

Silver Stars Handbook 2013-2014 Season

Introduction

Welcome to the Silver Stars Synchronized Skating Team! We had a fun and successful competition season last year and we look forward to continuing our improvement with both new and returning members. Our skaters appreciate the encouragement of their families. We will once more need everyone's full support as we work on the goals of the upcoming season.

We are providing this handbook to help parents and skaters understand the best way to assist the team toward these goals. It provides a background about the Silver Stars and the benefits of synchronized skating, as well as ways to prepare for exhibition performances and competitions. It also includes information about fundraising and team-building activities. We hope you find this document useful. Please feel free to share your comments or any ideas you have to improve it. If there is anything that needs correction or to be added, please be in touch with our coach Laura Erle or any of the Silver Stars Organizing Committee Members.

What is Synchronized Team Skating?

Synchronized team skating is the fastest growing discipline of figure skating both within the United States and internationally. Synchronized skating features a group of 8 - 20 skaters working together to form lines, blocks, circles, wheels, and other formations using fast-paced footwork and intricate moves, all set to music. It combines the skill and artistry associated with the individual sport of figure skating with the camaraderie and teamwork found in all team sports. The team aspect is an exciting addition to the traditionally individualized sport of figure skating.

It is truly a great time to be involved with this ever-changing discipline. Every year the team, coaches, and judges push the sport to higher and higher levels. Synchronized skating combines something from all other skating disciplines. As a synchronized skater in today's world, the skater requires the rhythm and posture of an ice dancer, the power and strength of a pairs team, the presentation and proficiency of a free-stylist, along with agility and flow of a senior moves skater.

Synchronized team skating can be fun for any skater. The extra practice time that skaters spend in synchronized skating can enhance speed, edges, extension, and footwork, which are also very important to singles skaters. In addition to this, skaters will have the enjoyment of being part of a team. There are competitions to attend which means travel adventures that you will remember forever.

There are several levels of synchronized team skating, including Non-Qualifying Introductory teams (Beginner, Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile, and Open Juvenile) and Qualifying teams (Juvenile, Intermediate, Novice, Junior, Senior). The level of a particular team is based on age and skating ability. In the Bay Area, there are USFS teams in Dublin, San Francisco, and Oakland (adult team).

At the Collegiate level, there are many team opportunities available for skaters around the country. Colleges and universities actively seek highly skilled student athletes. Gold level tests in freestyle, dance and moves will be just a few of the requirements needed by the top collegiate teams.

On an international level, the International Skating Union sponsors several synchronized team competitions, including ones in the United States, Finland, Sweden, Italy, France, and Canada. The World Championships is held in a different country every year. We hope to see Synchronized Team skating in the Olympics in the near future.

A Brief History of the Silver Stars Team

In 1995, the St. Moritz Ice Skating Club decided that a synchronized team was needed at the Dublin Iceland rink, located in Dublin, California. Laura Erle was asked to teach a summer class. By September of that year, a team was organized and named the Silver Stars Synchronized Skating Team. Laura continues to be the head coach, and is currently assisted by Lauren Wrenn, a former Silver Star.

The Silver Stars team began its competitive career in 1996 with its first appearance at the Pacific Coast Championships and the U.S. National Championships. The next season, the team grew from 12 to 22 skaters and again competed at the Pacific Coast Championships and at Nationals. Over the years, the Silver Stars have competed in several non-qualifying competitions and continues to compete at qualifying competitions.

There have been more than one hundred skaters that have participated in the Silver Stars synchronized program. We have had skaters from France and Finland skate with our teams. Our skaters are very well-rounded; they have passed USFS tests in Moves in the Field, Freestyle, Pairs, and Dance. They have also competed in singles, pairs, and dance events.

The Silver Stars coaches have always stressed the importance of not only being a well-rounded skater but a well-rounded person. We strive to teach our skaters good sportsmanship, the importance of education, teamwork, respect and responsibility to others. As the Silver Stars Synchronized Team continues to improve and grow, our success is measured in the accomplishments of our team and its skaters.

The Team

A team is NOT just a group of people who do the same thing, at the same time and at the same place. A team IS a group of people working together towards a common goal, helping one another, encouraging one another, sharing each others' burdens, trials, triumphs, and joys.

