



Skate Canada



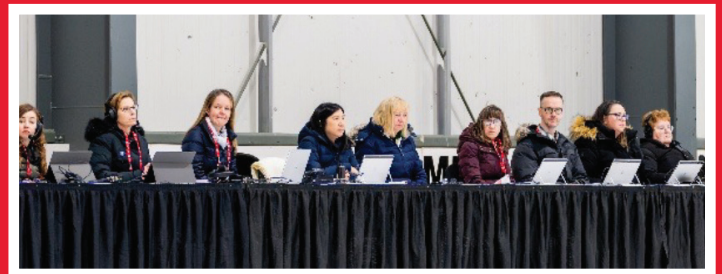
A Sincere Thank You to All Officials!

On behalf of the Officials Assignment and Promotion Committee (OAP) and Skate Canada, we are very grateful for your participation in the various online educational sessions and section run competitions this past season. Your continued dedication to make our events of 2025/26 Skate Canada Challenge in Calgary, 2026 Canadian National Skating Championships in Gatineau, 2026 Skate Canada Trophy in Dartmouth, and 2026 Skate Canada Cup in Waterloo, as well as all other events you may have served at, a success, is very much appreciated!

2025-2026 Season

2025-2026 SKATE CANADA CHALLENGE

This season the 2025-2026 Skate Canada Challenge was hosted in Calgary, Alberta. This competition brings together coaches, officials, athletes, and spectators from across the country. The expertise and dedication of our officials continue to be a key contributor to the success of our Challenge event.



“

Skate Canada Challenge can be a very busy week, with two rinks running simultaneously and a combination of new and experienced competitors in attendance. As Co-Technical Representative along with my colleague, Sheila Beard, we worked closely with the Local Organizing Committee and Skate Canada staff in attendance. They worked hard to ensure the event ran as seamlessly as possible. With this being an Olympic year, there was a high level of excitement throughout the week as there was a lot on the line for all of the athletes. Having a quiet week from the perspective of a Technical Representative means the event went well! We were able to enjoy the competition and appreciate the high level of skating from our athletes with each performance. ”

- Allyson Senecal, Co-Lead Technical Representative

OFFICIALS TRIAL JUDGE PROGRAM 2025



Skate Canada hosted a Trial Judge Program at the 2025-26 Skate Canada Challenge in Calgary, Alberta. The purpose of this program was for officials to gain reports in the Singles and Ice Dance discipline, and to give smaller sections the opportunity to provide officials experience in disciplines that may not be well represented within their own section. Thirteen officials representing seven sections participated in this program facilitated by Leslie Keen with support from Genevieve Rosa. Participants were also provided the opportunity to sit in on pre-event meetings, and participated in a Music Foundations workshop. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to this program.



As a judge from a smaller section with very few competitive Ice Dance teams, the Challenge Trial Judge Program offered a wonderful opportunity for exposure and growth for us officials. To be able to learn from experienced individuals and alongside others at a similar stage in their journey is a truly valuable development experience that has strengthened both my confidence and technical understanding as a judge. ”

- Olivier Baril, Senior Section Level Singles Judge, Novice Dance Judge

2026 SKATE CANADA TROPHY

The 2026 Skate Canada Trophy was a great success in Dartmouth. Canada's up-and-coming skaters competed in the pre-novice and novice categories. The LOC, volunteers, and officials all contributed to a memorable event, where three national records were set. It's always exciting to see Novice Canadian Champions crowned and Pre Novice skaters achieve their personal bests. Thank you to a great group of officials, volunteers and athletes for a successful event.



I was privileged to serve as a Technical Representative along with Justin Woodley at the 2026 Skate Canada Trophy in Dartmouth, NS. The emerging talent at the Pre-Novice and Novice levels was wonderful to have a rink side view of. Since this event coincided with the opening of the 2026 Olympic Winter Games, my thoughts drifted to whether athletes competing at Trophy might find that their skating journey takes them to the Olympics one day. A happy memory from this event was witnessing the amazing spirit of the volunteer community in Nova Scotia. Volunteers I interacted with spoke of their ties to the skating community and how much they enjoyed volunteering. In some cases, this translated to requesting extra shifts because they were having so much fun! Thanks to a dedicated LOC and the tremendous work of Skate Canada staff as their contributions positioned this event for success and made it a pleasure to be a part of. ”

- Brenda Hart, Co-Lead Technical Representative

2026 CANADIAN NATIONAL SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS



The country's top skaters returned to Gatineau, Quebec for the 2026 Canadian National Championships to compete for national titles. It was an exciting event that culminated with the selection of Team Canada's athletes to compete at the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympic Winter Games. The crowd in attendance was full of energy that fueled the athletes and the officials! Thank you to all the officials and volunteers that made this Championships a success.



