

Celebrating 100 Skating Tips of the Month!!

By Susan Ellis



Wow! When I first started writing the tips of the month back in December 2002 I never dreamed I would reach 100. But here it is 100 months later – well just a tad more because I missed a few months – and I actually managed to find 100 skating topics to write about. Sometimes it was a struggle to think of something to write and sometimes I had more than one tip on the go at a time. Some only took an hour to write and some took days to write. I hope you have enjoyed them all!

I was going to stop at 100 as it was supposed to coincide with my hubby retiring, and me, well semi-retiring and drifting off into the sunset in my beloved canoe. Unfortunately hubby's still waiting for the golden handshake (this is no time for his company to be prospering!!), and me, well, I'm not one to easily sit on my tucked butt and wait for him to retire, so I'll keep on tucking and tipping.

As with everything in life, things change. If they didn't we'd still be sitting by the radio listening to the ol' ball game instead of watching it on our super-sized, HD, 3D, plasma TV, and we'd be eyeballing the bend in our blade and if it didn't look right we'd stick it back in the door jam or hit it with the hammer again to get it just right. Many of the earlier tips are somewhat outdated so I figure this would be a good time to go back and update them with more recent information. You will see updated tips appear with a 'revised' notation beside them and I'll try to include photos and video in the ones that don't have them. I may also write a new tip from time to time but honestly, I AM running out of ideas now guys! If there is something you want to read about email me with suggestions.

I have been involved in speed skating as an athlete and then as a coach for over 40 years. As a kid I just wanted to go fast no matter what it was – skates, bike, running, whatever. It was the thrill of the speed that hooked me. Winning, keeping score – who cares, just let me play! I think that's what most kids want, just to play and have fun. As we grow older, we start to realize that in organized sport there are expectations, and that's OK as long as the expectations don't get in the way of the bottom line of having fun.

So here's my take and tips on helping kids to have fun, enjoy, and hopefully be around in 40 years to give back to the sport.

For parents:

- Let your kids have fun! Don't push them too hard but ask them to do their best.
- Your kid has a coach. Let the coach coach and enjoy watching your kids' progress.
- If you have a concern with your child's coach, talk to the coach, not the child.
- Don't make excuses for your kid when they lose and don't diss on other competitors and coaches.

- Your kids have ears. They don't enjoy listening to you gripe about their friends parents, their coaches, their club, etc.
- Encourage good sportsmanship and co-operation in your child and set the example.
- When your kid wins, tell them what a great job they did and that you love them. When your kid loses, tell them you are proud of them and that you love them.
- [Do's and Don'ts for Sport Parents](http://www.gym.net/useca/leadership%20and%20operations/sportparent%20handout.pdf)
(<http://www.gym.net/useca/leadership%20and%20operations/sportparent%20handout.pdf>)

For administrators:

- Sport is for people to enjoy. Solve your differences amicably and if you can't agree, then be adults and agree to disagree amicably.
- Recognize that not every athlete in your system wants to be or can be an elite athlete. Create opportunities for them to excel and enjoy at whatever level they choose to participate.

For Coaches:

- Just because it's always been done that way doesn't mean it always has to be done that way. Get creative!
- Let your kids have fun but push them to be what they can be!
- Educate, update, seek new information, listen to others' opinions.
- Coaching is NOT a contest between coaches. It is an endeavor that should enhance the lives of the athletes we coach as well as your own.
- Allow your athletes to grow, ask questions, seek all the information they can, everywhere they can and help them to understand and interpret different information. You just might learn something new yourself.
- "Because I say so" is a phrase to be used by parents only. Your job is to help your athletes understand WHY. That's how they become better athletes.
- For a few of us coaching IS our job, but it is NOT the kids' job. Let them have fun and have fun with them.
- Teach your athletes (and parents) respect is number one in sport and in life. Respect rules, officials, other skaters. Address disrespect, inappropriate behavior and bullying immediately when it happens.
- Lead by example. Show respect for every athlete, coach, official, and volunteer.
- [The Role of the Coach in Promoting Sportsmanship](http://www.miaa.net/gen/miaa_generated_bin/documents/basic_module/2005.pdf)
(http://www.miaa.net/gen/miaa_generated_bin/documents/basic_module/2005.pdf)

For Athletes:

- Remember your roots! You came to the sport to enjoy so do it, no matter who is pressuring you.
- Everyone has more fun when they give respect and are shown respect.
- [How to Show Good Sportsmanship](https://www.wikihow.com/Show-Good-Sportsmanship) (<https://www.wikihow.com/Show-Good-Sportsmanship>)
- Always put in your best effort. How can you be happy with anything less !?
- Never put another athlete down with "I let you win" or "You only won because..."
- Brag to yourself, but be humble in your accomplishments to others.

- Don't cheat! When you cheat to win a race, help someone else win a race, or help someone else to make a team you are cheating not only yourself, but you have caused a whole lot of hurt to someone else that lasts a lifetime.
- Become leaders and positive role models. It's worth a lifetime of respect that will carry you through life.
- Learn everything you can! Ask questions! If one coach can't or won't give you an answer, ask another coach. The more you learn, the better you understand, and the better athlete you become.
- Ever wonder what that kid who always sit by themselves in the corner and never talks to anyone is thinking? They are probably thinking they wish they would be included in your little circle of friends. Expand that circle and you just might change someone's life, and yours too!

And for everyone:

- Life is short – do what you love and love what you do!

So, what do I have to brag about today? 100 Tips! That's what!