For a synchronized skating team to function, all skaters must be working hard to improve their individual skills so that when they come together as a team they can focus on new skills. However, not every skater is at the same level; therefore, those skaters with higher level skills must help and encourage skaters who are working to improve and raise their own skill level.

Team members must put aside their individual differences, and personal relationships that tend towards cliquishness, and focus on the common goal which is to skate our best, and to become a competitive, but also enjoyable team, in which to be a part of.

Team members do NOT condemn or criticize one another, or complain about newer members' lack of skills. The fact is that all skaters must continue to work on basic skills in order to bring everyone up to a competitive level of skating. Without new skaters, our team will eventually cease to exist, and we would have no hope of growing into a larger, more competitive team with multiple divisions. New skaters are encouraged and welcomed and made to feel a part of the existing team.

Our team should be the place to be for skaters who want to compete and grow in their skills and have that synchronized skating experience, and who will feel welcomed and a part of the team from the beginning, regardless of their skill level or personality. We want to have FUN, but we also want to COMPETE and to be serious about what we do on the ice, with the ultimate goal being a trip to NATIONALS and being a nationally competitive team.

The only way to achieve TEAM UNITY is by working together and helping one another! That is what the SILVER STARS is all about.

Silver Stars Competition Record

Year	Competition	Level	Placement
1996	Pacific Coast – Berkeley, CA	Novice	4 th
	Nationals – Chicago, IL	Novice	13 th
1997	Pacific Coast – Seattle, WA	Novice	3 rd
	Nationals – Syracuse, NY	Novice	12 th
1998	Pacific Coast – Anaheim, CA	Intermediate	4 th (initial round)
	Pacific Coast – Anaheim, CA	Intermediate	2 nd (consolation round)
1999	Pacific Coast – CO Springs, CO	Junior Classic	2 nd
	Pacific Coast – CO Springs, CO	Novice	6 th
2000	Pacific Coast – Eugene, OR	Intermediate	5 th
2001	Pacific Coast – Anaheim, CA	Junior	4 th
	Pacific Coast – Anaheim, CA	Novice	6 th
	Pacific Coast – Anaheim, CA	Preliminary	1 st
	Nationals – CO Springs, CO	Junior	12 th
2002	Pacific Coast – Westminster, CO	Intermediate	5 th
	Pacific Coast – Westminster, CO	Juvenile	4 th
	Nationals – Lake Placid, NY	Juvenile	11 th
2003	Pacific Coast – San Diego, CA	Teen Intro	2 nd
2004	Pacific Coast – Salt Lake City, UT	Intermediate	5 th
2005	Pacific Coast – Ft Collins, CO	Teen Intro	2 nd
2006	Pacific Coast – Seattle, WA	Pre-Juvenile	1 st
	Pacific Coast – Seattle, WA	Junior	2 nd
	Nationals – Grand Rapids, MI	Junior	13 th
2007	Pacific Coast – Geneva, IL	Open Juvenile	4 th
2008	Pacific Coast – Nashville, TN	Open Juvenile	3 rd
2009	Pacific Coast – Broomfield, CO	Intermediate	8 th
2010	Pacific Coast – Cedar Rapids, IA	Pre-Juvenile	5 th
	Pacific Coast – Cedar Rapids, IA	Novice	3 rd
	Nationals – Minneapolis, MN	Novice	13 th
2011	Pacific Coast – Rochester, MN	Pre-Juvenile	1 st
2012	Pacific Coast – Plymouth, MI	Open Juvenile	7 th
2013	Pacific Coast - Kalamazoo, MI	Open Juvenile	2 nd

The Benefits of Synchronized Team Skating

There's no other sport quite like it: a team of highly skilled athletes skating in unison – with speed, strength, agility and grace – in creative programs choreographed to music. Synchronized team skating is not only captivating to watch, but also compelling in the many ways it benefits young people:

It promotes teamwork and cooperation. Good communication and teamwork are essential for safety and for strong performances. The team is judged on how well it skates as a unit, not on the unique performance of individual skaters.

It teaches self-discipline and dedication. Skaters arrive at practice promptly and work hard consistently, week after week.

