



## 2012 PSA and Coach's Edge Survey of Best Competition Practices

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During the first quarter of 2012 Merry Neitlich of the Coach's Edge and the PSA surveyed all of the PSA members to explore what the coaches thought were the best competition practices. This document is an addendum to go with the PowerPoint charts presented at the 2012 PSA Survey of Best Competition Practices.

The comments below capture and reflect the coaches' suggestions for best competition practices in the following areas:

### **Breathing/Stretching/Relaxation/Focus**

- Do stretching, warm-up exercised and jumps off the ice.
- Deep breathing exercise while going through program.
- Breathing techniques with repeating calming 'mantra'.
- Stretching, hip, core, legs and fingers - focus on themselves.
- Find quiet spot to focus on breathing after they have warmed up.
- Brief warm-up to increase heart rate, active stretching, physical run through of program, visualization of program then put skates on.
- If skater is nervous practice deep breathing techniques and walk, jump or jog lightly to get body moving.
- Listen to music on their iPod, calming exercises with yoga.
- Go somewhere away from people and read, sing or sit quietly.
- Short practice session then give them time to sit with their family.
- Let them be alone if needed, but they know I'm close by.
- Toss a ball, go for a walk, play video games or meditation to calm the skater.
- Talk about it as just another day on the ice.
- Focus skater on importance of staying in the moment as it happens.
- Isolate skater from watching other skaters and away from family to help them stay

focused on their own performance.

- Review their mental training journal.
- Coordination exercises to retain focus.
- Wear earphones when entering rink.

### **Visualization/Music**

- Off-ice warm up, visualize step-by-step clean program.
- Visualize a perfect program on the ice.
- Listen to program music while walking through performance. Stretching to music.
- Talk about how fantastic they saw themselves skating.
- Visualization being in a relaxing calming place – such as lying on the beach.
- As competition gets closer more visualization and meditation.
- Listen to their mix of music that inspires them.
- Give them one word reminders to stay focused on certain elements in their program.

### **Pre-planning**

- Follow normal routine, schedule, diet and rest.
- Practice warm-up at regular rink.
- Discuss what to expect at the competition rink, flow of the day, check equipment so skaters know what to expect.
- Arrive at rink earlier to see surrounds and orient them to the venue.
- Never ask more of a skater on competition day.
- Find quiet place to view rink, visualize their program. Then ask them to verbalize each element and how they will execute it and what they will need to do to master that element.

### **Distractions**

- Distract them as much as possible to hold their attention off the ice.
- Talk with them to keep their mind occupied.
- Talk about other things in general - how nice the rink looks, do they like their hotel, about their day, moves, books, nonskating activities etc.
- Play with tennis ball on their feet.
- Keeping them away from chatting, family friends or distracted by other skaters.
- Keep their mind off the other skaters and distractions by asking them questions that make them happy.
- Talk about outside events and the best feeling they had of their week of skating.

### **Lighten Mood /Have Fun**

- Work is over time to have fun.
- Remind them they should be happy with their personal efforts.
- Joke about anything but skating.
- Joke, dance with them to keep them unstressed, ready and motivated.

- Keep it light – it is just another practice.
- Remind them to have fun. They have the whole ice to themselves.
- Make them laugh, have fun group warm up.

### **Motivation/Positive Reinforcement**

- Tell them believe in yourself! You are prepared!
- Instill their joy in skating.
- Remind them to smile and have fun.
- Tell them I believe in them and have 100% confidence in their abilities.
- Tell them whatever happens I am proud of them.
- Remind them they are well trained and ready for this event.
- Give them positive affirmations.
- Skater selects card from card deck of Inner Peace cards. Explain to coach how it relates to their skating performance.
- Talk about the accomplishments to date.
- Remind them of their goals and talk about reaching them.
- Staying positive so they know I believe in them.
- Tell them to have a good time – enjoy the time do it just like it is a practice run through.
- Talk with them to reaffirm their ability and remind of expectations areas to focus.
- Tell them to relax and let their body do what we have trained it to do.
- Remind them they love the sport and that is the most important reason they are here.
- Remind them of their goals for the competition and to be proud of themselves.
- Their parents love them no matter what and have fun.
- Set three achievable goals for the performance.
- Show video of a good performance they did within the previous 2 weeks to boost their confidence.