

Midland Speed Skating Club Training / Practice Philosophy

A book could be written on the topic of training and practice for speed skating. Briefly, here is my overview of the Midland Speed Skating Club coaching philosophy.

The goal of the Midland Speed Skating Club is to have fun while teaching proper speed skating technique, discipline, self-motivation, dedication, leadership, team-building and sportsmanship. The club is proud to have coached hundreds of skaters since 1953. Many state, national, and North American champions as well as Olympians have come from our club. The purpose of the local speed skating club, such as Midland's, is to teach proper skating technique to allow skaters to be competitive at the state and national level or to simply enjoy recreational skating for the exercise. Once skaters develop into nationally ranked skaters, some pursue the Olympic dream and participate in the Olympic training centers to further improve their technique.

The coach's goal is to first develop stamina, endurance and strength. This is critical so that skaters have the strength and stamina to perform basic speed skating techniques correctly for extended periods of time. For example, the skating base position requires the skater to be in a low position with the knees bent at a 90 degree angle with the back in a rounded position. This position is required for proper skating technique but requires significant leg and back strength and stamina to do correctly. To accomplish this, a significant amount of time is spent simply allowing skaters time to skate numerous laps. It is also recommend that serious skaters train outside of club activities, such as stretching, running, bicycling, etc..

Also incorporated in the skating practices are technical drills that are taught to develop the proper skating techniques. There are many types of drills that are performed to develop balance, proper skating position, proper leg extensions, crossovers for the corners, starts, arm swing etc. These drills are demonstrated and performed at slow speeds, and then as the skater develops, these proper techniques are accomplished at fast speeds.

It needs to be stressed that **the best way to develop skaters is to allow them the time to skate**. We have limited time on the ice, so we try to get as much skate time as we can versus standing in a corner talking. This is why you will see the coaches talking to the skaters while they skate.

In addition to the ice skating practices, the skating club also offers dry land training twice a week at no extra cost. Dry land training is a combination of stretching and skating exercises that are performed in a gym. These exercises mimic proper speed skating techniques. They are intense and difficult. Dry land sessions are encouraged for the competitive or recreational skater. We do not recommend dry land training for young beginning skaters.

This training philosophy has proven successful for the club and its skaters over the past 50+ years. As indicated earlier, there have been many state, national, and North American champions plus several Olympians that have come from our club. I am certain that they had fun pursuing the sport of speed skating.

Wayne Winslow, MSSC President