



Kamloops Skating Club

Selecting Figure Skates/Boots

Tips and Advice to help find the right skate/boot for your skater

Four Main Factors in Choosing a Skate:

- Your weight/size
- How often you skate
- Your Foot Length & Width
- Ability/Skating style & Level

When looking for figure skates, for figure skating you won't likely find them in a typical department store. Most Figure Skates sold in most department stores are for recreational skating. *Recreational skates have a different toe pick than a true figure skate and are not built with as much support as is necessary for figure skating maneuvers and can result in injury (see our What is a True Toepick graphic on our website).* True figure skates are more expensive than recreational skates, but when you are spending money on coaching, ice time, dresses and the rest, it is maybe the most important investment you can make for your skater.

In Kamloops you can buy a few different types at Dolson's. You may get lucky and find some at Consignor Sports used; it is always worth a look. Skilled boot fitters like Blade Runner in Vernon, Skater's Edge in Coquitlam and Cyclone Taylor in Vancouver are always your best option,; however, they all involve travel. Blade Runner will come to Kamloops to sharpen skates; so you may be able to email or call Dave and he may bring some skates for you to try on when he comes to Kamloops (he also has a selection of used skates). If you do buy used, pay attention to signs of wear/break down especially in the ankles, they should be firm and make sure the toe picks are still all intact (if toe picks were nipped off then they will not be useful for spins or jumps). If you have chosen the correct figure skate boot and skate several times a week, then it should take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to break them in. Expect blisters and/or sore spots during a normal break in process. Wearing them around the house in skate guards, can help break them in a bit before skating in them.

Things to Consider:

Considerations you may want to take into account when booking a fitting would be to call in advance and discuss the physiology of your child's foot: size, width (wide, average or narrow), arch, heel (narrow or round) and toe configuration. Since different skates have different features knowing your child's foot can mean that the fitter can consider features like different shaped toe boxes that are more accommodating to different types of toe configurations, skates with a heel pocket for people with narrow heels, special widths and then the fitter can ensure they have the appropriate skates in stock in the sizes around your child's foot size; this is especially true if you are travelling out of town to get skates fitted.

When you need to upgrade to a Stiffer Skate

As soon as skaters start to jump their weight and skating style are important factors for choosing the proper skate. The heavier the skater the stronger/stiffer the skate has to be in order to give the necessary support, so it does not crease. Creases are indicators that a skate which does not fit properly (too big/ too much material around the ankle) or the skates cannot resist the pressure put on the boot while landing. People who are putting more weight on the skate or skate more aggressively should consider going up to the next stiffest boot and people putting less weight on the skate could consider going down a level in stiffness. Stronger skaters may want to move up to the next higher level boot (a more stiff boot), lighter or younger skaters might want to move down to the next lower level (or less stiff boot) but purchase a higher level blade. This is especially true for young girls skating at higher skill levels, but their physical size can't justify a figure skate boot built for a senior skater. Inappropriate stiffness in skates can be a cause of injury for skaters. If a skate is too stiff or not stiff enough injuries can ensue, which is why a proper skate fitter with figure skating knowledge is important.

Stiffness Rating

The stiffer the figure skate, the stronger the support. Stiffness ratings will vary depending upon figure skate brand. The Stiffness ratings refer to the amount of support for a particular model of skate. The stiffer the figure skate, the larger the numerical rating given to the skate. Stiffness ratings will vary depending upon figure skate brand, the higher the number the stiffer the skate. The following is a very general chart, that if you are looking for a skate for your child this will speak to the average skater. Having inappropriate support or stiffness can lead to injury; too little or too much for your skating level, which is why having a experienced boot fitter is **always** best.

