

Recommended Learn-to-Skate Program

Prepared for:



July 3, 2xxx

Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
<i>Program Administration and Management.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Professional Profile.....</i>	<i>1</i>
Recommended Program	2
<i>Staff/Volunteer Organization.....</i>	<i>2</i>
Skateland/Volunteer Instructor Team Organization.....	3
<i>Volunteer Classifications</i>	<i>3</i>
Lead Instructor	3
Assistant Instructor	3
<i>Volunteer Duties.....</i>	<i>4</i>
Lead Instructor	4
Assistant Instructor.....	4
<i>Class Approach.....</i>	<i>5</i>
Introductory Segment.....	5
Bronze Level	6
Silver and Gold Levels	6
Adult Group.....	6
Signage	6
Closing Segment.....	7
<i>Bronze Level Requirements</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Silver Level Requirements</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Gold Level Requirements</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Sample Curriculum Flyer.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Recommended Floor Layouts.....</i>	<i>13</i>
Thirds in Length Layout.....	14
Thirds in Width Layout	15
Quadrants Layout	16
Special Class Events	17

Executive Summary

Skateland operators wish to derive relative merits in continuing to offer the learn-to-skate class program. Ideally, the class program should serve to enhance Skateland's ability to achieve the following objectives:

- Controlling operational costs while increasing revenue,
- Improving customer service levels, and
- Shifting management focus to critical day-to-day operations.

The class format recommended in this document offers the following benefits:

- A comprehensive, well-documented instructional program that has been piloted for six months with success,
- A vehicle that ensures Skateland may continue to provide the same or improved levels of service, and
- A management tool that enables key employees to focus on operating the facility with minimal time and resources spent on administering learn-to-skate classes.

Program Administration and Management

Maintaining service levels is ever challenging as skating industry margins continue to shrink. Competition for recreation dollars is fierce. The first time a customer has a “bad experience,” she moves on to the next of her many leisure options (after sharing her disappointment with 10 of her friends). Solid program administration and management keeps “bad experiences” rare, and repeat business commonplace. The class program recommended in this document places great emphasis on the concept of “lead” and “assistant” volunteer instructors and their individual duties, and encourages regular communication between class volunteers and management. The program design and teaching methodologies outlined are the result of nearly two years’ “on-the-job” research directing Skateland’s learn-to-skate program.

Professional Profile

Kim Balkovec has an MA in communication, and has been employed as a technical writer for more than two years with computer outsourcing firm, (i)Structure, Inc., a Level 3 Communications company (www.i-structure.com). She has been a USA Roller Skating (USARS) Certified Artistic Coach since 1996, and a roller figure skating competitor since 1973. She has earned the national Roller Skating Associations’ (RSA) gold-level proficiency and competed nationally in school figure, dance and free skating. She is the current president of the Omaha Roller Figure Skating Club.

Recommended Program

The elements in this program were designed to accommodate skaters of all ages and skill levels, skating on a variety of skate platforms. The primary goal of the class is to instill the basic skating skills and safety rules necessary to enjoy public skating sessions and skating parties in a safe way. *This is NOT a figure skating fundamentals class.* The recommended learn-to-skate program has been piloted with success at Skateland for more than six months. Utilizing the methodology outlined in this proposal, and teaching the elements on the following pages, the class demand for volunteer instructors *could* be met with a minimum of three experienced volunteers, up to an attendance of about 30.

