



## *CANSKATE WELCOME LETTER 2022/2023 SEASON*

### *CANMORE SKATING CLUB*

#### **1. Welcome**

- a. Welcome everyone to the 2022/2023 skating season. We are excited to have you all skate with the Canmore Skating Club. Please read this welcome letter for important information on the Canskate Program and review it with your skater, especially if they are new to the program, so everyone knows what to expect on the Canskate Session.

#### **2. Introduction: The Canskate Team**

##### **a. Head Canskate Coach**

- i. Mark Tkacz – Mark is a Certified Regional and Canskate Coach and is a former Principal performer with Disney on Ice. He brings years of skating knowledge to the team and is focused on developing strong technical skating skills in figure skating, hockey, and other ice sports.

##### **b. Assistant Canskate Coach**

- i. Joyce Lau – Joyce is a trained Canskate Coach and a competitive STARSkater with the Canmore Skating Club. Joyce is in grade 12 at Banff Community High School. Joyce is a strong leader in the Canmore and Banff skating clubs and enjoys helping young skaters learn to skate.

##### **c. Canskate Coordinator and on-ice assistant**

- i. Robin Forsyth – Robin is a National Level Coach and a Technical Specialist in Singles and Pairs Skating. Robin is helping with the coordination of Canskate and with any adaptive skaters on the Canskate sessions. She is a former competitive figure skater and Principle performer with Disney on Ice. Robin loves to teach skaters of all levels and abilities and is passionate about inclusion in sport.

- d. **Program Assistants (PAs)** – PAs help us deliver our skating programs under the direction of the Head Canskate and Assistant Canskate coaches. They are accomplished skaters and range in age from 11 – adult. You may see different PA's throughout the sessions assisting your skaters. They have all received special training to be PA's.

- i. **Maya Gonzalez** – Maya is a competitive figure skater and member of the Skate AB/NWT/NUN Junior Development Team. She is looking forward to helping young skaters develop their skills.

- ii. **Hazel Schmaltz** – Hazel is a competitive STARSkater and is currently working her way through high level double jumps. She brings lots of fun and games to our Canskate Sessions.
- iii. **Madison Faupel** – Madison is a competitive STARSkater and is working on her double jumps. She is looking forward to helping our Canskaters experience the joy of skating.
- iv. **Maya Aura** – Maya is a STARSkater who has developed her skills quickly over the past couple of years. She always promotes kindness and patience while helping with Canskate.
- v. **Remi Hilty** – Remi is a former competitive STARSkater who has returned to Canmore after a year of helping with Canskate in Calgary. She is an accomplished skater and looks forward to sharing her knowledge with our younger skaters.
- vi. **Jeff Faupel** – Jeff is an adult skater who has experience in both hockey and figure skating. He is the perfect PA to help develop skills for any avenue of skating.
- vii. **Anya Tkacz** – Anya is small but mighty. She is a STARSkater who loves the creativity and expression of skating. She is our youngest PA.
- viii. **Carol Manson McLeod** – Carol is an adult skater who has brought her many talents and love of skating to our club over the past few years. She knows how to make our young skaters feel comfortable trying new skills.
- ix. **Norine Hori** – Norine is an adult skater who has been the life blood of the Canmore Skating club for many years. She brings a joy of skating and passion for our club to the ice and to our young skaters.
- x. **Rien Solodan** – Rien is a competitive STARSkater and an accomplished athlete in many sports including volleyball and golf. Rien is mastering her high-level double jumps and helps bring great technique to our younger skaters.
- xi. **Sage Jonker** – Sage is a competitive STARSkater who is working on her high-level double jumps. She is also an accomplished volleyball player and promotes great sportsmanship and strong skating when she teaches.

### 3. Program and Format

- a. The objective of Canskate is to teach the basics of skating for all ice sports.
- b. Canskate emphasizes good technique by using fun and interactive circuits to help develop skating skills
- c. Canskate is comprised of Six Stages, each stage contains three components: **Agility, Balance, Control** or the ABCs of skating. Once all three components of each stage are completed, the full badge will be given. You can move onto a higher component within a badge without completing the full badges as to not stall development if a skater is strong in a particular area. For example, a skater may complete Stage 2 Agility, before completing Stage 1 Control.



Keep in mind that progress is not always linear and that it takes time to develop skills and confidence. If the skater is able to practice at times other than our sessions progress will be quicker - time on ice develops the skills.

