

COOPERATIVE PROFESSIONAL FIGURE SKATERS
PFSC



MEMBERS HANDBOOK

PFSC

Congratulations! You have just joined a fantastic organization that is working to put the control back into the skaters' hands. This handbook is designed to give the skater the basic information on how to launch a paying career in skating. How do I find the shows and how much should I be paid? How about agents and contracts? What are my strengths that I should capitalize on?

This Organization is composed of many skaters involved in a variety of shows and jobs. We offer general insights to things all skaters should know, and means to contact members who will be able to give you even more specific information on what you are searching for.

Please keep this PFSC Members Handbook confidential as it is intended for PFSC Members only.

- I. Role of PFSC ---trying to open up info to put more control back to the skaters: Mission Statement
- II. PFSC Web site: The Holy Grail.....
- III. Definition of eligible and ineligible. How can I make money and still compete?
- IV. Marketing/Resume---OK, so I want a job, but how do I get my name out there?
- V. Agents, their jobs, what can and can't they do for you?
- VI. Contracts/Negotiations--- I want a million dollars...take it or leave it.
- VII. Hidden costs on tour---Its going to cost me how much to skate in this show???????????
- VIII. Medical care on the road.
- IX. Looking into skating shows and producers.

The PFSC would like to thank Sandra Sherwani and Dan Hollander in putting together this handbook.



Role of the PFSC

*With uniting and sharing information, The PFSC hope to put the skaters back in control of themselves. People might say we are trying to become the union for figure skaters. All the PFSC wants is a place where skaters can get together, decide on how they want to industry ran, and go with it. We are happy to work with the PSA, USFSA, ISU and all the skating organizations in hopes to bring about the same goal: **The promotion of skating**. This is all about you, so take pride in what you do, and get involved with the PFSC!*

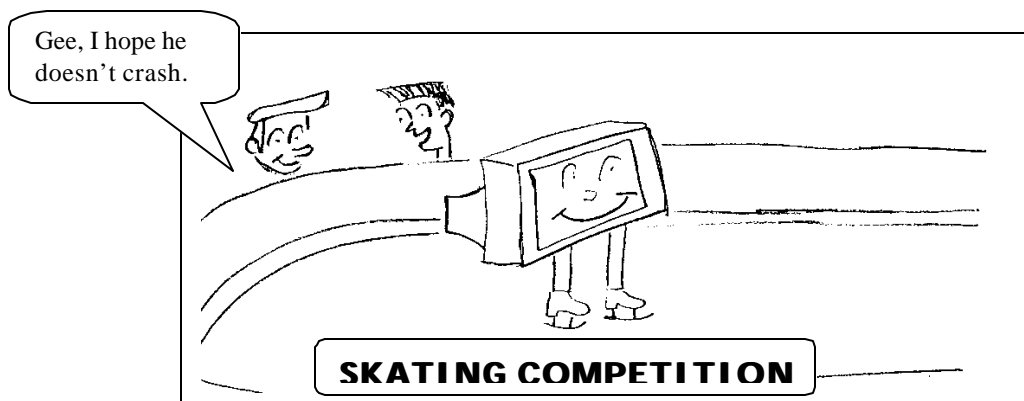
Mission Statement

The Professional Figure Skaters Cooperative is an organization dedicated to the promotion and advancement of all levels of performing professional skating members. The P.F.S.C. endeavors to work creatively and in conjunction with the professional skating industry.

