



# **SPEED SKATING CANADA**

## Announcer's Handbook

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Of course, this 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the SSC Announcer's Handbook will eventually be updated. It is hoped that future updates of the Handbook will result from the contributions of the many quality speed skating announcers across Canada which may benefit from the contents presented here.

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Robert Laurie  
Fredericton, NB  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Excitement, energy and passion describe what skaters and spectators feel on race day. However, when spectators enter a venue they often get a sense of the excitement, energy and passion even before seeing the ice. More often than not the announcer is responsible for this. A good announcer can create an exciting atmosphere for skaters and fans alike. Although some of the announcer's skills may be very different than those of other officials, becoming a good announcer is no different than becoming a good referee or starter; all need an interest in and commitment to their job.

Many speed skating clubs across Canada have members who may be very good at announcing or who may be interested in becoming a good announcer. However, all too often an individual is asked to announce at the last minute and because of a lack of preparation and training the experience is unpleasant for the announcer, the audience and the skaters. To help avoid such unpleasant experiences it is important to be well-prepared for the job. While learning on the job is inevitable, properly prepared and conscientious announcers will gain the most from their experience and rise above the crowd. More importantly, skaters and fans alike will enjoy their day at the rink.

This handbook has been developed to support the development of high caliber announcers. Speed Skate Canada strives to have all competitions announced in a professional, exciting and efficient manner. It is hoped that this handbook will help all announcers improve and gain confidence in their skills.

This handbook is organized in four sections. The first section will discuss some basic characteristics required of all announcers; the second section will describe the announcer's job prior to a competition; the third section will focus on the announcer's job during a competition while the fourth section will describe the announcers role immediately following a competition.

## **BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

Being a sports announcer means being a specialist. It also means being in charge. Every time your voice is heard people consider you familiar, a confidant, almost a close friend. You must be the person you present yourself to be, in other words a person of prestige, with a feeling for your role, which does not allow you the faults of poor speech.

Many skills are required of good announcers. These include voice, diction, personality, composure and adaptability. An announcer's voice should be well suited to the technology being used, warm, round, fairly deep, and devoid of any regional accent. In addition, announcers must possess basic knowledge of subjects such as phonetics. Good vision and a certain flair and personality; lightning fast reflexes, to understand strange situations or texts instantly, and the knowledge and skills to properly interpret them are also attributes of a good announcer.

Announcers are automatically assumed to have good grammar, some literary background, and a feeling for method. Adequate preparation involves familiarity with, if not mastery of, several other techniques, such as proper breathing, steadying of the voice, overcoming stage fright and working with a microphone. Good psycho-physiological training can help develop clear, impeccable diction; simplicity, naturalness and ease; and a playful and friendly tone, but with moderation.

The art of speaking, even if one has the gift of the gab and a concern for correctness, requires frequent introspection, often over new habits. If the announcer wants to elevate one's art, he or she must make it a point of honor to accept all of the effort, courage and labor connected with intellectual disciplines. Being a good speaker is both an art and a science.

A given announcer may be said to have natural talent, a warm voice; but if he or she lacks the art of speaking, the individual will tire and drive his listeners away instead of holding their attention. Too many announcers settle for the expedient. The voice is a magnificent instrument that can only be mastered through hard labour and persistent exercise of the vocal organs. Just as a pianist achieves virtuosity through practice a good announcer achieves excellence through practice and experience. Nothing should sway him or her from phonetic exercises. One should remember that only through work and determination can the desired results be achieved. Announcers should hone their skills and never be afraid to consult reference works on diction including the dictionary. You may have natural talents and a pleasing voice, but you will never become a consummate or great announcer if you have no concern for correctness. Only one pronunciation or articulation will be understood: the right one. An announcer must never forget he or she is in the fore, in a position of honour. The mission is quite clear.

We all know what is meant by the common man style, the vulgar style, the "old man" style, the professorial and the simple, honest style; the latter is the important one. Speaking properly and clearly does not mean slipping into affectation, preciousness or ridicule, but simply making oneself understood. Pleasing listeners is the great announcer's secret.

We must know how to measure out our information to avoid the pitfalls of facility and familiarity. In so doing, we show more respect for our audience which counts on our knowledge to assess a performance as good, average or poor. More importantly, we will earn the respect of the athletes who strive to surpass themselves through a fair, objective and unexaggerated assessment of their efforts.

Finally, the speed skating announcer must be seen as an ambassador for the sport. The word ambassador designates any person entrusted with a message. Therefore, you are destined to communicate the message about speed skating, to increase understanding of the sport and make it loved, to better promote its image. By that very fact, the announcer is the official spokesperson for the sport. This involves a multitude of responsibilities.

