



SPEED SKATING CANADA

Manual for Starters

PLEASE NOTE:

In this manual, the masculine gender has been used only for convenience. The female gender may also apply.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual has been designed specifically to provide advanced technical training for speed skating starting officials who wish to qualify at Levels II to V in SSC's Officials Certification Program.

It is assumed the Starter already has experience in the type of speed skating practiced in Canada; long track (Olympic Style), long track (mass start) and short track (mass start)

Those completing this course, together with the appropriate practical and performance components of the Officials Program will have the necessary knowledge and experience to successfully handle the starting functions at any level of competition from a local inter-club meet to a world championship.

Speed Skating Canada would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals in the preparation of this manual.

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ROLES AND QUALITIES

Role of Starting Personnel

The role of the Starter is to conduct a fair and equal start for all participants in the race. This involves controlling and supervising the start and the race so that it takes place in accordance with the current rules and regulations. The Starter must ensure that all skaters have the maximum opportunity to perform to the best of their ability during the start.

The Starter's task sounds simple; however, it is one of the most important and difficult in sport. A good starter is in control and often goes virtually unnoticed. A poor Starter is inconsistent and results in confusion and disappointment in the skaters, coaches, other officials and spectators.

Qualities of a starter

A Starter must be a fair, but firm, individual who is well experienced and respected in the sport. A low-key, helpful, pleasant nature will serve him well, particularly during a long competition.

A Starter must have a strong commitment to fairness. It is important to ensure that no skater gets an unfair advantage over another skater.

A Starter must be firm and determined, in order to maintain control of the start. Skaters must not be allowed to start a race; this is the Starter's responsibility. If this happens, then one of the skaters has had an advantage.

A Starter must be capable of split-second decision making. In starting, there is very little time for reflection. Instant action is required. Mental alertness and focus are prime requirements in fulfilling the function of a Starter.

A Starter must have a strong desire to avoid error. When an error occurs, it is better to acknowledge the error, determine how and why the error occurred and how to avoid it in the future. If errors occur, one should learn from them in order to strive for perfection.

A Starter must be in good physical condition and be prepared to perform his function over long periods of time (i.e. several hours) in sometimes very adverse conditions (i.e. windy, cold). His performance could be affected by his fatigue level and state of health.

Relationships with other officials

The Starter is one of the senior (or chief) officials at a competition and his behavior and relationships with the other officials should reflect this standing. The Starter (or his designated Assistant) will be in periodic communication with several of the other officials during the competition.

Before the start of every race, the Starter must confirm that the Chief Timer and Chief Finish Line Judges are ready. This may be done verbally with radio communication or by waving a flag or flashing a light.

During the course of the meet, the Starter may consult with or be advised by the Referee or Meet Coordinator if there are any changes, delays, etc.

The Starter (or his designated Assistant) may also have to occasionally check with the Clerk of the Course regarding race details, i.e. number of participants, skater numbers, etc, in particular during quartet start preparations.

EQUIPMENT

List of Equipments/Supplies

The Starter (and his Assistant) should bring with, or ensure the following equipment and supplies are available for competition:

- Starting Gun (always with back-up)
- Shells (require 2x the number of races)
- Earplugs
- Snowsuit/boots (for outdoor competitions)
- Plastic Whistle
- Red arm sleeve
- Container (for spent shells)
- Red Flag
- Chalk line (mass start)
- Wrist Watch
- Clipboard and Pencils
- Program of Events
- Copy of SSC / ISU Rules
- Transducer (if electronic timing is used)
- Microphone (for ISU competitions)
- Black Smoke Board / Curtains

Starting Guns – Selection and Maintenance

Many models and types of starting guns are available commercially. These range from single shot, light duty models, to multi-shot heavy duty models. The proper selection of a starting gun is essential if accurate timing of the skaters is required.

For long track competitions, the starting gun should be of a heavier duty, higher caliber (i.e. 38) such that the starting shot is almost instantly heard (or seen via a smoke board) by the Timers, who, in some instances, can be up to 100 m away. For short track competition (i.e. inside an arena), a light duty, low caliber gun (i.e. 22) with or without a smoke board, is usually sufficient.