It encourages individual skill-building. To perform the highly demanding moves required for group formations, a skater must continue to improve and maintain his/her individual skills.

It supports good nutrition and exercise habits. Because synchronized skating is a year-round sport, skaters learn to eat and exercise well all year.

It builds confidence and self-esteem. Team members experience the thrill of reaching a difficult goal through hard work, determination and cooperation, and of being recognized for this achievement (all team members receive a medal when their team places in the top four in their division).

It teaches trust. Skaters learn to trust their teammates to perform their roles, for everyone's safety.

It creates strong friendships. The bonds formed during team practices and competitions over the years can last a lifetime.

It promotes good sportsmanship. During competitions, teams and skaters wish each other luck, cheer each other on, and exchange congratulations.

It teaches performance, grace and musicality. The experience of performing to music under pressure will benefit skaters in other life situations that require presentation skills.

It demonstrates the benefits of synergy. Skaters learn that working diligently with others toward a common goal is both rewarding and fun!

It supports other skating training efficiently. Synchronized skating is ideal cross training for any other skating discipline.

It lays the foundation for success. Synchronized skating is a system that builds the discipline necessary to succeed in other pursuits.

Community Service

Community service projects are an important part of the team's activities each year. Participating in projects as a team demonstrates the value of giving back to our communities, builds bonds with teammates and other community members, and raises public awareness of synchronized team skating in a positive way. In the past, the team has participated in the Toys for Tots program, One Warm Coat Drive, Dublin St. Patrick's Day Parade, San Ramon Library Book Fair, and volunteered time working with the YMCA. The team has also skated in exhibitions that are open to the public. In 2011, our skaters skated at the Grand Opening of the outdoor holiday rink in San Jose and got to meet Kristi Yamaguchi.

Within the skating community, we expect all of our skating families to support Skate St. Moritz, either through a donation of volunteer time or hospitality (food) item. Additionally, our club sponsors the only competition in Northern California devoted solely to Synchronized Skating - the Bay Cities Synchronized Skating Competition. ALL families are required to volunteer for this event.

Fundraising

Fundraisers (if any) will be determined by the Organizing Committee.

Skaters and/or their parents may not solicit funds from local businesses or corporate sponsors for their child's personal fund in the name of the team. These contributions are not tax deductible for the business making the donation and in most cases it is the business' intention to donate money to the team itself. Checks from corporate and small business sponsors will be deposited into the general account for use by the team.

Our fundraising events throughout the year include food sales during competitions and shows at the rink, our fall and spring dress sales, and rummage sales (held every 2-3 years). St. Moritz Ice Skating Club is also a main source of funding for our trips to Sectionals and Nationals. As such, we volunteer our time for SMISC events (Skate St. Moritz and Bay Cities Synchro competitions).

If you have fundraising ideas, please contact an Organizing Committee member.

Publicity Activities

Each year the team participates in other events that generate awareness about the team and the sport of synchronized skating. These activities are important for raising the team's visibility to potential donors and corporate sponsors, for building teamwork and for attracting new skaters in future years.

We have been highlighted in the local area newspapers. Most recently, an article in the Tri-Valley Herald in January, 2013, wrote about the Open Juvenile team's trip to Pacific Coast Synchronized Skating Sectionals. For accuracy purposes, the coach and possibly the rink must pre-approve all information provided to the media.

We hold exhibition performances prior to some major competitions.

Team Bonding Activities

An integral part of the team experience is the bonding that takes place between the skaters. This is important not only for expanding friendships, but also for promoting trust and unity in preparation for performances. Past activities have included pool parties, movie outings, and team dinners. The biggest team bonding activity currently is our annual bus ride to the Anaheim competition in November.

The Skating Season

Unlike some team sports, synchronized skating requires year-round training and skill development in preparation for competitions and exhibitions. With few exceptions, the team practices are held every week on Thursday nights, and may be supplemented by additional practices as needed during the weeks leading up to competitions. The teams also practice on Monday evenings. A team schedule will be provided to each skater.

The period after Nationals, from late February through early June, is devoted to workshops focused on building individual and team skills. This is the time for skaters interested in joining the team to begin working with the team, commit to the practice schedule and all competition dates. This is also the time that our returning skaters can work on new synchro skills for the upcoming season.