Level	Skills Working On	Skate Recommendation	Stiffness Rating of Skate (Graf Skates do not have a stiffness rating)
<p>Canskate, Junior Academy & Recreational</p> <p><u>Exception-</u> Has enough support for the very young (ages 7 and below) for competitive or those that are of a petite body size.</p> <p>These skates do not have the support needed for older/larger skaters who are taking lessons and wanting to advance in the sport.</p>	<p>Learning to Skate, Non-Competitive skating, Occasional Skating.</p> <p>Good Recreational Skates have a stiffness rating between 5-20.</p> <p>Skills: Stopping, gliding, stroking forward and basic edges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Softskate Plus G8181 (Girls) ○ Excel JS1290 (youth & adult) ○ Glacier 120 ○ Mystique (youth and adult) • Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 110 Opal (girls & womens) ○ 14 Pearl (girls) • Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pirouette G0171/G0170 (womens and girls) ○ Fantasia (Specifically designed for the “ small fry”) • Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Splendid Gold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Softskate (not rated) does not have a competitive blade ○ Excel (Stiffness 5) ○ Glacier 120 (Not rated) does not have a competitive blade ○ Mystique (stiffness 10) • Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 110 Opal (stiffness 20) ○ 14 Pearl (stiffness 20) • Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pirouette G0171/G0170 (stiffness 15) ○ Fantasia (Tots) (stiffness 10) does not have a competitive blade • Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Splendid Gold (no stiffness rating, designed for basic hops on the ice and nothing more)
<p>Junior Academy & Star 1</p>	<p>Boots Should have stiffness rating between 10 - 30.</p> <p><i>These skates are not recommended in sizes larger than a youth size 2.5, for anything more than recreational use, as the longer they are the more stiffness is needed and they may develop early breakdown, creasing etc.</i></p> <p>Skills: Basic steps, gliding, stopping, forward stroking, basic edges, forward crossovers, two foot spin, spirals, backward stroking, waltz.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mystique (Beginner youth & Adult) ○ Artiste JS1791 (girls) ○ Elle DJ2130 (women or girls) • Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 110 Opal (girls & womens) ○ 14 Pearl (girls) ○ 119/19 Emerald (Youth & Adult) • Risport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Antares (Youth & Adult) ○ Excellence (youth & Adult) • Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pirouette (girls) • Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brio (youth & adult) • Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Splendid Gold ○ Ace (youth & adult) ○ Prestige (youth & adult) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mystique (stiffness 10) ○ Artiste JS1791 (stiffness level 20) ○ Elle DJ2130 (stiffness 30) • Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 110 Opal (stiffness 20) ○ 14 Pearl (stiffness 20) ○ 119/19 Emerald (stiffness rating 25) • Risport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Antares (Stiffness 30) ○ Excellence (Stiffness 40) • Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pirouette (stiffness rating 15) • Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brio (stiffness 25) • Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Splendid Gold (no stiffness rating, designed for basic hops on the ice and nothing more) ○ Ace (designed for the lightweight skater, for single jumps) ○ Prestige (for flip, loop, salchow) for skaters 55kg or less, for very light/younger skaters can be used for double jumps
<p>Star 1, 2, 3 & 4</p>	<p>Boots Should have stiffness rating between 30 - 50. Lowest Rating is for Youth, Higher Rating for Adults.</p> <p>Skills: Back crossovers, three turns, bunny hop, forward spins, sit spins, camel spins, arabesque, single jumps, spirals, axel, simple footwork, hockey stop, T-stop.