



CONNAUGHT SKATING CLUB

CanSkate Parent Handbook

A practical guide for before, during and after class

English Edition | Revision 1.0 | 8 September 2026

canskate.ca

00 | FIND IT FAST

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Tip for printed copies

Keep pages 3-7 and 16 easy to reach during the first two weeks. The final page contains current links and QR codes for registration, policies and program updates.

01 | START HERE

Welcome to CanSkate

Welcome to Connaught Skating Club. CanSkate is Skate Canada’s official learn-to-skate program for beginners. It develops the basic skills needed for figure skating, hockey, ringette, speed skating and confident recreational skating.

Connaught has served the community for more than 100 years. It is a not-for-profit club supported by dedicated volunteers and committed to a positive, inclusive environment where skaters can build confidence and work toward their goals.

The five things to remember

Bring your own skates and helmet. Arrive early. Keep a parent or designated adult in the arena. Dress warmly and wear gloves. Check email and the club website before each class for schedule updates.

Before the first class

☐	Complete registration through the Connaught Uplifter registration page and keep the confirmation email.
☐	Have skates professionally sharpened. New skates are not ready for the ice until sharpened.
☐	Bring a CSA-approved hockey helmet. A bike, ski or snowboard helmet is not accepted.
☐	Label the skater’s helmet, guards, gloves and water bottle.
☐	Plan to arrive about 20 minutes early for the first class and at least 15 minutes early afterward.
☐	Tell the coordinator before class about medical needs, allergies, disability-related accommodations or anything that may affect safe participation.

No equipment rentals

Connaught does not provide rental skates or helmets for CanSkate sessions.

An adult must stay

A parent or designated adult must remain in the arena and be available throughout the session.

02 | ARRIVAL AND FIRST DAY

A calm start makes a better class

- 1

Check in: look for the CanSkate table when you arrive and collect the skater’s name tag. Parent volunteers at the table can help with questions.
- 2

Get dressed: use the assigned dressing room or arena lobby. Put hard guards on skate blades before walking away from rubber flooring.
- 3

Wait safely: skaters wait at the designated ice entrance until a coach invites them onto the ice. Remove hard guards before stepping on.
- 4

Find the coach: the assigned coach’s name appears in the bottom-right corner of the name tag. If you do not recognize the coach, look for the coach’s photo on the bulletin board. The initial assignment may be adjusted during the first two weeks as assessments are completed.
- 5

After class: a coach or parent volunteer will collect the name tag at rinkside. Collect all belongings, dry the blades and leave with the designated adult.

For a nervous or crying skater

This is common. Stay visible, speak positively and give the coaching team time to help. A coach or PA may offer a short break, then encourage another try. Many children need more than one class to feel comfortable.

Bathroom breaks

The designated adult must be available to help. Encourage a bathroom visit before skates and equipment go on.

Food and hydration

Offer a light meal or snack and water before class. No food, gum or drink containers are allowed on the ice.

If you are late or absent

- Late entry can be difficult once groups are moving. Check in with staff and wait for direction before approaching the ice door.
- A missed class cannot be made up by attending a different registered session. Check the current club policy for cancellations and exceptions.
- Keep the skater home when ill or contagious. Notify the club if there is a health or safety concern the coaches should know about.

Please respect our coaches and parent volunteers

Coaches manage the instruction, safety and progress of many skaters. Parent volunteers donate their time to support check-in and session flow. Courtesy and following directions help create a safe, positive environment for every child.

Help us keep improving

We work hard to maintain a high-quality program and value your feedback. Share suggestions with a parent volunteer or email connaught.canskate@gmail.com.