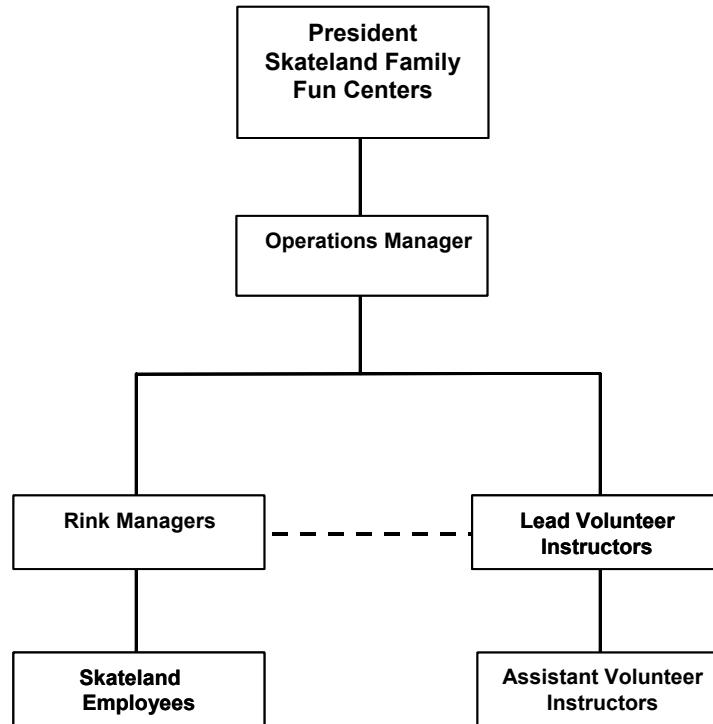
Summer classes are generally lower in attendance and might even be covered by only two volunteer instructors. However, experience has shown that when one instructor is responsible for more than eight to 10 students, the quality of instruction is jeopardized. For this reason, during the peak class season (November through March), lead instructors should strive to meet to meet a goal of two volunteers per skill level, or a total of six to eight volunteers.

Staff/Volunteer Organization

As important as the technical aspects of the recommended program are, the team delivering the services is by far the key to the success of Skateland's learn-to-skate classes. It is essential that the lines of communication between management and volunteers remain open, and that both groups understand clearly the objectives at hand. It is crucial that operations directives with regard to classes are communicated to lead instructors, who in turn, are responsible for communicating management policy to assistant instructors.

Skateland management should communicate operations directives regarding classes directly to lead volunteers, precluding their reliance on hearsay and/or misinformation from part-time employees. Conversely, lead instructors should communicate concerns and class-related information to Skateland management. Lead instructors are encouraged to work together to find solutions to operating the classes in a professional and fun way, involving management only for resolution of customer service issues and concerns. Repeated conflicts among volunteers resulting in management involvement may lead to suspension of said volunteers. A high-level organization chart appears below.

Skateland/Volunteer Instructor Team Organization



Volunteer Classifications

Lead Instructor

A lead instructor shall be no younger than 15 years of age, and should have been an assistant instructor at Skateland for at least one year, a member of the figure skating club, or appointed by a certified figure skating coach or a member of management. Lead instructors must own and wear their own precision roller skates during class instruction times.

Assistant Instructor

An assistant instructor may be of any age, but shall be no younger than 11 years of age, and should be a member of the figure skating club, or appointed by a lead instructor, certified figure skating coach or a member of management. Assistant instructors must own and wear their own precision roller skates during class instruction times.

Volunteer Duties

Lead Instructor

Lead instructors are responsible for ensuring that all phases of the Class Approach, as outlined below, are performed adequately. When more than one lead instructor is present to volunteer for classes, it is the responsibility of the lead instructors *as a team* to distribute responsibility equitably. ***Whenever possible, an adult lead instructor over the age of 21 should direct the class.*** Directing the class is defined as operating the sound booth and microphone, leading the entire group in the opening warm-up, stretching and safety segment of class, and having final decision in resolving conflicts. The class director shall also be the individual responsible for fielding inquiries or complaints about the program from customers. ***It is crucial to project to the public that there are qualified adults in charge of the class program.*** Fighting among lead instructors with regard to this point shall not be tolerated. Lead instructor duties include, but are not limited to:

- Communicating with other lead and assistant instructors weekly regarding availability to volunteer and management directives,
- Ensuring that there are adequate printed class materials each week (sign-in sheets, nametags, certificates and instructor passes), and reordering supplies through management as needed,
- Obtaining weekly allotment of game tokens from manager on duty on day of class,
- Setting up sign-in counter, posting skill level signs, and preparing the sound booth prior to class time,
- Assigning volunteers to sign-in and skate counter posts prior to class,
- Designating floor layout and on-floor posts for all class volunteers,
- Leading the entire class during the opening warm-up, stretching and safety segment of class,
- Teaching at any class group skill level – Bronze, Silver, Gold or Adult group – as required,
- Testing and awarding of students,
- Recruiting, training, and managing assistant instructors,
- Passing out instructor passes and student game tokens, and
- Communicating with management regarding customer service issues.

