

**Technical Director Report  
2006-2007 Annual General Meeting  
Pacers Speed Skating Club of Ottawa  
April, 2007**

**Overview**

Another successful season, with improvement seen at all levels. The club has increased enrolment and seen great personal improvements at competitions. Congratulations for the many medals, personal bests, and goals achieved by so many skaters this season.

Thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to the success of the club and to the positive, supportive environment for all our skaters. Rocky (and helpers) have done a great job on equipment, and thanks to head coaches Kelly, Gerry, Ryan and Gavin and the large number of volunteer coaches – like, wow! What a team!

We need to increase our volunteer participation at the oval to maintain and operate the facility. Also looking for assistance in running warm-ups from the intermediate and advanced hours. We encourage all parents to take the officials course as a way to learn more about the sport, and to help out at meets.

**Programs**

**Short Track**

Participation has increased over previous years. We are unlikely to get extra ice time next year, so enrolment numbers will likely not increase. Final numbers below...

Group	Participants
Development	32
Intermediate	31
Advanced	35
Masters	39
Interclub (included above)	(15)
Coaches	23

Ice times were moved 15 minutes earlier for all sessions, imposed by the Sensplex. This was awkward for many skaters/coaches in the first hour – but we adjusted in the end. Sledge hockey before the Tuesday practice leaves the ice in rough shape, but Sensplex has not provided any solution for this. Turnover in Zamboni drivers has required repeated training in how to do a track flood.

Thank-you to the many volunteers that assisted with the mini-meets this year. They were fun and a great learning experience – great work by Kelly and her legions of helpers. Coaches are looking for some volunteers to help with warm-ups before the scheduled ice times, for both intermediate and advanced hours.

**Development:** Geared to introduce young skaters the “Fun”damental of speed skating using the SSC-Cutting Edge skills/badge program; lead by the Kelly Ball. Kelly was assisted by several coaches, including some advanced/intermediate skaters. Kelly has had another great year with so many of her group being new to speedskating. This is a critical stage of skating where skaters either learn good habits or bad. This is also a great introduction to parents who want to get involved in coaching.

**Intermediate:** Geared to introduce competition and continue to develop technical skills using the SSC-Cutting Edge program; lead by Gerry Harrington and Ryan Ogston. The improvement in style and times was very evident for this group – thanks to the great coaching and hard work.

**Advanced:** Geared to train for high levels of competition and to continue to refine technical skills; led by Ryan Ogston and Gerry Harrington. The criteria to move up to this hour were controversial at the beginning of the year. Balancing the number of skaters (for safety), the number of intermediate skaters and the requests for interclub participation was difficult – and some interclub requests could not be honoured. It is very clear that the decision to join this hour remains with the head coach.

**Interclub:** Advanced skaters from the Pacers, Gloucester Concordes and Brockville benefit from this program. Interclub was limited again this year as the number of skaters in the advanced hour was at the max. We would like to encourage more coordinated approach for developing skaters in the interclub – mostly this means increased communications.

**Masters:** Masters skated on Thursdays at the Sensplex (and regularly in the evening at Brewer Oval during long track season) led by the dedicated Gavin Thulien. Master hours was geared to providing recreational fitness, skills development and a social atmosphere. Many of the masters (and a few youth) participated in the Marathon Racing series, with great success! A group of dedicated Masters also attended the World Masters Games in Calgary. Mike Rivet provided coaching starting in the fall with dryland, and nurtured his skaters to some great times (both meanings intended!!)

## **Long Track**

The long track program at Brewer Oval started on January 18 and was over by the end of February. It certainly was a challenge due to weather again this year. Age Class and Masters meets were both cancelled due to a lack of ice. The Long track camp also could not be run due to lack of ice. We held a mini-meet for Concordes/Pacers, which was very successful. The planned marathon also happened, but just barely. Overall attendance during supervised hours was way down due to the short season but was still over 14,000.