03 | SKATES

Fit, lacing and sharpening

Choose supportive skates that fit now

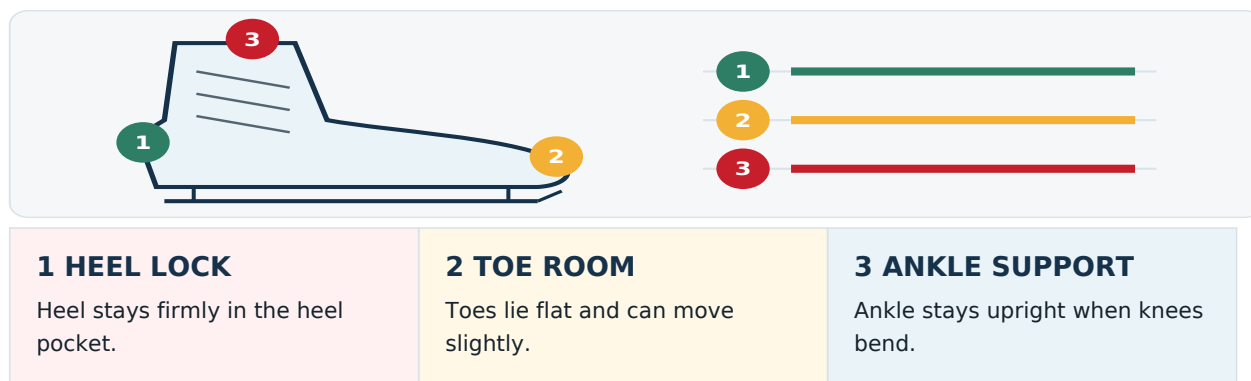
- Figure skates or hockey skates are suitable. Avoid toy skates, plastic blades and boots that fold or collapse at the ankle.
- Fit skates with the thin socks or tights the skater will use. Toes should lie flat and have a little room to move, while the heel stays firmly in place.
- When standing with knees bent, the foot must not slide and the ankle must remain upright. Do not buy oversized skates to “grow into.”
- For used skates, check that the boot still supports the ankle and that blades are not heavily rusted, bent, deeply nicked or sharpened beyond useful life.

How to lace

- 1 Loosen the laces enough to place the foot fully into the boot. Tap the heel back into the heel pocket.
- 2 Lace comfortably across the toes, snugly over the instep and firmly at the ankle. The foot should feel secure without pain or numbness.
- 3 Use every required eyelet and hook. Tie a short, secure bow and tuck the loops safely.
- 4 Never wrap extra lace around the ankle, blade or bottom of the boot. Replace laces that are too long or damaged.

Sharpening

New blades must be sharpened before use. After that, many beginners need their blades sharpened about every 20-30 hours, but timing varies with the blade, ice and skater. Sharpen sooner if an edge slips, the blade is nicked, or the skater walked without guards. Use a technician experienced with the type of skate. Never remove the bottom toe pick from a figure-skate blade.



04 | BUYING EQUIPMENT

What to buy and where

Recommended skate types

A supportive lace-up figure skate or hockey skate is suitable for CanSkate. The photos below are examples only: brand, colour and price do not determine whether a skate is appropriate.



Examples from the Skate Canada CanSkate Resource Guide (December 2024).

Recommended

A firm boot that supports the ankle, secure laces, a heel that stays down, enough room for toes to lie flat and a blade in good condition.

Avoid

Moulded plastic or buckle skates, double blades, boots that fold at the ankle, oversized skates, and blades that are deeply rusted, bent or badly nicked.

Where to buy or sharpen

- Figure skates: Cyclone Taylor Figure Skating offers figure-skate fitting and custom sharpening at 1005 West 49th Avenue, Vancouver.
- Hockey skates: Cyclone Taylor Source for Sports has locations at 6575 Oak Street, Vancouver, and 14140 Triangle Road, Richmond. Contact the retailer to confirm current inventory, fitting and sharpening services.
- Before travelling: confirm current hours, inventory and services directly with the retailer. These references are provided for convenience and are not club endorsements.

At the store

Bring the thin socks the skater will wear. Ask the fitter to check heel lock, toe room and ankle support. New blades must be sharpened before the first class.

05 | HELMETS

Accepted types and correct fit



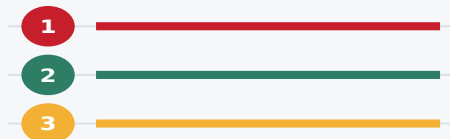
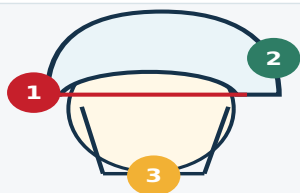
Use the certification mark, not appearance, to decide. Only a CSA-approved hockey helmet is accepted. Skateboard, ski, snowboard, bicycle and general multi-sport helmets are not accepted. Product photos are examples only.

Helmet rule

All CanSkate and Adult CanSkate participants up to and including Stage 5 must wear a CSA-approved hockey helmet. A skater who has completed Stage 5 must still wear one if they do not yet have good forward and backward control, stopping ability and obstacle navigation.