Assistant Instructor

Assistant instructors are crucial to the success of the learn-to-skate classes. Many of the young students respond very well to the younger people that typically volunteer. In addition, the assistant instructor can effectively help with many of the administrative responsibilities of

the lead instructor. Finally, the assistant instructor has the potential to provide many years of service to the Skateland learn-to-skate program – they should be treated with the utmost respect, and encouraged and rewarded for their outstanding efforts.

Class Approach

Introductory Segment

Each week, it is helpful if volunteers can arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of class. During this period, lead instructors can assess the number of volunteers present, assign duties, decide on floor layout, and relay any directives from management.

As students begin to arrive, they should sign in upon entering the rink from the Playdaze facility. It is a good idea to station one volunteer behind the counter to greet incoming students, request that they sign-in and wear a nametag, answer their questions, and direct them toward the self-service skate counter, if needed. The countertop between the music box and snack bar is a good location for sign-in sheets. While signing in, students and adults are exposed to a variety of Skateland promotional flyers. The sign-in sheets lend an air of “official-ness” to the program, and provide an opportunity for the volunteer stationed at the sign-in area to make a good first impression. It is important to station a mature volunteer in this post.

A second volunteer should be stationed *near* the skate counter in case students request assistance. Standing *behind* the counter is not recommended, as handing out skates is a demanding, non-skilled position that will quickly cause most volunteers to see coming to classes as “hard work.” Most people would rather sleep in on Saturday mornings than get up to “go to work” for no pay. We have never had a customer complain about using the self-service skate counter.

All other volunteers should be on the skating floor at ten after the hour, or five minutes prior to the start of class. Class time should begin promptly at exactly 15 minutes past the hour, *as advertised*. Lead instructors should NOT begin class 15 minutes early (on the hour), and allow a “free skate” to early arrivals. When class does begin, warm-up time should consist of two songs’ worth of open skating. Between 20 and 25 minutes past the hour, lead instructors should gather students and seat them around the traffic circle. With demonstrations by all instructors present, one lead instructor should take the whole class group through warm-up stretching, a brief discussion of key skate parts (toe stops, laces, lock nuts) and checking them for safety, and skating floor precautions and etiquette to include:

- Getting up properly from a fall,
- Skating floor safety rules, and
- Proper entering and exiting the skating floor.

Upon completion of the group warm-up and safety section of the class, the lead instructor shall brief the group of what is to take place during the rest of class time. At this point, it is effective to remind students of any upcoming specials, schedule changes, new flyers available at the sign-in desk, etc. It is also at this time that the lead instructor should be sure to introduce him/herself as well as each instructor present, the skill levels in which they are teaching, and where those groups will meet on the floor. Then, the group is broken out into separate skill levels (Bronze, Silver and Gold).

Bronze Level

Skaters that are new to the class shall always begin group in the Bronze Level. The Bronze Level shall be split into two groups: those that can stand on skates and have begun to roll, and those that require a little time “marching” on the carpet in order to feel comfortable. On most days, the Bronze Group shall require a minimum of two instructors. It is highly preferable to post two lead instructors at this level, adding assistant instructors as needed/available. Skills taught in each level of class appear in the following pages.

Silver and Gold Levels

Typically, the Silver Level group will be the second largest. One lead instructor with an assistant or two to three assistant instructors may teach this group. Many skaters that get to this point feel satisfied that they can now enjoy their school skating parties and elect to discontinue taking classes. The Gold Level group is rarely larger than eight skaters. Because of the level of difficulty in the skill items presented, this group should always be taught by a lead instructor. The Gold Level group rarely, if ever, shall require a second lead instructor or assistant. Further, when attendance and/or the number of volunteers are low, this group may be combined with the Silver Level group. This group is often small enough to easily sacrifice a portion of its allotted floor space to accommodate an alternate Adult Group, should lead instructors find it is warranted.