This year, the competitive season gets officially underway May 2, 2013. Although not all team members may be able to make every summer practice due to vacation schedules and other commitments, each skater must understand the importance of minimizing absences and improving individual skating skills throughout the summer. Beginning in July through the Pacific Coast Sectional championships in late January and (if the team qualifies) the National championships in February, prompt attendance at every practice is essential – the entire team depends on it. This is not only for practice reasons, but for the safety of all skaters. In addition, all skaters are expected to participate in every competition and exhibition during the season, as these experiences build confidence and the ability to perform under pressure.

If your skater cannot attend a practice, you must email Coach Laura about the absence at lerle64@aol.com Failure to notify the Coach PRIOR to an absence will result in an unexcused absence. Multiple unexcused absences may reduce your skater to “alternate” status.

Team Levels

Team level refers to the division in which the team will skate in events.

Silver Star's team levels depend directly on the number and abilities of the skaters on the team each year. The team levels and their members are set by the coach no later than September based on the skaters' age (as of July 1st), individual test levels, demonstrated synchro skills, and requirements for being selected to skate on a particular team.

Starting in 2003, USFSA began mandating that all synchronized team skaters pass the appropriate Moves-in-the-field tests. We encourage all skaters to work towards passing Moves-in-the-field tests.

Skating Events planned for 2013 –2014

First or 2nd weekend of November, 2013	Anaheim Synchronized Team Championships	Anaheim, CA
December 13 AND 14, 2013	Dublin Iceland Holiday Show	Dublin, CA
January 5th (tentative), 2014	Bay Cities Synchronized Skating Competition	Oakland or San Jose, CA
January 11 OR 12, 2014	Dublin Iceland Exhibition Performance	Dublin, CA
January 22nd– 26th, 2014	Pacific Coast Sectionals (Silver & Teal Teams)	Hoffman Estates, IL (Chicago)
February 25-March 2, 2014	USFS Synchronized Skating Nationals (Silver Team - if qualified)	Colorado Springs, CO

Competition Ready

Shortly before each competition, Silver Star's skaters receive event-related information covering transportation schedules, lodging information, costumes, hair and make-up needs, packing suggestions, attire guidelines, reminders about conduct, and practice/competition schedules. Please be sure that you and your skater review this information thoroughly.

Maintaining Good Health

Silver Stars skaters are expected to keep themselves in top condition for practice and performance. The coach maintains the right to oversee the physical appearance of all skaters on the team. Meanwhile, families can help our team stay healthy by being aware of any physical or behavioral

changes in their skater, for example unusual eating habits, sluggishness or irritability. If your skater contracts a contagious illness or begins taking a new medication, please report this information to the coach immediately; some medications are not allowed in competition. If the medication will be taken long-term, you must complete a new Medical Release Form. If your skater is sick or unable to skate but well enough to observe practice, every effort to attend to stay abreast of program changes should be made.

Other Training and Testing

In addition to regular team practice, each skater is expected to also spend time on individual strength training and skating skills. Moves-in-the-field are especially integral to synchronized skating; as a result skaters are expected to work towards a personal goal of passing at least one moves-in-the-field test level per year. Lessons in moves-in-the-field are required of every skater, depending on the level of the team (see the requirements below, based on your skater's team). Stroking and ice dance lessons are strongly recommended. The strengthening, stamina and skills developed through the other disciplines of our sport serve to benefit synchronized skating and vice versa. A skater may be reduced to alternate status due to lack of needed skills, stamina and endurance. Young skaters must learn to tie their own skates by August. It is the responsibility of each skater to communicate with his/her private coach regarding team requirements.

Purple Team: 2 hours of skating practice in addition to Silver Stars practices. Private Coach highly recommended to work towards Pre-Preliminary Moves in the Field over the course of the year.

Teal Team: 2 hours of skating practice in addition to Silver Stars Practices. Private Coach required. At least one (1) 15-20 minute private lesson in Moves in the Field each week. Working towards Pre-Preliminary or Preliminary Moves in the Field.