Ideally, the report of the gun should be loud enough to be clearly heard by the Timers but, at the same time, not so loud that it adversely affects the skaters or nearby spectators and officials

The shells (blanks) can be either powder or primer based. Powder shells produce smoke and are necessary for manual timing. Primer shells are considerably less expensive, but virtually smokeless, and therefore suitable for electronic timing only.

Between competitions, the starting guns, shells, etc., should be stored in a locked or secure area. Periodically, or as required due to usage, the gun should be disassembled and the working parts cleaned with soap and water and then oiled lightly to prevent rust.

Starting guns should be inspected annually by a licensed dealer to ensure their structural integrity. All guns will eventually be required to be replaced depending upon their robustness and degree of use.

Electronic Timing/Starting Systems – An Overview

Electronic timekeeping denotes a time-measuring system which is started electrically by the firing of a starting gun and records electronically the crossing of the finish line by each competitor.

The use of electronic timekeeping is compulsory for Canadian Olympic Style Championships, Canada Cups, Canadian Short Track Team Trials, ISU Championships, World Cups and Olympic Winter Games. Electronic timekeeping is seldom used for local, provincial or regional meets in Canada, however, because of the cost and unfamiliarity with the equipment a variety of electric equipment is commercially available ranging from simple finish time only systems to sophisticated TV, scoreboard and computer compatible systems. For competitions using electronic timing, the Starter must be prepared for and familiar with the set-up, which will vary from location to location.

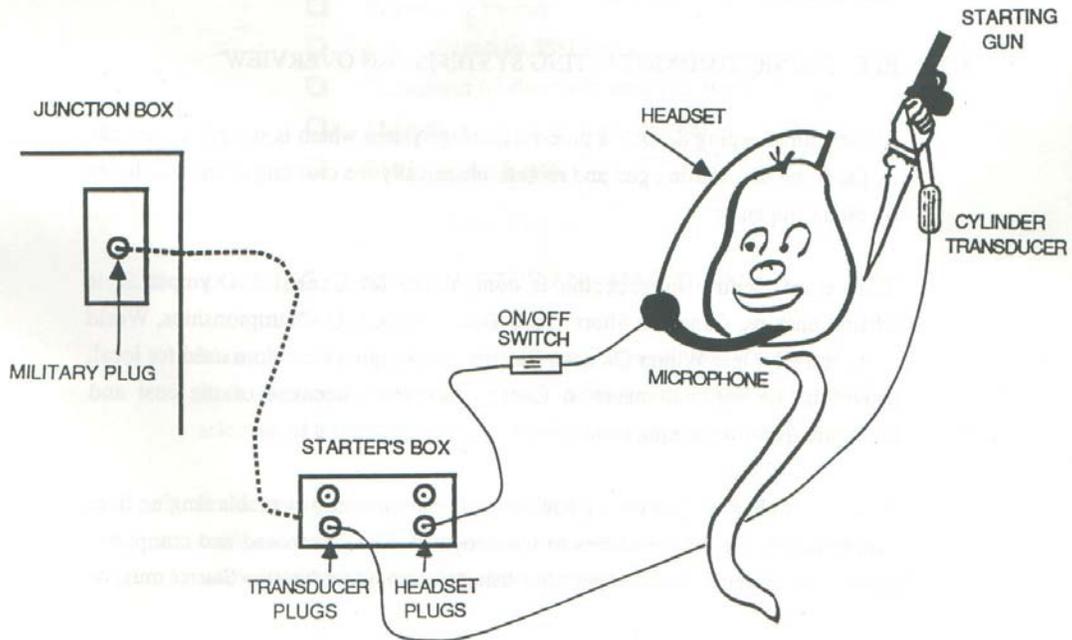


Electronic timing equipment used for Long Track meets in Ste. Foy

With electronic timing, the starting gun is outfitted with a transducer, which is close to, or, in some cases, actually built into the gun. The transducer is usually hung on a short strap from the Starter's thumb. It is relatively close, i.e. within 10 to 15 cm, to the gun.

