



Collegiate Synchronized Skating

In the 2008 season, 42 teams in two levels around the country registered with U.S. Figure Skating. In addition, four college teams competed at the junior or senior level, three of whom earned spots on Team USA. The collegiate program debuted at the 1997 U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships, where three colleges (Bowling Green State University, Miami University and Western Michigan University) participated.

While the opportunities for synchronized skating at the collegiate level are widespread and continue to grow each year, scholarships are not available, even at schools with varsity programs.

The majority of the programs are student run "club sports," which receive partial funding from their colleges. Student athletes learn valuable leadership, communication and management skills for post graduation while managing and running all aspects of their programs – including working with the university, budgeting, event and travel planning, recruiting, scheduling, hiring coaches, etc.

There are two fully funded varsity programs in the U.S.: Miami University and Adrian College.

Skating on a collegiate team is the experience of a lifetime!

What about the Olympics?

It is every synchronized skater's dream that someday the sport will be included in the Olympic Winter Games.

In order for a sport to be added, it first must be recommended by the sport's international governing body – in our case, the ISU – to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). This has not happened yet, as the sport must continue to develop and grow on the world level.

U.S. Figure Skating's approach is to do everything possible to continually improve the quality, popularity and depth of talent and participation of synchronized skating in the U.S., so that when it does become an Olympic sport, Team USA will stand on the podium.

U.S. Figure Skating is proud to put more resources into synchronized skating than any other ISU member federation. Some of the programs, projects and funding efforts by U.S. Figure Skating include:

COACHES EDUCATION

- international and sectional seminars
- mentor programs
- international and grassroots coach development programs
- partnership with the Professional Skaters Association (PSA)

TEAM & ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

- sports science programs
- synchronized training festival
- synchronized monitor program for sectional level teams

INTERNATIONAL ENVELOPE PROGRAM

- international monitor program
- training, travel and uniform grants and World/World Junior team apparel
- athlete travel to the World Synchronized Skating Championships & World Challenge Cup for Juniors
- U.S. Figure Skating budgets over \$400,000 annually in direct support to the U.S. Synchronized Skating Team

RESOURCES FOR SYNCHRONIZED TEAMS

- U.S. Figure Skating Online
- sponsorship and promotional materials
- tools and guides for starting, managing and coaching a synchronized skating team.
- icenetwork.com

PROMOTION/OUTREACH

- SKATING magazine
- U.S. Figure Skating Online
- media guide
- collegiate skating fact sheet
- club education
- Basic Skills workshops and materials for skating directors
- NARCE and PSA seminars.



U.S. FIGURE SKATING 2008 Synchronized Skating Fact Sheet

Synchronized skating is a growing discipline of figure skating. It is a highly technical form of figure skating characterized by speed, accuracy, intricate formations and breathtaking transitions. Synchronized skating is performed by teams of 8-20 athletes and incorporates aspects of singles, pairs and ice dancing into a team sport.

Synchronized skating is the newest discipline of figure skating. It began approximately 50 years ago with a group of skaters in Ann Arbor Mich., called the Hockettes, who organized to perform exhibitions at the University of Michigan ice hockey games.

Synchronized skating has grown into a competitive discipline, with athletes participating all over the world and 2008

marking U.S. Figure Skating's 25th U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships. There are more than 500 teams registered with U.S. Figure Skating, representing more than 8,000 athletes in addition to officials, coaches, supports and alumni.

The competitive structure of U.S. synchronized skating rises from the U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills program through the sectional championships to the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships. The top teams at the senior level are selected to represent the United States at the World Synchronized Skating Championships.

Synchronized skating is not yet an Olympic sport, but it did debut as an exhibition sport at the 2007 Winter World University Games, and will be featured as a full medal sport at the 2009 Winter World University Games in Harbin, China.

Timeline for synchronized skating:

- 1976 The first official synchronized skating competition is held in Ann Arbor, Mich.
- 1984 The first U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships are held in Bowling Green, Ohio.
- 1989 Sweden holds the first international synchronized skating competition.
- 1994 The International Skating Union (ISU) officially recognizes synchronized skating as the fifth discipline of figure skating. (Men's and ladies singles, pairs and ice dancing are the other four.)
- 1996 The first ISU World Synchronized Skating Challenge Cup (a precursor to a World Championships) is held in Boston, Mass.
- 2000 The ISU holds the first World Synchronized Skating Championships in Minneapolis, Minn.
- 2001 The ISU holds the first World Challenge Cup for Juniors in Neuchatel, Switzerland. Team USA (Superettes) wins the bronze.
- 2007 Synchronized skating is added to the Winter World University Games in Torino, Italy. Miami University finishes fourth.
- 2007 U.S. Figure Skating sanctions the largest skating event ever held – the combined Midwestern and Pacific Coast Synchronized Skating Sectional Championships. More than 2,600 athletes on 157 teams participate.
- 2007 Miami University Varsity Synchronized Skating Team wins the silver medal at the 2007 World Synchronized Skating Championships in London, Ontario, Canada – the first ever World medal for a U.S. Team.
- 2008 U.S. Figure Skating holds the 25th U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships in Providence, R.I.