## **BEFORE THE COMPETITION**

As an official Speed Skate Canada announcer you have an obligation to properly prepare before a competition. You should know the organization, the host club, the rules, the athletes and if at all possible the competition venue. You are the spokesperson for a discipline that must become better known to the public in order to generate more interest in the sport. You therefore must do your own research and obtain as much background information as possible. You can never have too much information. Ask the Organizing Committee if you have been assigned a statistician which can feed you interesting and timely information. This person should be knowledgeable about the sport, the skaters and their times. As it may be difficult to look up stats during a race, the statistician feeds you vital information which you can read or interpret. A good statistician is invaluable.

It is useful to have a method for preparing your work. You should invest a lot of energy in setting up a fairly simple mechanism that will become a valuable tool down the road. You must develop a method for using the background information that you have researched prior to the meet. To simplify matters, assemble all of your findings in a ring binder. By using loose sheets, it will be easy to classify various types of information which you can then consult very quickly if necessary. For example, your file could contain notes on the Organizing Committee, its officers and the special aspects of the competition. It could outline the host region and its main characteristics. It should also include broad sketches of speed skating, its history, its growth, and its outlook especially in terms of the Olympics, World Cups and World Championships. Documentation relating to the competitor's records should form an important part of this memory aid. Your imagination will help you discover many other possibilities. This project will serve you time and again and make your work that much easier.

It is important to find out what the Organizing Committee expects from you. Is it simply a description of the races, controlling the music and sound system, being Master of Ceremonies for the Opening Ceremonies, announcing medal winners, etc?

In many venues the announcer is also responsible for the music that is played between races and during the flood and lunch breaks. You must therefore find out whether or not you will be expected to do this when you are asked to announce at an upcoming meet. Should you be responsible for the music you must preview all the music. I highly recommend you create your own play list and bring the appropriate technology (CD's, mp3 players, iPods, etc.) to the venue when applicable. Make sure all the technologies are compatible with each other.

Always try to gain control of the sound system. This will avoid the chaos that often results when too many people are at the controls. You will thus be able to ensure that volume is always adjusted to the level best suited to your voice. This will not always be possible, of course, so before starting work, visit the person running the sound booth to conduct system checks. You can make the necessary arrangement so he or she can follow your lead and, of course, test the microphone to provide you with the best support possible.

Ask the Organizing Committee if you will be working with an assistant announcer. Often times you will be asked to train an announcer who has little or no experience announcing the level of the meet that you will be working. It is therefore expected that you train the announcer during the meet. Having an assistant can be very helpful if you need a break ((bathroom, lunch, discussion with officials, etc...)) during the meet.



Be prepared for the type and level of competition you will be announcing. Know the calibre of skaters and be informed on whom the top skaters are. Know how important the meet is to the competitors (qualifying meet for national or international competitions, championships, etc. Try to imagine your reactions in given situations. Devise fictional situations and record your performance on tape. By listening to your voice you may discover errors and then make necessary corrections before performing in public. Try announcing races when they are televised. Although this may present significant challenges because of the technology and the camera angles, the speed and cadence of the race represent ideal practice situations for beginning announcers or those who have yet to announce races at world-class speeds.

In addition to preparing background information and practicing your announcing, a beginning announcer can do a simple yet very effective exercise to improve pronunciation and facilitate articulation. Simply read aloud with a pencil between your teeth, pushing it to the corners of your mouth. Work in this way for five minutes, and then repeat the exercise without the pencil. If you don't like that one, there is another method; place a small handful of raw peas or beans under your tongue, read aloud for five minutes then repeat without the peas or beans. You will be surprised at the effectiveness of these exercises when you repeat them regularly.

Use the new-found clarity in your speech to practice the proper pronunciations for skaters' names. Nothing is more insulting to skaters and their family to have their name mispronounced in public. Make a list of the names for whose pronunciation you are not sure and find someone to ask before the first race. It is generally a good idea to ask the skater or his or her coach. Not only will you get the proper pronunciation but you will gain their respect because of the professionalism that you will have shown. Correct pronunciation of names is important and the responsibility of the announcer. If an error does slip in, do not attempt to blame others for your mistakes. You need perceptiveness because that is the very basis of perfection and success in announcing.

## **DURING THE COMPETITION**

### **Role and obligations**

The announcer's most important duty is to establish a dialogue with the public. Contact will prove easier if the approach is flexible, without artifice, and straight forward. The public does not like to be tricked and rarely pardons someone who generates false hopes. Honesty and openness are thus two essential qualities for capturing the public. To describe a very controlled competition such as speed skating requires a certain intellectual quickness in order to seize all subtleties of the competition and properly appreciate the participants' records. To speak with authority and from knowledge without coming across as being arrogant is the goal of speed skating announcers.