It's always a privilege and an honour to serve as a technical representative at the Skate Canada National Championships, alongside the many dedicated Skate Canada volunteers, staff, and my co-technical representative, Joanne, and this year was no exception. The 2026 Canadian National Championships in Gatineau, Quebec, brought together the skating community from across the country, showcasing the nation's top athletes in an exciting lead-up to 2026 Olympic team selection. An enthusiastic crowd created an electric atmosphere, cheering and celebrating every performance, while the skaters brought high-level performances and many personal bests, making the event truly unforgettable. Beyond the competition, the Championships were a celebration of the entire skating community, including athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and fans, all coming together for the love of the sport. I left the week inspired and honoured to witness such incredible talent, as the event not only highlighted Canadian skating excellence but also set the stage for success at the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympic Games.

- Sarah Miles, Co-Lead Technical Representative

2026 SKATE CANADA CUP

Skate Canada Cup returned to Waterloo for a third year with Novice, Junior, Gold, and Open category events. This event showcased high-level performances, precision, and artistry from teams across Canada.



It was a privilege to work with the staff from Skate Canada and the very efficient volunteers that made my job as Technical Representative as pleasure. We had teams from Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia which we felt was a good representation of Synchro across Canada. The level of skating was good, and the audience was very supportive of all teams.

- Joanne Shaw, Co-Lead Technical Representative

HONOURING OF SUSAN MORRISS



The OAP continues to honour retiring officials. At the 2026 Canadian National Skating Championships, we gathered to celebrate the officiating career of Susan Morriss. Skate Canada President Karen Butcher thanked Susan for her significant contributions and was presented with a gift from Skate Canada. Diane Kamagianis highlighted Susan's officiating career and had everyone laughing and in tears.



It is always a pleasure to attend these evenings to celebrate our international officials. Honouring Susan for her contributions, leadership, and development of skating at all levels was a wonderful part of the National Skating Championships. Susan's dedication and commitment for so many years is evidence of true love of the sport. Congratulations and thank you Susan for your years of service as an ISU official.

- Laura Baker, Senior Manager of Performance Excellence and Officials

2025-26 EXAM CANDIDATES

This year we had numerous exams at our domestic events and would like to congratulate the successful candidates:

Darren Bogle	Challenge Singles Judge	Nathalie Delisle	Canadian Pairs Judge
Keiko Marshall	Challenge Pairs Judge	Melissa Houle	Canadian Dance Judge
Josh Diacur	Challenge Dance Judge	Kortney Paolini	Canadian Synchronized Skating Judge
Pier-Luc Paquet	Challenge Pairs Technical Specialist	Julia Mullins	Canadian Dance Judge
Kristy Balkwill	Canadian Singles Judge	Karen Ballinger	Canadian Synchronized Skating Technical Specialist
Christine Bourdeau	Canadian Pairs Judge	Isabelle Henault	Canadian Synchronized Skating Technical Specialist

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE – LESLIE KEEN

If I can describe my Milano Cortina Olympic experience in one word, it would be “variations on a theme” of the word “**Incredible**” (had to throw in a musical reference lol):

It was an **Incredible** honour to be selected as one of the Canadian judges for the Olympics – a lifelong personal journey. Having the privilege to have a front row seat for all segments of the Team and Individual Ice Dance events to witness live and judge the amazing performances by our Canadian athletes and those from many other nations was a dream come true.

It was **Incredibly** hard to hold back my emotions on panel when many teams skated their absolute personal best with exceptional quality, passion, or genuine joy including moments that I thought my eyes would pop out holding back tears of appreciation for their performances – and for sure the Incredible Bronze medal performances of Piper and Paul.

It was **Incredible** to be the first discipline officially done so I could wholeheartedly support our athletes and my fellow Olympic judges for the other figure skating disciplines and take in many of the other Olympic sports with my skating colleagues and personal friends.

And it was **Incredible** to receive all the support, guidance, and mentorship from my friends, family, and many Skate Canada colleagues before, during, and after the Games so I could do my best job for our sport.