A transducer is a sound wave sensitive device consisting of two filaments in a metal/plastic housing connected via a wire to the timing system. The report of a gun jars the two filaments together, thereby momentarily completing the circuit and generating an electronic pulse which is recorded at the timing box as the start of the race, i.e. $t = 0.00$ seconds.

For ISU sanctioned competitions, the Starter must also wear a small microphone which (via two loudspeakers positioned near the starting lines) broadcasts the starting commands to the skaters. A schematic diagram of the Starter's set-up is shown below; while a general 400 m double lane track lay-out is presented on the following page.



MEET PLANNING

General

Meet planning is, without a doubt, as important as having acquired and mastered the skills necessary to officiate. The Starter should be well-informed, organized and prepared for every competition. It is naïve to think that all you have to do is show up and a remarkable performance will follow.

Inadequate planning can result in complications which can turn an excellent performance into a relative failure. Successes will be judged as normal and go unnoticed, while small errors will be remembered. It is easy to lose years of effort and successes in one simple poor performance.

Some of the key planning aspects that should be addressed prior to a competition are discussed below. Obviously, the importance of the event (local, provincial, national, or world championship) involves somewhat different preparations. But remember, it is better to be over-prepared for a small competition than to be under-prepared for a more important one.

Selection of Starters

The Starter for a local, provincial or regional competition is usually selected by the Meet Coordinator or Organizing Committee. The Starters for a national or North American competition are selected by SSC ODC (in September of each year). The Starter(s) for ISU Championships, World Cups and Olympic Winter Games are appointed by the ISU President, as much as possible in line with the Organizing Committee's preferences.

The timetable for selection of the Starter is a function of the level of the competition. For example, it is not uncommon to name the Starter at least two to three months before a national or international competition, whereas for local or inter-club meets, a two to three week period is normally sufficient.

Certain officials must be members of SSC in order to serve at SSC sanctioned meets. This requirement is covered by SSC Rule N2-100 as follows:

The following officials at a Canadian Championship event or a SSC sanctioned meet must hold a current SSC membership card; Announcer; Meet Coordinator, Referee, Assistant Referee, Clerk of the Course, Starter, Assistant Starter, Chief Timer, Chief Finish Line Judge, Track Stewards and Chief Recorder."

General guidelines for the selection of starting personnel to various levels of competition are as follows:

Local or Inter-club Meets

- The Starter should be Level II (recommended)
- Assistant Starters should have attended a Level I Officials Clinic

Provincial/Territorial and Regional Competitions

- ❑ The Starter should be Level IIIA. Up and coming Level IIIB's can work as chief under the direction of a senior official
- ❑ Assistant Starters should have Level II.

National and North American Competitions

- ❑ The Starter should be Level IIIA. Up and coming Level IIIB's can work as chief under the direction of a senior official
- ❑ Assistant Starters should be Level IIIB as a minimum.

International Competitions (i.e. World Cup)

- ❑ The Starter should be Level IV.
- ❑ Assistant Starters should have at least Level IIIA.

World Championships/Olympic Winter Games

- ❑ The Starter should be Level V.
- ❑ Assistant Starters should have at least Level IV.

Pre-Meet Preparations

Once selected for a competition, you should apply to work some less important competitions in your region, just for practice; even practices in one of your club's training sessions can be beneficial.

Where possible, visit the race site and familiarize yourself with the environment. Don't be afraid to ask for modifications or adjustments to your work positions. You alone are responsible for your success or failure, which can be caused by an inappropriate positioning of equipment or a displacement that you might not have requested.

Ask to see and handle the pistols that you will be using. If you know how to use and maintain them, you will not be caught off guard if a small problem arises. Check to ensure that the proper type and quantity of shot are available for the meet. Determine where the pistols and ammunition will be stored, and where and when they can be obtained on race day.

On the track, you should also check the pre-start and starting lines and their conformity with various applicable regulations; demand corrections if needed. At the same time, you should also check the locations and hook-ups for electronic timing/starting equipment and microphone, if applicable. Do tests to ensure the operational capabilities of all this equipment.

Prior to the meet, you should have discussions with your assistant(s) to define your expectations of them during the meet, their role and schedule, as well as your interpretation of specific rules and regulations. At a competition, the starting must be the same consistent high quality, whether done by the Starter or his Assistant(s).