Announcers are not only good at what they do because of individual skills but also because they are good team players. Announcers must collaborate with the other officials to ensure smooth operations during the competition. They must have the interpersonal qualities required of team players such as open and frank communication, patience, cooperation and adaptability. Announcers must realize that the chief referee is in control at all times and thus must assist the chief referee as requested. Establish a good working relationship with the chief referee prior to the meet when possible. Official's meetings the evening before the start of a competition can serve this purpose well. Always make sure you know what the chief referee expects from you.

During competitions announcers must be prepared and arrive early to ensure proper sound checks and contact with referees, starters and other officials. It is important to establish proper procedures and timing for announcing upcoming races, skaters, and disqualifications. Discussions with starters are important to make sure that the announcer does not interfere with or delay racing because of announcements being made while the starter and the skaters are ready to start the race.

Ask the Organizing Committee to introduce you to the runners that will be working during the meet. These volunteers, usually young skaters, are invaluable when you need information or papers quickly. Make sure you identify and get to know them. Having a good rapport with the runners is conducive to a smooth operation.

As an announcer you should always be aware of all important proceedings and stay calm when faced with unexpected situations. You must also calm the crowd in case of emergencies. The crowd develops trust in the announcer and as such expects a clear and honest message at all times. Relaying facts rather than opinions and rumors is crucial.

Announcers must be respectful of others. This includes not only referees and other officials who should never be criticized by the announcer but also skaters, their parents and indeed all involved in the sport regardless of their roles. Good sportsmanship is required of you as much if not more than athletes and coaches. Public criticism or ridicule of an athlete or coach is never warranted. Similarly, although you are expected to add to the excitement of the competition care must be taken not to engage in cheerleading. Show your enthusiasm but remain neutral at all times.

### **Stage fright**

Many anecdotes have been told about stage fright, most aimed at showing that almost all public speakers have suffered from it. Never having suffered from stage fright is no mark of superiority; but conquering it certainly is. It is proof of will power and an act of

self-criticism and self-knowledge. Stage fright manifests itself in various ways. Beginner's stage fright strikes suddenly and can completely annihilate the thought mechanism, empty the mind like a vacuum and even influence other natural functions. There is another, more insidious stage fright, that of habit, which generates throbbing paralysis, an obscure but painful fear of the public, a hope that time will stand still so the fatal moment when you have to speak never arrives. Many famous speakers have confessed to this type of stage fright to varying degrees. It particularly strikes speakers who dread having to speak. While this type of temperament exists it does not rule talent.

Announcers who suffer from vague but permanent stage fright must accept this condition. It is important to remember that stage fright is not a serious and crippling disease; is not limited to beginners; has no relation to possible or future talent; can be overcome and, even if it is not overcome, can coexist with a brilliant career.

Stage fright, a temporary and accidental phenomenon, should not be confused with shyness which, if deeply ingrained, means you would be wise to volunteer for a different task. Some shyness may prove an advantage or only a partial handicap; but total shyness, the obsessive total inability to speak, will obviously deprive you of your most essential skill: speech.

## **Race descriptions**

When you describe races, present athletes or officials, announce a promotional or other message, or communicate results you should always remember that you have earned the confidence of a group of people to fulfill this mandate. Therefore, each time you have something to communicate you do it on their behalf and must avoid substituting your own interests for this role. Keep in mind that no one is more important than the message to be transmitted. It is not the quantity of words that impresses but their quality and suitability. Be clear, be concise, and be correct.

The description of races is probably the most demanding task for an announcer and the one which poses the greatest challenge. Describing competitions in which the action occurs so quickly such as during short track events requires very special oral gymnastics and a well-honed creative skill. Let's not forget that this function requires extreme concentration because, among other things, there is no room for error; your credibility is on the line. Even worse, an error may impact on the overall organization of the meet. For example, an error which affects the interim classification during a race or one which presents the competitors in the wrong order could be particularly serious since athletes might be psychologically thrown off and perform poorly as a result.

Short track events in particular feature laps which are run fairly quickly so there is almost no opportunity to correct yourself. There is barely enough time to state the essential: type of event, names of competitors, and a description of the actual race, plus bits of information to increase spectator interest. The race is almost over and there is still a lot you haven't had time to say!

Make sure you describe all passes after they have been completed, not when the strategy is developing. Premature announcements unfairly inform the lead skaters and can change the race outcome. This is also true concerning possible skater disqualifications, false starts or any other decision rendered by an official. Obviously, you should never criticize an official's call.

Since things happen quickly, you must decide in advance what information you want to include in your actual description. Depending on the situation, you might wish to talk

about a local athlete, point out another's remarkable progress, explain that a third is considered to have great potential, and so forth. All of these little details add spice to the race and bring spectators to the edges of their seats.

