

USFIFS

United States Federation
of Inline Figure Skaters

FAQ about USFIFS

and

Inline Figure Skating

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Guido Tonini

Arthur Lee of the Snow White Manufacturing

John at PicSkate

1. What is the name of the organization?

The name is the United States Federation of Inline Figure Skaters or USFIFS.

2. What is the purpose of the organization?

There are a number of purposes of this organization which are detailed in the By-laws. Two of the main functions are:

- a. The USFIFS will be solely devoted to the advancement of inline figure skating in the United States. The rules of the organization will be based on the rules of United States Figure Skating (USFS) with changes to match the needs of the organization and the sport. The USFS website is:

<http://www.usfsa.org/>

The USFS is the organization for figure skating on ice. Its rules are based on International Skating Union rules or ISU. Their website is:

<http://www.isu.org/>

- b. The USFIFS has the goal of bringing together inline figure skaters from around the world.

3. What is the current National Governing Body for inline figure skating?

In the U.S. the organization is the USA Roller Sports. The website is:

<http://usarollersports.org>

The world-wide body is Fédération Internationale de Roller Sports or FIRS. Their website is:

www.rollersports.org

4. Where can I find more detailed information about your organization and your rules?

We have a website at usfifs.org that includes more current information as it becomes available. You can also send an email to the email addresses listed on the website for more information.

5. Why not use USARS and FIRS rules?

In several countries, especially the U.S., inline figure skating has not advanced and has actually declined under organizations designed and interested primarily in the advancement of quad roller skating. Competitive roller skating overall has seen a considerable decline since the eighties. In recent years it has been strongly focused primarily on trying to prevent the steady erosion in the number of roller skaters.

At the present time many inline figure skaters in the US have no categories to compete in because of age and skill categories that lock them out. In order for inline figure skating to advance skaters of all ages and skills should have the opportunity to compete.

Within roller skating all testing is done by the Roller Skating Association and soon by the USARS. The RSA website is:

<http://www.rollerskating.org/>

The RSA is an organization of coaches and businesses interested in roller skating. The test levels do not directly translate to USARS competition levels, but the USARS rules have been changed so the RSA levels are close enough that the skaters would be in comparable skill level. USARS has returned to using RSA tests as requirements for competition, but there is discussion within the USARS about using a different format.

6. Why USFS and ISU?

Inline figure skating has attracted skaters from both ice and roller. It is really a blend of both sports. The last year that the USARS had more than two skill and age categories for inline freestyle was 2004. At that time an informal survey was done of inline skaters and many were regular ice skaters that found inline skating quite conducive to skill development.

The skating skills for many inline moves are quite similar to ice skating moves. Many skating analysts feel that it is closer to ice skating than quad roller skating. This is due to the nature of the single blade concept on wheels. Some skaters have found spins and three-turns much easier to learn on inlines than quads. The rocker on several inline frames are designed to mimic the blade curvature of an ice blade.

In the US the ISU-based organization, USFS, is a member-based organization that is composed of clubs with officers elected by members. Major rules changes are made by an annual meeting of clubs called the Governing Council. At the Governing Council much of the business of the organization is conducted. Clubs will send delegates based on the number of their members. The clubs are independent of the management of a rink and often encompass several rinks with a home rink and several additional rinks. This is the model that we are using the the USFIFS.

There are also many more skaters and coaches in ice skating than in roller skating which means that it will be easier for skaters, coaches to understand the rules and structure and therefore be less confusing. This is particularly important when we bring the USFS Basic Skills program to schools, park districts and gyms. There are many outdoor inline hockey rinks and other locations that can be easily used to learn figure skating. It will be a lot easier to get teachers and skaters to move between various skating programs. There are also many places where rinks don't exist or are quite expensive. This will also hopefully bring prices more in line and make skating more affordable. A skater, whether inline, ice or roller can also practice their program in more places.

7. Is there a precedence for using ice rules for non-ice skating?

In the early days of ice and roller skating there was a single organization that handled competitions for both sports. In the early twenties the USFSA was formed and was dedicated to ice skating only. In 1937 the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association (RSROA) was formed to handle roller skating.

The following excerpts are taken from:

<http://www.hickoksports.com/history/rollerskate04.shtml>

“The Amateur Athletic Union, which controlled most American amateur sports at the time, wasn’t happy with the RSROA because it included rink owners and skating professionals, The U. S. Amateur Roller Skating Association (USARSA) was founded by some skaters who didn't feel that their sport should be controlled by rink owners. The USARSA began with artistic skating, holding national championships in that discipline in 1939.”