Silver Team: 2-3 hours of skating practice in addition to Silver Stars practices. At least 1 of those hours on a Freestyle session or VERY QUIET public session (less than 25 skaters on the ice in an hour). Private Coach required. At least one (1) 15-20 minute private lesson in Moves in the Field each week.

Travel

All skaters are required to travel to and from competitions as a group, and may not travel separately unless prior arrangements have been made with the coach. All travel expenses will be estimated at the beginning of the season and are the responsibility of each skater family. Every attempt will be made to obtain the lowest rates on airfare as possible. Airfare deposits may be required, as we will likely purchase tickets well in advance of our trips to obtain the best rates.

All skaters are required to ride the bus to Anaheim. This is a team-building event. Chaperones will be provided. If you are interested in chaperoning, please contact an Organizing Committee member.

Chaperones

Anaheim Bus: Due to the size of the team this year, only designated chaperones will be riding the bus with the team to Anaheim. Parents may carpool and caravan with the bus, if they so desire. Parents must be at the hotel upon team check-in, or have a designated hotel room chaperone for their child.

Pacific Coast & Nationals: Many parents choose to travel with their skater. If you choose to send your child with a chaperone, it will significantly reduce your costs. Chaperones will pay for their own flights and meals, but their accommodation expenses will be split equally between the families of the skaters in each room. Chaperones may be expected to hold and account for funds for each skater, and must make their own arrangements for reimbursement from the families at the end of the trip. Chaperones

are expected to monitor their assigned skaters' activities, enforce rules, make sure their skaters are where they need to be on time, and make sure they get enough food and rest.

Sportsmanship and Behavior

Silver Stars skaters are encouraged to promote Team Unity on and off the ice by being respectful of one another, helping and encouraging those less skilled, refraining from cliquish behavior, welcoming new team members and being respectful of coaches and parents. At events, the team is required to sit together and promote good sportsmanship by taking part in cheers for other teams and supporting teammates equally; they keep negative opinions to themselves, and shrug off any inappropriate remarks from other teams. In the process, they help generate good will among all competitors and positive opinions about Silver Stars, the St. Moritz Ice Skating Club and the USFSA.

Similarly, Silver Stars families also represent the team, St. Moritz and the USFSA when attending team events. As parents, we can support our skaters by continuing to set a good example and talking to them about the value of teamwork and sportsmanship. In addition, we can carry these values into other settings, such as during online discussions and when visiting other rinks. We can also show support by wearing team colors, cheering for the entire team (not individuals) at competitions when appropriate, and creating banners that reflect the team's goodwill and unity.

Costumes and Warm-ups

Team costumes are integral to synchronized skating performance, and need to be carefully safeguarded to prevent damage or loss. The costume selection and ordering process is managed by the coach. Each skater is individually fitted early in the season. Competition skating dresses and hair ornaments are distributed to each skater at the beginning of each competition then collected from each skater at the end of each competition. No alterations are to be made by anyone other than the official team costumer, with the approval of the coach. Also, please remember that skaters must NEVER eat while in costume to prevent stains. Parents can help remind skaters of this when dresses have been distributed, and ensure that every dress is returned to the coach when requested after performances.

Please note that the team competition dress is the property of the team and will be kept in the possession of and laundered by the coach or her designee(s).

Each skater will be provided a specified number of tights as part of their fee. Purple and Teal team skaters will receive "over-the-boot" tights for competition. Each skater is responsible for providing her own "under" tights of the same color as the over-the-boot tights. Tights are available for purchase from the team clothing manager. Each Purple and Teal skater must have a minimum of two pairs of each kind of tights. Silver team skaters will receive "in-the-boot" tights for competition, plus 2 rolls of Sk8 Tape. All Silver Team skaters must use Sk8 Tape for competition. If tights are damaged or lost it will be the skater's responsibility to purchase additional tights from the team coordinator.

Every skater is required to purchase the official Silver Stars Team practice and travel outfits. The outfit must be kept clean and in good condition at all times. Skaters will be required to replace the outfit at their own expense in the event of loss or damage. When taking part in any team function, competition, or during travel, skaters must be presentable (shirts tucked in, pants worn correctly, hair neat, etc.).