As you can see, preparing before a competition is extremely important. It is just as important to know how to time these points of interest, spreading them throughout the competition. You don't want to use all your material in the first few races because you'll have to repeat yourself later. Once you have properly memorized certain facts they will enter your description almost automatically.

## **Pacing yourself**

Be careful to protect your voice even if it is natural to get excited when the action heats up. Your voice is a very fragile instrument which may desert you without warning just when you need it most. Never warm up your voice by loudly clearing your throat. That only makes matters worse and irritates the vocal cords. Instead, take a deep breath and swallow your saliva to lubricate your throat. A slight drop in temperature, a little fatigue, a few drinks and lack of sleep are insidious enemies. Avoid soft drinks, alcohol and caffeine when working because they thicken the saliva and make articulation harder. These facts cannot be ignored, especially since you must have a sound mind, clear thoughts and plenty of energy to last through a full day of speed skating competition.

Some announcers charge into the first competitions full steam and then run down as the day wears on. It is better to start with a moderate tone and adopt a pace you can maintain to the end of competition. You should always give your best effort but it is also wise to hold something in reserve because this work demands a great deal of energy.

Although races are usually run fairly close together you must not abandon the audience between heats. If you want to retain your audience to the end of the day, there should be no dead time. This doesn't mean you should babble on incessantly even if it presents a golden opportunity to pass on messages from the Organizing Committee. Playing music between races, during flood breaks and during lunch breaks not only allows you to catch your breath but it also gives you a chance to review your notes, check results, even plan a few short interviews with athletes or officials. The public likes to hear comments and impressions from the participants.

## **Announcing disqualifications**

Disqualifications are common in speed skating, especially short track. It is your job to keep the spectators fully informed of all disqualifications. It is important however to NEVER announce a disqualification until it is requested by the referee. Specifically, you should never call a disqualification during the actual race regardless of how obvious the call might seem to be. When describing the action during which there might be a disqualification you must stay objective and describe the skater's position rather than what might have caused the disqualification. For example, suppose skater X is chasing skater Y and impedes skater Y as they enter a corner. Suppose also that skater X managed to pass skater Y and exits the corner ahead of skater Y. What should be announced is that skater X has passed skater Y not that skater X has impeded skater Y. The pass is your call while the impeding is the referee's call. Stick to your role!

Once the referee has informed you of a disqualification it is your job to inform the audience. This should be done as soon as possible so that athletes and spectators can be informed of the outcome of contentious situations they might have seen. The disqualification should be announced before the next race when there is time or shortly

after the next race has begun. When announcing a disqualification, make sure you name the race number, the skater with his or her number, his or her team, the reason for the disqualification and where and on which skater the infraction occurred if the referee informs you of this. Announce also the name of any skater who might have been advanced because of the actions of a disqualified skater. Never announce a disqualification before the referee has informed the coaches.

### **Technical tips**

In closing, here are a few technical tips on how to work with a microphone. Since you will have to work in various venues, you may have to use different types of microphones connected to sound systems of varying power and quality. Never try to improve them by changing the pitch of your voice; you will only make the situation worse by ruining your vocal cords.

Remember that while there are several types of microphones, there is only one way to work with them all. A directional microphone must be placed directly in front of your mouth about 10 cm from the lips to avoid explosions or 'pops' on strong syllables. An omnidirectional microphone may be placed at an angle from the mouth, but the same distance from the lips, for the same reasons, especially since it is even more sensitive. In both cases, run tests to get the best performance possible.

## **AFTER THE COMPETITION**

After the last race of the competition you should thank all volunteers, parents, coaches, rink attendants, and officials for their contributions to the meet. Congratulate the winners and thank all athletes for their participation and sportsmanship. The name of the major sponsors should be announced while waiting for the medal ceremonies. Organizing Committees may wish to have you announce the medal ceremonies. Make sure that you have discussed this with the Organizing Committee so that the necessary prior arrangements can be made.

After the medal ceremonies, announce the location of the next meet (if appropriate) and wish everyone a safe trip home.

## **CONCLUSION: THE ROAD TO SUCCESS**

We have seen that the speed skating announcer must perform various functions with many responsibilities. Regardless of your experience you must make every effort to carry out these duties as effectively as possible. The attitude and behaviour this implies defines a very strict line of conduct that requires personality, method, perceptiveness and perfectionism.

And how do you go about fulfilling such a demanding role? Above all it is a question of attitude. Remember that you act as a liaison, not to showcase your personal talents. Of course, the two are not mutually exclusive, but you must be careful not to project yourself to the detriment of the cause you wish to serve. Be content to be yourself, to be natural, and speak simply with warmth and enthusiasm. Your message will be much better received and you will certainly not lose in the bargain.