The ice dancing style and rules were adopted by the USARSA. Oftentimes ice judges were used in judging competitions. After the merger the ice dancing style became the International Style.

“The two rival groups held separate national championships until 1972, when the RSROA amateur skaters, the USARSA, and the U. S. Federation of Amateur Roller Skaters merged to form the U. S. A. Confederation of Roller Skating (USAC/RS), now known as USA Rollersports.”

USA Rollersports is shortened as USARS and is the current governing body for roller skating in the US.

A major impetus for the merger of the various organizations was to get roller skating into the Olympics. This was basically dictated by the International Olympic Committee. There were multiple national-level competitions. It is also true that the USARSA skaters tended to do better in international competition because the

international roller skating judges preferred the ice skating style. Because of a number of issues including perhaps the decline of the sport, roller figure skating still does not appear to be close to being in the Olympics. However inline speed skating will be an exhibition sport in the 2008 and has been submitted to be a permanent sport in the 2012 Olympics. This may have more success because of the success of inline skaters turned ice skaters in the recent Winter Olympics.

8. Have there been any other roller skating organizations created because felt the members felt they needed an organization more devoted to their sport or with a different emphasis?

When there was the merger of the roller skating organizations in 1972 a number of skaters were quite upset. A considerable number of skaters, judges and coaches from the USARSA did not join the new organization. Many of them formed the National Amateur Roller Skating Association. Their website is: <http://narsaonline.com/> This organization does not have the membership numbers of USARS but they do fully support inline figure skating

On the inline hockey front, from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USA_Roller_Sports: In October 2001, [USA Hockey](#), the national governing body of ice hockey in the United States, challenged USARS jurisdiction of roller hockey; however, the United States Olympic Committee continues to reaffirm the charter of roller sports, eligible in the summer Olympics, to USA Roller Sports

In the meantime, USA Hockey formed a separate branch called USA Hockey InLine that is also promoting hockey events, but is unable to send a national team to a world championship event sanctioned by FIRS. There is also an inline hockey organization aligned with the [Amateur Athletic Union](#) (AAU) to help with growth and legitimacy of its hockey programs. This is expected to grow to be an alternate ice hockey program also sponsored by the AAU.

9. How do inline, quad and ice skating differ?

Quad roller skating refers to traditional-style roller skating with a frame that has two wheels on each side of the front and back with the front wheels and the back wheels each connected by an axle. Edging is done by putting pressure on the side of the boot and leaning at the ankle and causing the axles to steer the skater like a car.

Roller skates for freestyle have a toe stop that aid in toe-assisted jumps. The jumps are done without any assistance of the toe for takeoffs and landings except for toe-assisted takeoffs in jumps like the toe loop. When skaters land a jump in rollers the shock absorption must be done by the knees, leg and ankle bones directly instead of allowing the ankle to bend and absorb more of the shock. Because of the wheels and heavy metal frames, quad roller skating frames tend to be much heavier than ice

frames. This actually seems to have helped roller skaters that have transitioned to ice become better ice skaters.

In ice and inlines jumps are often assisted by the toe. Besides the toe-assisted takeoff jumps other jumps such as a waltz jump, axel and so forth often use the toe to help the takeoff. The landing is done in such a way that the jump is landed on the toe, the heel goes down and the toe is then released from the ice or floor. This allows for shock absorption and less injury and a different skating style.

In roller skating quad skaters are penalized for use of the toes in landing and for non-toe assisted takeoffs. Inline skaters are not supposed to be penalized, but some skaters think that the judges will still deduct for use of the toes stop except on toe-assisted jumps. On ice there is no penalty unless it detracts from the skating.

10. What competition events will you hold?

We will hold at least the following categories:

- Basic Skills events in conjunction with the Basic Skills Committee
- Singles
- Pairs
- Adults
- Solo Creative Freestyle and Spotlight
- Solo Dance and Team Dance
- Solo Creative Dance
- Theater on Inlines
- Synchronized Skating

We will consider other categories and events as we develop our organization.

11. Why hasn't inline figure skating taken off in popularity?

This is a very difficult question to answer and there is probably no single reason. There was an initial burst of enthusiasm for inline figure skating in the USARS in the mid-nineties. It was seen as the savior of roller skating. Inline skating was becoming quite popular and quad skating had been and still is in decline.

Unfortunately, the popularity was not strongly reflected in the competition numbers. It may be that coaches are very reluctant to teach something that they don't have first hand experience with. If they are comfortable teaching quads and have enough students then why add inlines? If they can encourage their skaters to only skate on quads then it is easier for them.