Helmet fit

- Look for the CSA certification mark. Bike, ski, snowboard, skateboard and multi-sport helmets are not accepted.
- The helmet should sit level and snug, without rocking. Fasten the chin strap every time.
- Do not use a cracked, damaged, altered or poorly fitting helmet. Follow the manufacturer's replacement guidance.
- A properly fitted face cage is recommended for young Pre-CanSkate beginners, but it does not replace the required helmet.
- Do not place a thick hat under the helmet. Use only a thin layer that does not change the fit.

**1 LEVEL**

Helmet sits level, not tipped back.

2 SNUG

Helmet does not shift or rock.

3 FASTENED

Chin strap is secured every time.

06 | CLOTHING

Warm, protected and free to move

What to wear

- Wear warm, flexible layers and water-resistant pants. Avoid clothing so bulky that it limits knee bend or movement.
- Gloves or mittens must be worn. Choose a fitted pair; waterproof options are helpful for beginners who spend more time touching the ice.
- Tie back long hair. Remove scarves, dangling jewellery, loose drawstrings and items that could catch or fall onto the ice.
- Low-profile knee or elbow protection may be used only if it fits securely and does not restrict movement. Ask the coordinator if unsure.

Good choice

Warm base layer, flexible jacket, water-resistant pants, fitted gloves and thin socks.

Avoid

Jeans, long scarves, loose cords, oversized snowsuits, thick socks and bulky headwear under the helmet.

For Pre-CanSkate beginners

Young beginners may spend more time sitting, kneeling and getting up from the ice. Warm hands and water-resistant pants make it much easier to stay comfortable and keep trying.

Quick clothing check

☐	Warm flexible layers
☐	Water-resistant pants
☐	Fitted gloves or mittens
☐	Thin socks or tights
☐	Long hair tied back
☐	No scarf, loose cords or dangling items

07 | THE PROGRAM

What your skater will experience

CanSkate Tots

Ages 2-5

A 30-minute introduction for young beginners, covering Pre-CanSkate through Stage 2. Early lessons focus on standing, falling safely, getting up, marching and beginning movement.

CanSkate

Ages 4-17

A 45-minute group program covering Stages 1-6. Skaters learn through music, circuits, stations, activities and repeated practice.

The ABCs of CanSkate

AGILITY

Turning, jumping and quick direction changes.

BALANCE

Forward skating, edges, gliding and body control.

CONTROL

Backward skating, stopping and speed control.

Typical CanSkate session

- 1** Warm-up and Fast Track: skaters begin moving as soon as they enter the ice and follow coach and PA cues.
- 2** Three lesson stations: groups rotate through circuits that develop balance, control and agility. One station may include the Challenge Zone.
- 3** Fast Track between rotations: short laps keep skaters moving and guide them to the next station.
- 4** Group activity and cool-down: the class finishes with a game, skill activity or moving stretch.

Why circuits?

Skate Canada's delivery standard calls for at least 90% movement. Circuits create more practice repetitions while allowing coaches to observe, correct and challenge each skater.

What parents can do

- Celebrate effort, courage and small improvements instead of comparing children.
- Let the coaches and PAs work with your skater. They will call you if your help is needed.
- Use encouraging language: "Falling is part of learning. You know how to get up and try again."
- Ask program or placement questions away from the active ice doors so staff can supervise safely.

08 | PEOPLE AND PROGRESS

How the program works

CanSkate Coordinator

Kirsty Richardson is the current CanSkate Coordinator. For program, placement, first-day or progression questions, contact connaught.canskate@gmail.com.

Director of Skating

Keegan Murphy is Connaught Skating Club's Director of Skating and oversees the direction of the club's skating programs. For day-to-day CanSkate questions about placement, first-day procedures or progression, Kirsty Richardson remains the primary contact.

Professional coaches

CanSkate is led by Skate Canada coaches with National Coaching Certification Program training who are registered and in good standing. They meet applicable Skate Canada screening and first-aid requirements, teach the skill standards, plan circuits and assess skaters throughout the season. Skate Canada's minimum delivery standard is one coach or PA for every 10 skaters.

Program Assistants (PAs)

PAs are trained and registered club skaters who support the coaching team. They help with demonstrations, warm-up and cool-down, group movement, nervous beginners, teaching aids and safe session flow. They assist coaches but do not replace professional instruction.