Go over your checklist and make sure you have all your equipment. Come to the competition with the appropriate apparel for the conditions.

Finally, re-read the applicable SSC/ISU rules and regulations the day before the event.

Remember, you do not have time to read the rules during a competition.

Coaches/Officials Meeting

This meeting usually takes place the night before, or in the morning of, the meet and is where the Referee sets the pace and directions for the meet. It is essential for you to attend, as it is an opportunity for you to:

- ❑ introduce yourself and your assistant(s),
- ❑ define your interpretation of key rules and procedures at the start line
- ❑ determine if any coaches have hearing impaired skaters
- ❑ offer to practice “trial starts” (if any coaches wish to have them done, set a time and a place), and
- ❑ meet other officials and establish their responsibilities and locations during the meet.

Day of the Meet

You are expected to be calm, fresh and in good shape to do your job well. Each of you knows better than anyone what is needed to be prepared and alert on a competition morning (sleep, relaxation, nourishment, concentration). We will not discuss this point further as you are responsible for your own behavior and will profit or suffer from its consequences.

Before the first race of the competition, arrive an hour early, if possible, to do a last check and make sure there is enough time to make any needed adjustments. Before the other races of the day, take 10 to 15 minutes to do new checks and tests, especially for the long track races where the start positions change. This equipment shift must be done at the end of a race, allowing you time for tests and changes during ice preparation or athletes’ rest periods.

Practice doing a quick recognition check of everyone that will possibly be in visual or verbal contact with you, at whatever level, particularly immediately before a race. Don’t forget that you are in charge at the start and that others must adjust to you rather than you to them. Your first priority is the athletes at the line and you must always work in their interest.

Following each day of races, you should place the starting guns into their containers and give them (and the other starting equipment) to the Meet Coordinator or office staff for safe keeping.

STARTING RULES AND PROCEDURES

General

In order to be a well rounded Starter and function as an effective senior member of the team of officials at a competition, it is essential to completely understand the starting rules and procedures. A good Starter improves the overall quality of the meet, while a poor Starter detracts from the success of the meet.

At the start of each race, the Starter must prevent surprises and distractions which interfere with his and the skaters' concentration. It is essential that the start line be a controlled and pleasant environment. A Starter must strive for perfection. A Starter must control the start, yet remain in the background. The races are for the skaters.

The Starter is in charge and control of the event of the start (ISU Rule 217-1 LT and 290-8a ST). The Referee remains in control of the race with the exception of the start. It is necessary to ensure that all skaters have an equal chance by having them start from a fixed non-moving position.

The starting procedure is always the same, whether the Starter is a novice with average experience or a veteran with ample experience. No matter what level of certification the Starter has, he must always act in accordance what the rules set out in the ISU manual and in the SSC Information Manual (Red Book). Barring different interpretations memorandums, these two sets of rules are more or less the same and are contained in Appendix A (ST) and Appendix B (LT) of this manual.

Carefully read the important points on these starting rules and procedures. This is the time to review in full the SSC and ISU regulations currently in force. After a preliminary reading, study them one by one for comprehension and the proposed interpretation. The starting rules for each type of competition are summarized below and copied in Appendix A (Long Track) and Appendix B (Short Track).