Remind yourself that personality does not mean imitating others, and certainly not trying to be someone you are not. Nor is affirmation of one's personality limited to speech, although this is a good indicator. An individual's general behaviour, either in normal circumstances or at special activities, is probably more indicative of his/her true colours. It is also wise to pay attention to your outward appearance, in terms of attitude, grooming, dress, etc. For international competitions, team colours, logos or any other mark which would cast doubt on your neutrality as an official must not be worn.

Finally, make sure that you enjoy announcing and that you meet many interesting people in the process. As in most jobs, success breeds success and the thirst for more. Have fun.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Promotional aspect of a speed skating competition

The role of the announcer, who often serves as master of ceremonies for many speed skating competitions, includes:

- A** – Promoting annual series of competitions
- B** – Thanking the sponsors, whose contributions are directly linked to the holding of the competition.
- C** – Explaining the local, regional, provincial, national and international structure managing speed skating competition.
- D** – Explaining the administrative structure as well as the role of the officials present for the competition.
- E** – Explaining the different styles of speed skating.
- F** – Acquainting the public and the other skaters with other skaters by interviewing them during ice resurfacing periods.

#### **A – Suggestions for promoting a series of competitions:**

1. About every 2 hours, the results of the preceding competitions in the same class.
2. About every 90 minutes, the dates of the next competitions in the province and/or region.
3. About every 3 hours, the dates of larger competitions to be held during the year. A message with respect to local athletes who are now competing internationally.

#### **B – Sponsor Recognition**

Thanking the sponsors, whose contributions are directly linked to the holding of the competition.

1. If the competition is linked to a sponsor, you must announce every hour that spectators are at the \_\_\_\_\_, to inform spectators and promote the sponsor.
2. If organization of the competition required other sponsors, this must be announced every two or three hours, depending on their participation.

#### **C – Explaining the local, regional, provincial, national and international structure managing speed skating.**

1. Local structure: When appropriate give history and name the members of the Board of Directors. Also give the history of all competitions held by this club in recent years and the highlights of each.
2. Provincial structure: When appropriate give history and name the members of the Board of Directors. Also point out any official representative attending the competition.
3. National structure: When appropriate give history and name the members of the Board of Directors. Point out any official representative attending the competition.



4. International structure: when appropriate give history and name the members of the Board of Directors. Point out any official representative attending.
5. In closing, mention associated organizations such as regional recreation councils etc.

## Appendix B: Speed skating competition announcing checklist

### Short Track and Long Track Mass Start

- I. **Information Required:**
  - a. Competition Information – name/signification of event
  - b. List of Competitors
    - Background
    - Scratches
    - Lists of heats, semis, finals, breaks, program changes, time line
    - Qualifying criteria for each distance raced
  - c. Sport Information
    - Records
    - Rules
    - Role of officials
    - Venue information
    - Previous results
- II. **Information to be Delivered**
  - a. Race Information (distance, names, qualifications)
  - b. Race Commentary
    - Introductions
    - Play by play
    - Cautions
  - c. Race Results
    - Times, standing
  - d. Schedule Information
    - Breaks
    - Changes
  - e. Sport Information
    - Rules
    - Roles of officials
    - Venue information
    - Sponsors

### Olympic Style

- I. **Information Required:**
  - a. Competition Information
    - Name/signification of event
    - List of Competitors and pairs
    - Background of competitors
    - Scratches
  - b. Names of Officials
  - c. Sport Information

- Records
  - Splits
- Rules
- Roles of officials
- Venue information
- Previous results

**II. Information to be Delivered**

- a. Race Information (distance, pair number)
- b. Race Commentary
  - Introductions (names, lanes)
  - Splits
  - Cautions
- c. Race Results
  - Times, standings
- d. Schedule Information
  - Breaks
  - Changes
- e. Sport Information
  - Rules
  - Roles of officials
  - Venue information
- f. Sponsors
- g. Miscellaneous
- h. Relationship between Officials
  - Referee, starter, clerk of the course, meet co-ordinator etc.

**Before the Competition**

- A.** Meet with the competition co-ordinator to review:
  - i. Location of recording office, official's room, skater's dressing room, first aid station, concessions, souvenir stands.
  - ii. Equipment available for your use, possibly a stopwatch to give our splits, binoculars.
  - iii. List of officials
  - iv. List of sponsors
  - v. List of guests
  - vi. Race programs
  - vii. Information to coaches
  - viii. Information to athletes
  - ix. Special events which may take place
- B.** Meet with the Chief Referee and the Chief Starter to discuss:
  - i. Race schedule and proposed timeliness
  - ii. When to announce and when to keep quiet
  - iii. Time of meals/flood breaks
  - iv. Access or ease of communication during competition: it is important to be able to communicate with chief officials, a walkie-talkie may be necessary. Other could be hooked in: clerk of

