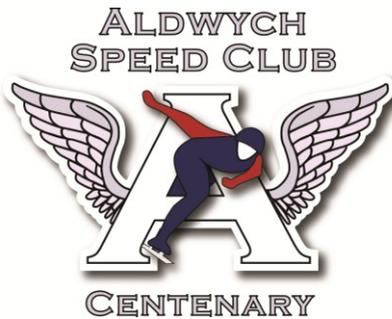


# The Aldwych Speed Club



## Members' Handbook

[www.aldwychspeedclub.org](http://www.aldwychspeedclub.org)

***This hand book is primarily directed at our new and prospective members. There are however, some sections that even our veteran skaters should be interested in reading and we hope everyone will read over those sections***

## CONTENTS

Welcome to the Aldwych Speed Club.....	3
A Message to Parents .....	4
A Message to Teenage and Younger Skaters.....	4
A Message to Adult Skaters .....	5
Speed Skating Equipment.....	6
Skates and blades .....	7
Skin suits .....	7
Safety .....	8
Some Things You Should do Before Getting on the Ice .....	9
The Training Groups .....	10
Basic Skating Skills Certificate.....	11
Frequently Asked Questions.....	12
Useful Information.....	12

## WELCOME TO THE ALDWYCH SPEED CLUB

Welcome to the Aldwych Speed Club. We are a short-track ice speed skating club that trains twice a week on the ice rink at the Guildford Spectrum Leisure Centre in Guildford, Surrey UK.

We cater for a wide range of ages and abilities, from beginners and older skaters who want to maintain their skills and fitness to top skaters on the verge of the Great Britain Team and the very youngest novices who want to see how far they can go in this specialist and exciting sport. Many members of the club have represented Great Britain in international competitions, including the Olympics, whilst our own competitions allow all abilities to try to achieve their personal goals in a race situation.

If you are new to speed skating please don't be disappointed if you find it difficult at first. The skates and blades are very different to other forms of skating and the technique to achieve high speed can feel awkward. You're likely to find it hard to use the edges correctly at first. Just remember that everyone struggled in the same way when they started (even group A), and if you keep working you will be able to master the technique and fly round the rink at speed!

## A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

The coaching staff are trying to deliver a well balanced training programme which will develop all aspects of our skaters and fitness, from the youngest/newest skaters to our older and elite skaters. The contents of training sessions will change and develop throughout the season.

None of our coaches is paid for teaching and as our numbers grow it is an increasingly demanding job. We hope you will give them your full support.

There are many ways you can help at the club such as helping to push the mats on and off the ice before and after a session; helping out at race meetings or even participating on the committee. Please ask any committee member if you'd like to help.

## A MESSAGE TO JUNIOR SKATERS

Speed skating is great fun! We want you to enjoy your skating and to reach your potential in the sport. If you have talent, there are many opportunities to race at rinks around the country, join development training camps or even represent your country (we have had several skaters attend the Junior World Championships).

Speed skating can be frustrating. You will be told to skate in a particular way that will be difficult and uncomfortable, but this really is the way to achieve the fastest speeds. Working on your technique is the only way to get quicker – which ultimately will mean winning races!

Speed skating can be dangerous. The blades are very sharp, and skaters travel at very high speeds. Please listen to everything the coaching team tells you, and never wander on to the track when a group is skating.

## A MESSAGE TO ADULT SKATERS

Sharing the ice with the young children can often be trying on adults. We sometimes forget what it was like to be young and to be learning new and difficult skills.

Some youngsters simply do not pay attention. They will muck about. They will not listen and they will skate dangerously. You can tell some youngsters every single session not to do something and they will do it anyway. Some of you get frustrated that the kids get disproportionately more time for their rotation than the other groups. It takes more time to explain things to them and they need lots more personal attention! That is just a fact of learning. So, don't get mad at them for being a kid. HELP THEM INSTEAD!

At the same time, we want you to have a good workout, a fun skate and the chance to explore your own limits. These two goals need not be with each other.

## SPEED SKATING EQUIPMENT

Although the club has an extensive stock of skates available for loan, other loan equipment is limited. We expect that new skaters will purchase all the following equipment after the first month.

- HELMET – Available from club sales (not cycle helmet as they have vents which are large enough for a skate to pass through, and therefore can be dangerous.)
- NECK GUARD – Available from club sales.
- GLOVES – Available from club sales (should be cut-proof)
- KNEE PADS – Available from club sales.
- SHIN GUARDS – Available from any good sports shop. Look for soccer shin guards without ankle protection.
- LONG SLEEVE SHIRT – All skin must be covered except the face.
- TRACK SUIT BOTTOMS – Without flared bottoms.
- DRINKS BOTTLE – Plastic not metal.
- BLADE GUARDS – Available from club sales.
- OLD TOWEL – To dry blades and boots.

