

# LEARN TO COMPETE

## SKATE CANADA Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile, Pre-Novice

Figure Skating in Canada follows a Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model to help guide and shape programming in clubs and schools to direct the growth of all athletes through any age and stage of the development pathway. Programs designed and delivered by Skate Ontario clubs and schools follow modern principles of athlete development outlined in the LTAD. By providing step-by-step technical support and a customized performance and competition calendar, Skate Ontario ensures an optimal development pathway for athletes.

Athletes in the **Learn to Compete** stage of the LTAD are introduced to more complex figure skating skills while foundational elements are synthesized. Consistent training both on and off the ice continues during this stage, and athletes are exposed to further performance and competitive experiences. At this stage, program choreography is tailor-made for each athlete to optimize performance. The following chart outlines the recommended commitment levels at the entry and exit point of the **Learn to Compete** stage:

Development Stage	Minutes/Ice session	Days/Week	Session/Day	Weeks/Year
Entry	45-60 minutes	4 days	1 session	44 weeks
Exit	45-60 minutes	4-5 days	1-2 sessions	44-46 weeks

(Skate Canada's Guide to Long-Term Athlete Development, 2010)



During the **Learn to Compete** stage, emphasis is placed on off-ice conditioning (speed, strength, endurance and flexibility), consolidation of foundational skills, acquisition of new skills and the development of mental training. Although the recommended number of competitions increases at this stage, it is imperative that athletes do not over-compete and that the focus should be on training and developing performance skills. Over-competing at this level will hinder athlete development. The following chart outlines the recommended competition participation for this stage:

Recommended Number of Competitions			
Category	Summer	Fall	Winter
Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile	1-2	1-2	1-2
Pre-Novice	2	2	2-3

The **Learn to Compete** stage also introduces other competitive disciplines of the sport like pairs, dance and synchronized skating and transitions the athlete from coach-based to official-based assessment. Athletes at this stage should be participating in off-ice training for one hour sessions, three to five days per week, 46-48 weeks per year. Off-ice programming should focus on physical fitness and should also include dance classes. Athletes can participate in other sports at this stage, but to a minimum degree.

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