



SAFSA WP

**ETIQUETTE WHEN
CHANGING COACHES**

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the correct and procedure for skaters and/or their parents/guardians to follow when considering or executing a change of coach within the SAFSA WP. It is designed to ensure professionalism, respect and the best interests of all parties involved, including the skater, current coach and the prospective new coach.

2. Principles Guiding Coach Changes

- **Skater's best interest:** All decisions regarding coaching changes should primarily serve the skater's development, well-being and progress in the sport
- **Professional Courtesy and Respect:** all interactions throughout the coaching change must be conducted with respect, honesty and transparency
- **Financial Responsibility:** all outstanding financial obligations to the current coach must be settled before engaging with the new coach
- **Contractual Responsibilities:** skaters and/or parent/guardians must honour any contractual agreements in place with their coach, including required notice period (commonly one calendar month). This ensures coaches are not left financially disadvantaged after committing to monthly expenses and allows appropriate planning, regardless of whether lessons are taken during the notice period or not.
- **Clear Communication:** open and direct communication is crucial to prevent misunderstandings and maintain a positive relationship within the skating community

3. Procedure for Changing Coaches:

- **Initial Consideration and Discussion (Skater/Parent/Guardian)**
 - **Self-Reflection:** before initiating a change, the skater and /or parent/guardian should carefully consider the reasons for wanting a change.
 - **Where the skater is a minor:** parents/guardians should actively involve the skater in the process. Excluding the skater can result in confusion, distress or resentment and may negatively impact the skater's well being and performance
 - Are there specific issues that could be addressed with the current coach?
 - **Direct Communication with the Current Coach:** the skater and/or parent/guardian must first schedule a private meeting with the current coach to discuss any concerns or the desire to explore a change. This conversation should be open, honest and respectful. The aim is to understand if the issues can be resolved or if a change is indeed the best path forward

- **Resolution Attempt:** if the concerns are specific and potentially resolvable, attempt to work with the current coach to find a solution. This could involve adjusting training methods, communication styles or lesson focus
- **Approaching a New Coach (After Discussions with Current Coach)**
 - **DO NOT approach a new coach before speaking with your current coach. Doing so is considered unprofessional and can negatively impact relationships within the skating community**
 - **This requirement does not apply in situations where there are safeguarding concerns or where direct communication with the coach is not possible. In such circumstances the welfare and safety of the skater takes precedence**
 - **Inform Prospective Coach:** when approaching a potential new coach, the skater and/or parent/guardian must inform them that they are currently working with another coach
 - **New Coach's Responsibility:** the prospective new coach is expected, as a professional courtesy, to inquire about the skater's current coaching situation and confirm that the skater has communicated their intention to change coaches with their current coach

4. Clarification of Coaching Role Change

Not all coaching changes involve a straightforward transition from one coach to another. Situations where an assistant coach is re-designated as head coach or where coaching roles are restructured, are still considered coaching changes under this policy.

In such cases:

- Financial, contractual and notice obligations to the original coach remain in effect unless formally released
- Re-labelling coaching roles does not negate existing agreements or outstanding responsibilities
- All parties are expected to communicate clearly to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding
- **Formalising the Change:**
 - **Final Discussion with Current Coach:** once the decision to change coaches is firm and a new coach has been identified the skater and parent/guardian must have a final discussion with the current coach

- **Outstanding payments:** ensure all outstanding fees, invoices and any other financial obligations to the current coach are settled in full. A final statement should be requested and paid
- **Gratitude:** express thanks to the current coach for their time, effort and contribution to the skater's development
- **Transition period:** (if applicable) discuss a reasonable transition period, if needed, to ensure a smooth handover of training plans or information
- **Confirmation by New Coach:** the new coach should confirm with the previous coach that the relationship has been formally concluded, and all financial matters are settled before commencing regular lessons with the skater. This is a crucial professional courtesy
- **Commencement of Lessons with New Coach:** once all the above steps have been completed and outstanding payments are settled, lessons with the new coach can officially begin

4. Unethical Practices (Prohibited)

The following actions are considered unethical and are considered prohibited under this policy:

- **Solicitation:** any coach, parent/guardian, SAFSA Committee Member, the CPISC, rink staff directly or indirectly soliciting students who are currently training with another coach
- **Undermining:** any coach or individual undermining another coach's methods, reputation or relationship with a skater
- **Unsettled debts:** a new coach commencing lessons with a skater knowing that there are outstanding financial obligations to a previous coach
- **Lack of Communication:** skaters/parents/guardians changing coaches without prior, direct communication with their current coach
- **Spreading Gossip and Negative Information:** disseminating negative or disparaging remarks about a coach, former coach or skater

5. Dispute Resolution

In the event of a dispute or concern regarding a coach change, parties are encouraged to first attempt to resolve the matter directly and amicably. If a resolution cannot be reached, the matter may be brought to the attention of SAFSA WP for mediation and appropriate action. All complaints must be submitted in writing with specific details of the alleged infraction.

6. Role of SAFSA WP

SAFSA WP aims to foster a professional and respectful environment for all its members. While the direct relationship is between the skater/parent/guardian and the coach, SAFSA WP reserves the right to address instances of unethical conduct or violations of this policy, as per its constitution and disciplinary procedures.

This policy may be reviewed, amended and/or updated by SAFSA WP Committee to align with the SAFSA National regulations and requirements.

THE SAFSA WP COMMITTEE

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