEVELS:** Introductory, Bronze, Silver, Gold

A Junior session would be about 1 ½ hours long. The breakdown would be approximately as follows:

**SKILLS:** 20 minutes

**DANCE:** 20 minutes

**FREESTYLE:** 40 minutes

**STROKING:** 10 minutes

Private lessons would be booked with your choice of professional coach for approximately 30 minutes pre session. (10 minute skills, 10 minute dance, 15 minute free skate, for example). The remainder of would be practice time. Skaters use the full ice surface and all sessions are with music.

At any point the skater may cross back to the Ice Stars program and will be given credit for Skate Canada tests passed. This generally does not occur due to their satisfaction with the Skate Canada Test Program. Test days are available about 4-6 times a year.

There are approximately 4 competitions per year that a skater with a solo can enter. A solo can be started once a skater has enough basic skills (a few turns, front and back crosscuts, 2 spins and a few jumps). A skater needs to have about badge 6 to start a basic

solo. You also require a private coach to choreograph the program and select music that is appropriate for the skater.

A skater should skate at least 2 days a week if they want to compete or take Skate Canada tests and consider skating at least two weeks during the summer.

As your skater progresses through the skating system the professional coach you hire will be a great assistance to you. They will give you direction on many matters. Look to them for help on lesson numbers, equipment selection and selecting a skate sharpener. They will advise you on when your child is ready to enter a competition and take a Skate Canada test. Professionals will give you rates for all the services they provide.

Visit our website, [www.bedfordskatingclub.com](http://www.bedfordskatingclub.com), for a list of our professional staff. Qualifications, certification levels, additional information and how to contact them is there.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions if you have questions that weren't answered here.

Yours in skating,  
Becky

Becky Ackerman  
Recreational Administrator  
Bedford Skating Club  
[bedfordskatingclub@hotmail.com](mailto:bedfordskatingclub@hotmail.com)  
(902) 222-0908