- the course, starter, recording office. However the fewer people on the frequency the better.
- v. Notification of disqualification
  - vi. Draw times and place
- C.** Meet with the arena director to discuss:
- i. Announcer's stand
  - ii. Operation of microphone – preferably one with an on/off switch
  - iii. Equipment: tables, sheets...
  - iv. Music controls
  - v. Line of sight (start line, finish line)
  - vi. Doing a sound check prior to the beginning of the competition
- D.** Meet with the coaches, if possible to:
- i. Go over pronunciation of skater's names
  - ii. Gather information on individual skaters if no media kit has been made available
- E.** Meet with the chief recorder to discuss paper flow to the announcers to ensure everything operates smoothly:
- Note: Items A, B, C, D and E may be done on the eve of the competition or early of Day 1 of competition.
- F.** Prepare to make an announcement to everyone 10 minutes and 5 minutes before the beginning of races (flexible according to weather conditions):
- i. 10 min – call officials to their work stations
  - ii. 5 min – call skaters to the marshalling area
  - iii. 1 min – ask first event or pair to report to the starter. Ask second pair or event to be ready.

## **Beginning of the Competitions**

1. A word of welcome
2. A description of the nature of the competition
3. Introduction of major officials
4. Principal sponsors named
5. Introduction of guests

## **During the Competition**

- A.** Beginning of the Race:
- i. Announce the distance, category, sex, qualifications (2, 2+1, 2+2, and record.
  - ii. Introduction of skaters, numbers, clubs

NOTE: It is important to work with the start official to prevent any delays in the start of the race. When the competitors are called to the start line, the announcer must be silent. When the starters arm is raised the gun will sound shortly. If all competitors have not been introduced this procedure should be completed after the race has started. Do not speak during the start procedures.

- B.** During the Race:
1. Animated description may include:
    - a. skaters' names (memorize as many as possible)

- b. position of skaters
- c. strategy being used
- d. passing
  - on the inside
  - on the outside
  - charging at block

Refrain from describing a passing manoeuvre until it has been completed. If you mention that a skater from the back of the pack is starting to make a move, it gives away the strategy and takes away that skaters' surprise move to get the lead.

- e. if available, use an assistant to follow progress or race with respect to Canadian, personal and track records.

2. Explanation of principal race rules:

- a. procedure for a good and a false start
- b. explanation of a fall at the start of the race
- c. disqualifications: interference, skating inside of the bocks
- d. total number of laps, number of laps remaining
- e. use of the bell indicating one lap to complete the race

3. General Concepts

- a. Protection of skaters: helmets, gloves, knee, pads, mats...
- b. Ice conditions: temperature, water in corners
- c. Accomplishments of best skaters during the races
- d. Explain the work of minor officials on and off the ice: lap counter, block workers, timekeepers, place judges
- e. Possible interviews with coaches, athletes

**C. End of the Race**

1. Announce the "unofficial" positions and times (first 3). It is important to mention that these are unofficial results.
2. If possible, identify skaters eligible for the next level (semi-final, final).
3. If there is time, mention again the names of the major sponsors.
4. At the end of first day's of competition: announce the time o the beginning of the next day's races, hospitality room, coaches meeting, official draw if applicable.

**Relay Races**

1. Introduction of teams (colour, numbers)
2. Principal Rules:
  - a. Explanation of an exchange or pass by push-off
  - b. Significance of:
    - i. Gunshot – 3 laps remaining
    - ii. Bell – 1 lap remaining
  - c. The same skater does the last 2 circuits
3. Animated description which requires a great deal of attention. Follow the leading team.

**End of Competition**

- A. Give Thanks on behalf of the organizing committee:
- Officials
  - Volunteers

- Sponsors
  - Arena employees
- B. Congratulations to:
- Winning athletes
  - Participating athletes
- C. Presentation of Medals – meet with the co-ordinator prior to the end of the competition to confirm procedure to be followed:
- List of guests presenting the medals
  - Protocol to be followed

## Appendix C: Important information for the general public

The following information to be shared with the spectators during the competition may be useful:

### Short Track rules can be summarized as follows:

- Skaters may not shorten the regulation track in any way
- No skater may impede another skater
- No skater may obstruct another skater
- The lead skater has the right of way in turns
- A skater who is passing is responsible for what happens in the passing move

### STARTS – Procedure

1. The starter calls the skaters to the starting line and checks the starting positions (first on the inside, fifth or sixth on the outside).
2. When timekeepers and judges are ready, the starter calls the skaters by stating: "Go to the start".
3. When everyone is in place: "Ready". All skaters will move as close to the line as possible without touching it, and remain motionless in this position until the signal (gunshot – 1 to 1.5 seconds after becoming motionless).

**False Start:** If a skater moves, it is a false start. Each skater is allowed one false start. After a false start, skaters take the ready position. After a second false start, the skater is disqualified and must withdraw.