Again, Ted Huffman has been the key person managing what happens at the oval, and his personal attention is what makes the facility successful. Also, thank-you to everyone who pitched in to help. Ted is handing over the job of oval management next season.

The challenge for the club is find the volunteer resources required to keep such a facility running. We tried to get volunteer attendants this past season but even this was not successful. So there needs to be extra effort and organization to ensure we have the needed volunteers.

Long track coaching was shared between Pacers and Concordes and the level coordination is great. Thanks to Gerry, Sarah, Joanne and all the long track coaches.

A smaller than normal group attended the long track provincial championships in Sault Ste Marie, but they were very successful with many qualifying for Canadian and North American Championships.

A small group has (again) started exploring the possibility of a refrigerated oval – calling it the Winterlude Skate Park. We are looking for synergies with Winterlude, the NCC, the city, one or both of the universities, and OSSA. Let me know if you have ideas or time to assist.

### **Off-Ice Training**

Summer (off-ice) training ran from May to September on Monday evenings. Sessions were well attended, and benefits to athletes that participated were evident this season. Sessions are planned for this summer, will be run on Mondays.

The Pacers are now sponsoring the dryland camp at Mont Ste Marie in July. This is a great opportunity for juvenile-aged and older skaters who are training regularly to take it to another level. This is a fun and challenging 4 days. Enrolment is limited. There will also be a Master camp later in July.

Coaches are interested in knowing who is interested in off-ice sessions on nutrition, equipment maintenance, and putting together a personal training plan. Feedback to the coaches or technical director would be appreciated.

### **Coaching**

Club coaching experience and knowledge continues to improve. Previous efforts to encourage more parents to become coaches is paying off. There were over 20 individuals who assisted on the ice this season. Additional coaching support was provided by advanced hour skaters – who get volunteer hours for high school.

A local “Level One” coaching clinic was held over two weekends in the fall, with 5 Pacers taking advantage of the opportunity to learn and work towards certification. This is a great way to learn more about the sport, and provide volunteer opportunities. More clinics are planned at the summer camp in Cambridge. There are likely to be officials clinics at the camp as well.

## **Competition**

The second year of the new Ontario Calendar, with time standards for Ontario Cups, has brought both improvements and more challenges. Some meets were too small to be profitable, and some skaters were frustrated by the lack of opportunity to skate correct distances to get the time standards. OSSA is always looking for constructive feedback, so if you have any suggestions in how to improve the system, please contact the Technical Director who can forward good ideas to OSSA.

OSSA has a Competition Committee that is looking at ways to take Ontario to the next level. Decisions affecting next year will be made at the OSSA AGM, so please read the presentation and provide your feedback.

As the largest club in Ontario, overall Pacer attendance at provincial meets continues to be strong. With the growth in numbers of skaters in Ontario, the level of competition continues to move higher. Coaches are excited with number of PBs this seasons (see the PB file on the website). There are some great newcomers to the club this season, great to see new talent. The PB (personal best) database has been kept up to date – thanks to the coaches and a few other volunteers.

This skating season also included the Canada Winter Games – held only once every four years. Five Pacers qualified. Maddie Martin and Pat Marsh bringing home individual medals and all other skaters bringing home team medals for either long track team pursuit or short track relay. This was a great experience for those involved.

## **Preview for Next Year**

We are requesting additional ice time for next year. With the opening of the new ice complex in Goulborne, it is expected that some hours might free up at the Sensplex. However, we have been warned that it is unlikely that speedskating will get extra hours. Actions for next year

- Get the markings for the track set right onto the concrete surface. This will make it easier to keep the track accurately marked for practices and competitions
- Get more volunteer help for managing the oval and for attendants
- Improve warm-ups for skaters before they get on the ice
- Solve the sledge hockey issue – maybe with an extended flood, but this will take away from skating times
- Gauge the interest in off-ice sessions in nutrition, equipment maintenance, and having your own training plan.

Thanks!!

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