

Ice Sports

It's the middle of winter, and if the weather's not right for skiing or snowboarding and you want to exercise, why not go to the nearest ice rink? / ALASTAIR S. EDWARDS (UK)

Ice sports on skates

The first people to skate were probably the Vikings – they fixed a bone to the bottom of a shoe to help them travel over frozen rivers and lakes. The first skate with a metal blade² was invented in Scotland, and the first official skating club – The Skating Club of Edinburgh – was established in 1642.

Ice hockey is well-known to Czechs, Americans and Canadians, but is less popular in the UK and other English-speaking countries. Ice hockey is played by two teams of six, consisting of three *forwards*³, two *defencemen*⁴ and a *goalkeeper*⁵. Each player has skates and a hockey stick, and the aim of the game is to hit a puck into the opponents⁶ goal⁷. Ice hockey is a fast contact sport, so players have to wear protective clothing, including a helmet, shoulder and elbow pads, a mouth guard, protective gloves, heavily padded shorts and shin pads. Goalkeepers have more equipment: a blocker on the arm, a catch glove, and leg pads. Games are divided into three 20-minute periods. Men's ice hockey has been an Olympic sport since 1920, women's ice hockey since 1998.



Ice hockey

In **speed skating**, two skaters compete either in an ice hockey stadium (short track – 111.12m) or on a specially built long-track oval (400m). Professional skaters

have speed skates, lycra skin suits which are Kevlar and cut-proof*, special gloves, and knee, neck and ankle protection. Races are up to 5,000m long, and professionals skate at about 50kph. Speed skates are different than ice-hockey and figure skating skates. They have longer and higher blades, and some skaters use *clap skates*, where the blade is attached to the shoe by a hinge⁸ to make running easier. Speed skating has been an Olympic sport since 1916.



Speed skating

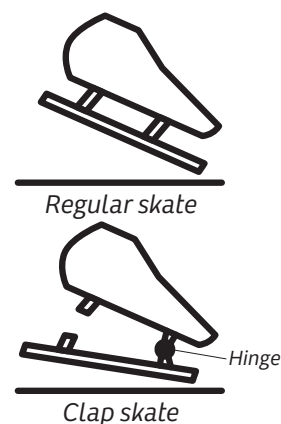


Figure skating is an art and a sport for individuals, pairs, or groups. It's called *figure skating* because skaters make figures on the ice. Figure skating includes dancing, jumps, lifts and many other moves, and is always done to music. Synchronized skating is done in groups, a bit like synchronized swimming. The first World Championships was in St Petersburg in 1896. The International Skating Union (ISU) makes the rules for competitions. Points are given for technical performance and presentation. In singles skating there is a *short program*, which must include two jumps, three spins⁹ and one step sequence, and a *free skate* where the skater must do jumps, spins and choreography. Figure skates have *toe picks* (teeth) at the front of the blade, which help the skater do jumps. Figure skating has been an Olympic sport since 1908.



Figure skating

Ice sports without skates

Curling was invented in Scotland in the 16th century. It's a bit like bowling on ice. Two teams of four players each have eight large, heavy, round stones (17–20kg) with a handle¹⁰ on the top. The aim is to slide¹¹ them over a sheet of ice 45m long to one of four concentric circles (the *house*). Other members of the team have curling *brooms*, which they use to sweep¹² the ice to remove dirt or make the stones go faster. A game lasts 73 minutes, and the winner is the team with the most points. Curling has been an Olympic sport since 1998, with Canada winning most of the medals.



Curling

MATURITA QUESTIONS

- Which sports are played in winter and which in summer?
- Which winter sports do you like? Why?
- Name five ice sports, and describe them.
- Which ice sport is not an Olympic sport yet?
- Which ice sport do you like? Why?

Ice yachting is sailing with the wind in a specially built *ice boat* fitted with *sails* and skis, or *runners*, to run over ice. But you can't go ice yachting on an ice rink! The first ice boats transported goods and were used for racing, and were up to 15m long. Modern ice boats have three sharpened^{**} steel runners – two at the back and one at the front for steering¹³ – and are usually for one person. The *mast*¹⁴ is up to 30m tall with sails about 7m². Ice boats go very fast – usually about ten times the speed of the wind. The fastest speed ever recorded was 254kph! Ice sailors wear protective clothes, such as a wind-chill-proof* suit, a helmet, goggles^{***}, gloves and spiked¹⁵ shoes (to walk over the ice). Ice yachting needs large areas of very flat ice, such as rivers or lakes. Ice yachting is not an Olympic sport (yet!).



Ice yachting

LANGUAGE NOTE

- * **cut-proof** – you can't cut it
- wind-chill-proof** – wind and cold can't go through it
- ** **sharpened** – made sharper
- *** **goggles** – protective glasses

VOCABULARY

- ice rink** [aɪs rɪŋk] – kluziště
- blade** [bleɪd] – ostří (nože)
- forward** ['fɔ:wəd] – útočník
- defenceman** [di'fensmæn] – obránce
- goaltender** [gəʊl'tendə] – brankář (v hokeji)
- opponent** [ə'pəʊnənt] – protivráč, soupeř
- goal** [gəʊl] – branka, gól
- hinge** [hɪndʒ] – pant
- spin** [spɪn] – otočka
- handle** ['hændl] – rukojeť
- to slide** [slaɪd] – klouzat
- to sweep** [swi:p] – zametat
- steering** ['stiəriŋ] – řízení (vozidla)
- mast** [mɑ:st] – stěžeň
- spiked** [spaɪkt] – s hroty