Thanks to Skate Canada, all the athletes and coaches for their trust in my experience and capabilities. Being able to judge at the Olympics was truly an **Incredible** opportunity and holds extremely fond memories for me that I will cherish forever.

NEWS FEATURE ON DEBBIE ISLAM

During the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Games, Debbie Islam, ISU Judge and ISU Technical Controller, was featured in the Bradford Today news. Debbie shared her rich figure skating background, from competing, to judging at every national championship since 1986 and at two Winter Games. The article can be found [online here](#).

CHAMPIONING WOMEN'S SPORT: CAROLYN MCEWEN'S IMPACT ACROSS ICE AND PITCH

Whether it's coaching Canada to a world silver medal or officiating an international figure skating event, at the heart of her work is a dedication to creating environments where athletes can show up fully and confidently as themselves. The article can be found [online here](#).

REFLECTING ON ONE'S JUDGING PROCESS

As the 2025-2026 skating season comes to a close and we move toward a new season, we encourage each judge to reflect on their judging process and what refinements could be considered. A sound process is very important at all levels of officiating. Many of us will start the 2026-2027 season in the early summer months, so this is a perfect time to contemplate change!

In thinking about judging process, the following points are important in one's routine in terms of consistency and efficiency:

- Enter each GOE immediately after every element; do not wait until the end of a performance to enter all the GOEs.
- Following the last element and the completion of the performance, begin to enter your PC scores.
- After your PC scores have been entered, return to the list of elements and look for any changes from the Technical Panel – re-enter your GOE if necessary; if video review is available, review any elements as required.
- Write down a few points about the components scores while you continue to monitor the work and potential changes of the Technical Panel.
- Once the elements are authorized, do one quick and final review of your GOEs.

Additional thoughts on an efficient judging process:

- Use video replay to confirm initial assessment or to confirm errors; do not use it to go looking for errors.
- If using video replay, limit the number of views for each individual element.
- Once the elements have been authorized by the Technical Panel and the review time has expired, limit note taking. Further notes can be made after you have submitted your marks.
- Very often, the initial assessment is the most accurate one so trust the training and experience you have.

For some judges, this may be a different process than what you have been using during your officiating career. We acknowledge that change is sometimes difficult, but it is imperative to continue to learn and grow in our role as judges. Our recommendation is that you consider adapting and changing to the suggested process noted above. It is our collective responsibility to provide accurate scores while maintaining a very timely process to keep the competition running smoothly. As we move into a new season, please take time to reflect on your personal process and what adaptations could and should be made early in the new season.

Thank you for your work this past season and all the best to you in the 2026-2027 season!

- Andrea Derby & Karen Howard, OAP Members

Reminders



AVAILABILITY CHANGES

People have busy personal and professional lives, and we understand your availability may change from when you first fill out the officials availability survey in the spring. It is very important that you send an email to Laura Baker and the chair of the OAP to notify of any changes. Once the original data is pulled from the availability survey, we do not look at this survey again.

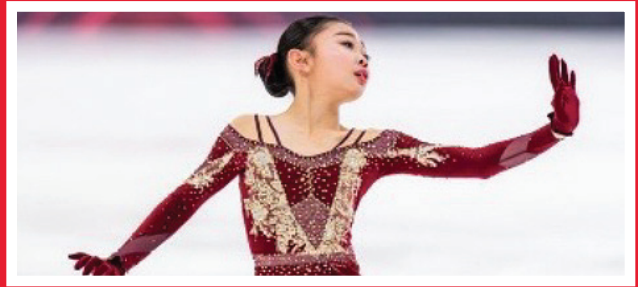


DOMESTIC ACTIVITY

As in previous years, it is your responsibility to ensure you have officiated in at least one section level event or higher before officiating at a Skate Canada domestic event, assigned by Skate Canada. This activity should take place after July 1, 2026. For example, officiating at a summer competition, fall competition, or an international competition all meet the criteria to then officiate at Skate Canada assigned competition.

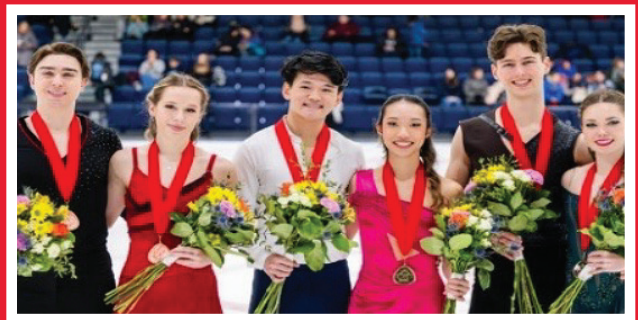
Looking Ahead...

