

Vernon Figure Skating Club - Program Assistants

Revision date: October 1, 2013

THE ROLE OF THE PROGRAM ASSISTANT (PA):

Program assistants are an important component to any successful CanSkate program. The role of the program assistant (PA) will vary depending on the unique needs and dynamics of a club but all duties involve assisting the Skate Canada coach (the Coach) in the delivery of the program. The responsibilities of a PA may include:

- Assist the Coach in delivering the program on-ice and off-ice
- Demonstrate skills and teaching progressions
- Supervise practice sessions
- Lead warm-ups and cool-downs under the direction of the Coach
- Reinforce learned skills (follow-up on coach instruction)
- Lead circuits, drills, group activities
- Distribute awards (stickers, badges, etc.)
- Provide individual and group assistance as directed by the Coach
- Take attendance
- Be a role model for young skaters
- Arrive on time

PROGRAM ASSISTANTS- MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

Candidates must:

- Be of a sufficient age and skill level (as deemed necessary by the Coach) to be able to assist the Coach (it is anticipated that most of the PA's will be at least 10 years of age)
- Have a helping nature
- Have patience with children
- Be able to communicate ideas clearly
- Be reliable
- Have a sense of commitment to tasks
- Have qualities of a good role model
- Be able to lead activities in a creative and enthusiastic manner

POLICY STATEMENT:

The PA program is a development program for responsible, dedicated skaters. Selection is by invitation from the Coach. Skaters must possess the maturity and skills themselves to be able to assist the Coach. PA duties will be allocated by the Coach based upon the PA's strengths and PA's will either lead a CanSkate group by themselves or will be assisting the Coach. All PA participants will receive PA credits.

- The PA program must follow Skate Canada guidelines.

- The PA must participate in training sessions held at the discretion of the Coach.
- The PA may only participate in sessions that they have been scheduled to work as arranged by the Coach.
- For planned absences, the PA is responsible to coordinate shift changes with other PA's and notify the Coach accordingly.
- PA's will receive the following club credits for assisting as scheduled on CanSkate sessions: \$5.00/CanSkate session. Credits will be applied to each PA's personal account on Coast Registry.
- All personal club credits can only be applied to registration of sessions via Coast Registry. Credits must be consumed prior to September 1st of the following skating season (credits can be used for fall/winter/spring registration). **Any personal club credit not used up by September 1st will be forfeited by the skater back to the club.**
- Personal club credits cannot be reimbursed as cash to the skater.
- Club credits will be automatically deducted off the skater's registration total by Coast Registry.
- With the changes to online registration by VFSC, it is no longer possible to use personal club credits for club clothing or buy on sessions.

PURPOSE:

- To develop leadership skills in senior skaters
- To develop volunteerism and community service within the club membership
- To encourage skaters to contribute their time and effort back into the sport
- To enhance the delivery of the CanSkate program

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coach

- Select skaters for the PA program that will be responsible and reliable contributors to the CanSkate program and provide them with the *Program Assistant Policy* document.
- Provide regular and ongoing training and instruction of duties for all PA's.
- Monitor the performance of all PA's and provide feedback to the skaters as necessary.
- Provide a work rotation schedule for all PA's with contact information, incase they need to find a replacement for their scheduled shift.
- Submit the "PA sign in" sheet monthly to the club Treasurer.

Treasurer

- Tally and enter personal account credits for each skater seasonally as per the "PA sign in" sheet.
- Provide a summary of personal credit for each skater on a regular basis or as needed.
- Zero all personal account balances that are unclaimed after the fall/winter registration event for the following year.

Director

- Ensure that Coast Registry has accurately deducted the skater's personal credits from their account.
- Provide the Treasurer with PA credit account totals seasonally.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAM ASSISTANTS (for Club Coach- as per Skate Canada)

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- Be a role model for young skaters
- Arrive on time

PROGRAM ASSISTANT- MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

The club coaches are ultimately responsible for selecting and training the best PAs available to your club and for putting the best CanSkate program possible on the ice. Candidates must demonstrate:

- A helping nature
- Patience with children
- An ability to communicate ideas clearly
- Reliability
- A sense of commitment to tasks
- Qualities of a good role model
- Ability to lead activities in a creative and enthusiastic manner

Remember that accomplished skaters, even though they may know the skills, may not necessarily be the best leaders. On the other hand, an average skater may be a dynamic PA!

Other considerations:

PA's should ideally meet these qualifications:

- **Be 12 years of age**
- **Have passed the Preliminary Free Skating Test**

Remember that parents do not like to see their children guided by someone who is the same age or younger, and the CanSkaters often do not respond as well. In cases where it is absolutely necessary to use younger PA's, they should be partnered with another PA (i.e. two per group), and with those who have more experience wherever possible. Younger PA's should also have different duties with less responsibility, for example as a helper to demonstrate or run errands.

RECRUITING AND SELECTING PROGRAM ASSISTANTS:

PA's are vital to the success of any CanSkate program. Because of their important role, coaches and clubs must select the most capable individuals.

Determine the needs of your club:

Before you begin to recruit and select, you will need to figure out exactly what your club's needs are.

Step 1: How many PA's will you need?

- The number of PA's required depends on the number of skaters you expect to be taking part in the program.
- You should plan for at least one PA for every 10 CanSkaters. This ratio, however, should be improved wherever possible.

Step 2: When will you need the PA's? Which days/hours?

- This depends entirely on the CanSkate schedule that has been established. Consult the club schedule before you start to recruit PA's. Refer to schedules and registration patterns from the past as a guideline.

Step 3: Determine what you need them to do?

- This may depend on the size of your program, the number of Skate Canada coaches, the number of assistants available, as well as the amount of off-ice volunteer assistance that you have.

Step 4: Write a job description.

- Based on the Role of the Program Assistant above, you can write a job description for your PA's.

Step 5: Timing of recruitment and selection.

- **1) Announcement:** Announce a call for PA's at the club in the spring. Include information regarding the minimum requirements, application deadline and the dates of the PA training sessions. Provide a sample job description as well as the benefits of becoming a PA.

- **2) Recruit and select:** Actual recruitment and selection of your PA's should take place in the summer or early fall, well before the program is to begin. This will allow you time to get their training started before the season opens. You may have skaters either sign a list posted on the club bulletin board or contact the skaters directly or both.

FEEDBACK AND MOTIVATION:

Once PA's are in action, you will need to maintain their interest and commitment - in short, give them feedback and motivate them.

- Feedback and motivation are very closely linked.
- Positive or negative feedback and how it is delivered has a great effect on whether a person's performance improves or stays the same (or even worse - deteriorates!).
- The goal of any feedback is to motivate your PA's to become even better assistants for you and your club.

CANSKATE PROGRAM ASSISTANT RECOGNITION:

Each section has their own policy on how program assistants in their section should be recognized and/or remunerated. Please consult your section for details.

Other motivators and rewards:

Over and above the motivators/rewards that sections have established, these ideas may be useful:

- Recognize a PA of the month. Post his/her picture on the bulletin board or print it in the club newsletter accompanied by a brief outline of his/her hobbies and achievements.
- Recognize and present a trophy to the Program Assistant of the Year.
- Present the PA's with little surprises handed out unexpectedly during the season. Small skating related items that are for them only are well received (e.g. skater postcards, pens, posters, magnets, etc.)
- Assign special duties or tasks which have "status" as a means of recognition.
- Provide PA's with the opportunity to be featured in the carnival, ice show or demonstration day.
- Hold a Holiday and/or end of season pizza party