

Time Trials at the Pettit National Ice Center

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The Pettit holds time trials nearly every Saturday, and some Sundays throughout the ice season. The Pettit's racing season schedule is posted here: <http://www.thepettit.com/speed/competitions.htm>

How to Register

The sign-up sheets for each week's racing appear in the Pettit office on Wednesdays. To sign up for a time trial, you need to register in the Pettit office by 4pm, Friday, the night before the time trial. If you are at the rink, you can just drop into the office. If you are out of town, you can call the rink office at: 1 (414) 266-0100. Once the automated computer operator comes online, choose the option for the rink office.

The office will want your name, and the distances that you want to skate. There are usually 3-4 distances each day, and you are limited to 2 distances per day. The cost is around \$10 for Saturday and \$17 for Saturday and Sunday. The office will take VISA / MasterCard over the phone.

The Friday 4pm deadline is quite rigid. At 4:15 the Officials create the pairings and start-lists for the weekend, and you will NOT be added if you miss the deadline. The officials use the following guidelines to set up the pairings:

- Pair by distance (shorter distances first, progressing to longer distances)
- Pair by gender (for each distance ladies go first, men second)
- Unranked skaters go first with their gender
- Ranked slower skaters go next
- Ranked faster skaters go last
- If there is an odd number of skaters,
The skater without a pair will be the first skater.

These are just guidelines, but they are fairly predictable. So if this is your first time doing a time trial, you will most likely be the first or second pair, depending on how many new skaters are present.

The rink requires a minimum of 10 skaters to hold the races. So, if there are fewer than 10 skaters, racing will be cancelled, and the rink will have an open speedskating session instead.

Saturday Morning

The rink opens at 7:00 am and warm-up is from 7:15 – 8:00 am. Try to arrive by 7:00 – 7:10 am. Often, the main lobby doors are locked. The door adjacent to the right stairwell will be unlocked. Use this door to enter the building, go downstairs, and take the tunnel to get to the center-rink.

As you enter the center-rink, there is a sign-in table next to the ice (Fig 1).



Fig 1. Go to the Sign-in table to check-in, and see the schedule and the start order.

The Sign-in table has:

- 1) The Schedule for the day, which has the order of the events, and looks something like:

Today's Time Trial Schedule of events		
7:15 – 8:00	Warm-up	
8:00 – 8:20	Resurface	
8:21 – 8:22	National Anthem	
8:30 – 8:46	500 meters women,	8 pairs
8:48 – 9:12	500 meters men,	12 pairs
9:12 – 9:32	Resurface	
9:32 – 9:44	1000 meters women,	4 pairs
9:46 – 10:01	1000 meters men,	5 pairs
10:02 – 10:10	1500 meters women,	2 pair
10:11 – 10:25	1500 meters men,	3 pairs
10:26 – 10:50	3000 meters women,	4 pair
10:50 – 11:16	3000 meters men,	4 pair
11:16 – 11:55	5000 meters men.	1 pair

- 2) The Sign-in sheets for each event, which looks something like:

Event 1 500-meter Women's start list			
Heat	Lane	Skater	
1	I	Ima Neuskater	
2	I	Sally Skater	
	O	Sue Sortaspeedy	
3	I	Sheila Fastgirl	
	O	✓ Sherry Sprinter	
4	I	Shirley S. Swift	
	O	Elli Enchanted	

Go to the table, and place a check next to your name on each start list. Make sure that if you are doing 2 races, that you make checks next to both races. On the start list, the first column lists the order of the pairings. The second column lists whether you start on the inner lane "I", or the outer lane "O". So in our example, Sherry Sprinter has checked in, is in the third women's pair, and starts in the Outer lane.

Pre Race

Now you can go warm up. The entire oval is open at this time, so you can warm up using both the inner and outer lanes, as well as the warm-up lane. If you need to, you can use the bicycles in the weight room, which is behind the bleachers. At 7:30 everyone has to leave the ice while it is resurfaced.

At 8:00 am, the time trials will start promptly. You are allowed to warm up in the warm-up lane, as long as you do not get too 'vigorous'. Make sure you know which pair is 2 before your start. When you are 2 pair away from starting, you need to go to the starting line.

Standing next to the starting area will be a person handing out armbands. If you start in the Inner lane, pick up a white armband. If you start in the outer lane, pick up a red armband. A handy "word trick" is to remember an Apple, "White on the inside, and Red on the outside". Put the armband around your right bicep/tricep (Fig 2). Sometimes for longer races, if there is a time constraint, skaters will skate 4 at a time instead of 2. If this happens, the armbands for skater #3 and #4 are green & yellow.