Adult Group

Should the number of adults present and wishing instruction exceed four or five, AND should the number of volunteer instructors required to cover Bronze, Silver and Gold Levels be adequate, lead instructors may elect to partition off a section of the floor just for the adult students. If the number of adults present is three or less, they should be given the option to join the children in classes or “practice” in the Gold Level section of the floor, away from the students at that level, but near enough that the Gold Level instructor can assist them in addition to the Gold Level students.

Signage

During class time, requirements for each of the three skill levels (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) are prominently displayed on walls adjoining designated areas on the skating floor. Requirements are printed in bold black on two-foot by three-foot laminated white signs, for

durability and ease of reading. (These signs, tape, class certificates and volunteer instructor session passes are stored under the sign-in counter.) This allows both instructors and students to quickly review their level's requirements, individually and as a group. The signs ensure that instructors remain hands-free for better balance and ability to assist skaters. (Of course, students are never allowed to bring anything onto the skating surface.) The signs also preclude the need for or use of paper, pens, clipboards, etc. on the skating surface.

Instructors at all skill levels should spend time at the beginning of class breakouts going over the requirements with students and briefly demonstrating the moves that will be taught that day. Pointing at and referring students to the signs posted on the wall will help the instructor to retain control of the group. "Previewing" what will be done in the day's class is an effective method for ensuring that students retain the instruction offered.

Closing Segment

At approximately 10 minutes before the hour, the lead instructor shall announce an optional game of skill. This should be presented as "an opportunity to practice in a fun way the skills you have learned today." Depending on the number of students in attendance, the Hokey Pokey, Simon Says and The Limbo are appropriate. The first two games work better with larger crowds, the latter with smaller crowds. It is during this time that some students may wish to practice on their own, leave the skating floor, or join their instructors at the back of the rink for testing to the next skill level.

Passing students to the next level of instruction is at the discretion of lead instructors only. Testing shall only be conducted during the last 10 minutes of class time. Skateland provides ready-to-sign certificates to award students. Lead instructors shall prepare certificates for their students immediately following testing and request that the DJ on duty for the public skating session after class announce the students who have just passed to the next level. This works well when presented during the first five or 10 minutes of open skating. A simple statement such as the following is appropriate:

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, please join me in congratulating the following student(s) for their skating achievements; Billy Jones has passed from the Bronze to the Silver Level, and Susie Smith has passed from the Silver to the Gold Level. Way to go!"

Under no circumstances should volunteers spend class time conducting "awards ceremonies." Skateland advertises a 45-minute class, and volunteers should strive to offer just that. 45 minutes is not an inordinate amount of time to receive instruction and practice time. A number of former class customers have been highly critical of past programs that have required their children to sit out 10 to 15 minutes of class time to watch other students be presented certificates in an awards ceremony. Some children may progress very slowly while others seem to advance every other week. It is no fun to watch all of the children in your group moving on if you're behind the curve. Children have been far more receptive to the idea that *everyone* that works hard is rewarded each week.

For this reason, it is strongly recommended that the practice of providing one game token to each student at the close of class be reinstated. This is a simple process of lining students up along the front railing, while two instructors starting at each end of the line hand out one token to each person in line. Experience has proven this to be far more exciting to children than any paper certificate has ever been. In addition, it encourages skating patrons to spend time enjoying Skateland's arcade offerings. Who can play just one game? Often times class students linger on for hours in Playdaze playing games, when the intention was to simply play that one token on the way out the door after class.

The following pages illustrate the signage posted during class instruction time. It is arguable that, every student conscientiously working through the content on the following pages, at the hands of experienced and exacting volunteer instructors, will have earned a token of Skateland's appreciation.

Bronze Level Requirements

Bronze Level

7 Requirements to Pass to Silver Level:

Safety Rules

Posture Basics

Forward Marching

Forward Scissors

Forward 2-Foot Slalom

Forward 1-Foot Glides

Toe-Stop (Roller Skates)

Heel-Stop (Inline Skates)

Silver Level Requirements

Silver Level

7 Requirements to Pass to Gold Level:

Forward Scooter Push, regular direction

Forward Scooter Push, reverse direction

Forward Outside Edge Stroking

Backward Scissors

Backward Scooter Push, regular direction

Backward Scooter Push, reverse direction

Backward Stop (Roller Skates)