SSC Procedures and regulations

Section N - Rules

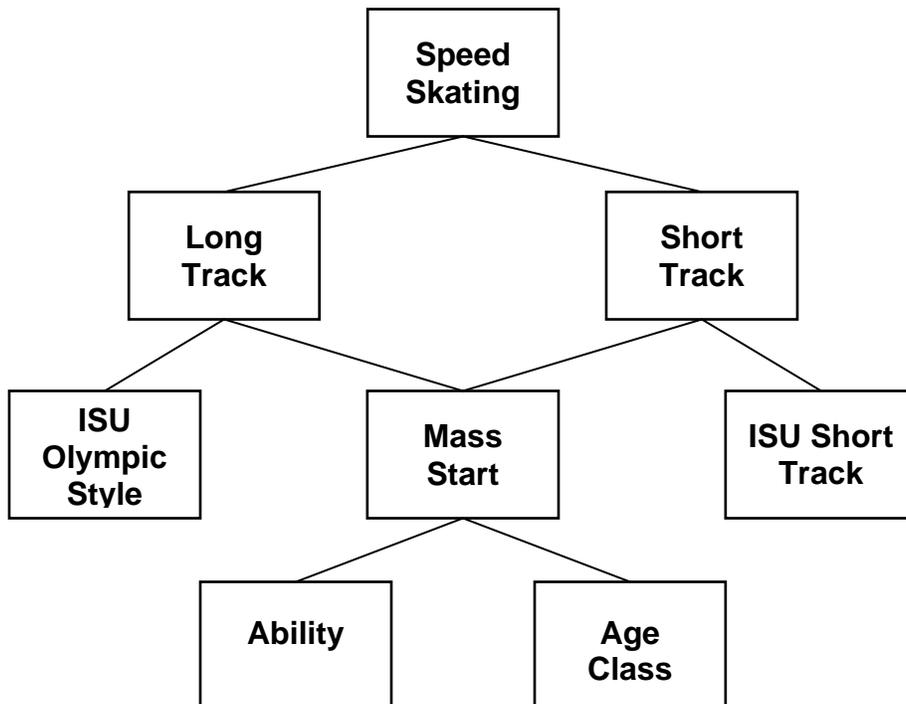
The following rules shall apply to all SSC sanctioned meets, unless reference to a Canadian Championship is made, or other restrictions are specified. Short track and long track Olympic style competitions will follow ISU rules unless indicated otherwise in this section or, in cases involving the format of national-level competitions, in the appropriate High Performance Bulletin. The Memorandum of Agreement between SSC and United States Speed Skating may also contain rules specific to N-Am Championships. Thus, Section N contains SSC-specific rules that differ from corresponding ISU rules. In each case, there is a documented need for a uniquely Canadian approach or to state a practice that considers simply convention. Officiating procedures are contained in officials manuals appropriate to the specialty concerned.

The ISU SPECIAL REGULATIONS SPEED SKATING and SHORT TRACK SPEED SKATING 2006 (green) book outlines rules for Olympic Style skating from 200 to 278 while Short Track rules are numbered 280 to 298.

Below is an overview about the different disciplines and rules. Exact rules are covered in **Appendix A** for Short Track and **Appendix B** for Long Track.

Starting Rules and Procedures

<u>Long Track ISU rules</u>	<u>SSC rules</u>	<u>Short Track ISU rules</u>
217, 254, 255, 261, 278	N3-100 to N3-103	280, 289, 290, 297, 298



Speed Skating Canada Rules

General

- N1-100 to N1-107

Officials

- N2-100 to N2-105

Special rules for Long Track Mass Start Competitions

- N3-100 to N3-105

Special rules for Short Track Competitions

- N4-100 to N4-108

Special rules for Olympic Style Competitions

- N5-100

Special rule for Marathon Competitions

- N6-100 to N6-105

Long Track (Olympic Style)

The applicable starting rules for long track (Olympic style) competitions held in Canada are ISU Rules 217,254 and 255. In addition there are Rules 261 for Pursuit races and 278 for Quartet starts. The starting personnel consist of one or two Starters and one or two Assistants, depending upon the level of the competition.

- Each pairing comes to the line with their positions pre-drawn. The skaters skate in separate lanes. White armband – inner lane and red armband – outer lane.
- The starting lines can be staggered, depending on the distance (**Appendix C**).
- The Starter shall take his position, so that he has a clear view of all skaters starting in the race.
- On the command “Go to the start”, the skaters place themselves between the pre-start and the starting lines and remain in a still and upright position. The two lines are 2.0 m apart as indicated in Rule 255.
- On the command “Ready”, the skaters take their starting position and maintain this position absolutely still until the shot is fired.
- There is a distinct interval of 1 to 1.5 seconds between the time all skaters are still and the firing of the gun.
- False starts are incurred as described in Rule 255
- A false start is indicated by a second shot or whistle from the Starter
- Another Starter’s Assistant may be positioned 50 – 60 m from the starting line and may flag down the skaters if a false start has occurred.
- After a false start the offending skater(s) is informed and the skaters must return to the pre-start line and wait for the starting commands.
- After a false start, the skater committing a next false start of this pair/heat shall be disqualified from the race concerned.

