

Club Questions and Comments about the 2017-2018 Short Track Technical Bulletin -A Question and Answer document from the Ontario Speed Skating Association-

The OSSA Short Track Technical Bulletin is established annually at the start of each racing season. Changes are made to best reflect the ever-evolving racing pathway needs of Ontario-based skaters from entry level through national competitor.

Input about the 2017-2018 Short Track bulletin and racing pathway was provided by the OSSA Technical Committee, the Provincial Registrar, the VP Education, the VP Athlete Development, the High Performance Director, the Special Olympics Convenor, and Chief Officials. OSSA member clubs were formally invited to provide input about the draft 2017-2018 Short Track Technical bulletin in August 2017. Skaters, parents, coaches, officials, and club representatives provided comments about their racing experiences throughout the 2016-2017 season.

Disclaimer: If there are changes to the SSC Competitions Bulletin or the SSC High Performance Bulletins that warrant changes to OSSA's competitions, the Technical Committee will amend the Technical Bulletin accordingly.

PROVINCIAL SERIES

Why is qualification for the Canada East Championships based solely on performance at the Provincial A Championships?

At the Provincial A Championships, the 11-14 year old skaters race in their 1 year age categories for selection purposes, but it is recognized that this does not always provide for meaningful racing groups. The Provincial Series meets are set up to encourage the best racing possible, that means mixing some age classes to create groups of more comparable ability. It would not be fair to count the points earned at the Provincial Series meets because skaters who are in lower groups would automatically be ranked behind skaters in their age class who were in higher groups but they would not have an opportunity to directly challenge them for points.

Additionally, the Provincial Series meets should be used as opportunities for the skaters to develop their racing skills and try new strategies in advance of the Provincial A Championships. They should not feel as though a mistake in one of the regular-season races will disadvantage them at the end of the year.

It takes a long time to go through the 200m pursuits. Why is this race included or what it is accomplishing?

The 200m is a medal event at Canada East where skaters race the preliminary rounds as pursuits and the final in packs. Provincial Series skaters race this event to prepare for Canada East and to establish seed times. The short nature of this event emphasizes

development of the skater's reaction time off the start line, their ability to accelerate, and their ability to achieve top-speed.

Why is there a 500m SuperFinal at Provincial Series #1?

Variety of events is important for the racing development of the skaters. A 500m SuperFinal and Relays offered early in the season will align with the skaters' fitness levels and will challenge the skaters with different race scenarios.

REGIONAL SERIES

Registration for Regional meets – explain the order of priority and the maximum number of skaters.

The 2017-18 Short Track Technical Bulletin allows for more movement between Regional and Provincial Series and East – Central – West regions. With this increased flexibility, provisions need to be in place to accommodate more skaters while still keeping registration numbers at a manageable level.

A prioritized list of registrations is required to provide the meet organizers with a methodology to accept or decline registrations should registrations be excessive. During the 2016-17 season, only one Regional meet had in excess of 150 skaters. During the 2015-16 season, no Regional meets were in excess of 150 skaters.

Why do the racing distances in the Regional Series skaters keep changing?

Set distances need to be established at the meets to ensure skaters race common ranking distances and to prepare skaters for progression in the sport (longer distances, different events).

For the 2017-18 season, only Division 1 and 2 of Group 3 are scheduled to race the 400m ranking distance because the 400m has been very challenging for the newest and youngest racers.

Club feedback has indicated the desire to offer skaters more racing variety. This Technical Bulletin is addressing that desire by giving the Meet Coordinator, Meet Recorder, and Chief Referee the flexibility to select additional events based on the ages, numbers, and abilities of the skaters who register for a particular meet. The goal is that skaters leave the event satisfied they were challenged within their abilities and are encouraged to participate at future events.

MASTERS

In March 2017, OSSA solicited clubs for feedback about their Masters skaters to plan for their racing and training needs. With only 4 clubs responding and minimal commonality, few changes have been made to the Masters racing pathway.

Masters should have their own racing categories. Masters should race as separate genders.