Backward-to-Forward Stop (Inline Skates)

Silver Challenge Items:

Shoot-the-Duck

Two-Foot Spin

Arabesque

Forward Inside Edge Stroking

Gold Level Requirements

Gold Level

10 Requirements to Graduate to SuperSkater:

Forward Cross Pulls, regular direction

Forward Cross Pulls, reverse direction

Forward Inside Edge Mohawks

Forward Inside Edge Stroking

Backward Cross Pulls, regular direction

Backward Cross Pulls, reverse direction

Backward Outside Edge Stroking

Shoot the Duck

Two-Foot spin

Arabesque

Gold Challenge Items:

Backward Inside Edge Stroking

Spread Eagle

Same-Edge 2-Foot Turns

Different-Edge 2-Foot Turns

Sample Curriculum Flyer

The following can be printed on 8-1/2 x 11-inch paper and cut into half sheets. It is very useful to students, and particularly to the adults sitting in the lobby waiting for them to finish class. It provides a clear picture of the skills students can expect to obtain from Skateland's learn-to-skate program.

Bronze Level	Silver Level	Gold Level
7 Requirements to Pass to Silver Level: Safety Rules Posture Basics Forward Marching Forward Scissors Forward 2-Foot Slalom Forward 1-Foot Glides Top-Stop (Roller Skates) OR Heel-Stop (Inline Skates)	7 Requirements to Pass to Gold Level: Forward Scooter Push, regular direction Forward Scooter Push, reverse direction Backward Scissors Backward Scooter Push, regular direction Backward Scooter Push, reverse direction Forward Outside Edge Stroking Backward Stop (Roller Skates) OR Backward-to-Forward Stop (Inline Skates) Silver Challenge Items: Shoot-the-Duck Two-Foot Spin Arabesque Forward Inside Edge Stroking	10 Requirements to Graduate to SuperSkater: Forward Cross Pulls, regular direction Forward Cross Pulls, reverse direction Forward Inside-Backward Inside Turn Forward Inside Edge Stroking Backward Cross Pulls, regular direction Backward Cross Pulls, reverse direction Backward Outside Edge Stroking Shoot-the-Duck Two-Foot Spin Arabesque Gold Challenge Items: Backward Inside Edge Stroking Spread Eagle Same-Edge 2-Foot Turns Different-Edge 2-Foot Turns
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Bronze Level	Silver Level	Gold Level
7 Requirements to Pass to Silver Level: Safety Rules Posture Basics Forward Marching Forward Scissors Forward 2-Foot Slalom Forward 1-Foot Glides Top-Stop (Roller Skates) OR Heel-Stop (Inline Skates)	7 Requirements to Pass to Gold Level: Forward Scooter Push, regular direction Forward Scooter Push, reverse direction Backward Scissors Backward Scooter Push, regular direction Backward Scooter Push, reverse direction Forward Outside Edge Stroking Backward Stop (Roller Skates) OR Backward-to-Forward Stop (Inline Skates) Silver Challenge Items: Shoot-the-Duck Two-Foot Spin Arabesque Forward Inside Edge Stroking	10 Requirements to Graduate to SuperSkater: Forward Cross Pulls, regular direction Forward Cross Pulls, reverse direction Forward Inside-Backward Inside Turn Forward Inside Edge Stroking Backward Cross Pulls, regular direction Backward Cross Pulls, reverse direction Backward Outside Edge Stroking Shoot-the-Duck Two-Foot Spin Arabesque Gold Challenge Items: Backward Inside Edge Stroking Spread Eagle Same-Edge 2-Foot Turns Different-Edge 2-Foot Turns

