

JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER

CONGRATULATIONS TO JEANNE BEGEJ - OFFICER OF THE NEW ZEALAND ORDER OF MERIT

Jeanne Begej has been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2020 for her contribution to figure skating and is now an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit, following a nomination made by CISC. The following is the citation that appeared in the Queens' Birthday announcements



BEGEJ, Mrs Jeanne Lorraine

For services to ice figure skating

Mrs Jeanne Begej has made a significant contribution to ice figure skating in New Zealand since the 1960s as a competitor, judge and administrator at club, regional and national levels.

Mrs Begej was the National Intermediate 1967 and Senior Ladies Champion 1968 and 1969. She competed again in later years and represented New Zealand as a member of the Spectrum Synchronised team at the Australian National Championships from 2009 to 2014 and 2016. She has been an accredited national ice skating judge for 55 years and was an International Skating Union Judge from 1978 to 1996 and again from 1999 to 2006. She has been a New Zealand Ice Figure Skating Association (NZIFSA) team leader and team official at various international competitions and congresses and has served in several local and national voluntary administrative roles over 50 years. She was jointly responsible for introducing the Kiwi Skate Learn to Skate Program in 1986 and has been a volunteer coach for many years. She has been President of the Canterbury Masters Figure Skating Club since its inception in 2004. Most recently she was the NZIFSA Officials Director from 2016 to 2019. Mrs Begej is a Life Member of the Centaurus Ice Skating Club in Christchurch, Dunedin Ice Skating Club, and the New Zealand Ice Figure Skating Association.

Jeanne's award was recognised at the Coffee Club session at Alpine Ice Arena on Thursday 4 June with a tiara wearing honour guard holding skate guards and hockey sticks.



RETURNING TO THE RINK AT ALERT LEVEL 2

With the move from Alert Level 3 to Level 2 on Thursday 12 May and the subsequent easing of those of the Alert Level 2 restrictions on Friday 29 May 2020, we are fortunate that the majority of our skaters have been able to return to the ice. The rinks in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Gore are all open again. Alexandra is aiming to open their rink this weekend and Queenstown rink opens on 14 June, which is all very exciting for their skaters.

As communicated via email on 30 May the eased Alert Level 2 restrictions mean that gatherings of groups of up to 100 people are permitted, including gatherings for sport & recreation, but there are still a number of requirements that need to be met.

- Contact tracing is still essential
- Good hygiene measures, particularly washing and drying of hands, and regular sanitising of equipment and surfaces need to be in place.
- We are still asked to maintain physical distancing of 2m where possible, especially from people we don't know. It is recognised that contact during physical activity will occur, but this should be minimised as much as possible.
- Stay home if you are sick and do not take part in sport or recreation if you have flu like symptoms, self-isolate and get tested.
- We attach, for your information, the latest "Play, active recreation and sport at Alert Level 2" guidelines from Sport NZ. Based on this information, our recommendations for figure skating are that:
- While there is no longer a requirement for groups of skaters and their coaches to be separated, distancing should be maintained where possible. If continuing to allocate separate designated zones helps address this without impacting on how sessions function, then clubs / rinks may choose to continue to do this.
- Synchronised skating teams can now train together without the previous restriction on numbers.
- Given the physical contact that is inherent in synchronised skating, pairs and ice dance, you all need to be even more careful about hand-washing / sanitising before and after skating.
- There is no maximum time limit specified for any gatherings (including sport and recreation). However, to protect people's health, rinks or clubs may choose to limit events and gatherings to under two hours. These are not requirements, but please respect the decision of your club or rink if they chose to do this.

COVID-19 AND THE IMPACT ON OUR COMPETITION CALENDAR

Based on the revised alert Level 2 information, competitions can go ahead provided we can address the public health measures spelt out in the Alert Level 2 information. With the likelihood that we are moving to Alert Level 1 in the not too distant future that's all likely to get more straight forward too.

However, it was recognized early on that there were likely to be some challenges around getting sufficient officials for panels and NZIFSA have a responsibility to make sure we do not put any of our officials under undue pressure to attend competitions and put themselves at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19.

From the perspective of the skaters being ready to compete, provided skaters have worked hard on their off-ice training during lockdown, we believe they could be ready four to six weeks after being back on the ice. We're not saying this will be easy, but we do not believe it is unrealistic. To allow this preparation time does mean that competitions that were planned for June needed to be pushed back a bit. At the same time, we are also committed to trying to ensure that those skaters that do not have access to ice all year have a fair opportunity to prepare for Nationals too, and so aim to keep Nationals around the end of September / early October.

To run a condensed competition season that does not necessitate our officials committing to being available every weekend and provides a reasonable opportunity for skaters to compete has required all the clubs to come together to work out what competitions can be held when. We would like to say a big thank you to all the club representatives for the constructive and co-operative approach they have evidenced, both during the meeting on 27 May, and subsequently, as the finer details are worked out.

A particular thanks to our southern clubs AISC, ISS, QISC and to OISSA who have made some quite significant compromises. Rather than the three clubs and the sub-association each having their own championship events they have agreed to hold one combined club competition. Not an easy decision to make.

All of the revised competition dates are now on the NZIFSA website www.nzifsa.org.nz/competitions. Competition announcements are being prepared, reviewed and finalised at present and will be posted on the NZIFSA website when available.