- d. Skaters are grouped according to skill level and sometimes age. Skaters may be moved within groups at times to even out numbers or to allow for skater development. These groupings are at the discretion of the Head Coach.
- e. Each session will begin with a warm-up all together. Skaters will then head to their groups for lesson time where they will learn the skills in Agility, Balance and Control. There will then be a fun group activity and/or game followed by a cool down to end each session.
- f. Important things to remember: If your child has never skated before, the first few times can be scary and falling down often is common and expected. Positive encouragement, patience and kindness will help your skater overcome their fears. If your child is a returning skater, it may take a few times to get back into the swing of things. The first few on-ice sessions can sometimes look and feel chaotic as we try to get skaters into the groups that will be the best fit. Please be patient and allow the coaches and PAs to do their jobs without distraction.
- g. If your skater is unable to go to the washroom on their own (especially with ski pants, parkas, mittens and a helmet on, please stay visible at the arena so you can help them to the washroom as needed. **Our coaches and PAs will be not be able to leave the ice surface to assist with washroom trips as per safe sport guidelines.** We will do our best to get them to you 'in time'.

#### 4. Proper Equipment and Clothing

- a. **Skates** – hockey, figure or speed skates are acceptable. Please ensure that your child's skates are tied properly and have ample ankle support. Please try to avoid plastic, buckle closure or adjustable blade leisure skates. Be sure that you've checked your skates to ensure they are sharpened. If you are unsure if your child's skates are sharp enough, ask one of the coaches (Mark, Joyce or Robin) to check the blades.
- b. **Helmets** – **YOU MUST HAVE A CSA APPROVED HELMET FOR ICE SKATING** – note: Ski helmets or bike helmets WILL NOT be permitted on the ice. Your helmet will need the CSA approval sticker that is no more than 5 years old. Skate Canada, our governing national skating organization, has this mandatory rule. Our licensing and insurance would be jeopardized if any skater was injured while wearing any other type of helmet. Skate Canada requires skaters to wear a helmet until they have mastered a complete Stage 5 level.
- c. **Clothing** – Please dress warmly and ski pants for brand new skaters that are water resistant is recommended. For more advanced Canskaters, pants such as track pants, sweat pants, leggings, etc. are great as they have good range of movement. Please ensure the pants are not loose at the bottom as blades can get caught up in the excess fabric. Sweaters, light parkas, sport zip ups are also good clothing choices for skating. Remember to wear gloves! Water resistant gloves are great, especially for new skaters. Please do not wear long scarves. They can get tangled up and be a safety hazard on the ice.



## 5. What to expect on the first class

- a. Arrival - please arrive 10-15 minutes early for your first class. Check in at the table and find your child's name tag and attach to their outer clothing so it is visible to the coaches. You are welcome to use one of the assigned dressing rooms or the spectator stands in the arena. We will be located in the Thelma Crowe arena.
- b. We will conduct a quick meeting with everyone right before we head onto the ice. Please do not go onto the ice until the coaches instruct you to do so.
- c. The first day will start with skaters in groups, and you will see a lot of movement within the groups. This is the coaches evaluating the skaters and trying to find the appropriate group for your skater while keeping the groups as even and manageable as possible. Please be patient.
- d. Near the end of the session PAs will collect the name tags so they are available for next week's session.
- e. When skaters begin to exit the ice, they will receive a treat such as a sticker or a colouring sheet for all their hard work. Please guide your child away from the exit to prevent a back up once they've exited the ice.



## 6. Behaviour Expectations

- a. We want all of our skaters to have a positive and inclusive experience. We will not tolerate any bullying behaviour by parents or skaters towards other skaters, parents or coaches. If bullying behaviour occurs, you or your skater will be asked to leave the arena.
- b. We understand that all kids have bad days, but safety is our first concern. If there is evidence of tantrum like behaviour from any of the skaters (kicking, hitting, screaming, etc.) an adult coach will remove that skater from the ice to their parent or guardian. We would not want anyone to be accidentally hurt by any unacceptable behaviour. If the parent or guardian is able to calm the skater, they will be allowed to return to the ice but will be removed again if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- c. Please leave the coaching to the coaches. If you have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out after a session or via email. **Please do not pull aside one of our PAs to discuss the skating program. Most of them are MINORS and any concern should be directed to the head coach (Mark) or coordinator (Robin)**

## 7. Next Steps

- a. If your skater is showing interest and abilities that may be more suited for our Pre-Star program, one of our coaches may speak with you about advancing into that program. Pre-Star focuses more on the skills of figure skating, while continuing to move through the Canskate Badges. It is recommended that the skaters have a certain skill level before joining this



more advanced program. If you are interested in this for your skater, please don't hesitate to speak with one of the coaches.

- b. If your skater would like more information about power skating or hockey programs, we are more than happy to direct you to the appropriate association.

#### **8. Contact**

- a. If you have any questions or concerns you can direct the to either:
  - i. Canmore Skating Club – [canmoreskatingclub@gmail.com](mailto:canmoreskatingclub@gmail.com)
  - ii. Robin Forsyth – [tkaczrobin@gmail.com](mailto:tkaczrobin@gmail.com)
  - iii. Mark Tkacz – [mark.tkacz@gmail.com](mailto:mark.tkacz@gmail.com)
- b. Please don't hesitate to reach out if to any of the above emails for any questions you may have.