While the USARS organization includes inline skating as an acceptable variation on roller skating, there has been a steady decline in the number of freestyle competitors on inlines. This appears to be much more than the decrease in the number of quad

skaters.. There have been unsuccessful offers to lead efforts within the organization to turn this around.

When USARS dropped the Junior Olympics over half of the inline skaters ended up with no levels to compete in. But there has been little public interest by USARS in making changes. The arguments have ranged from it being too difficult, going nowhere, technically poor, no future and so forth. So as fewer skaters compete in inline figure skating, fewer skaters know about it.

12. How do I form a club?

- There are two levels of clubs. They are:
 - *Provisional* - Gather 3 members and create the positions of president, secretary and treasurer. These members can be skaters, coaches, or parents of skaters. The same person can hold more than one position and the officers can be less than eighteen years old except where required by law and where signature authority is required for club accounts. After this you need to register your club with USFIFS
 - *Full Member Clubs* – Gather 5 members together and create the positions of president, secretary and treasurer. The officers must be at least 18 years old or older. These members can be skaters, coaches, or parents of skaters. Then you need to register your club with USFIFS. A provisional club can become a full member club by meeting the requirements of a full member club..
- Rink owners and managers can not be counted as voting club members, but are welcome to join clubs as non-voting members and can be non-voting board members. .
- You need to come up with a name that is independent of a rink. You might call it East Shore Inline Skating Club as an example. But don't use the name of a current skating club, whether ice, roller, speed and so forth to avoid confusion.
- You may specify a preferred location where your club normally skates. This is for administrative purposes and to tell people where you skate and can find you. It can be a rink, park, or other location. But don't use a rink's name so people don't think you are just a rink club.
- Send us your club information and list of officers and pay an annual club membership fee and a membership fee for each member.
- Complete a form signed by the officers saying that as a USFIFS club they will abide by the rules of the USFIFS.

13. Do I need to have my rink okay my club membership?

Clubs are independent of any rink and there is no need to get the okay from the rink. However, you may ask them for permission to skate as a club. The rink may require that you join the USARS, join their club and take from a local coach. This is their option. You can also just skate as an outdoor club. This is particularly good in areas with few rinks but good weather. You should not have more than one club per rink or location.

14. Which coaching organization credentials will you recognize?

Currently credentials are not required. However, this may change depending on how we structure Nationals. We will recognize the Professional Skaters Association or PSA, which is the ice skating coaches organization. Their website is:

www.skatepsa.com

and the RSA, which is the Roller Skating Association International; Their website is:

www.rollerskating.org

They have a coaches group which is the Society of Roller Skating Teachers of America (SRSTOA). We will also recognize any coaching credentials from the Ice Skating Institute (ISI) or USARS or other coaching organizations recognized by the National Governing Board of any USOC organization.

15. Will you require certifications for coaches?

For events that are sanctioned by another organization we will require the certifications that they require. To be listed as a certified coach in our coaches' directory you will need certifications. For national and world events it is conceivable that we may require certifications from the appropriate skating authority.

16. Will my coach need to get insurance?

There are no plans to require insurance at this time. But individual rinks, park districts and other skating locations may require coaches insurance. The cost of the insurance from PSA is less than \$100 a year and is quite comprehensive and covers ice and inline skating as well as off-ice/off-skate training.

17. My coach teaches roller skating and is an RSA member. Will you recognize the coach's membership and any certifications?

There is no requirement for certification at this time. We will recognize their certification if it was required for a particular event. However, for a sanction at an USARS sanctioned competition there may be certification requirements. This should not matter on local competitions.

18. I have coach that is an ice coach and a PSA member. Will you recognize the ice certifications?

There is no requirement for certification at this time. USFS does not require any sanctions for their skaters to skate inline events. Otherwise the answer would be the same as for an RSA coach.

19. Will you recognize other coaching certifications?

If there was a requirement we will recognize any certifications and membership issued by a legitimate coaches skating organization that are part of the ISU or FIRS organization structure. We will also recognize USFS, ISI and any USARS coaching certifications.

20. Can my ice coach teach at the roller rink? Will there be a need to buy more insurance or join the RSA?

All ice coaches that are members of the PSA and have the PSA insurance policy are covered when they teach inlines. Your roller rink may require that the coach join the RSA and USARS, take their insurance and certifications and meet other requirements. This occurs even on ice where some clubs or rinks have additional requirements that must be met. Your coach can approach the roller rink, tell them that only inlines will be taught and have a copy of the insurance coverage to give to the rink owner or manager. Additional insurance and coaches membership is not necessarily a bad idea any way.