Grouping and assessment

- Groups are based mainly on skating ability, with age and group balance also considered.
- Each skater is assigned to a specific group and coach. The name tag helps the skater and volunteers identify the correct group.
- Initial skill and placement assessments are completed during the first two weeks. Group and coach assignments may change during this period.
- Skaters progress at different rates and may work on skills from more than one stage at the same time.
- Progress is tracked throughout the session. Ribbons and badges depend on the skater's completed evaluation, and progress reports are available online.
- If you have a placement question, speak with the CanSkate Coordinator off the ice, before or after the session, or contact the club by email.

Do not miss the final class and awards presentation

Why attend: the in-person presentation celebrates progress and motivates skaters. Please make every effort to attend.

Fall, Winter and Spring: ribbons and stage badges are presented based on the skater's evaluation.

Every term: skaters receive a goodie bag, including in summer.

Pickup: skaters are encouraged to attend and collect their awards in person. If necessary, a family member may collect them. Friends and other non-family members cannot collect on the skater's behalf.

Summer: because the term is shorter, there is not enough time for an accurate formal final evaluation.

Ribbons and badges are not issued, but goodie bags are still given.

09 | SKATE CARE

Protect the blades and boots

At the rink

- 1

Use hard guards: put them on whenever walking off the rubber flooring. Keep the inside clean and free of grit.
- 2

Dry everything: after class, remove the hard guards and dry blades, mounting plates and boot soles with an absorbent towel.
- 3

Use fabric soakers: once dry, place clean fabric covers on the blades for the trip home. They absorb remaining moisture and protect other items in the bag.
- 4

Air the skates: at home, remove the skates from the bag, open the tongues and let them dry completely at room temperature.

Never store blades in hard plastic guards

Hard guards trap moisture and can quickly cause rust. Do not leave skates in a car, garage or damp closed bag, where temperature changes and moisture damage blades and boots.

A well-packed skate bag

☐	Skates
☐	CSA-approved hockey helmet
☐	Hard blade guards
☐	Drying towel
☐	Fabric soakers
☐	Fitted gloves or mittens
☐	Hair ties
☐	Water bottle for before and after class
☐	A spare pair of thin socks
☐	Optional: small screwdriver for skates with screw-mounted blades

Tip: write the skater’s name on every item. Gloves and guards are the most frequently misplaced.

10 | SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES

Follow staff directions first

If a skater is injured

- 1 Stay off the ice and allow the coach to assess the skater. Entering in street shoes creates another hazard and is not permitted.
- 2 If it is safe to move the skater, staff will bring them to the designated first-aid area and call the parent or guardian.
- 3 For a serious or suspected head, neck or back injury, do not move the skater unless directed by emergency personnel.

Power failure, fire alarm or evacuation

- Skaters must stop and leave the ice as directed by coaches, arena staff or emergency personnel.
- Apply hard guards if they are immediately available. Otherwise, an authorized adult may carry a young child. Do not let blades contact bare concrete.
- Do not delay evacuation to remove skates or collect equipment. People come first; equipment can be replaced.
- Follow the arena's evacuation route and meet at the location directed by staff.

Weather, ice or schedule disruption

Check the email address connected to your registration and the club website before travelling. Schedules can change. The current Connaught policies explain when replacement classes, credits or refunds may or may not be available.

Parent responsibility

Remain in the arena, keep your phone available and know which entrance your child uses. The players' benches, penalty boxes and ice surface are for authorized staff and skaters only.

11 | COMMON QUESTIONS

Quick answers for parents

My child seems to be in the wrong group.	Speak with the CanSkate Coordinator away from the ice. Groups are based mainly on ability and may contain skaters of different ages or stages.
My child keeps asking to leave the ice.	Help staff identify the reason: cold hands, uncomfortable skates, fear, fatigue or a bathroom need. A short reset and a simple return goal often help.
Can I take photos or video?	Follow the club's current privacy and publicity policy. Photograph only your own child where possible, respect other families and never use flash near the ice.
Can parents go on the ice?	No. Parents and guardians are not authorized to enter the ice surface and may create a safety risk. Wait for staff to bring the skater to you.
Can we switch sessions or make up a missed class?	Not automatically. A missed class cannot be made up on another session. Session changes, cancellations and refunds are governed by the current registration form and club policies.
What if my child does not enjoy the first class?	A first class can feel unfamiliar and difficult. Encourage a few genuine attempts, then discuss persistent concerns with the coordinator. Any refund request follows the posted policy and deadlines.
When will my child earn a badge?	Assessment happens during regular classes. A skater earns ribbons for Agility, Balance and Control, then the stage badge after completing all three areas for that stage.
Do you rent skates or helmets?	No. Families must bring correctly fitted skates and a compliant helmet.