As we look forward to the 2026-2027 season, here is a snapshot of some things to come:



SINGLES TECHNICAL PANEL OFFICIAL PATHWAY

The new Section Level Technical Panel Official pathway training will be delivered to new Learning Facilitators May 28-31 in Toronto. Thank you to Laurene Collin-Knoblach, Sheila Beard, and Ryan Sutherland for their work to create the pre-course and in-person materials, as well as the external review group, Pier-Luc Paquet, Mark Scott, Kevin Reynolds, and Veronique Gosselin, who provided valuable feedback on the eLearning materials. The course will be formally launched in June 2026.



REFEREE PATHWAY

The Referee Pathway review work is currently underway. A new eLearning pre-course and Learning Facilitator training will be delivered with a target date of Fall 2026. Thank you to Nicole LeBlanc-Richard, Sheila Beard, Sarah Miles, Erica Topolski, and Michelle Woll for their time and effort to date developing the materials, as well as the external review group, Andrew Bosco, Brett Hines, and Jeff Lucasik, who have provided valuable feedback on the eLearning materials.

MESSAGE FROM JANICE HUNTER OAP CHAIR

As we end the 2025-2026 season, I thank all who officiated at Skate Canada domestic events and who continue to volunteer in their Section. Your dedication to the sport and your own ongoing development as officials is a crucial piece in the smooth running of events in our country. For those of you who also officiate internationally, thank you for your additional time away and for your willingness to be assigned as substitute judges should the need arise. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Sheila Beard who has been an untiring and most effective Chair of the Officials Judge/Evaluator/Technical Officials committee (OJET). This committee is made up of the Section representatives responsible for officials up to and including Section level. Sheila has her finger on the pulse of what's happening in the Sections and brings forward valuable information and items for discussion.

At risk of sounding like a broken record, my messaging to all officials has not changed over the years. The good news is that so many people have really stepped up and taken ownership of their own pathway. Some are training in a new discipline, others taking on a new role, and others have recognized the value of their contribution staying at current level. I have had many emails demonstrating individuals actively keeping track of their activity and seeking clarification and/or guidance on their specific goals. This information is helpful to both section and national offices to keep us all on the same page. Remember to take a photo of the officials list for events you are on to simplify your tracking process. For the upcoming season, goals meetings will again be offered, stay tuned for more information.

As I have said each year, if at any time if you have questions, or feel that the OAP has missed something, or if you want to make us aware of specific needs, please don't hesitate to contact the both the OAP Chair and Laura Baker. This way, both have the same information and can cross-check follow up, so it does not get missed.

This is my fourth and final message as OAP Chair. For those who have followed my progress on the jigsaw puzzle, I feel confident in reporting that there are only a few spaces left to fill in and the remaining pieces are laid out in front of me rather than lost on the floor! I have a large notebook pretty much filled with notes from meetings, calls, to-do lists, etc. and looking back through it, I do get a feeling of accomplishment. Thank you to all officials for your support and open conversations during my time as Chair (even when we agreed to disagree). A special, heartfelt thank you to Laura Baker and her team in the office who have kept me on track and put up with my often-scattered thoughts and a certain amount of forgetfulness! And of course, the OAP Committee – your thoughtful discussion and insight at meetings have been invaluable and the key to keeping the wheels well-oiled and running like a quiet blade cutting through the ice.

Finally, please join me in welcoming Karen Howard as the new Chair of Skate Canada's Officials Assignments and Promotions Committee. You are in good hands!

Most sincerely,
Janice

Again, we thank you for your dedication to our sport, and your tremendous efforts throughout the year.

Sincerely,

The Officials Assignment and Promotion Committee of the 2025-26 season

Chair: Janice Hunter

Members: Jodi Abbott, Cynthia Alepin, Jennifer Betts, Andrea Derby, Karen Howard, Raoul Leblanc, Nicole Leblanc-Richard, Gregor MacLean

Skate Canada Staff: Debra Armstrong, Laura Baker, Mike Slipchuk, Shae Zukiwsky, Mollie Trainor