Skaters of All Ages

Synchronized skating is a lifetime sport. Skaters on beginner or preliminary teams are as young as 5 years old, while athletes enjoy competing on masters teams well into their 70s.

In 2008 approximately 40 percent of teams registered in the beginner, preliminary, pre-juvenile or juvenile levels. These teams are comprised predominantly of skaters under 13 – the elementary or middle school ages.

The next largest group of teams were those at 13-17 years old, representing 35 percent of the total. Teams in the open

juvenile, open junior, intermediate, novice and junior levels are comprised predominantly of high school age athletes.

The senior, sometimes called “championship,” level is the highest and most competitive level of synchronized skating. Like singles, pairs and dance, reaching this level is a huge accomplishment realized by a relatively small number of athletes. Just 2 percent of teams compete at this level. Senior teams are comprised of older high school students, college students or recent college graduates between the ages of 16-24.

The collegiate level remains a fast grow-

ing event. With 35 percent growth since the 2006 season, there were 42 synchronized teams registered in the collegiate or open collegiate level. Athletes on these teams must be college students as recognized by the institution they attend.

Synchronized skaters exemplify “skating for life.” There are three adult levels which are populated by skaters who took up figure skating as an adult, skaters who competed in singles as a child, and those who have been on a synchronized team for longer than they can remember! The open adult, adult and masters levels boast 60 registered teams.

Geography

U.S. Figure Skating divides the 505 teams across the U.S. into three competitive geographic sections:

Pacific Coast: The Pacific Coast section, encompassing Colorado and all states to the west, is home to 51, or 10 percent of the total teams.

Midwest: The largest section of the country is the Midwest, boasting 254 registered teams, or 50 percent of the total.

East: Figure skating clubs in the Eastern section of the country are at 200 or 40 percent of all U.S. synchronized skating teams.

Around the World

Synchronized skating began in the United States, but it has spread rapidly around the world. Since the first World Figure Skating Championships in 2000, 20 countries on five continents have entered a team in the championship.

U.S. Figure Skating names 10-15 synchronized teams annually to Team USA to represent the United States at international competitions sanctioned by the ISU.

The United States joins Finland, Sweden and Canada as one of the top countries in the world. All four U.S. teams sent to the 2007 World Challenge Cup for Juniors and World Synchronized Skating Championships finished in the top five, with Chicago Jazz taking the bronze at the junior event and Miami University winning the silver at the World Synchronized Skating Championships.



Competitive Pipeline

U.S. Figure Skating is the national governing body for figure skating in the U.S., as recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) and the International Skating Union (ISU).

The competitive pipeline offers competition in 15 levels, differentiated by age, skill level and the number of skaters on each team.

U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills/ Beginner Synchronized Skating Program

Teams develop the skills they need for future success by beginning with the fundamentals in the U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills beginner synchronized skating program. The “Synchro 1-4” badge curriculum teaches the basic skills of the sport, while the beginner competi-

tive program combines these skills into a 1:30-2:00 program that can be skated at nonqualifying and Basic Skills competitions.

SYNCHRO 1-4 badges
any number of skaters, any age

BEGINNER 1, 2 or 3
8 – 16 skaters, age varies by level



Developmental levels

Teams competing in the levels below may participate in their respective sectional championships but do not progress to the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships.

- PRELIMINARY** | 8-16 skaters, majority under 12; all under 10
- PRE-JUVENILE** | 8-12 skaters, majority under 12
- OPEN JUVENILE** | 8-12 skaters, majority under 19
- OPEN JUNIOR** | 12-20 skaters, at least 12; majority under 19