## SKATES AND BLADES

Speed skates and blades are very different from other skates, and can be quite expensive to buy. The club has a good stock of loan skates, but cannot guarantee to be able to provide enough skates of the right size. In this case skates will be issued on a first come, first served basis. **Club skates should not be taken home**, unless you need them for a competition, in which case you should return them after the next club session.

When you are ready to get your own skates, ask about the options. There are two types of boot: off-the-peg boots are made to a standard size, whereas custom boots are built to follow the exact shape of your foot (you'll need to make a plaster cast of your feet to get them made). There are also a number of different suppliers (from around the world), and you should ask the coaching staff which suppliers would be the best option for you.

There are also a number of different suppliers for blades. All speed skating blades are sharpened by hand, using a stone and a jig. If you get your own skates, you'll probably also benefit from having your own sharpening kit, rather than waiting to use the club's.

## SKIN SUITS

If you want to race, you will need a skin suit (you'll also find it easier to skate with one). There are two types of skin suit: basic and a cutproof. The cutproof obviously offers better protection against skate blades. Some club members do have children's skin suits available from time to time, so it is always worth asking.

## SAFETY

Speed skating can be dangerous, and it is essential that everyone obeys basic safety rules and thinks about potential risks. To minimise the risks, the club takes extensive safety precautions, based on advice from NISA and other organisations. Here are some basic guidelines to help you skate safely:

- Speed skating blades can be extremely sharp, and can easily cause nasty cuts. Always beware of blades, particularly when sharpening, and always use skate guards when off the ice
- Always wear the right equipment
- If the session has started, do not open the door or go onto the ice until a coach signals that it is safe
- Never skate round to train when the doors are open or when the pads are not fully put out
- Only skaters over the age of 16 are allowed to put the pads out and collect them in at the end of a session
- Always listen to the coaches' directions when on and off the ice
- Be careful during relays - do not push during a relay changeover if it happens after the red line
- Do not wander on the track when other groups are training
- Be aware that group C may be training on an inner track, and make sure you don't get in their way

## SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD DO BEFORE GETTING ON THE ICE

1. Go to the toilet. Having to go while on the ice means you end up missing about ten minutes of skating.
2. Have your water bottle filled.
3. Have all your safety equipment on... helmet, gloves, neck guard, knee pads, shin guards and skates.
4. Be ready to get on the ice at least five minutes before the session starts. Adults should be ready to help put the pads out as soon as we are allowed on the ice
5. Get yourself in a good skating mood.

Be ready to learn new things. SMILE AND HAVE FUN! It is just amazing how much more you learn when you are smiling. Remember, you have to fall one hundred times before we expect you to be good. So, don't be discouraged because you have a few falls.

## THE TRAINING GROUPS

The club runs 3 training groups – A, B and C. The coach decides which group you will train in, selecting the group that will best help your development, based upon your ability (not age).

- Group A is the top group, and can include skaters on the verge of the GB squad.
- Group B is for developing skaters, younger members aiming for group B and recreational skaters
- Group C is for the youngest skaters and those new for the sport

Normally the club would expect skaters to be able to cross over before taking to the ice, however we do sometimes take skaters who are just below this level, so it is always best to discuss your ability with the coaching team before your first session.

Group A and B have a training programme set by the head coach. Group C will have some time skating on the track, although at this level they can train on an “inner track” and therefore their sessions will include less time on the full track.

## BASIC SKATING SKILLS CERTIFICATE

Speed skating is a very technical sport – your speed is very dependent upon good technique. In order that beginners develop quickly, the club has a basic skating skills certificate that is awarded when a skater can demonstrate fundamental techniques and drills. Achieving this certificate is a first step towards skating with group B.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Q. Where do I get skates & equipment?*

A. Skates can be borrowed from the club. Other equipment can be purchased from the club.

*Q. Where do I sharpen my skates?*

A. We hand sharpen them ourselves. We have the equipment to teach you.

*Q. What clothes do I need?*

A. Any comfortable tracksuit or running outfits will work. When you get ready to compete you will have to buy a skin suit in the clubs colours.

*Q. What do I need in my skate bag besides skates?*

A. Bring a towel to dry your skate blades after every practice to keep them from getting rust spots. Bring some socks. Have your protective equipment in the bag... knee pads, helmet, gloves, neck guard, extra shoe laces, water bottle.

*Q. I want to race, what do I need to do?*

A. If you want to race, you'll need a skin suit. You can initially race as a novice, but if you want to continue you will need to register with the National Ice Skating Association (NISA).

## USEFUL INFORMATION

Here are some websites with useful information

[www.aldwychspeedclub.org](http://www.aldwychspeedclub.org)

the club's website

[www.iceskating.org.uk/shorttrack](http://www.iceskating.org.uk/shorttrack)

National ice skating association  
(NISA)