- ❑ In quartet skating, the second pair of skaters (yellow armband – inner lane and blue armband – outer lane) are started when the first pair is approximately one third to one half a lap ahead.

Long Track (Mass Start)

Special rules for long track mass start competitions

Refer to Rules N3-100 - N3-103 in the SSC Red Book

Short Track (SSC and ISU Sanctioned)

The applicable starting rules for short track competitions held in Canada are ISU Rules 280,289,290,297 and 298. The starting personnel usually consist of one Starter and one Assistant Starter, both of whom are usually off-ice.

- ❑ The skaters come to the start with their positions pre-drawn. The Assistant Referee directs the skaters to their appropriate positions.
- ❑ The Starter takes his own position, so that he has a clear view of all skaters at the start.
- ❑ On the command “go to the start” the skaters shall place themselves at their respective dot at the start line. The skaters have to stand still until the starter calls “ready”, whereupon they have to take their starting position with the center of the body over the respective dot and keep this position absolutely until the shot is fired.
- ❑ A false start is given when a skater takes his starting position before the command “ready” or leaves his position or moves any part of his body after the command “ready” and before the shot is fired.
- ❑ The skater or skaters, who made the false start, will be assessed a false start.
- ❑ The skaters must return to the start area without delay.
- ❑ The skaters will receive no more words of instruction once the commands “go to the start” and “ready” have been given.
- ❑ In the event of a second false start by the same skater the Starter shall tell the skater that he/she is disqualified.
- ❑ The apex (4th block) is the marker for restarts. If a skater is interfered with and falls before the apex block, the skaters may be called back to make a new start.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/CERTIFICATION

General

It is important to realize that you are not a perfect Starter (in fact, no one is). But it is more important that you constantly strive for perfection, race after race, meet after meet. The athletes' results, presided over by the invisibility or anonymity of your presence, will be the main object of your evaluation.

You should continually carry out a self-evaluation which will allow you to constantly improve your performance from your first experience onwards. This will bring about a continued improvement in your personal development and increase other people's estimation of your worth.

Working with other Starters, either assistants to you or you as an assistant to others, provides the opportunity to grow as a Starter. The opportunity is enhanced if you are able to develop a rapport with your colleagues which is open and constructively critical. Criticism done in good faith and during the course of the meet will lead to a higher level of performance for both parties involved.

Personal development strategies should consist of attending technical seminars and working in as many meets as possible to gain experience and confidence. These activities can be at all levels; club, provincial, regional, national and international. You should seize every opportunity to participate in these, and not consider any of them to be beneath you as an official.

Officials' Certification Program

The Officials Certification Program was established by, at that time, CASSA in 1982, revised in 1998 and is updated annually. The program is based on a multi-level system, consisting of 5 levels for Referees and Starters, 4 levels for Meet Coordinators and 3 levels for recorders, Timers, Finish Line Judges, Announcers, and all other officials. In Short Track there are 3 levels for Competitors Stewards. Certification requirements for all officials are contained under Section O of the Procedures and Rules in the SSC Information Manual (Red Book).

Responsibilities for certification are as follows:

- Levels I and II - Province / Territory
- Level IIIA and IIIB - SSC
- Level IV and V - SSC / ISU

The evaluation of Levels I and II is conducted by the Branch VP – Officials or Branch Officials Committee while the evaluation of Levels IIIA and IIIB is carried out by SSC's Official Development Committee. For Levels IV and V, the evaluation is also carried out by SSC; however, the recommendations are submitted to the Technical Committee of the ISU for ratification.

Certification Criteria for Starters

Level I

SSC has established technical, practical and performance criteria which should be met for certification of Starters at Levels I through V. The criteria are presented below

Level I requirements:

- Attend a Level I officials clinic
- Assist at 1 or more non-sanctioned meets
- Assistant at 1 or more SSC sanctioned meets (provincial/regional level)
- Satisfactory evaluation from Starter
- Review and approval from Branch Officials Committee

An official who meets all of the above requirements should be certified at Level I. Officials who have achieved some of the criteria, but not all, may be referred to as "Starters-in-training". Once a Starter has achieved a Level I standing, he may begin training for Level II.