**Restarts** are at the discretion of the starter: If a skater falls before the fourth (apex) cone, the starter may recall the race. In this case, there is a new start with all signals.

**Note: No announcements should be made during starts.**

### SKATERS EQUIPMENT

- Rigid protective helmet
- Leather gloves
- Number or competitor's bib
- Shin and knee guards

### LAP COUNTER

- Is responsible for the accuracy of the length of each race
- Changes the number of laps after the leader has passed
- Sounds the bell when the lead skater starts the final lap

### CONE ATTENDANTS

- Ensures the track is in the same colour at each end
- Changes the track regularly at the official's request
- Replaces displaced cones without impeding skaters
- Places cones accurately within the track

**\*\*Please read Section N – Rules of the Procedures and Regulations Manual to expand your knowledge of the sport of speed skating.**

## Appendix D: Protocol for official ceremonies

1.	Introduction	9.	Dress Rehearsal
2.	Responsibility	10.	Protocol
3.	Program line-up	11.	Introductory Addresses
4.	Program Assistant	12.	Speeches
5.	Dignitaries	13.	Special presentations
6.	Reception	14.	Official opening or closing
7.	VIP Room	15.	Awarding of medal and/or trophies
8.	Respecting Schedules	16.	National anthem

### 1. Introduction

Defining an overall protocol for ceremonies marking the opening or closing of a competition, or the awarding of medals or trophies is no small task.

This annexe develops some guidelines for protocol. While not very exhaustive, these principles will enable you to conduct your programs with a surer hand while respecting the general rules of national and international etiquette.

After reading this section of the manual, you will be fully capable of producing your programs and devising procedures that will enable you to meet the needs of your organization.

Always keep in mind that official ceremonies are the window dressing for a competition and will set the tone for all activities in the event. You should therefore give them all the attention they deserve because through them you will leave your mark for the future.

### 2. Responsibility

In all official ceremonies, success or failure often hinges on a single factor: distribution of responsibility. It is vital that a single person hold responsibility for the entire process. That person must ensure that everyone fully understands his/her duties and is capable of performing them satisfactorily. Prior to an event an announcer should meet with the co-ordinator of official ceremonies discussing format and responsibilities.



### **3. Program line-up**

A program line-up is essential for each official ceremony (opening, closing, awarding of trophies or medals, etc.). The line-up should show the events in your ceremony in chronological order, the equipment required, site layout, order of entrance for participants and escorts, order of technical equipment and the responsibilities of each person (who does what and when).

This line-up is extremely important; a copy should be given to each person participating or providing support of any sort of the production of your ceremonies. Your line-up should be approved by the Organizing Committee.

### **4. Production assistant**

Ensure that a responsible person is in charge of the physical facilities you have planned for your official ceremonies. This person will oversee equipment (podium, medals, trophies, flags, carpets, flowers, plants, etc.), the people who will install this equipment, and the hostesses you will assign to escort your dignitaries during the official ceremonies program. The production assistant must handle the placement of hostesses, dignitaries, and medal and flag bearers in proper order as indicated on the program line-up. The production assistant is also responsible for music and lighting if applicable, and directs all technical operations for your ceremonies in close cooperation with the announcer. The actual program may be as elaborate or as simple as you wish, the success will depend on your planning.

### **5. Dignitaries**

Any dignitaries you wish to invite to your opening, closing and award ceremonies should be given as much advance notice as possible. When contacting their offices, specify the date, time and place of their appearance and confirm all arrangements by letter. Two weeks before the competition date, inform them in writing of exactly when and where they should arrive, and whom to report to. You should also provide an area on the competition site for assembling dignitaries and special guests.

### **6. Reception**

Dignitaries should be met at the competition site by the person who invited them and the chair and/or honorary chair of the competition.

### **7. VIP room**

Dignitaries should be assembled in a specific room or area so they can be directed more easily to the site of the official ceremonies. Pay special attention to this room so it will be clean and inviting.

### **8. Respecting schedules**

All official ceremonies should be as brief as possible, and contain only the key information to be communicated to spectators. Each speaker's time should be limited to avoid unnecessary delaying of the actual competition. The diplomatic course in this case is to ensure, when handing out your program line-up, that each speaker's allotted time is clearly indicated. Always try to allow the same length of time for each dignitary. Always attempt to place your official ceremonies at times in the competition schedule when there is certain to be a large audience. Always start your ceremony as soon as possible after

the end of the competition and resume the competition quickly after your ceremony is complete. This time is valuable for spectators and you should make every effort to hold delays to a minimum.

## 9. Dress rehearsal

To ensure your program line-up is realistic, for major competitions, hold a dress rehearsal with all persons involved (except dignitaries, of course), using your planned line-up. This rehearsal will give you a last chance to prepare and to finalize your line-up.