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Artiste JS1791 (girls) ○ Elle DJ2130 (women or girls) ○ Freestyle (Youth & Adult) ○ Classique (girls or women) ○ Competitor (womens & girls) ○ Marquis (boys & men's) • Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concept G0471/G0470 (girls & womens) ○ Select G1149/G0049 (girls & womens) • Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diamond 113/33 (womens & girls) ○ 223 Stride • Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preludio (youth & adult) ○ Motivo (youth & adult) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Artiste JS1791 (stiffness level 20) ○ Elle DJ2130 (stiffness 30) ○ Free Style (Stiffness 40/45) ○ Classique (stiffness 40) ○ Competitor (stiffness 50) ○ Marquis (Stiffness 45) • Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concept G0471 (stiffness 45) ○ Select G1149 (stiffness 40) • Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diamond 133/33 (stiffness 40) ○ 223 Stride (stiffness 50) • Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preludio (stiffness 35) ○ Motivo (stiffness 38) ○ Overture (stiffness 48) • Risport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excellence (stiffness 40) ○ RF3 (stiffness 45) • Harlick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competitor (stiffness varies dependant on boot materials chosen)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overture (youth & adult) ● Risport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excellence (youth & adult) ○ RF3 ● Harlick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competitor (adult & youth) ● Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prestige (youth & adult) ○ Richmond Special (youth & adult) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prestige (for flip, loop, salchow) for skaters 55kg or less, for very light/younger skaters can be used for double jumps ○ Richmond Special (single and double jumps leading the changeover from 1 turn to 1 ½ or 2 turns)
Star 5-9	All previously mentioned skills plus, double jumps. Stiffness should be 50-75. A skilled boot fitter is recommended for all skate fittings, as weight, height and skating style all will play a role in selecting the proper boot to prevent injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Debut (adult & youth) ○ Competitor (girls & womens) ○ Elite DJ5200 ○ Premier DJ2800/DJ602 (womens & mens) ● Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Podium (girls & womens) ○ G0078 Bronze Label (womens) ● Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 229 Edge (womens) ○ 255 Motion (womens & youth) ○ 910/91 Flair (womens & girls) ● Harlick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competitor (adult & youth) ○ Competitor Plus (youth & adult) ● Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chorus (youth & adult) ● Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Richmond Special (adult & youth) ○ Edmonton Special 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Debut (stiffness 55) ○ Competitor (stiffness 50) ○ Elite DJ5200 (stiffness 75) ○ Premier DJ2800 (stiffness 65) ○ Premier DJ602 (stiffness 69) ● Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Podium (stiffness 55) ○ G0078 Bronze Label (stiffness 75) ● Riedell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 229 Edge (stiffness 60) ○ 255 Motion (stiffness 70) ○ 901/190 Flair (Stiffness 70) ● Harlick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competitor (stiffness varies dependant on boot materials chosen) ○ Competitor Plus (stiffness varies dependant on boot materials chosen) ● Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chorus (stiffness 70) ● Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Richmond Special (single and double jumps leading the changeover from 1 turn to 1 ½ or 2 turns) ○ Edmonton Special (double and triple jumps (men quadruple jumps). On request Graf produces extra stiff versions of the Edmonton.)
Star 10/Gold Skate/Competitive Skate	All aforementioned skills plus triple jumps and layback spins. Stiffness should be between 75-100). A skilled boot fitter is recommended for all skate fittings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ G0098 Silver Label (womens) ○ G0528 Gold Label (womens) ● Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerto (Youth and Adult) ○ Ice Fly (Youth and Adult) ○ Piano (Youth and Adult) ● Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Edmonton Special ● Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elite DJ5200 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ G0098 Silver Label (stiffness 85) ○ G0528 Gold Label (stiffness 90) ● Edea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerto (stiffness 85) ○ Ice Fly (stiffness 90) ○ Piano (stiffness 95) ● Graf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Edmonton Special (double and triple jumps (men quadruple jumps). On request Graf produces extra stiff versions of the Edmonton.) ● Jackson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elite DJ5200 (stiffness 75)