Recommended Floor Layouts

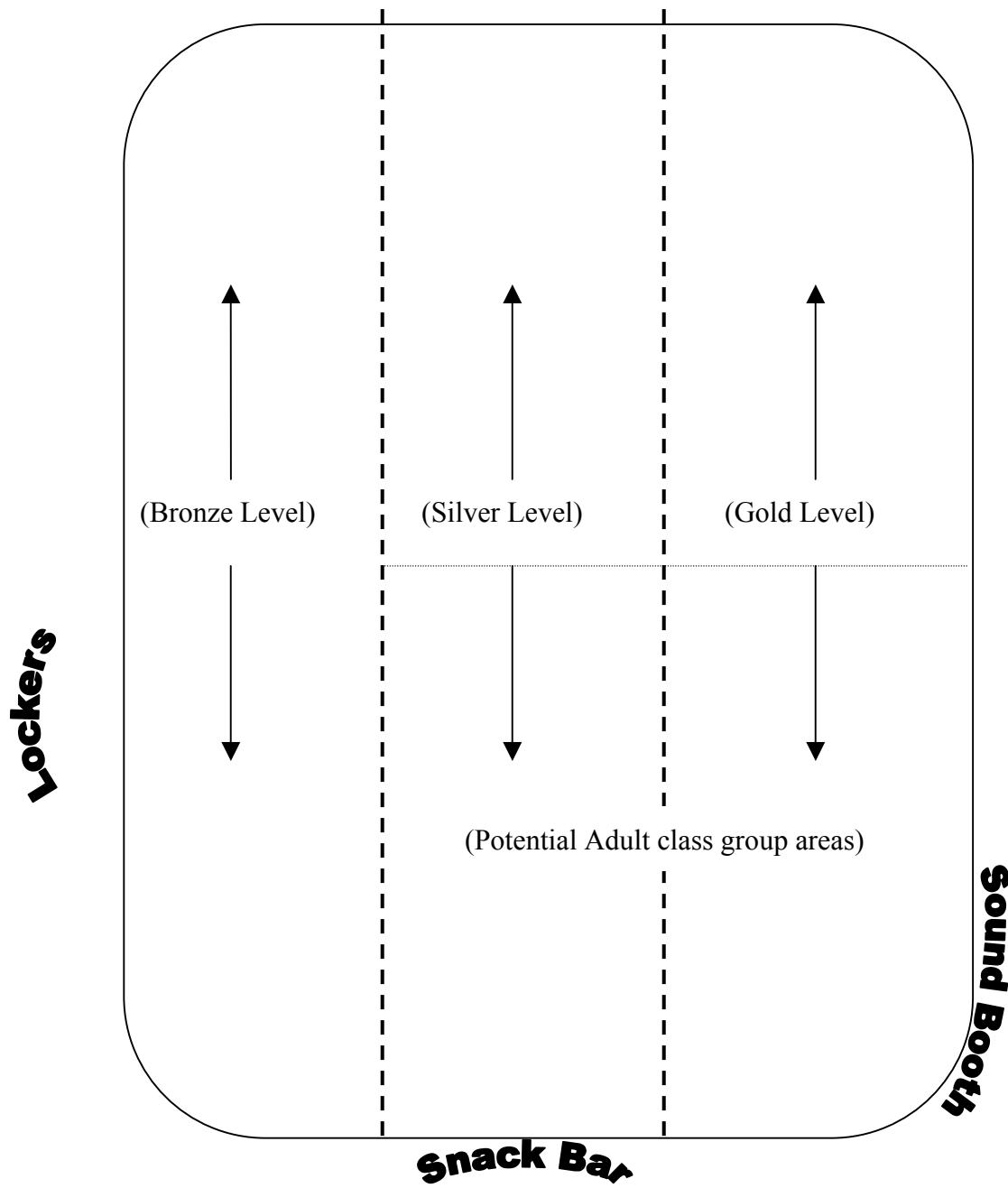
Whatever the season, the attendees in the Bronze entry-level group always outnumber the skaters in the Silver and Gold levels combined. On high attendance days, it is often more efficient to post one volunteer each to the Silver and Gold levels, and four to the Bronze level alone. Further, when a number of adults are present, modification of the standard floor layout may be required to accommodate a separate those adults who wish to receive skating instruction.

Should the lead instructor(s) decide there are enough instructors present to meet the demand in the Bronze, Silver and Gold groups, and that a separate adult group is warranted, floor space should *never* be taken from the Bronze group. The lead instructor(s) must decide, based on the number of attendees in each of the remaining three groups (Silver, Gold and Adult), which groups to combine in one-third of the floor, and which group will retain one-third of the floor. The following pages illustrate floor layouts that have been used with success.

