



QUESTIONS PARENTS SHOULD ASK WHEN **CHOOSING A COACH**

Choosing a figure skating coach is one of the most important decisions a skater and their family will ever make. The right coach doesn't just teach jumps and spins – they shape how a skater learns, grows, and loves the sport.

Whether your child is just starting out or training at the elite level, it's important to look beyond titles and medals. The best coach is one whose teaching style, communication, and philosophy fit your skater's goals and personality. Asking thoughtful questions can help you find that perfect match – one who builds strong technique, confidence, and joy on the ice.

BACKGROUND AND COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- How long have you been coaching, and what levels of skaters have you trained (Basic Skills through Senior)?
- What is your coaching philosophy or approach when working with competitive skaters?
- How do you define success for your students – results, skill development, mindset, or something else?
- How do you balance technical skill development with artistry and performance quality?
- How do you keep training positive and motivating for skaters at different levels?
- How do you handle mistakes or tough training days?
- How do you encourage independence, resilience, and accountability in your students?

EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- What levels or disciplines do you specialize in (singles, dance, pairs, choreography)?
- Have you coached skaters who have qualified for Sectionals, Nationals, or international events?
- Do you have experience developing skaters through multiple levels (for example, from Basic Skills to Junior/Senior)?
- What would you say are your strongest coaching skills – jump technique, spins, skating skills, choreography, or mental training?
- Do you take part in continuing education or technical seminars to stay current?



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LESSON STRUCTURE AND TRAINING APPROACH

- How often should a skater at my child's level train on-ice and off-ice each week?
- How do you typically structure lessons (technical work, run-throughs, feedback, correction)?
- What's your policy on practice sessions when you're not present?
- How do you approach off-ice conditioning, flexibility, and mental preparation?
- How do you handle choreography and program selection – do you create programs yourself or work with a choreographer?
- Do you help plan testing, competitions, and the overall training season?
- How do you track progress (through journals, videos, testing milestones, or evaluations)?

COACH-SKATER RELATIONSHIP

- How do you build trust and communication with your skaters?
- How do you adapt your coaching style for different personalities or learning styles?
- How do you motivate a skater who's struggling with confidence or consistency?
- What's the most important value, mindset, or habit you try to instill in your athletes?

SCHEDULING, BILLING, AND POLICIES

- What are your lesson rates, and how do you bill (per lesson, per month, or another method)?
- What is your cancellation or rescheduling policy?
- Do you charge additional fees for competition coaching, travel time, or choreography?
- Are there any costs for video analysis, goal-setting meetings, or other extras?
- How far in advance should lessons be booked, especially during busy seasons?

COMPETITION AND GOAL SETTING

- How do you prepare skaters mentally and physically for competition?
- What's your approach to managing competition nerves and pressure?
- How do you decide which competitions or test sessions to enter each season?
- What are your expectations for competition behavior, preparation, and attitude?
- How do you celebrate progress or help a skater regroup after a disappointing skate?



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COMMUNICATION & PARENT/ SKATER INVOLVEMENT

- How do you communicate with skaters and parents – email, text, meetings, or competition updates?
- How do you prefer parents to share feedback or concerns?
- How involved should parents be in daily training decisions?
- What is your policy on parents observing lessons or practice sessions?
- How do you handle conflicts or misunderstandings between skaters, parents, or coaching staff?

FIT AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

- Where do you see this skater's potential, and what steps would you take to help them grow?
- How do you balance short-term goals (test sessions, competition results) with long-term development?
- What does the typical progression look like for your skaters as they move through levels?
- Do you encourage cross-training or exposure to other skating disciplines (ice dance, synchronized, theatre on ice)?
- How do you help skaters navigate plateaus, burnout, or mental blocks?

COACHING TEAM AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

- Who would be part of my skater's coaching team (spin specialist, jump coach, choreographer, off-ice trainer)?
- How do you coordinate communication among the team?
- How do you handle adding or switching coaches if a skater needs a specialist or a change?
- What kind of training environment or rink culture do you promote?
- How do you encourage sportsmanship and camaraderie among skaters of different ages and levels?

FINAL "GUT-CHECK" QUESTIONS

- Why do you think you'd be a good fit for this skater?
- What do you expect from your skaters – and from their families?
- How do you determine when a coaching relationship is no longer the right fit?
- Can we observe one of your lessons to see your teaching style in action?
- May we speak with a current or former student (or parent) for a reference?

A coaching relationship is built on trust, respect, and shared commitment. The best fit is not always the most decorated coach, but the one who understands your skater – how they think, how they respond to feedback, and what motivates them. Take your time, observe lessons, and trust your instincts. When a skater feels supported, challenged, and understood, everything else – from clean jumps to confident performances – follows naturally.