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN OPEN

In December 1996, Scott Williams and Charlene Wong Williams conceived the concept for the American Open Professional Figure Skating Championships. Their goals included offering professional skaters the opportunity to win a title, audition for their industry, share their talents with the skating community, and promoting the many talented professional skaters in general. Though there are a number of professional skating competitions each year, there are few opportunities for lesser-known professionals to receive invitations to participate in these sought after events. After years of effort, Scott and Charlene had both reached the upper echelons of professional skating, performing in many high-profile tours and televised events. Not being national champions or Olympic medallists themselves, other professional skaters with similar backgrounds often came to Scott and Charlene for advice on how they, too, could improve their careers. The few avenues for professional development that the duo had been able to capitalize on, such as the World Pro in Jaca, Spain, and the PSA U.S. Open, were either no longer being held or had become out of reach for most professional skaters. It was this impetus that inspired Scott and Charlene to create and hold the first American Open Professional Figure Skating Championships at the Pickwick Ice Arena in Burbank, California, in June 1997. The 1998 American Open followed in June of 1998, and was held in Geneva, Illinois, at the Fox Valley Ice Arena and Fitness Center. Brian Boitano hosted the 1998 Open and has been a valued supporter of the concept from its inception. Both the 1997 and 1998 championships were considered remarkably successful and competitors enjoyed the deserved recognition and career benefits that they had earned through their outstanding performances. The American Open includes 5 categories: the traditional disciplines of men, ladies, pairs, and ice dance, and an all-new event "titled: Show Act." This new category has been a trademark that separates the American Open from any other skating competition. Many talented acts have been discovered in this exciting category; some of them going on to star in shows such as Champions on Ice, or shows built around their unique acts, such as the new Splash in Las Vegas. In looking toward the 2000 American Open, the organizers continue to search for new ways to bring great skating to the skating fans that appreciate it, and wish to thank all of you - skaters, spectators, and volunteers - for your support.

PFSC WEB SITE



Imagine all this information in the handbook, and times it by 10, and you still won't have a portion of the great information offered to you on the web site. Want more information on investing your money on the road? How about what shows are going on, and where to send a resume for that show too? Our web site is designed for skaters by skaters. Have a problem on tour and want to know how to deal with it? Ask your question on the site, and we'll find a skater who has had that problem, and they'll tell you how they dealt with it. Come check out the site, because only with your help and interaction, can we continue to grow and help each other in the sport we love! See you online!!!



WWW.PROSKATERS.ORG

PROFESSIONAL VS AMATEUR

An amateur, or "eligible" is someone who is allowed to compete in the Olympics. A professional, or "ineligible" is someone who is not allowed to compete in the Olympics. **YOU CAN MAKE MONEY AND STAY ELIGIBLE.** Well then, what the heck makes me ineligible? All eligible skating is run by the International Skating Union. Then each country has their own "national governing body," or NGB. In the United States, our NGB is the United Skates Figure Skating Association, or USFSA.

Teaching is something you can do in America and be kosher doing it. But you should contact your club and NGB, to find out for sure what the rules are.

Accepting money for performing or competing: You must have a **SANCTION**, to skate in a show/competition, make money, and remain eligible. Check with your NGB to make sure the show/competition has a **SANCTION**. If not, in America, you can get a special form from the USFSA that allows you to get a sanction for just yourself to skate in that show.

There is no requesting of a sanction after the fact. Once done, even out of ignorance, there is no coming back, so be careful!!!

There is a world of opportunity open to eligible skaters nowadays. But before you rush off towards the lure of show business and the promise of riches, take a moment to safeguard your own eligibility and contact your NGB.

CONTACT INFO:

USFSA
20 First St.
Colorado Springs CO 80906
USA

Tel. (719) 635-5200
Fax (719) 635-9548

Email: usfsa@usfsa.org
Website www.usfsa.org

SkateCanada
1600 James Naismith Dr. Suite 403
Gloucester ON K1B 1C1
CANADA

Tel (613) 747-1007
Fax(613) 748-5718

Email: skatecanada@skatecanada.ca
Web page: www.skatecanada.ca

ISI
17120 Dallas Parkway, Suite 140
Dallas TX 75248

T: (972) 735-8800
F: (972) 735-8815

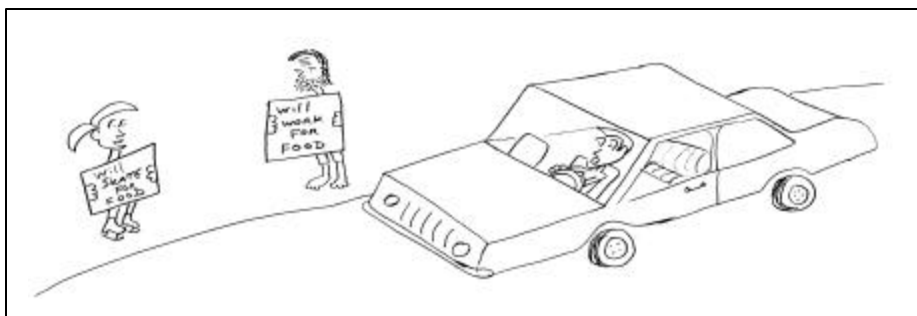
Email: ISI@skateisi.org
Web site: www.skateisi.com

ISU
Chemin de Primerose 2
CH-1007
Lausanne, Switzerland

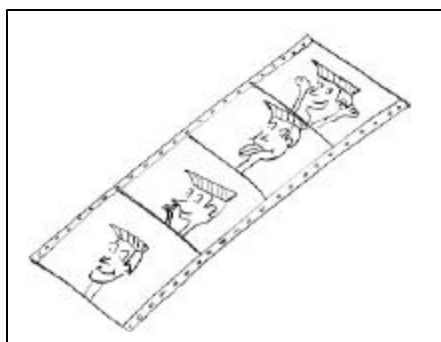
Tel: (+41) 21 612 66 66
Fax (+41) 21 612 66 77

Email: info@isu.ch
Web site: www.isu.org

RESUME



You have decided to start looking into skating shows to make a living or as a side job. You need to be prepared to market yourself. Ahh... the scary word “resume.” This is very important to have. Prepare a piece of paper highlighting your accomplishments. This can be a placement at competitions, years of teaching or choreography experience, experts that you have worked with, and anything that you feel might make you stand out. DON'T FORGET TO SPELL CHECK!



A good publicity headshot and skating shot is important to have too. People say it takes money to make money, and this is something not to skimp on. A good presentation of yourself will make the difference between you getting the job or not.

Here are some thoughts from a person who looks at resumes all day... so take notes!!!

You are out in the skating world seeking a new job and the first step towards that is to creating or updating your resume. Well...it may seem like a mundane and arduous task...but trust me once you have finally put all your work experiences on paper you will be happy it is finally done.

Now there are many different ways to do your resume and no one way is completely right or wrong. It basically comes down to the style and approach you take. If you really are lost and just don't know where to begin, go to the nearest library and there are plenty of reference books that will give you all the tips that the biggest and best in the business world swear by.

One thing that you do need to remember is that if you want to be treated like a “professional skater” than you should act like one as well. Hand written resume, spelling mistakes, whiteout, etc. are just not acceptable. In the real business world your resume would be tossed into the nearest waste paper basket...so don't think the skating world should be any different.

If you are on the road touring and don't have a computer...go to the nearest Kinko's and either have them put your resume on disc or type it up yourself. It is time and money well spent.

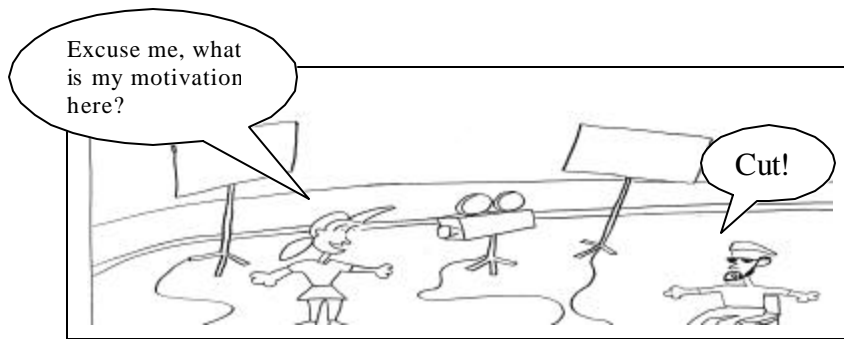
Some general rules to follow:

- 1) Make sure your contact numbers are current or that you list a number that “someone” can find your through. You never know how long that resume will sit before you are called upon.**
- 2) List your most recent work experiences first. i.e. 2001 and backward.**
- 3. A general rule is to limit your resume to 2 pages.**
- 3) Don't forget to list no-skating credits like languages you speak that may be useful in overseas shows, etc.**
- 4) 5. Keep your resume up to date after each show. Having a resume you can send out at the drop of a hat is useful.**

Just remember that you should be putting as much energy into your resume as you do with your training. This will be your first impression with an employer and every positive impression counts.

By Sylvia Froescher

VIDEO RESUME



A demo tape is another thing that is good to have. A number or two showing your stuff is sufficient. You can even go as far as slicing together an introduction of just some cool tricks you do and put it to music. Most producers watch the first 20 seconds and move on to the next person, so do something to GRAB THEIR ATTENTION. So if you are going to invest in a demo tape, make it interesting and to the point, which is to promote YOU!

Here are some tips from the man who started this great organization: Scott Williams

We've been getting lots of questions about audition videos, so here are some tips from last year's PFSC Conference.

- ⇒ Make sure you are well lit and the picture is clear. A well-lit practice arena is often more appropriate than a dimly lit show performance taped with a typical camera. It's nice to be able to see your face fairly clearly.
- ⇒ Include a variety of skating skills. Show your ability to jump, spin, edges and moves-in-the-field, etc. A short program demonstrating your abilities is great. Show your ability to perform various styles and moods.
- ⇒ Introduce yourself, state your background (briefly), and why you'd like to perform professionally.
- ⇒ Spending a large amount of money and effort on professional editing is not necessary, just keep it simple and let your skating do the talking. Unless you're looking for a job as a video editor!
- ⇒ Include all pertinent information with your tape: such as your name, address, phone numbers, etc.
- ⇒ Send a good current full-body picture as well.
- ⇒ Suggested length is 2-4 minutes.
- ⇒ Most importantly, have fun! Let your personality come through and enjoy the project.

By Scott Williams

Agents



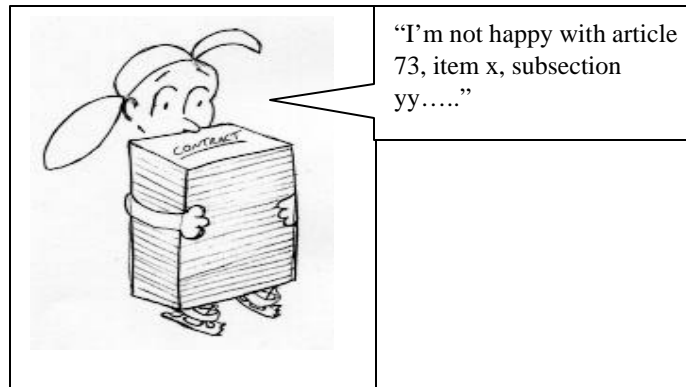
A good thing, a bad thing... it all depends on the situation. Some skaters have jobs flying in from everywhere, and a good agent is important to make sure you get top dollar for your gig. Big agencies usually have promoters calling them for their skaters. Some smaller agents spend their time working hard to find the work and promote their clients, the skaters. Which is right for you? Maybe none of the above. If you are hard working, have a good business head, you can be your own agent. This is a tough call and is best to ask other skaters for advice on this one.

Agents can work in different ways. Some make you sign a contract and take a flat 10% to 15%. Others work per show per commission. Some allow you to get work on your own, while others take a percent whether you got the show or they did. It's all about the contract, so have a good lawyer and ask other skaters what to look out for.

