

Performances/Exhibitions/Recitals/Ice Shows/Carnivals

Basic Skills programs and figure skating clubs have several avenues at their fingertips to showcase the talent of their participants while marketing their programs. These avenues include the following:

EXHIBITIONS

An exhibition is a skating performance by an eligible person(s) by itself or as part of some other entertainment. All exhibitions that involve eligible skaters must be sanctioned or approved by U.S. Figure Skating to protect the eligibility of the skaters participating. There normally are no props or special costumes. There may be solos and/or group performances. At many clubs, exhibitions take place between the periods of a hockey game, used as a practice run before an important competition or at the conclusion of a skating season. They are also common after a major competition, such as the U.S. Figure Skating Championships.

Clubs may host exhibitions:

1. To provide an opportunity to promote figure skating
2. To provide an opportunity for selected skaters and/or groups to perform before an audience in preparation for a competition

RECITALS

Recitals are performances in which eligible skaters display their skills and maneuvers for an audience with the purpose of commemorating the conclusion of a skating session, season or session of lessons. Recitals allow skaters to display their skills for spectators within individual and group performances. Costumes and music can be utilized to help convey a theme, such as celebrating the holiday, and often unify the individual recital performances. They are not only a terrific way to conclude a session or season of skating, but also help to market the skating program offerings to potential new participants.



ICE SHOWS/CARNIVALS

Ice Show/Carnivals are gala performances where skating furnishes the principle entertainment for spectators. Performers are predominantly eligible skaters. Member clubs/programs hosting an ice show must apply for a performance sanction/approval. In this type of show, there are typically costumes, props, music, solo and group performances. While it is common to hear carnivals referred to as ice shows, club officers must be aware that the performance sanction application refers to this event as a carnival.

Creating and producing an ice show is an intricate and complicated procedure. There is no magic formula but rather several general rules of thumb. Knowing your clientele and having a firm grasp on the overall needs of your skating community are two strong assets for a financially successful show.

It is important to keep in mind that your skating school ice show is exactly that—a skating school ice show. The purpose is not only to profile the higher-



level competitors at your rink but also to show the growth of your skating school from within. A well-run show should showcase the many opportunities that skating in your rink provides for each and every child. From synchronized skating to soloists, ice dancing, ice theatre, tots, group numbers with step-outs, maybe even a special appearance from the local hockey team or a guest skater—a good show offers something for every skater enrolled in your programs. NO skater should be hesitant to perform because the parent or child does not feel they are good enough to participate. This is an opportunity for everyone!

Ideal timeline for an ice show production:

(Keep in mind that this is an ideal timeline for ice shows; it can be condensed dependant upon the program's individual situation and needs)

Look at your show as a process and write a realistic timeline to accomplish your goals:

- 1 year in advance: Choose a show theme and title
- 8-12 months: Select and edit music, design sets, book videographer, photographer, curtains, announcer and lights
- 6-8 months: Begin choreographing your show, write the script, host kick-off party
- 4-6 months: Show registration begins, costume ordering begins, set construction begins
- 3-4 months: Apply to U.S. Figure Skating for a performance approval or sanction, rehearsals begin, costumes are ordered
- 2-3 months: Program ads are sold, group ticket sales begin, vendors contacted
- 1-2 months: Program goes to printer, tickets are printed, vendors contacted again
- 6 weeks: Tickets go on sale for public, photo day, continue rehearsals
- 1 week: Technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal
- Showtime!

Remember that the show process involves literally hundreds of people; staff coaches, skaters, set designers, community volunteers, fundraisers, rink management, front desk staff, costume designers, volunteers, parents, makeup





artists, light technicians and ultimately your audience. Be realistic about your show's timeline. Know what you can and can't do and how long each task will take. In general, add in an extra two to three weeks to any task, especially costume ordering.

Theme

Begin with the theme of your show. Themes can be subtle or bold. You may use them as the invisible link between numbers or as a bold, underlying show idea. For example, as a choreographer and producer, you may choose something as subliminal as color or geometric theme to carry throughout the production.

Traditional ice shows usually follow a bold underlying theme such as "Rock and Roll through the Ages," "Journey through OZ," "Evening at Pops," "Space Odyssey" or perhaps "Salute to Patriotism." Using obvious

themes like this can help dictate costuming, lighting, set design, choreography and most notably music. Group formations, exits and entrances, lighting, spatial reference and placement of numbers within your program will contribute to the interesting aspects of your show.