Competitive levels

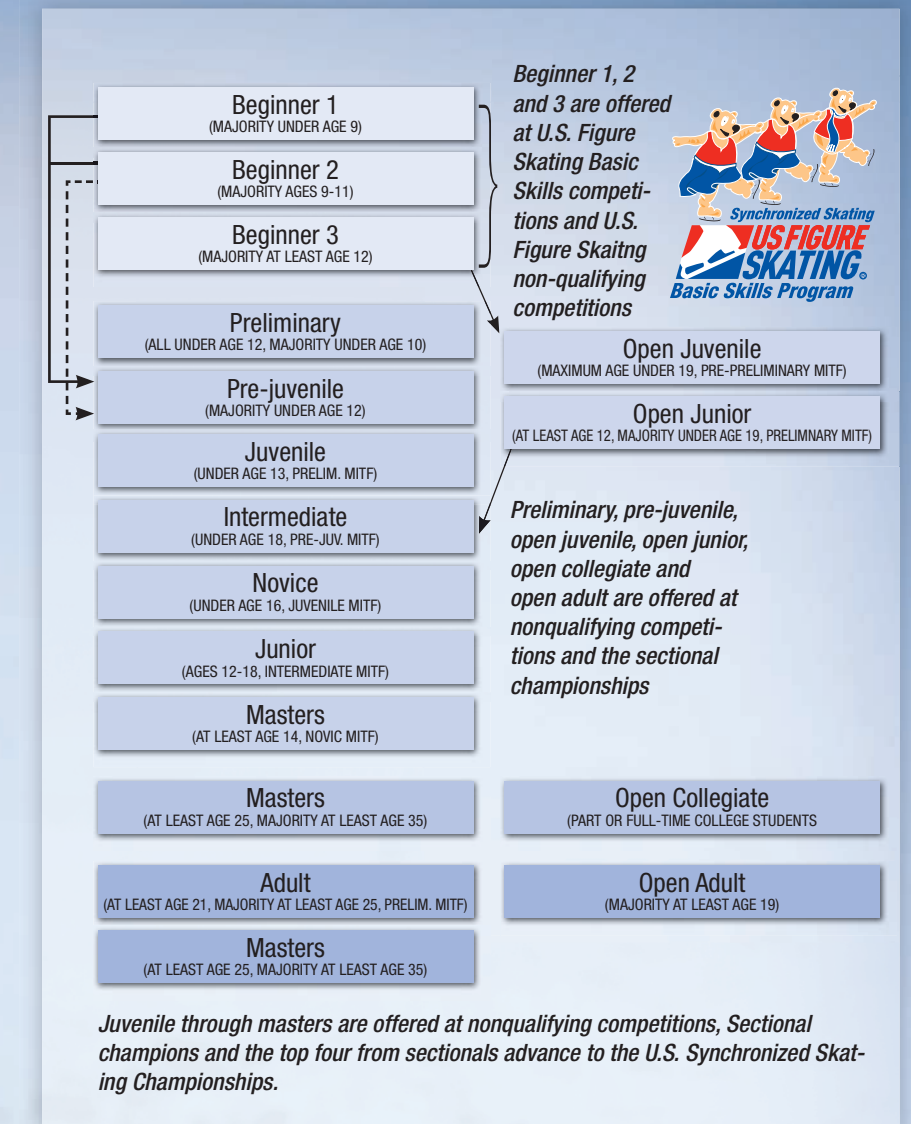
Teams in competitive levels compete at their respective sectional championships, with the top four advancing to the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships. The top teams at the novice, junior and senior levels may be selected for international and world competitions.

- JUVENILE** | 12-20 skaters, all under 13
- INTERMEDIATE** | 12-20 skaters, all under 18
- NOVICE** | 12-20 skaters, all under 16
- JUNIOR** | 12-16 skaters, all at least 12 and under 19
- SENIOR** | 16 skaters, all at least 14

Collegiate levels

Teams competing in collegiate levels are comprised of college students. Open collegiate teams compete only at non-qualifying competitions and the sectional championships; collegiate teams may advance to the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships by placing in the top four at their respective sectional championship.

- OPEN COLLEGIATE** | 8-16 skaters, part or full-time college students
- COLLEGIATE** | 12-20 skaters, all full-time college students



Adult levels

Teams competing in the adult levels are comprised of skaters who are continuing in the sport or learning to skate for the first time. All adult levels compete at sectionals, with the top four in the adult and masters categories advancing to the national championships.

- OPEN ADULT** | 8-12 skaters, majority at least 19
- ADULT** | 12-20 skaters, all at least 21, majority at least 25
- MASTERS** | 12-20 skaters, all at least 25, majority at least 35

Competitive Pipeline

- World Synchronized Skating Championships
- World Challenge Cup for Juniors
- ISU-Sanctioned International Competitions
- U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships
- Eastern, Midwestern and Pacific Coast Sectional Synchronized Skating Championships
- Nonqualifying U.S. Figure Skating Competitions
- U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Competitions