During the 2016-2017 season, 6 women and 28 men of diverse abilities raced in a short track event. At this time, such numbers do not support gender-separate racing categories.

OSSA provides a variety of racing opportunities for Master skaters across the province. A separate group for Masters skaters may be made at the discretion of the Provincial Registrar and Chief Referee if there are sufficient registrations at the Pre-Season Meets and at any Regional Series meet. Proficient Master skaters have the opportunity to race in the Provincial Series should they have the minimum time standards and fall within the number quota for the Open category.

The Master Provincial Championships is scheduled with another event (Provincial Series #3 in 2018) because there are insufficient numbers of competitors to warrant a stand-alone event. The system currently in place to award points was established in 2014-15 after consultation with the Masters community. It was determined this method would be the most fair with mixed age and mixed gender racing and it would encourage skaters to race to the best of their ability.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Why is OSSA only maintaining ranking distances on the Ranking List?

The Short Track Ranking List is a tool maintained by OSSA and it is used for sorting skaters into Divisions at meets and for sorting skaters into the Provincial or Regional Racing Series. The Ranking List is published online in the interests of transparency and accuracy. This allows OSSA members to make sure that the list is accurate. Errors do occur on occasion as the list is maintained by manual entry.

The Ranking List is not intended to be used as a tool to track skaters' personal bests over all distances raced during a season. OSSA recognizes that skaters strive to establish personal best times but it is the responsibility of clubs to maintain their own complete personal best lists and celebrate achievements as they choose.

Why is there not any information about Provincial Records in the Technical Bulletin?

The conditions for recognizing Provincial Records were established many years ago to align with Age Class Records recognized by Speed Skating Canada. Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) guidelines do not support the maintenance of records for children and youth and, as such, Speed Skating Canada no longer maintains national records for children and youth. With the ever-evolving racing pathway, OSSA has responded by

evolving its competitive structure and is no longer able to consistently provide racing events in formats that adhere to the established criteria for setting records.

Beginning in the 2017-18 season, Provincial Records will no longer be maintained.

OSSA is creating barriers for skaters. Why aren't more female skaters invited to race in the Provincial Series? Why must Regional Series skaters attend an OSSA meet in order to be eligible for the Championships?

Invitations into the Provincial Series have increased from 148 to 156 for the 2017-18 season to encourage more participation: 4 girls and 4 boys. Further explanation about the Provincial Series invitations can be found in Appendix D of the Technical Bulletin.

Participating in a speed skating meet is exciting and confusing for first-time competitors. Their first exposure to a meet should not be at a Provincial Championships (youth or adult). There are safety and scheduling (time) concerns that need to be considered. The same applies for a skater who has not raced since the previous season.

The required skill level of officials is too high. It needs to be reduced because there is only so much that can be done with the volunteer base. It is more difficult to achieve a Level 1 certification now.

The certification requirements align with the officials' certification development pathway. The officials' certification requirements listed in the 2017-2018 Technical Bulletin are the least demanding than they have been in years to accommodate the volunteer challenges encountered by clubs across the province.

In the recent past, there was misinformation about the pathway requirements to achieve Level 1 certification. The steps required to achieve Level 1 certification have not changed and the pathway is clearly outlined on the Officials page of the OSSA website. The development pathway is established by Speed Skating Canada.

Why are there only 2 distances listed for the Provincial B & C Championships? There should be more standard distances.

For several seasons, clubs have been asking that the year-end Championships offer more innovative events and have fewer standard races which do not promote fun or friendship. The Technical Committee has responded by establishing set distances per age category that count towards an individual Championship placement. The host club now has the flexibility to establish the other events (adding more individual events or offering other events) based on the number, ages, and genders of the registered skaters.

What is OSSA going to do about skaters leaving events early?

OSSA will not be dictating when families are allowed to leave an event. Families who have registered and paid to attend an event can leave the event when they choose.

However, they are responsible for notifying their club coach – who in turn will notify the meet organizers and officials – well in advance to ensure there is minimal disruption to the racing schedule. Clubs should encourage their skaters to stay for the entire competition and the awards ceremony to support their peers when possible.