



Clothing: Lessons, Testing, and Competition

Obviously when you compete or test you'll want to wear something that's a bit special, and comfort won't be your first priority. But what about all those hours you spend practicing?? Here comfort and safety will be more important to you.

It is important that whatever you wear be loose enough to not restrict your motion. It should not be so loose or baggy that it presents a safety hazard however. You should never wear anything that is so loose that it drags on the ice, or close to your blades.

If you're prone to getting cold, consider a layered approach. A couple of thin sweaters or sweatshirts will be better than one really heavy thick one -- and you can shed layers as you heat up.

Girls generally wear thin sparkly tights when competing. But for practice some skaters choose to wear those slightly baggy "jogging suit" or "sweat suit" pants over their tights. Like sweaters, these can be removed as you heat up. Another option is to get the heavier practice tights that some vendors sell. In our area, skaters call these "sweater tights", and get them from [Mondor](#). From a distance, these look just like the regular competition tights.

You might choose to wear a nylon windsuit like runners often wear. These are lightweight, and usually have a felt lining for warmth. These suits are generally nice and loose so they don't restrict you. The nylon tends to shed water, and always keeps it away from your skin, unlike tights or normal pants. And the nylon material is very slippery -- when you fall, it slides very nicely on the ice.

Gloves are appropriate if your hands get cold and are required for all RoseGarden programs. Most skaters wear those stretchy "one-size-fits-all" gloves that you can get at discount stores. You should get lots of pairs because they always seem to disappear even faster than socks and they are often difficult to get during the summer months.

Heavy outdoor coats generally hinder your ability to move, and should probably be avoided unless it's really cold and you have no other options.

Those chemical heat packs that are sold for hunters are often used to keep hands or feet warm (some skaters even put them inside their boots). Be careful though if you use them, because they generate a lot of heat and can burn you if you're not careful. Be careful to dispose of them properly when they're used up.

Parents of small children in early learn-to-skate programs may feel more comfortable if their children wear hockey helmets to protect their heads. Some rinks require this until a certain level of proficiency is attained. In others, it is a matter of personal choice. Full hockey and ski helmets provide the most protection but a bicycle helmet is sufficient for most beginning skaters. The rink does not rent helmets so skaters must come prepared.

Competition and Test Clothing

It's important to realize as you go to tests or competitions that you're going there as a skater, not as a fashion model. The judges will be a lot more interested in what you do than in how you look. You should be neat and tidy, and you should ensure that your clothing is appropriate to your age and skating level.

The USFSA does set some minimal standards for clothing that must be followed, or deductions will be assessed during a competition. These can be found in the Rulebook, as summarized below. A good rule to follow is ALL skaters must have all competition and testing outfits approved by their coach before any ISI or USFS event.

- All clothing must be modest, dignified, not theatrical in design, and appropriate for athletic competition
- Clothing must not give the effect of excessive nudity for athletic sport
- Ladies in singles and pairs may wear skirts, trousers, or tights (including unitards)
- For dance, ladies must wear a skirt or dress
- For synchro, ladies may wear a skirt or body suits or full-length trousers. Ladies skirts must not be below the top of the calf of the legs for safety reasons
- Men must wear full-length trousers - no tights for men are permitted.
- For dance, men's costumes may not be sleeveless
- Any ornamentation attached to the clothing must be firmly fastened so as not to fall off during skating.
- For dance, decorations on costumes must be non-detachable
- For synchro, sequins, rhinestones, or jeweled trim may be used in moderation on the clothing of senior and junior teams only. It is

allowed on the bodice only. Sleeves and skirts may not be adorned. Feathers or other materials that could be dislodged are not allowed

- Hair pins and bobby pins are prohibited for synchro competition (hair must be sewn to secure it)
- For synchro, the clothing worn in actual competition may not bear any form of advertising. Warmup suits may bear the name of a sponsor when the team is on ice for warmup
- If you buy your clothing from a catalog supplier that caters to the skating market, you can be reasonably confident that these standards are followed. If you make your own, or get a local dressmaker to make your outfits, you should ensure that the above rules are understood.

If you do make your clothing, consider some of the following hints:

- Girl's sleeves usually have a loop at the end which can be "hooked" over a finger to keep the sleeves from sliding up the arms as she moves.
- Similarly, boy's pants usually have a strap on the bottom that goes under the boot to keep them tidy. This strap is generally attached with "Velcro" or by a button.
- Make sure that the material is stretchy enough to permit movement without binding, pulling, or tearing out of the seams.
- Ladies clothing often uses "flesh-colored" fabric to maintain appropriate modesty while creating the illusion of "less cover".
- Hot Glue guns work well for attaching sequins and small decorations, although actual needle-and-thread application is more secure for larger decorations.

Design your clothing so that it hides any underwear that is worn, and provides adequate support and cover for those occasions when it is not. Tights are designed so underwear does not have to be worn and will create a nicer line for the skater. Please check with your coach on policies on wearing underwear with your skating costume.