Skate Boots bothering your feet?

Figure skates are meant to be worn with thin nylon socks or bare feet. If you are wearing bulky socks this may be a source of discomfort. There are a few actions you can take if your skate boots are hurting your feet. If your skate boots are heat moldable you can have them re-molded locally. If yours aren't moldable or it didn't fix the issue- you may be able to have them punched out at Dolson's or Players bench depending on the skate boot you have. If that doesn't solve your problem and it is a pressure point issue near your ankle then bunga pads or gel pads may help. Skilled boot fitters like Blade Runner, Skater's Edge and Cyclone Taylor are always your best option, but they all involve travel. Blade Runner will come to Kamloops to sharpen skates; so you may be able to email or call Dave and he may bring equipment to work on your issue when he comes to Kamloops.

Skate Fit by Brand

The Jackson Fit- Jackson has become a leading brand for lightweight performance in Figure Skates. Most skates and boots are heat moldable to help reduce the break-in time. They have a rounded toe box, a medium-high instep, and a medium width heel. The toe box is also more accommodating to people who have boxy toes, or toes that are similar in length (the 2nd or 3rd toe is longer or the same size as the big toe). If you have a medium to high arch you may want to consider this brand and medium heel. Jackson knows that not all feet are the same width, so they offer several stock figure skating boots in four different widths. Jackson has a wider last than Riedell from side to side and also in heel width.

The Gam Fit- They are similar to Jackson but made in the traditional style with full natural leather uppers and soles. This brand has a wider toe box and is higher in the arch vertically. It is a good choice for those who have several toes the same length as the big toe, a medium/high to high arch and medium to narrow heel. This brand is also a good selection for those who have a combo width foot (wide ball and a more narrow heel). The toe box isn't as tapered as Riedell or Risport, but isn't as rounded as Jackson. It wider in the arch area than any of the other brands from top to bottom (not side to side), but has a little more narrow heel. This is a good boot for combination feet that have a wide ball/ high arch but a narrow heel.

The Riedell Fit- Riedell has several models to choose from and are popular among first time skaters. They have a tapered toe box, a medium instep, and a medium width heel. This brand is a good choice for those who have tapered toes, a medium to flat arch and medium heel. Many young skaters, including toddlers, have a wide foot. Riedell has met this challenge by being the only brand that has a wide width option for their entry level/beginner skates.

The Risport Fit -When you think of Risport figure skate boots, think of a fine Italian dress shoe...very high quality. Risports have a tapered toe box, a medium instep, and a medium width heel. This brand is a good choice for those who have tapered toes, a medium arch and medium heel. Great for skaters who are transitioning from an Edea boot back to a traditional skate. Risport used to be considered more of a narrow boot as they don't carry a true "wide" width. However, their C width will accommodate most normal width feet. The toe box is more accommodating to tapered toes.

The Harlick Fit- Harlick is generally a custom boot, they have many, many options to customize the skate from types of leather for stiffness to having decorative images stitched onto the ankle of the skate. They are light boots with carbon fiber soles. Great for most foot problems that lead to skating difficulties. They generally have a longer life, as they can be sent to be refurbished to Harlick for a reasonable amount.

The Edea Fit-Edea calls their boots the instant custom fit; they use a memory foam which shapes to the foot at body temperature is designed to allow skaters instantly have the right fit. They are not oven moldable and that will void any warranty they come with and they say it will lead to an early break down. Edea uses a thermo foldable material that allows the skates to be molded in width, tightened or opened up in the heels, shaping can be done to accommodate different toes – hammer or square and arch support can be changed for high or low arches. After the outer shell is fitted the inner padding can then do its job and give the 'instant right fit.'

Background on Figure Skate Blades:

Blades are mostly made in lengths of 1/4 inch (7 1/4 , 8 1/4 , 10 3/4). Blades also have different widths and radii, as well as different configurations of the spinning area (sometimes referred to as the bulge or rocker) and different toe picks. These all have major effects on the way a blade feels to a skater.

Buying Blades?

The blade length is the measurement from the front of the sole plate to the back of the heel plate. Skater's do not need expensive blades to be a great skater, they should however, buy well-built and age/ability appropriate equipment for the skating level. Upgrade equipment as your skater's skill progresses, for example a skater may need to upgrade skates when they move from basic skating to first jumps or from double to triple jumps etc. Advanced blades require the skater to have excellent technical skills. Advanced blades are designed for very experienced skaters. Advanced free-style blades have a longer radius and have bigger toe picks. Also, the portion of the blade that is used for spinning is much smaller than on intermediate blades; meaning the skater must stay properly positioned and balanced going into and during the spin or they will start rocking on the blade. Intermediate blades provide you a larger area on the blade to make corrections and continue spinning even if you aren't perfectly positioned/balanced. Blades are all made essentially from the same materials and manufacturing process. Some blades are more expensive simply because of supply and demand and a different design modifications like side honing which makes them slightly more expensive in manufacturing.

In the end the most important thing to remember is that there is no better brand. The brand, that fits the foot and is suited best is the best brand. Good Luck finding skates.