## 10. Protocol

In all official ceremonies, it is very important to observe certain rules of etiquette, which may vary depending on circumstances, but generally take the following order:

- a) Introduction by Master of Ceremonies
- b) Entrance of competition flags
- c) Entrance of persons officiating the ceremony; precedence should be assigned in accordance with each person's relative importance, ie:
  - National, provincial, regional, local politicians
  - Dignitary from national, provincial or regional institutions
  - Dignitary from municipality or institution where competition is held
  - Honorary chair or major sponsor
  - Organizing committee
- d) Speeches:
  - Politicians
  - Institutional representatives
  - Competition dignitary
- e) Special presentations
- f) Official opening or closing, or awarding of trophies or medals
- g) National anthem

## 11. Text of presentation

The announcer is the individual who will set the tone and style for all of your presentations. It is therefore very important to make a very careful choice and select someone people will want to listen to. The Master of Ceremonies must have experience in using a microphone, a steady, authoritative voice, conservative dress and diction suited to his/her role. Never forget that the style of your official ceremonies will often determine the style of your competition, so give them all the attention they deserve, down to the smallest details.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

On behalf of the organizing committee, I take pleasure in extending to you a very warm welcome to this \_\_\_\_\_.

THE FLAGS OF THIS \_\_\_\_\_.

The flags should always be presented in the same order. If you have several flags to present, at a Canadian championship, for example, the order should be: flag of the province where the last Canadian championship was held; flags of the provinces

participating, in alphabetical order; flag of the province hosting the championship; Canadian flag. The same order must be respected at international events.

If your event is local or regional, present flags in the following order: club flag; federation flag, national association flag; city flag; provincial flag; Canadian flag. Order on the ice should run left to right.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

The dignitaries officiating this ceremony\_\_\_\_\_.

## **12. Speeches**

Introduction of persons who will deliver a speech. Protocol requires introducing person working at the international level first, followed by those at the national, provincial, regional and local levels. The chair of the Organizing Committee and/or honorary chair speaks last.

## **13. Special presentations**

You should always pay attention to this section. If souvenir plaques or honourable mentions are to be handed out, this should be mentioned. This section is also devoted to thanking the sponsors who make this competition possible. Always start with the most important, and name any representatives in the audience.

## **14. Official opening or closing**

Officials participating in the opening or closing ceremonies of your competition may be escorted by celebrities who have made the championship possible.

## **15. Awarding of medals and/or trophies**

Present medals in the following order: from the beginner's category to the advanced category, starting with the bronze medal, followed by the silver and always ending with the gold.

Trophies are distributed immediately after medals in the categories involved and in the same order as the medals.

## **16. National anthem**

The opening and closing ceremonies of your competition should always end with the national anthem.

## **Appendix E: SSC Officials certification program**

### **Certification requirements**

The Branch Vice President of Officials is responsible for the evaluation and certification of officials at Level I and II.

Level I – represents the first or entry level for all officials. A Level I official understands his/her function in general and is capable of carrying out assigned tasks in a competent, efficient manner. Requirements for Level I are summarized below:

- Attend a Level I officials' clinic
- Assist at 1 or more non-sanctioned meets
- Assist at 1 or more SSC sanctioned meets
- Satisfactory evaluation from Chief official
- Review and approval from Branch Officials' Committee

An official should meet all of the above requirements in order to be certified at Level I. Officials who have not achieved all of the criteria may be referred to as "officials-in-training" (O.I.T's). Once an official has achieved Level I standing, he/she may begin training for Level II.

Level II – represents the first level of overall responsibility for officials. A level II official understands his/her function in detail and is capable of being the chief official at non-sanctioned or sanctioned Branch competitions.

### **Requirements for announcers Level II**

- Chief at 1 or more non-sanctioned meets
- Chief at 1 or more SSC sanctioned meets
- Satisfactory evaluation from senior Branch official
- Review and approval from Branch Officials' Committee

Level 1 officials who satisfy all of the above requirements are eligible for Level II. While SSC has established and published criteria for Levels I and II (Annex "A" of the Information Manual) these represent guidelines only and are intended to provide some degree of uniformity and consistency across Canada. Since the Branches are responsible for the certification of their own Level I and II officials, they may adopt their own criteria.

It is important once you have fulfilled the criteria for a specific level, you notify the individual in your club who is responsible for the official certification program so a formal application for upgrading may be made on your behalf to your province.

The SSC Officials Certification Program was established in 1982 as part of the Level Officials Manual and revised in 1989 and 2008. The program is based on a multi-level system, consisting of 5 levels for Referees and Starters and Competitor Stewards and 3 levels for Meet Co-ordinators, Timers, Finish Line Judges, Announcers and all other officials. Each level has specific technical, practical and performance requirements as shown above for the role of the announcer.