



March 29, 2019

Hello All:

Planning for the 2019-2020 season has been underway for the past several months and there are changes coming that will help to address the concerns that we've heard from clubs, coaches, officials, skaters, administrators and from crucial funders.

First, the concerns...

...clubs need more resources and members

...skaters looking to advance their skills need to train and compete together more often

...we are a small sport and many of us are known to each other but there are ways that we can work better together

The changes...

Speed Week

Speed Week is an annual event to develop awareness of the sport of speed skating and the clubs that offer it. It is designed to help all clubs raise significant amounts of money while promoting the sport, offering a chance to recruit new members and increasing partnerships within local communities.

Using a format similar to the NHL Skills Competition – Fastest Skater, for a small fee any individual is given the chance to race the clock in a single lap around the rink using their own hockey/figure skates, not speed skates. A website will be set up where times can be entered, and racers can compare their times against times from across BC.

While there is value in the individuals racing the clock, the greater fundraising value is with Challenge Races. Local organizations or even small groups of individuals (4 racers/team) will challenge each other to a race. Done in a team pursuit format, the teams will race head to head. Each team "bets" the other team that they will win. The winner of the funds bet is the club. For example, if one of your local restaurants challenged another restaurant to race and the bet between them was \$50, the winner would get bragging rights for a year, but your club would receive \$100 (\$50 from each team). There are endless possibilities of Challenge Races: one school against another; media vs mayor/council; police vs fire; etc.

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The Challenge Races offer clubs the opportunity to raise significant dollars in a very short period of time and could grow year after year as bragging rights are on the line. While it is possible for any club to do this at any time, by asking all clubs to do this during the same week of the year provides everyone with the opportunity for greater exposure for every Speed Week event. After considering different options, the BCSSA Board has proposed that we target Speed Week as the week following Thanksgiving.

BC Cup

We are bringing back BC Cup racing and have added some bonus features. There will be 3 BC Cups next season: 2 Short Track and 1 Long Track and each will be a qualifier for the provincial championships. Each BC Cup will engage skaters primarily in the L2T and T2T stages but can incorporate skaters in Junior/Senior categories if there are enough race entries.

The actual competition will occur on Saturdays. On Sundays BCSSA will offer Academy programming for skaters (Skater Academy) as part of their BC Cup entry fee. In consultation with the local hosts, BCSSA will also offer workshops and/or certification for coaches (Coach Academy) and officials (Officials Academy). There can also be workshops for club administrators (Club Academy) and parents (Parent Academy). Workshops will be occurring simultaneously and there may be overlap. For example, a workshop on Nutrition could include skaters, coaches and parents as this may be a topic of interest and importance to all 3 of those groups.

With the addition of these 3 BC Cups along with the existing BC Short Track Championships and BC Long Track Championships, we are now providing 5 opportunities for skaters to race against the rest of the province instead of the original 2. Through the Sunday Academy program skaters, coaches, officials, clubs and parents will also come together to train, to learn and to share best practices.

Technical Committee

Currently there are a number of committees that serve vital roles within BCSSA. Some Committees such as the Awards Committee and the Competitions Committee are considered Operating Committees with very specific work to do at a specific time of the year. There are 4 other committees that are considered Standing Committees whose work spans the entire year. These include the Athlete Development, Coach Development, Officials Development and Sport Development Committees. Each committee meets independently to discuss and advise on issues important to their area of development. This is important work and requires this specific focus.

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Every committee is vital in and of itself, but we believe that we can also broaden the focus of each of the 4 Standing Committees through the creation of a Technical Committee which will have representation from each of the 4 Standing committees in addition to staff and board members. This structure provides the committees with the ability to collaborate with each other, staff and board towards our common goal of a stronger association.

Summary

Perhaps you've picked up on a theme while reading through these changes. It is about working together to grow and improve our sport. For 2019-2020 we are creating opportunities to do just that. The opportunity for skaters to train and compete together through the BC Cups and Academies. The opportunity for all facets of the speed skating community to learn together through the various Sunday Academies at BC Cup competitions. The opportunity for us to do a province wide fundraising event together to increase awareness, membership and the financial resources for every club. And lastly, the opportunity for the Technical Committee to have representatives of the four Standing Committees coming together to collectively discuss best ways to move BCSSA programming forward.

We are excited about the plans we have for the 2019-2020 season and hope that you are too. If you have any questions or concerns about how these changes may affect you directly, we encourage you to speak to the leadership at your respective clubs. Of course, we are always available to answer your questions directly. Please visit the Contact page on our website to find staff and board contact information.

Thanks!

BCSSA Board and Staff

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