REMEMBER ONE THING!!! The person who always puts your best interest first is **YOU!** If you do have an agent, sit down and discuss what each person's roles are, and it's up to you to stay on top of it all. Make sure your agent, as well as yourself, is taking care of business, or you just might find that you have none.

PFSC TIPS ON NEGOTIATING THAT EVERY SKATER SHOULD

KNOW



1. Think Things Through....

Any decisions you make about your career are crucial to your future, so don't let anyone rush your decision in the negotiation process. Take some time to think about what is important to you, and make up lists and notes so that your thoughts are organized before responding to an offer. Follow these three simple steps:

- ⇒ List the things you can't do without (examples include: extra ice time for training while on tour; vegetarian meal options; the choice of having a car or pet with you on the road).
- ⇒ Determine a "bottom line" amount of compensation that you will accept for the role you have been offered. Keep in mind your specific role in the show or tour will help determine the fee level (see below).
- ⇒ List those things that you would like to be a part of the deal, but that you could do without if necessary.

Once you have your thought together and you're ready to respond to an offer, be sure to have your notes and lists with you for the follow up conversation.

2. Ask Questions....

Some tour promoters have a tendency to intimidate skaters with whom they are negotiating in order to rush a decision. Take the time to ask questions about the job you have been offered. Issues to consider include:

- ⇒ For a long-term tour:

What role does my character play in the show? How many minutes will I be on the ice during the show, and how many solos or cold spots will I be featured in? How many changes of costume will I have per show, and how difficult is the level of skating required? How many shows will I need to perform in per week? What medical, dental and workers comp benefits are included in my contract? Must I pay for my own meals and hotel rooms while on tour? And if so, will the country in which I will be performing be particularly expensive to live in, such as the Far East? These are all factors that go into determining salary levels.

VI-1

- ⇒ For a short- term production or one show- only event:

How many programs will I be asked to perform? What is the nature of the event (charity events and benefits pay less; corporate shows and televised events warrant higher fees)? What is the size of the ice surface on which I will be skating, and on how many sides will the audience be seated? How many people does the arena hold? And will I need to perform in any group numbers to open or close the show that require extra rehearsal time? Must I choreograph new programs to fit the format of the show? Know what it is you are committing to before accepting or rejecting a fee or salary.

3. Make smart career choices....

Many skaters rely too heavily on the amount of money they will be paid for a particular project without considering the other benefits of the job. For instance, if the pay is not as high as your usual standard day rate, but the job will take you to a European city you have never visited, it may be worthwhile to accept the offer if you have nothing else scheduled for that particular date. Or, if the person choreographing or producing the show is someone you've always wanted to work with and/or someone whom you greatly respect, or it's a charity event benefiting a cause you believe in, there is value in participating anyway.

4. Get It in Writing!

Get in the habit of documenting every conversation you have with a prospective employer. Take notes on each phone conversation and make sure to write down the date of the conversation and key points that were discussed. It is also smart to follow up an important meeting with a note or fax to the person with whom you've been speaking, outlining the issues that were discussed in the meeting or phone conversation. If you don't write everything down, you may forget key points later in the negotiation process, or worse, be surprised when you are later denied something you felt was already agreed upon in a previous conversation. Once you get in the habit of writing things down, you'll be amazed at how helpful your notes are later on.

5. Don't be a Whiner....

There is nothing more annoying to an employer than a skater who complains about show or tour policy with the other skaters without first making his or her concerns known to the people who can deal with the issue at hand. If you have a complaint about policy issues or are unhappy about any aspect of the show or tour, be sure to first go to the tour manager to discuss it. Many times the problem can be diffused right away. If you have gone through the proper channels and still get no satisfaction, think about discussing the issue with other skaters on the tour and try to come up with a group solution. Or, put your complaint in writing and have all the skaters sign it, and ask for a meeting to suggest possible solutions. Bad feelings and resentment can escalate considerably if complaints are not dealt with properly from the start.