12 | ACHIEVEMENT AND NEXT STEPS

Progress reports and possible pathways

CanSkate has six stages. Each stage includes Agility, Balance and Control skills. A skater may work across stages at the same time, so progress is not always a straight line.

RIBBONS Earned as the required skills in each fundamental area are completed.	STAGE BADGES Awarded after Agility, Balance and Control are all completed for that stage.	PROGRESS REPORT Shows achieved skills and what the skater is still developing.
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CanSkate progress reports are online

All progress reports are electronic and can be viewed or printed from your family's Connaught Uplifter profile.

How to view or print an evaluation

- 1 Log in at Connaught Uplifter using the same account used for registration. If you forgot the password, request a reset or contact the club. Do not create a new account.
- 2 Click your name in the upper-right corner and choose "My Account."
- 3 Click "Participants" below the account holder's name, then select the skater's name.
- 4 Open the "Evaluations" tab. Select an individual published evaluation or choose "Evaluations Summarized by Program." Use the print icon on the evaluation page.
- 5 Open the "Achievements" tab. In Category View, choose CanSkate to see each level's status. List View shows completed Agility, Balance and Control achievements across programs.

Interested in figure skating?

Talk with the CanSkate Coordinator or a club coach. Entry to Connaught's figure-skating development programs is by invitation and assessment, and availability may change.

Junior Academy Ages 4-7 For young skaters who show enhanced ability and potential to pursue competitive figure skating. Auditions and assessments are held through the year.	STARSkate Development Ages 8-13 For skaters who show enthusiasm and potential to continue figure skating in a structured recreational pathway. Invitation through CanSkate is required.
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CanSkate is a foundation for every ice sport

Strong balance, stopping, turning, gliding and speed control help skaters move confidently into figure skating, hockey, ringette, speed skating or skating for life.

Program descriptions and admission requirements may change. Confirm current details on the Connaught website before making plans.

13 | OFFICIAL SKILLS REFERENCE

Agility, Balance and Control by stage

This official Skate Canada chart lists the detailed elements for Pre-CanSkate and CanSkate Stages 1-6. It also shows how many check marks are required for each fundamental-area ribbon. Use it as a reference when reading the electronic evaluation; the coach's published evaluation is the official record of progress.