If you have a jacket or warm-up pants, take them off here, and leave them on the safety mats.

The Start

When the pair in front of you is done racing, the starter will call you to the starting line. If you are not there, you will be given a warning for “delay of race”, SO ALWAYS BE ON TIME.

The starting commands are the same as for short track, and are:

“GO TO THE START”	Stand (or kneel) about 1 foot behind the starting line.
“READY”	Take your position
“BANG”	The gun goes off, and away you go!



Fig 2. Casey FitzRandolph and Kip Carpenter at start of 500m
Casey has the red “Outer” armband, and Kip, the white “Inner”.

If you hear a double shot from the starter’s pistol, then there has been a “false start”. Stop racing, and return to the starting line. The starter will announce who false started, and give them a warning. If you get a second false start, you are DQ’ed. After the starter gives the warning, return to the ready position and wait for the pistol shot.

The Race

Assuming that there was no false start, you are now racing on the oval. Every time you go down the back straightaway, you need to change lanes. You should have noticed earlier, that there are lane markers that separate the two lanes. The lane markers are everywhere except the back straightaway, which is where the lane change occurs.

If you arrive at the back straight at the same time as your pair, the right-of-way is given to the skater in the outer lane. Since they went a longer distance through turns one and two, to get side by side, they must be going faster. This is rarely an issue, as you have the entire length of the back straight to change lanes, which is around 100 yards in length (Fig 3). Given the option, however, you should change lanes as early as possible. If you forget to change lanes, the officials will let you continue to skate, but when you finish the race; you will not receive a time, and will be listed as a disqualification (DSQ) on the day’s results for leaving the course.

On the back straight, in the same area where the lane change occurs, is the “coach’s box”. It is a lane of ice about 2 feet wide on the far right of the rink. If you have a coach, that is the only place that they can be on the ice. You and your coach will normally work out in advance what information you will receive. Typical information yelled by coaches are: lap times, reminders to change lanes, and words of encouragement.

On the back wall of the rink is a digital scoreboard. It lists which pair is skating, and also displays their split times and finish times. If you or your coach wants to write these times down, you need to be quick. These times are only displayed for about 10 seconds. After that, the clock moves on to the next split, or the next race.

You want to skate as close to the blocks as possible, as that is the shortest distance around the track. If you accidentally hit a block, do not worry. Hitting the block will usually distract you enough to break your

rhythm, but keep on skating. You are not disqualified for hitting a block. It happens often, and there are block chasers that will get the block, and return it to its position.

If, during your race, you fall, get up as quickly as possible, and continue to race. There is no re-skate if you fall. If you are racing in the outer lane, and fall into the inner lane (this is a very rare occurrence), you need to return to the outer lane at the point that you left it, otherwise you will be disqualified for cutting the course short.

Lap cards are displayed at the finish line. When you approach 1 lap to go, you will hear the bell ringer ring the bell. Continue to focus on good technique. As the race continues, most skaters tend to rise up out of their good aerodynamic position, putting them onto their toes, and into a less efficient position. For most skaters, their foot speed also usually drops over time.



Fig 3. Both athletes change lanes down the back straight. Kip, who started on the inner lane, got to the back straight first. Here, Kip has already moved to the outer, while Casey is hoping to catch some draft before moving to the inner.

Post Race

When you are done, move to the warm-up lane. Cool down for 2-3 laps, and catch your breath. Once you have your breath back, go back to the starting area, and return your armband. Put your jacket and warm-up pants back on. Go back onto the warm-up lane to finish your cool down. If you have a second race to do, be aware of the time until the next race, so that you warm up appropriately.

When all the races are done, the referees remove the blocks from the rink, and then the referees leave the ice. At this time the time trials are over, and “open speedskating” time begins.

Open speedskating time lasts until noon, so if time trials end at 10:30, there is 90 minutes of open time. If time trials run until noon, there is no open speedskating time. If you did not sign up for time trials, but you plan to skate the open session, then you need to pay for the session at the rink office. The fee is \$9.

When everything is done, results are available from the rink office. They are on the counter, next to the skating schedules. If you forget to pick up results, they are also posted online, several days later at:

<http://www.thepettit.com/speed/timetrialresults.htm>