



HALIFAX REGIONAL SPEED SKATING CLUB

www.hfxspeedskate.com

Head Coach Report 2013-2014

1) CLUB MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS:

We ended the 2013-14 season with **48 skaters** (2 skaters long track only). The membership numbers are very similar to end of the 2012-2013 season. However, this is the third straight year that we have seen a decline in membership for long track only.

2) COACHING CAPACITY:

We started the season with 6 returning coaches: Carolyn Jarock (CJ), Jean-Pierre Daigle (JP), Dawn Cyr, Danielle Daigle, Jonathan McNeill, Brent Thompson and a new coach, Sarah MacDonald. Sarah skated for 15 years for the Riverview Club and was working in Halifax in Human Resources. In the beginning of January 2014 Sarah was unable to continue to coach for HRSSC since her work required regular travel to Newfoundland.

3) PROGRAMMING:

HRSSC Coaches provided approximately 450 hours of programming in the 2013-2014 season, not including travel, competition and planning. HRSSC programming included:

1. **DRYLAND TRAINING:** Saturday morning throughout the spring, summer and fall, dryland training for Group A for 40 minutes prior to their short track ice time.
2. **SHORT TRACK:** Mondays 7-9pm and Thursdays 7:30-10:00pm
3. **LONG TRACK:** Wednesday 5-6pm, Saturday 8:30-10:15am
4. **LEARN-TO-SPEED-SKATE:** Saturday 10:15-11:00am

SUNDAY MORNING RACES: Sunday morning long track races were organized by Brent Thompson and took place from 9-10:30am. Although these races were not officially part of HRSSC programming, many HRSSC skaters took part.



HALIFAX REGIONAL SPEED SKATING CLUB

www.hfxspeedskate.com

The coaching team, using the ice time allotted, divided the HRSSC members into groups based on stage of LTAD, speed, track awareness and willingness to commit to off ice training. The number one consideration in the grouping of skaters was on-ice safety. This year we had the following groupings:

- a. **Beginner Group C:** Beginner / younger skaters. This group has more emphasis on fun and learning to speed skate.
- b. **Intermediate Group B:** This group teaches racing and technique that skaters will use as they grow to be faster and better overall athletes. Off ice dryland training is introduced during the summer.
- c. **Advanced Group A:** This group is the most advanced. Skaters in this group must be prepared to train off ice and follow their fitness program.
- d. **Learn to Speed Skate Program: (Saturday 10:15-11:00am)**

4) COMPETITIONS

This season HRSSC skaters were well represented in the Atlantic Short track competitions, regional short track competitions, long track camps, local long track competitions, regional long track competitions, and national long track competitions. HRSSC had skaters meet the short track qualifications to attend the National Short Track Championships and the Long Track Canada Cup standards.

The biggest highlight of the 2013-14 season for me personally was having a large number of HRSSC skaters from all groups attending a short track competition in our own facility. This event was the first of the Atlantic Short Track series and set the tone for the rest of the season.



HALIFAX REGIONAL SPEED SKATING CLUB

www.hfxspeedskate.com

CHALLENGES FOR THE 2014-15 SEASON:

1. INTEGRATION OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TRAINING INTO CLUB PROGRAMMING:

The next season will see several HRSSC skaters, who are age-eligible, competing for a spot on the 2015 Canada Winter Games speed skating teams. Four members of the HRSSC Coaching team have been named to the 2015 CWG NS speed skating coaching team. The dual role of being a club coach and a CWG coach can be a tricky balance. All coaches during HRSSC allotted ice time will continue to be advised to supervise / correct all skaters of the club group that they are working with and to follow the program of the HRSSC coach that is leading the group.

2. BUILDING CLUB MEMBERSHIP AT THE BASE:

This season, we have grown the number of skaters under the age of ten compared to the 2012-13 season. Continuing to increase the numbers of youth, ten years of age and younger in our speed skating programs is critical for the long term survival of HRSSC and to supply new skaters into the competitive and high performance streams. Recruiting of new members should target this group.

3. BUILDING OFFICIAL / VOLUNTEER BASE:

HRSSC's success in hosting competitions, special events, and public demonstrations hinges on training HRSSC associate members and parents in various volunteer positions.

The feedback that I received about the Sunday morning racing series was very favorable and many hope that it will be able to be repeated next season. Multiple groups (ALTP, HRSSC, NSMSSC, VSSC, SK) participated in the racing series. The number of volunteers must increase if this series is to continue. I would suggest that if a minimum of six volunteers (starter, clerk of course, track steward, recorder/lap counter, and two timers) can be arranged from all participating groups that the series could run. If less than six volunteers are available for any one weekend than that particular Sunday of races would have to be cancelled.



HALIFAX REGIONAL SPEED SKATING CLUB

www.hfxspeedskate.com

4. COACHING RECRUITMENT:

We have lost one of our HRSSC coaches (Sarah MacDonald) and will be losing another next season (Dawn Cyr). The loss of coaches, combined with added time commitment and responsibilities of three of our current HRSSC coaches in preparing the 2015 CWG NS Speed Skating Team will leave a deficit in HRSSC Coaching Team. Recruitment of new coaches is of paramount importance. I would recommend that we recruit at least one on-ice assistant (non-coach) for each HRSSC group on the ice during short track and long track sessions. This on-ice assistant would provide assistant to the coach in changing the track, ice maintenance, timing of skaters, etc.

The learn-to-speed-skate program on the oval has been one of very few expectations that HRM has had of the speed skating community in order to have dedicated speed skating time. With the growth of speed skating user groups on the oval, I feel that the continuation of this program should become a joint effort between multiple user groups. I recommend that HRSSC make a suggestion to representatives from the NS Masters Speed Skating Club, the Atlantic Long Track Program and The Speedy Kids Oval Program Society to make this program a joint venture.

If I continue as the head coach for the HRSSC for the 2014-2015 season, I must focus my efforts on coaching and shed other speed skating commitments. I will no longer be able to be continue my other roles, such as track marker, track surveyor/certifier, track maintenance, speed skating technical consultant, race planner, timer, place judge, meet recorder, liaison with SSNS, etc...

I am hoping for another successful speed skating season.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brent Thompson

Brent Thompson
Head Coach HRSSC