



Money Matters

ASPIRE TO SUCCEED

MONEY MATTERS

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN BUDGETING FOR SKATING

As a skater progresses into U.S. Figure Skating introductory membership, there are three important components to keep in mind when planning a skating budget: equipment, ice time and lessons. The Aspire program provides a cost-effective package program with on- and off-ice classes included, making the transition into figure skating seamless and affordable.

EXPENSES TO CONSIDER

- SKATES
- ICE TIME FOR EXTRA PRACTICE
- COACHING FEES (IF TAKING PRIVATE LESSONS)
- COMPETITION FEES (if the skater is beginning competing)
- COSTUMES

EQUIPMENT

Figure skating equipment, including practice clothing, bags and additional accessories is where a lot of skaters spend the most money. A proper-fitting boot and appropriate-level blade are the most important. An appropriate pair of skates based on level is most important because good equipment will help a skater progress faster and develop good technical habits on the ice.

Beginner figure skaters should start thinking about moving away from rental skates and investing in their own pair of quality boots and blades. Boots should fit properly and provide adequate support, and certified skate dealers can help skaters find the perfect fit.

Expensive, custom boots are not necessary for begin-

ners, but a properly fitting boot with sharp, correctly mounted blades will help skaters learn proper skills and have fun in the process. Talk to a coach at your rink before purchasing skates to find the best place in the area to go.

Be prepared to spend at least \$150 to \$250 if you buy new skates. Some figure skating clubs also host resales, and older skaters often sell their used skates, which are already broken in and provide great support for beginners.

ICE TIME

The average freestyle session at a rink costs between \$7 and \$15 per hour, and some rinks offer discounts if skaters buy "punch cards," or bulk sessions at a



Money Matters

ASPIRE TO SUCCEED

time. Many Aspire programs include ice time in their package, so check with the rink if you're looking to purchase extra practice time.

LESSONS

While on-ice instruction is included with the Aspire program, hiring a private coach to supplement those lessons is a good opportunity if it's feasible. Coaches provide targeted instruction in a semi-private or private lesson format.

In the Aspire group lesson format, skaters learn good training habits, acquisition of proper technique and camaraderie with fellow skaters. The group lesson

provides the same benefits of private lessons but at a fraction of the cost. Many rinks also offer complimentary public skating sessions for those enrolled in its group lesson program.

As a skater continues progressing, a combination of group and semi-private or private lessons will help him or her continue learning proper elements and improve practice habits. While it's an increased expense from group lessons, the coach can target specific needs of the skater, resulting in more rapid progression. Most private, one-on-one lessons should start at 15-20 minutes for optimum learning and are not necessary every time a skater goes to the rink.

BUDGETING TIPS

- Talk to other parents or skaters in the Aspire program and those taking private lessons about their experiences
- Talk to rink managers about options to reduce ice cost, such as package discounts
- If your skater is starting to compete, ask older skaters if they have any old costumes they are willing to sell
- Find another skater at the same level as yours and propose a semi-private lesson arrangement
- Sell your own used equipment
- Look into volunteer opportunities with your club and rink to discover any possible volunteer "perks" that may reduce skating costs