



Aldwych Speed Club

Ice Safety and Etiquette

Speed skating can be dangerous and with a large number of skaters on the ice it is essential that everyone obeys basic safety rules and thinks about potential risks. To minimise the risks the Club takes extensive safety precautions based on advice from BIS and other organisations. Here are some basic guidelines to help you skate safely and to maximise the value we get out of our limited ice time:

- Always wear the right equipment – clothing that covers the whole body, helmet, gloves, neck guard, knee pads, shin guards and skates.
- Speed skating blades can be extremely sharp and can easily cause nasty cuts. Always beware of blades, particularly when sharpening, and always use skate guards when off the ice.
- Be ready to get on the ice at least five minutes before the session starts.
- Minimise the need to get off the ice once the session has started, go to the toilet before the session and do not forget your water bottle.
- Only older skaters are allowed to put the pads out and collect them in at the end of a session. Older skaters should be ready to help put the pads out as soon as we are allowed on the ice.
- Never skate round to train when the doors are open or when the pads are not fully put out.
- If the session has started do not open the door or go onto the ice until a coach signals that it is safe.
- Always listen to the coaches' directions when on and off the ice. The coaches are in charge of the session; they carefully plan each session in advance to reflect the needs and abilities of all skaters. Help the sessions run smoothly by being aware of when coaches need you to be listening to instructions and ready to go on track. Getting distracted during rest periods can mean that you will not know what your group is doing next, or worse attempting to join the group once it has already started skating.
- We generally start each skate set with a build-up – this allows skaters to get into the correct skating order as determined by the coach. Joining a group late should always be done from the back of the group (not cutting in from the side) and only if it is possible should you move forwards to your position in the group. If the coach has indicated the drill has 'no overtaking' you should stay at the back.
- Exiting the ice prior to the end of the set (not completing all the laps) should be done with care. Slowing on the skating line can disrupt following skaters. Cutting across the inner track to slow down is equally dangerous to those on their rest periods. Skaters should move to the outside of the track, slow down and only when it is safe to do so cut into the middle, being aware of resting skaters.

- Be careful during relays – be aware of other skaters and do not push during a changeover if it happens after the red line.
- Be aware of all skaters and coaches when resting between exercise sets. Do not wander on the track when other groups are training. Remember that groups may be training on an inner track and make sure you don't get in their way.
- If you feel unwell on the ice or need help adjusting equipment please let your coach know. If you need to leave the ice before the end of the session, they will make sure the track is clear and that the Club can instigate the appropriate care procedures off-ice. This is particularly important for younger skaters.
- At the end of the session all older skaters should help with taking the mats off the ice. Younger skaters should leave the ice and stay out of the way of the trolleys. Helmets should not be removed until after skaters have left the ice.
- We understand that it can be helpful for the most experienced skaters to provide advice to other skaters, more pairs of eyes can often spot things which are out of sight of the coaches. This is encouraged as long as it is in line with the skills being practiced (as set out by the coach) in the session and takes place during rest periods without causing either skater to miss their next instruction or skate set. It could also be done before or after the session off ice.
- Coaching on track should be left under the control of the coaches. If you wish to help another skater on track this should be done with the consent of the coach of that group and on the understanding that this may mean you not skating with your group.
- If the coach blows their whistle cease skating, slow down and return to the middle of the ice. Do not approach the area of an accident.