21. Can I practice inline figure skating and take lessons outdoors?

No problem. In fact in many countries ice skaters have to train on inlines outdoors since there is extremely limited ice and the cost of ice skating is quite expensive. There are many park districts that have built outdoor skating parks for roller and inline hockey as well as skating parks built for skateboards and more extreme inline skating that can be used for practice. You can practice on a tennis court if you like and the park rules allow it. You should avoid parking lots and city streets due to unexpected traffic and the fact that there areas are often very rough, have a lot of little stones, are dirty and can cause you to slide the wrong way.

Since inline skating is a potentially hazardous sport you should always wear body protection. When skating outdoors you should always wear hand protection and a helmet. Additional recommended protection is knee and elbow padding. It is also a good idea to wear some soft inline hockey padded undergarments (not the hard kind, but soft) or the padded undergarments sold for ice skating. Once you get your balance

you will usually fall on your side or your rear the most. Padding will give you additional protection, give you more confidence and make it a more enjoyable experience.

There is nothing that can totally prevent you from getting any injury. You can break a leg just walking down the street. So you just need to be aware of your environment, wear protection, take lessons and relax when you feel you are out of control. If you are too stiff and scared then you can increase the seriousness of an injury.

22. Which is the proper term: in-line or inline?

Both terms are widely used and acceptable. The term **in-line** is a little more technical whereas the term **inline** is what people will usually think of first and do a search on. We will use **inline**.

23. Is inline skating a green sport?

Since there are very few energy resources needed, other than your own, outdoor inline skating is about as green as they come.

24. Where can I buy inline figure skates?

If you want to get skates that are designed for inline figure skating you will usually need to buy a separate boot and frame. These can be mounted by the roller rink or a shop that specializes in mounting ice blades. Figure skating shops and specialists are often quite intrigued by the inline frames. The frames mount like ice blades, not quad frames, so sometimes a roller rink will refuse to mount it.

You should first get boots that fit you properly. You need to consider the manufacturer of the frames you are going to use before you buy the boots. There are two kinds of frame mountings:

1 – Roller Skating Style Frames – These are designed for roller skating frames that have a flat surface. You should then buy boots that have a flat bottom. These are typically roller skating boots. However, you need a stiffer boot for inline skating than for regular roller artistic skating. Boots designed for roller figures can be relatively stiff so these may work for you. Frames that have a flatter surface include the older PIC frames, Triax, Custom Inlines among others

2 – Ice Skating Style Frames – These frames are curved like the ice blade mounting surface and so you should purchase ice skating boots that have the curved bottoms if you are using this style of frame. If you are not sure what kind of boots to get you should ask the manufacturer of the inline blade frame. You should do this before you spend any money because you might need to return your boots or have them modified

if they don't fit properly. Manufacturers that make the curved mounting surface include Snow White and the new PIC skates.

Flat bottom boots are often called co-planar boots. A good technical article is at:

<http://www.iceskatingintl.com/archive/features/coplanar.htm>

Most manufacturers of ice boots will sell a version that has a co-planar bottom. These may be special order so be prepared to wait up to several months. Some popular sizes may be in stock with some manufacturers like Riedel that sell a lot of roller skating boots.

The ice skating boots have a slightly curved bottom that is designed to be more like walking boots. The top of the ice blades will have a corresponding curvature that approximates the bottom of the boot. However, there is rarely an exact match, so the person that does the mounting typically has to flatten, sand or grind the bottom slightly when mounting ice blades. If they are mounting inline blades designed for a roller skating boot on ice boots then there may be even more flattening that needs to be done. If any modification needs to be done to the boot surface then someone that specializes in mounting ice blades would probably have more experience and equipment to do this than someone that does strictly roller skating mounting or that works on ice hockey skates. You might also seek out roller rinks or sellers that have a lot of expertise in this.

Thanks to Guido Tonini who made the following contribution to the FAQ:

"In any case it may be better to always order curved bottom boots for several reasons:

- 1 - They are designed for ice skating and so they should have good ankle stiffness, suitable for inline frames too.
- 2 - A curved bottom boot can be easily mounted also on a flat frame, but not the contrary. I believe that few firms produce only curved bottoms boots (e.g. the Italian EDEA). If such a boot needs to be mounted on a flat frame (roller or inline), they provide an "adapter". It's a sort of thin wedge few mm thick that goes between boot and frame, under the front part of the boot. The adapter has a planar bottom (the surface that touches the frame) and a curved upper that is in contact with the boot sole. The wedge thickness goes almost to zero under the ball of the foot, so it doesn't add any real height to the assembled skate. The "adapter" is cheap, light weighted, well designed, sturdy and well made. I really don't know if it comes in several sizes. I believe so, but the mounting is usually done at a skate shop and they take care of the problem.
- 3 - Curved bottom boots feels a bit more comfortable since they follow the natural shape of the foot, and the sole is closer in shape to that of a normal shoe.
- 4 - A curved bottom boot is usually available on the shelf, so there isn't any long delivery delay
- 5 - If the skater feels to be "not enthusiast" about artistic inline skating he/she can recycle the boots for ice."