Hair and Make-up

It is the goal of the team that its members wear coordinated make-up that complements the costumes and enables the skaters' faces to be seen in performance. Most of our makeup supplies are purchased in bulk. For sanitary reasons, we use disposable applicators, however, the team will advise you of eyeliner and/or mascara color for the season. Each skater will be required to purchase

those two items and bring them in a makeup bag to competitions. We do seek out donations/ discounts from local beauty supply businesses to off-set these costs. Colored nail polish and jewelry is prohibited and must be removed before performances.

All hair will be styled in the same manner as designated by the coach for performances. No bobby pins or hairpins are allowed in synchronized skating due to the danger of the pins falling and being a tripping hazard. Typically, the hair is twisted into a bun, secured with a hair net and sewn to the head with invisible fishing line.

“Hair and makeup moms” will style all skaters hair and help skaters with make-up. The coach or assigned parent travels with all skater make-up bags and necessary hair products, such as hairnets, gels, and hair sprays. Each skater must provide her own hair brush/comb, chapstick, foundation, mascara, and eyeliner. A complete list of required items will be included in packing lists for competition.

Early morning practice

In past seasons, during December and January (and February if qualified for Nationals) the coach may decide additional practices are necessary. These practice sessions generally occur early in the morning on a weekend. They may occur as early as 5 am. The coach will notify parents and skaters well in advance if extra practice sessions are planned.

All skaters will have practice on January 2 (during Winter Break). Please plan your Holiday vacations accordingly, as there is a competition tentatively scheduled on Sunday, January 5.

Teal and Silver Teams will have practices Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (in January). Please do not plan any activities that weekend for your skater until the final practice times are announced.

Parenting Support

One great benefit of synchronized skating is the ongoing support that parents offer each other. Silver Stars parents are deeply involved in their child's well-being through skating, and many are happy to offer their experiences and information to other parents. Many have formed great friendships that extend well beyond the rink. Car-pooling is also a very effective way to help out busy families. A roster will be provided in June or July, so you can easily contact families in your area to coordinate carpooling.

We also really need parents' ongoing support, volunteer hours, and commitment to the team in order to make the year run smoothly and successfully. We hope this season is a good experience for everyone - especially the skaters. We've created a variety of committees for parents to sign-up for to help share all the work it takes to make everything happen. Each family is required to sign up for one or two committee positions, depending upon the total number of skaters the team has for the season. Parent attitudes about commitment to the team are reflected by your skater. Please do not talk negatively about the team or any other skater with your skater. If you have a problem or question about the team, please talk to an Organizing Committee member or Coach Laura.

Communication

New for this year is Online Registration! All team communication will be online through our website. Please go to <http://sports.bluesombrero.com/silverstars> to sign up for the team. Until you have received notification of the team to which your skater is assigned, please sign up only for "Skater Registration and Commitment Fee." Once team placements have been made, please sign up for the appropriate team division for which your child has made. Please pardon us while we learn the new system along with you!

Important information is disseminated through the group email. We will make every attempt to keep the online Schedules up-to-date by team level. Please make sure to check the email account that you used to sign up for Blue Sombrero every Monday (Silver team only) and Thursday afternoon (all 3 teams) in case there are any last-minute practice schedule changes. If text messaging works better for you, please make sure to include a cell phone number in your registration, and text "bluesombrero" to 84483.

In 2010, we created the silverstarssynchro Yahoo! Group to ease communication between the Coaches, Board of Directors, and Parents. As we migrate to the Blue Sombrero site, we will be phasing out the use of the Yahoo! group.

Email is the preferred method of contact for the Coach and the Organizing Committee. Please refer to the email addresses below if you have a question, idea, or need to communicate one-on-one.

Silver Stars Organizing Committee

The Parent Committee is made up of parent volunteers. Any parent is welcome to attend our (infrequent) meetings to get more involved. Listed below are the Parent Committee Members for 2013-2014 Season.

Coach - Laura Erle

Email: Lerle64@aol.com

Karen Pratt

Email: kpratt.1022@gmail.com

Marilyn Kea

Email: mkea@astound.net

Shem Lao

Email: shemlao@yahoo.com

Gigi Tse

Email: ggtse@gmail.com

Ly Nguyen

Email: lnguyen1503@yahoo.com

Debbie Thomas

Email: debbie_l_thomas@hotmail.com