

Skating Tests

Skating tests beyond Basic Skills badge tests

Your child began a skating class a couple years ago and since then has passed several Basic Skills tests and earned badges. You are so proud to see your child make progress, and you have even begun to supplement group lessons with private lessons so your child passes the test before class test day.

These tests are a great way for you and your child to see that basic skating skills are being mastered, but you do need to know that U.S. Figure Skating has an entire test structure that is beyond Basic Skills. This test structure will make it possible for your child to be eligible to compete in certain competitions. It is the one that “means something” on a skater’s resume.

The first tests your child will take

The first test all skaters entering “advanced” figure skating will take is called the pre-preliminary moves in the field test. This test is described in the U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook and includes stroking, edges, spirals and a move called a Waltz 8. If your child passes this test, he or she will now be eligible to take the pre-preliminary free skating test, which includes a waltz jump, Salchow, toe loop, half flip, half lutz and one-foot spin.

The pre-preliminary test and the tests beyond that are not administered in a casual manner. They are usually taken at official test sessions where the skater may be the only one on the ice surface and is judged by highly qualified judges appointed by U.S. Figure Skating.

How long does it take to prepare for a skating test?

The first tests your child takes may not take long to pass and prepare for; however, each child will master the required skills differently. Some skaters may take six months to prepare for a test, while it can take others a year or more.

As time passes and your child progresses through the test structure, the tests get more and more difficult. Be patient. Don’t expect him or her to pass every test on the first try.

Types of tests

Most likely your child will begin as a singles skater and do his skating practice and performing alone. The tests required for singles skating are moves in the field and freestyle tests.

Moves in the field tests must be passed before taking the corresponding freestyle or pairs test. For example, the preliminary moves test must be passed before being eligible to take the preliminary free skating test or the preliminary pairs test.

What are moves in the field tests?

Figure skating first got its name because of “school figures.” Skaters spent hours and hours on the ice each day skating perfect circles on the ice, tracing lines, circles and turns. Everyone has usually heard of the “figure 8.”

Today, figure skaters no longer do figures. Instead, to master positions and edges and turns necessary for figure skating, skaters do moves in the field. Many of the things done in moves in the field tests are similar to what figures were.

The quality expected to pass moves in the field tests is high. Take the time to watch skaters testing at test sessions so you can fully understand what it takes for your child to prepare for a moves in the field test.

How much practice time should be devoted to moves in the field tests?

Your child should be encouraged to take the time to practice the elements in the moves in the field test they are working on daily. You will find that your child will be much more interested in jumping and spinning, so one suggestion is that your child practice his or her moves in the field test for at least one-third of their total practice session.