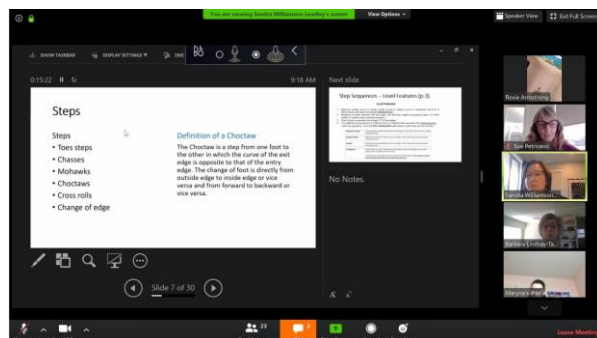
NZIFSA TESTS

We know there were a number of test sessions scheduled for March / April that were cancelled due to COVID-19. Many of these skaters will still be looking to sit their tests. Again, we need to be very cognizant of the demand put on our judges and are asking that careful thought go into organizing test sessions. We are also asking clubs to communicate with Ina Paul their proposed test sessions and we are encouraging clubs to minimize the number of test sessions and for coaches to plan accordingly and consider carefully when putting skaters forward for a test. We would also like to make a plea to parents. If your child's coach says they are not ready to test, then please respect their decision on this; they are the professionals.

OFFICIALS' TRAINING

Covid-19 has required us to look for alternative ways of delivering the officials' training that was planned for this year.

Sandra Williamson-Leadley and Clarence Ong (from Australia) delivered a training seminar for **Technical Specialists and Technical Controllers for Singles on Saturday 25 April** via Zoom. Thank you to Sandra and Clarence for facilitating the seminar. Four TCs, ten TS's, and eight new probationary TS's took part in this online training.



There have been two further officials' training seminars held since then, both delivered by Sandra Williamson-Leadley via Zoom.

- Dance seminar for Tech Specialists and Tech Controllers 16 May.
- Ice Dance seminar for Judges 23 May.

Both of these training seminars were attended by six officials.

If you have any questions about training to become an official, please contact Melissa Cummings at officials.director@nzifsa.org.nz

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX ALLOCATIONS

There is a lot of uncertainty as to whether any of the international competitions planned for the coming six months will go ahead, however, we do want to advise that the ISU have allocated New Zealand the following Junior Grand Prix events:

Location to be confirmed* 26-29 August (Ladies, Men, Pairs, Ice Dance)
Yokohama, Japan 16-19 September (Ladies, Men, Ice Dance)
Ostrava, Czech Republic 23-26 October (Pairs)
Ljubljana, Slovenia 7-10 October (Ladies)

*Note, this event was scheduled to be held in Richmond, Canada, however Skate Canada have advised they are unable to host this JGP as planned and the ISU are currently seeking an alternative host.

Travel restrictions in response to COVID-19 are likely to be the deciding factor around whether our skaters are able to attend any of these events. Our Skater Development Director, Sandra Williamson-Leadley, will be communicating with eligible skaters regarding the JGP's. At this point in time it seems highly unlikely that it will be either possible or safe for our skaters to compete. If there is some miracle that allows this to happen, as noted in the Selection Policy, where skaters are unable to attend Hollins Trophy, priority for assignment will be based on last years' National Championship results. For Junior Grand Prix the Board may limit the number of events a skater may attend, and they will be considering this at their June meeting.

New Zealand do not have any pairs or dance couples eligible to compete at the JGP events, but we have listed the allocations here for completeness.

ANTI-DOPING SEMINARS – COMPULSORY FOR INTERNATIONAL SQUAD

NZIFSA are committed to supporting Drug Free Sport NZ anti-doping education programmes as part of keeping our sport clean and free from drug cheats.

In previous years we have run an anti-doping seminar at our National Championships as that is one of the few times we have all our prospective international squad members in the one place. The timing of these seminars has often been a source of discontent. It has always been a challenge to find a time that minimizes the financial burden for out-of-town skaters of staying additional nights, and, importantly, the impact on skaters who may be competing later that day.

Last year we trialed holding anti-doping seminars at North Island and South Island Championships, with a further seminar held at Nationals for our skaters who train overseas and for those skaters who were unable to attend NI and SI champs. This seemed to work well and it is our intention to do the same again this year. We will have the details for you in the next newsletter.

Note: Attendance at one of these seminars is compulsory for any skaters wanting to compete internationally. Selection to the International Squad will be contingent on having attended an anti-doping seminar, so please make sure you plan to attend one of these.

NOMINATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AND SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARDS ARE DUE BY 1 SEPTEMBER

We would like to encourage you to nominate those outstanding administrators and the skaters who display the attributes of a great sportsperson for the NZIFSA Administrator of the Year Award and the Sportsperson of the Year Award respectively.

Nominations must be received by the General Secretary secretary@nzifsa.org.nz by **1 September**. The Board will be the selectors for this award and will announce the recipients at social function at the end of the 2020 New Zealand Ice Figure Skating Championships.

Criteria for the Administrator of the Year Award

- Take on a leadership or integral role in their club / sub-association
- Take on administrative/organisational roles and perform their duties in a manner that progresses the sport or enhances the functioning of the club / sub-association.
- Positive role model for other administrators of our sport
- Possibly work in a mentoring role within the club / sub-association

Criteria for Nomination for Sportsperson of the Year Award

- Positive role model for other skaters
- Demonstrate a 'fair play' attitude/good sportpersonship
- Positive and tangible contribution to their club and the sport in general
- Active role in the activities offered by the club and/or skate school, e.g. club nights, fundraising, KiwiSkate coaching sessions, etc.

NOTE: While skating achievement is considered, it is not the basis of this award

All the best in skating
Anita Tamepo and Jeanette King
President and CEO
NZIFSA