PROGRESS REPORT

SKATER'S NAME _____

CLUB/SKATING SCHOOL _____

PRE-CANSKATE - OPTIONAL READINESS LEVEL

- ☐ Fall down & get up
☐ Balance on two feet

- ☐ Move forward
☐ Make snow

- ☐ Move backwards
☐ Two-foot twist

- ☐ 360° march
☐ Two-foot jump

Pre-Canskate ribbon awarded: _____

CANSKATE ELEMENTS

	BALANCE	CONTROL	AGILITY
STAGE 1	☐ Fall down & get up ☐ Forward skating ☐ Forward two-foot glide ☐ Forward two-foot sit glide 4/4 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Snow slide steps ☐ Backward skating ☐ Backward two-foot glide 3/3 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Stationary 180° turn ☐ Stationary two-foot jump ☐ Forward skating perimeter of ice surface 3/3 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____
STAGE 2	☐ Forward sculling ☐ Forward two-foot to one-foot glide ☐ Forward push/glide sequence ☐ Forward one-foot glide with speed 4/4 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward stop ☐ Backward two-foot sit glide ☐ Backward two-foot to one-foot glide ☐ Backward push/glide sequence 3/4 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward two-foot turn ☐ Backward two-foot turn ☐ Forward 180° glide turn ☐ Forward two-foot jump 4/4 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____
STAGE 3	☐ Forward stationary blade push ☐ Forward two-foot slalom ☐ Forward circle thrusts ☐ Walking crosscuts ☐ Forward two-foot to one-foot curve glide 5/5 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward stop with speed ☐ Backward sculling ☐ Backward two-foot to one-foot glide ☐ Backward push/glide sequence ☐ Backward one-foot glide with speed 5/5 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward two-foot quick turn ☐ Backward two-foot quick turn ☐ Forward 360° step turn ☐ Backward two-foot jump ☐ Fast forward perimeter skating 5/5 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____
STAGE 4	☐ Forward crosscuts ☐ Forward inside giant slalom ☐ Forward outside giant slalom ☐ Forward lunge ☐ Forward spiral ☐ Drop-down drill ☐ Forward "V" start 5/7 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Backward stop ☐ Backward circle thrusts or pumps ☐ Backward two-foot slalom ☐ Backward one-foot glide with curve ☐ Sustained forward one-foot glide ☐ Speed drill #1 5/6 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward one-foot turn ☐ Backward 360° step turn ☐ Forward to backward two-foot jump ☐ Backward to forward two-foot jump ☐ Two-foot spin ☐ Two-foot sit spin 5/6 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____
STAGE 5	☐ Forward crosscuts figure-8 ☐ Forward inside edges ☐ Forward push/glide sequence ☐ Inside spread eagle ☐ Forward one-foot slalom ☐ Running lateral crossovers ☐ Forward perimeter skating with jumps 5/7 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward two-foot side stop ☐ Backward stop with speed ☐ Backward crosscuts ☐ Backward inside giant slalom ☐ Backward push/glide sequence ☐ Backward spiral ☐ Speed drill #2 6/7 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward one-foot turn ☐ Forward 360° glide turn ☐ Forward to backward one-foot jump ☐ Forward power jump ☐ One-foot spin ☐ Alternating foot spin ☐ Forward tight glide turns 6/7 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____
STAGE 6	☐ Forward power crosscuts ☐ Forward outside edges ☐ Forward one-foot slalom ☐ Forward one-foot sit glide ☐ Forward spiral (curve or straight line) ☐ Forward crossover acceleration ☐ Forward perimeter skating with crosscuts ☐ Forward perimeter skating with stops 6/8 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward one-foot side stop ☐ Forward two-foot side stop with speed ☐ Backward outside giant slalom ☐ Backward crosscuts figure-8 ☐ Backward perimeter skating with crosscuts ☐ Backward one-foot slalom ☐ Backward one-foot spin ☐ Speed drill #3 6/8 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____	☐ Forward C step ☐ Backward C step ☐ Two-foot multi turns ☐ Rotating power jump ☐ Backward toe-assisted jump ☐ Backward 360 two-foot jump ☐ Forward one-foot spin with spiraling edge ☐ Forward two-foot reverse pivot turn 6/8 check marks required. Ribbon awarded: _____

For more information on Skate Canada programs, please visit: www.skatecanada.ca/learn-to-skate/all-skating-programs

Source: Skate Canada CanSkate Progress Report, 2024 edition.

14 | RIBBONS AND BADGES

How the CanSkate awards fit together

Each stage has three ribbons: Balance (green), Control (red) and Agility (blue). When all three ribbons for the same stage are complete, the skater earns that stage badge.



CanSkate PatinagePlus

Awards / Prix



Official CanSkate awards visual supplied by Skate Canada. Colours and artwork may appear differently in print.

15 | CONTACTS AND LIVE INFORMATION

Keep this page handy

CanSkate Coordinator and program inquiries	Kirsty Richardson connaught.canskate@gmail.com
Director of Skating	Keegan Murphy
Registration questions	connaughtsc.registrar@gmail.com
Parent handbook website	canskate.ca
Online registration	connaughtsc.uplifterinc.com/registration
Club policies	connaughtsc.com/policies



Register online
Use Connaught’s Uplifter page



Parent handbook website
Read online and download the latest PDFs

Sources checked for this revision

- Connaught CanSkate program page
- Connaught policies and procedures
- Skate Canada CanSkate overview
- Skate Canada Helmet Use Policy
- Skate Canada CanSkate Progress Report, 2024 edition, and CanSkate Resource Guide, December 2024
- Skate Canada Program Requirements and Delivery Standards, November 2025

Important

This handbook is a practical guide. Current registration terms, posted club policies, arena rules and instructions from authorized staff take precedence. Information verified 8 September 2026. Handbook revision 1.0.