Level II

Level II represents the first level of overall responsibility (i.e. Chief) for Starters. A Level II Starter has a good understanding of the starting function and is capable of being a Starter for club/inter-club competitions. Requirements for Level II are listed below:

Level II requirements:

- Attend a Level II clinic
- Assist at 2 or more non-sanctioned meets
- Assistant at 1 or more SSC sanctioned meets (provincial/regional level)
- Satisfactory evaluation from senior Branch Starter
- Review and approval from Branch Officials Committee

A Level I Starter who satisfies all of the above requirements should receive certification at Level II. Since the provinces/territories are technically responsible for the certification of Levels I and II officials, they may adopt their own criteria; however, most Branches follow the SSC requirements outlined above.

Level III

Level III represents the next level of responsibility for Starters, and is split into two sub-levels, IIIB (referred to as SSC Sanctioned) and IIIA (referred to as National Championships/Trials).

A Level IIIB Starter is a knowledgeable, technically competent official who is capable of being Starter for provincial and regional competitions. Requirements for Level IIIB are presented below:

Level IIIB requirements:

- Attend a Level III clinic
- Assist at 1 or more SSC sanctioned meets (provincial/regional level)
- Assistant at 1 or more SSC sanctioned meets (national/international level)
- Documented recommendation from Branch
- Satisfactory evaluation from senior SSC Starter
- Review and approval from SSC Officials Committee

Level II Starters who satisfy all of the above requirements should receive certification at Level IIIB in either mass start (short track and long track) Olympic style or both i.e. Level IIIB Starter (mass start) and may begin training for Level IIIA.

A Level IIIA Starter is a more knowledgeable, more experienced official who is capable of being Starter for national and international (North American) competitions. Requirements for Level IIIA are presented below:

Level IIIA requirements:

- Starter at 3 or more SSC sanctioned meets (provincial/regional level)
- Assistant at 3 or more SSC sanctioned meets (national/international level)
- Documented recommendation from Branch
- Satisfactory evaluation from senior SSC Starter
- Review and approval from SSC Officials Committee

Level IIIB Starters who satisfy all of the above requirements will receive certification at Level IIIA in mass start (short track and long track), Olympic style or both, i.e. Level IIIA Starter (Olympic).

Level IV

Level IV represents the next level of responsibility for Starters. A Level IV Starter is a highly competent, experienced senior official who is capable of being Starter for International Competitions. Requirements for Level IV are presented below.

Level IV requirements:

- Attend an ISU clinic
- Instruct at a Level II Starters clinic
- Starter at 3 or more SSC sanctioned meets (national/international level)
- Assistant Starter at one or more ISU International Competitions (i.e. World Cup)
- Satisfactory evaluation from ISU Starter
- Documented recommendation from Branch
- Review and approval from SSC ODC
- Ratification by ISU Technical Committee

Level IIIA Starters who satisfy all of the above requirements will receive certification at Level IV in either Short track, Olympic Style or both, i.e. Level IV Starter (short track).

Level V

Level V represents the highest level of responsibility for Starters. A Level V Starter is a highly competent, internationally experienced and respected, senior official who is capable of being Starter for World Championships, World Cups and Olympic Winter Games. Requirements for Level V are presented below.

Level V requirements:

- Instruct at a Level III Starters clinic
- Starter at 5 or more SSC sanctioned meets (national/international level)
- Starter at one or more ISU International Competitions (i.e. World Cup)
- Satisfactory evaluation from ISU Representative or senior ISU Starter
- Documented recommendation from Branch
- Review and approval from SSC ODC
- Ratification by ISU Technical Committee

Level IV Starters who satisfy all of the above requirements will receive certification at Level V in either short track, Olympic style or both, i.e. Level V Starter (Olympic)

APPENDICES

Appendix A - 400 meter speed skating oval

Appendix B - Short track speed skating oval

