



**DWARF SPORTS
ASSOCIATION UK**



DWARF CONDITIONS ICE SKATING COACHING RESOURCE



Let's Skate is an exciting project from British Ice Skating funded by Sport England, which will deliver opportunities for disabled people to get involved in ice skating – whether that's skating on the ice, volunteering, coaching or officiating.

We will be supporting rinks across the UK to deliver inclusive ice skating sessions, led by qualified coaches. British Ice Skating will showcase the impact of the Let's Skate project to celebrate our success and inspire prospective new skaters to try ice skating; with the aim of consistently developing new opportunities for everyone to be involved in the sport.

Throughout the project we will be working with rinks, coaches, officials, volunteers and skaters to gather feedback to shape future work and help us realise our potential. Overall, we will make ice skating welcoming, safe and accessible for all – with a view to offering pathways to competition, volunteering, coaching or officiating.

You can find out more about the project at iceskating.org.uk/lets-skate

Participation statistics tell us that there is still much work to be done to support disabled people in sport. The number of disabled people taking part in sport or physical activity is significantly lower across all age groups than the overall population.

Inspire and motivate disabled people to continue to play sport and take part in physical activity with the help of this advice:

- Involve disabled people in all of your sessions.
- Recognise a disabled athlete as an individual, not an impairment.
- Have a shared vision with your participants in terms of coaching goals and expectations.
- Communicate and work together to achieve their goals.
- Talk to your disabled participants about their impairment to plan effective coaching sessions and adapt practices.
- Know the sport you coach. Have a passion to develop yourself as a coach.

This resource has been put together by British Ice Skating in collaboration with Dwarf Sports Association UK to support coaches in successfully coaching skaters with dwarfism.

DWARF CONDITIONS COACHING RESOURCE:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

General information on dwarf conditions

02

Understanding dwarfism in the context of ice skating

03

Coaching skaters with dwarf conditions: Pre-skate preparation

04

Skate UK - dispensation model

05

Meet the Lets Skate team

If you have any questions or feedback on the Lets Skate project, please contact letsskate@iceskating.org.uk



**DWARF SPORTS
ASSOCIATION UK**



1 GENERAL INFORMATION ON DWARF CONDITIONS

There are over 200 types of restricted growth that can be grouped together as dwarf conditions – the most common being achondroplasia.

An individual participating in sport can be involved in most activities, and the Dwarf Sports Association UK (DSAuk) is the leading organisation for sport for people with dwarf conditions. DSAuk believes sport is important for participants' development and integration with their peers. Many dwarf athletes enjoy a spectrum of different sports. Regular exercise can make a big difference to the lifestyle and well-being of a person with a dwarf condition.

There are a few skeletal and potential joint-stability problems sports coaches should bear in mind when working with participants with a dwarf condition:

- Many people with achondroplasia have a kyphosis or scoliosis of their spine. Constant shock to the back can cause damage to this area.
- Participants may have a spinal stenosis, which is a pinching of the spinal column caused by having restricted room within the vertebrae for the spinal column to pass through.
- People with restricted growth can have quite lax joints, and their elbows, hips and knees, especially, can be unstable. This is usually seen in the joints being extremely flexible.
- Many dwarf athletes can have a bowing of the legs, which may result in problems with their ankles. The more involved in regular exercise individuals are, the better the muscle tone around problem areas is maintained, and, therefore, the more stable these joints become.



2 UNDERSTANDING DWARFISM IN THE CONTEXT OF ICE SKATING

Before planning a session, it's important to appreciate the unique needs of skaters with dwarfism. Generally characterised by an adult height below 4ft 10in (147 cm), dwarfism—most commonly due to achondroplasia—can come with specific physical features:

- **Shorter Limbs & Joint Laxity:** May require wider stances for balance and careful attention during turns.
- **Spinal Curvature:** Awareness of lordosis or kyphosis helps in planning safe movement sequences.
- **Smaller Hands and Feet:** Selecting proper equipment is vital for safety and effectiveness.

By understanding these aspects, coaches can tailor sessions that work with each individual's strengths and abilities.



**DWARF SPORTS
ASSOCIATION UK**



3 COACHING SKATERS WITH DWARFISM: PRE-SKATE PREPARATION

Session Readiness

A successful session starts before stepping onto the ice. Consider these preparation steps:

- **Health Screening:** Confirm any existing spinal or joint concerns and consult with medical professionals if needed.
- **Equipment Check:**
 - **Skates:** Ensure they are well-fitted, with options for children or custom sizes.
 - **Helmet:** Mandatory for all beginners.
 - **Protective Gear:** Gloves, and if needed, knee and wrist pads
- **Adaptation Aids:** Some skaters might benefit from additional tools like Tykeskaters or penguin aids during early practice.



4 SKATE UK DISPENSATION MODEL

British Ice Skating Association is committed, as a service provider, to promoting Equality within Ice Skating, eliminating unfair discrimination. We believe that Equality is defined by the terms fairness, justice, inclusion and respect for diversity.

It is about making sure that everyone has an equal chance to participate in and contribute to the aspects of ice skating that interest them, and that no one is discriminated against unfairly for any reason, including – but not limited to – sex, gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, social background, ethnic origin, language, marital or civil partnership status or pregnancy.

Sports Equality is also about recognising and acknowledging that inequalities do exist in sport, taking positive and proactive steps to overcome these inequalities, and making sure that any barriers standing in the way of people who are traditionally not involved in ice skating are removed.

The Dispensation Model, developed in collaboration with Activity Alliance and built into British Ice Skating's learn to skate program Skate UK, is a key part of our commitment to building Sports Equality. It's designed to make ice skating more accessible for people with disabilities.



**Find out more
about Skate UK:
iceskating.org.uk/skateuk**

Examples of the dispensation pathways options for learning Skate UK skills:

Exercise	Dispensation A (Reduced skill)	Dispensation B (Aided)	Dispensation C (Combined)
1. MOVING FORWARD	Move forward half distance (i.e half width of rink surface instead of full width)	Move forward aided (i.e full width of rink)	Both A & B
2. MOVING FORWARD (10 steps) & TWO-FOOT GLIDE (with dip)	Move forward 5 steps with a half dip (reduced dip movement)	Move forward 10 steps & two foot glide (with dip) aided	Both A & B
3. SIT & STAND INDEPENDENTLY	Stand up only (coach to place skater down on ice)	Sit & stand aided	Both A & B
4. STATIONARY SNOWPLOUGH STOP	Use only one foot instead of two to show an understanding of a sliding technique	Stationary snowplough holding onto barrier, skating aid etc (aided)	Both A & B
5. MOVING SNOWPLOUGH STOP	Use only one foot instead of two and reduced stopping technique and distance (as long as the skater stops)	Moving snowplough aided	Both A & B
6. MOVING FORWARD (10 steps) & TWO-FOOT GLIDE INTO A FORWARD LEMON	Move forward 5 steps with reduced lemon shape	Move forward 10 steps & two foot glide into lemon shape aided	Both A & B

5 MEET THE LET'S SKATE TEAM

The Let's Skate team is here to support people on their journey into ice skating – we are dedicated to making the sport more accessible for everyone. Please get in touch if you require further support or have any questions:
letsskate@iceskating.org.uk.



Finally, if you have any feedback on something you have experienced within the project, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will work together to create a better environment for all.



ANDREW HIBBERD
EDI & COMMUNITY LEAD



KEITH HUDSON
SKATE UK LEAD



MILLIE KELMAN-JOHNS
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (EDI)



DAN RODENBY
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (EDI)