There are a number of manufacturers that make inline figure skate frames. They include:

- a. PIC Skate - A popular skate frame for low to high-level skaters is the PIC skate. Their website is:
<http://www.picskate.com/about.htm>
This skate is quite popular among ice skaters that have transitioned to inline figure skating. It was co-designed by an ice coach, Nick Perna, one of our Board members.
- b. Triax - A popular skate frame for low to high-level and World Class competitors is the Triax. It is made by Snyder, who manufactures quad skates also. Their website is:
<http://snyderskates.com/>
The Triax is easier for quad or traditional roller skaters to use than the PIC skate
- c. Custom Inline - A third skate that is made in Australia is the Custom Inline Frame. This is oriented more towards the high level and World Class skater. It is available from:
<http://www.custominlines.com/>
The website mentions the V1 frame. They also have a V2 frame that is recently released.
- d. Snow White - A fourth brand is the Snow White frame and is made in Taiwan. This covers a wide range of skill level. They have a curved bottom. According to Arthur Lee at the Snow White company "The Snow White frame has the 'curved' interface for ice skating boot mounting EARLIER than newer PIC skate. Snow White has carried this merit ever since it was designed in 2003. FYI, <http://www.inlinefigure.com/snowwhite.htm> <<http://www.inlinefigure.com/snowwhite.htm>> , and please pay attention to the picture and text of 'E'. Snow White had already been used many times in Worlds championships. For example, Adrain Baturin of Argentina, Gustavo of Brazil, Hsin Chia-Ling from Taiwan, and not to mention that Team USA of 2007 as they all ride on Snow White."

Their website is:

<http://www.inlinefigure.com/news.htm>

There is a review by Joann at: <http://www.skatelog.com/skaters/jo-ann-schneider-farris/snow-white-frames.htm>

- e. PRO Skate - Guido Tonini added the following: "I believe it worths mention the PRO Skate frame, because it is still in production and was / is used by the Italian athletes at Worlds. In several ways it is similar to the Triax but it is lighter. The firm produces both speed and artistic inline frames, so it's necessary to navigate the site (ingles -> products -> artistic). Their web site is: <http://www.prosk8.com/> and they have there an inquiry form."
- f. Jump-Spin Skate – This is designed for lower level skaters and is inexpensive. Their website is: www.jumpspin.com

Sometimes you can find a really good deal on inline frames since some places overbought stock when USARS was more involved in inline events. You should ask around. You might find them used on the Internet also.

25. Do I need toe stops to learn inline figure skating and do Basic Skills?

You really don't need the expensive skates, frames and boots to start out. As long as you don't do toe-assisted jumps like a toe-loop, flip, lutz or the half jump version of these jumps then most inline skates are okay. The heel stops may get in the way on the landing though of any jump, but often they can be removed or adjusted.

If you remove the heel stop do not leave the metal frame on the back of the skate that holds the heel stop. When you remove the rear stop you must remove the metal support that holds the stop. Otherwise this will dig into the floor or concrete if you fall too far back and leave gouges or worse will cause you to stop immediately and fall back with painful consequences. Sometimes the heel stop and the metal support bracket come off together so that would be okay then.

Once you remove the heel stop you would then need to learn a t-stop. You might need a helmet too until you get used to the balance because the heel stop helps keep you from falling back. A helmet and body protection is always a good idea. Even the best skater might need some protection at some time.

It is also a good idea to have inline skates that can be rockered if you have a choice. It is easier to do spins on two wheels at a time instead of three or four wheels. This means that the furthest front and back wheels are raised higher than the middle wheel or wheels. You can simulate the rocker on any inline skates by getting smaller wheels for the very front and very back wheels. They should be quite close in size, like 70mm vs 72mm. It doesn't take much. You might need to experiment to find what is comfortable.

Spins and other moves like three turns and mohawks should also be okay, especially if you rocker the wheels. You might want to start out with some lower priced inline figure skating equipment since it'll be a while before you get to toe-assisted jumps. By that time you would probably want to invest some money to buy some decent boots and frames.