Costumes

Costumes normally run on the small size. If a skater is a borderline size, always choose the larger size. They are usually never as good as the photo images appear and you always get what you pay for. Be realistic about what your skaters need to get from their costume. How many shows will the skater perform? How long do they realistically expect to use this costume? Can they recycle it? How much will your participants be able to bear financially when all of the expenses of the show are tallied—tickets, registration fees, rehearsal times, private lessons, if needed, and costume fees?

Correctly measuring the skaters is one of the most important projects of the show. Always have parents measure their children and sign off on the registration form. Any mistake in sizes will be their own responsibility. Have the words *NO REFUNDS* clearly printed on every registration form and ice show informational packet. Parents may then take the ordering process more seriously.

Double check the order forms to make sure that the sizes make sense and that they accurately comply with the costume manufacturer. Include the sizing chart on your registration form. Have several tape measures available in the office and at the front desk. Work with your pro shop on ordering accessories that will work with the costumes and help boost in-house sales (tights, boot covers, head pieces)

Program

The program book will not only bring addi-

tional revenue to your show but it is an inexpensive way to advertise your rink's programming. You can promote upcoming events in the hockey and figure skating communities, include skating school schedules and provide a pull-out registration form for non-skaters to sign up for lessons. This is also a great opportunity for local businesses to show support and advertise in the community.

Consistency and tradition play a large role in successful show planning. Develop a formula and stick with it. Keep the same weekend from year to year so families can plan ahead. Have a finger on the pulse of what works for your skating program and what doesn't, and then adapt. Listen to the feedback you receive from the skaters, coaches and audience members. Make note of this from year to year.

Overall, your skating school ice show is a profit-making venture. Your show should be one of the primary money-making events of the year. It is an opportunity for skaters to demonstrate the skills they have learned and to feel like a star for the day. It is also an opportunity for you to boost your enrollment and generate enthusiasm throughout the rink. Use your show as the marketing tool that it is. Remember that it is the only marketing tool we have in this business that the customer actually pays to be in and one that we don't have to pay for at all. A good show is valuable free advertising.

Performance Sanction vs. Basic Skills Performance Approval

Performance Sanctions are issued by U.S. Figure Skating to protect the eligibility of its members. The rules of the Sanctions and Eligibility Committee govern all carnivals and exhibitions held by member clubs. Each club has a U.S. Figure Skating sanction officer and alternate assigned to them each season, and it is their job to approve all performance sanctions submitted by member clubs. Each member club also may have someone designated as their club sanctions officer. The club sanction officer prepares performance sanctions and submits them to the U.S. Figure Skating sanction officer for approval.

With few exceptions, all carnivals, exhibitions, appearances or entertainment of any kind where U.S. Figure Skating eligible skaters participate must be sanctioned. Sanctions are required when any of the following conditions apply:

1. Admission is charged or admission is contingent upon a donation.
2. The sponsor or promoter is a recipient of some pecuniary benefit.
3. Skaters, other than those who are members of the host club, have been invited to participate.
4. Ineligible persons in skating have been invited to participate.
5. The performance is held at a location other than the principal skating headquarters of the host club.
6. The event is advertised or the public is invited to attend.

7. Skaters or synchronized skating teams exhibit at hockey games.

Basic Skills Performance Approvals allow full members to participate in U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills approved skating performances, ice shows, exhibitions and carnivals without the need for a separate U.S. Figure Skating sanction. Restrictions on performance approvals are that they do not include the participation of U.S. Figure Skating member skaters who are or have been active U.S. Championships competitors at or above the novice level within the past two years unless participation has been permitted by U.S. Figure Skating by way of sanction, ESCA (Eligible Skater Compensation Agreement) or special permission is obtained. Filing fee for obtaining a Basic Skills performance approval is \$25.

Please familiarize yourself with all sanctioning rules by clicking here <http://www.usfigureskating.org/MemberServices.asp?id=248> and go to the section on Sanctions and Eligibility.

All forms of advertising, announcement, program or notice, including on the internet/web, of any sanctioned carnival or exhibition must state that the event is presented by the sponsoring club/program and sanctioned or approved by U.S. Figure Skating.

