

Iqaluit Speed Skating Club 2020-2021 Coaches Report

Hello from the Iqaluit Speed Skating Club coaching team! The 2020-2021 season brought with it some unique challenges and successes that will be discussed in the following coaches report. Similar to the end of the 2019-2020 season, the COVID-19 global pandemic was still raging at the start of the 2020-2021 season. This brought many unknowns with regards to if we would even have a season, and if so how would it look with all the COVID-19 protocols required by the arena, and recommended by Speed Skate Canada. We knew however, that when the season started, that practices would occur with some extra safety provided by the new half-mats that we bought from winning the Intact Insurance Club of Excellence Award. We would like to thank Hayley Roberts for putting together and submitting the application last spring.

We were able to start practice again on October 24, 2020 where we did our best at practices with a somewhat diminished number of older kids. Many adjustments had to be made. We had to adjust the changerooms accordingly, separate the groups, wear masks anytime we were off the ice, fill out forms at every practice and the kids were unable to warm up inside the arena prior to practice. However, on a positive note, we had a very large number of kids join the “Northwestel Learn to Speed Skate” program this year, with coach Chloe not only running the “Northwestel Learn to Speed Skate” Program but also teaching the Junior coaches how to lead their own groups. We would like to thank our Junior Coaches and Coach Chloe, and our appreciation for Coach Chloe last season cannot be understated. We will miss Coach Chloe terribly as she is planning on heading off to University next year.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 hit Nunavut in November 2020 and we were off the ice again from November 14th until December 3rd. Luckily, we were able to have a Halloween special practice on October 31st, complete with treats, before the lockdown!

We were able to have a Christmas Party on December 19th and continued to have successful practices up until April 12th, 2021. Sadly, COVID-19 was officially confirmed in Iqaluit on April 14th which officially ended our 2020-2021 season.

There were several other highpoints of the season. We were able to have two mini-meets, this meant we were able to coach the skaters through a competition setting, and to train the new parent volunteers on what a mini-meet consists of and the varying competition roles that exist. With the generous funding from Northwestel we were able to order some new skates, safety gear and cut proof skinsuits. We also worked with Nagano Skate who provided all of our Advanced and Development skaters with a usb stick containing short track speed skating specific workouts. Additionally, we also participated in the Speed Skate Canada Virtual Challenge, which meant completing races and events that were developed to be COVID safe. These results were compiled across Canada, with skaters’ entries being put into draws for prizes.

In closing, we as the coaches are enormously proud with how the kids trained over the season given the ongoing global pandemic and the many unknowns it brought with it. We feel very lucky to have been able to have even a shortened season and thank the Board for all of their hard work in making that happen.

Sincerely,

The Iqaluit Speed Skating Club coaching staff (Kyle St.Laurent, Martine Dupont, Hayley Roberts, Shannon Hessian, Chloe Nevin)