Note: When possible, it is good practice to position the adult group along the front barrier wall/railing, as they will often prefer to hold onto that, rather than an instructor.

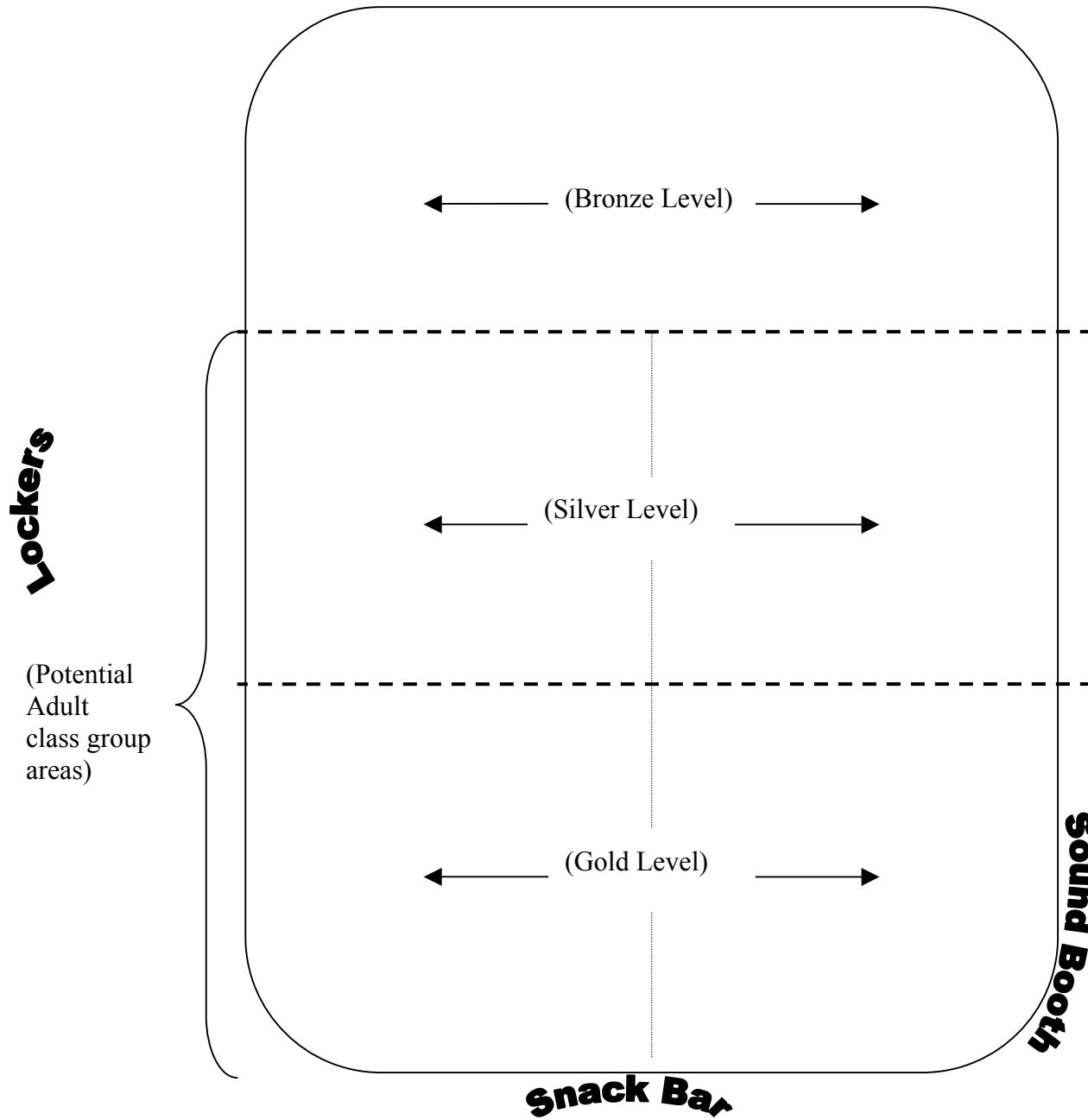
Thirds in Length Layout

(Individual skill level signs posted across back wall)



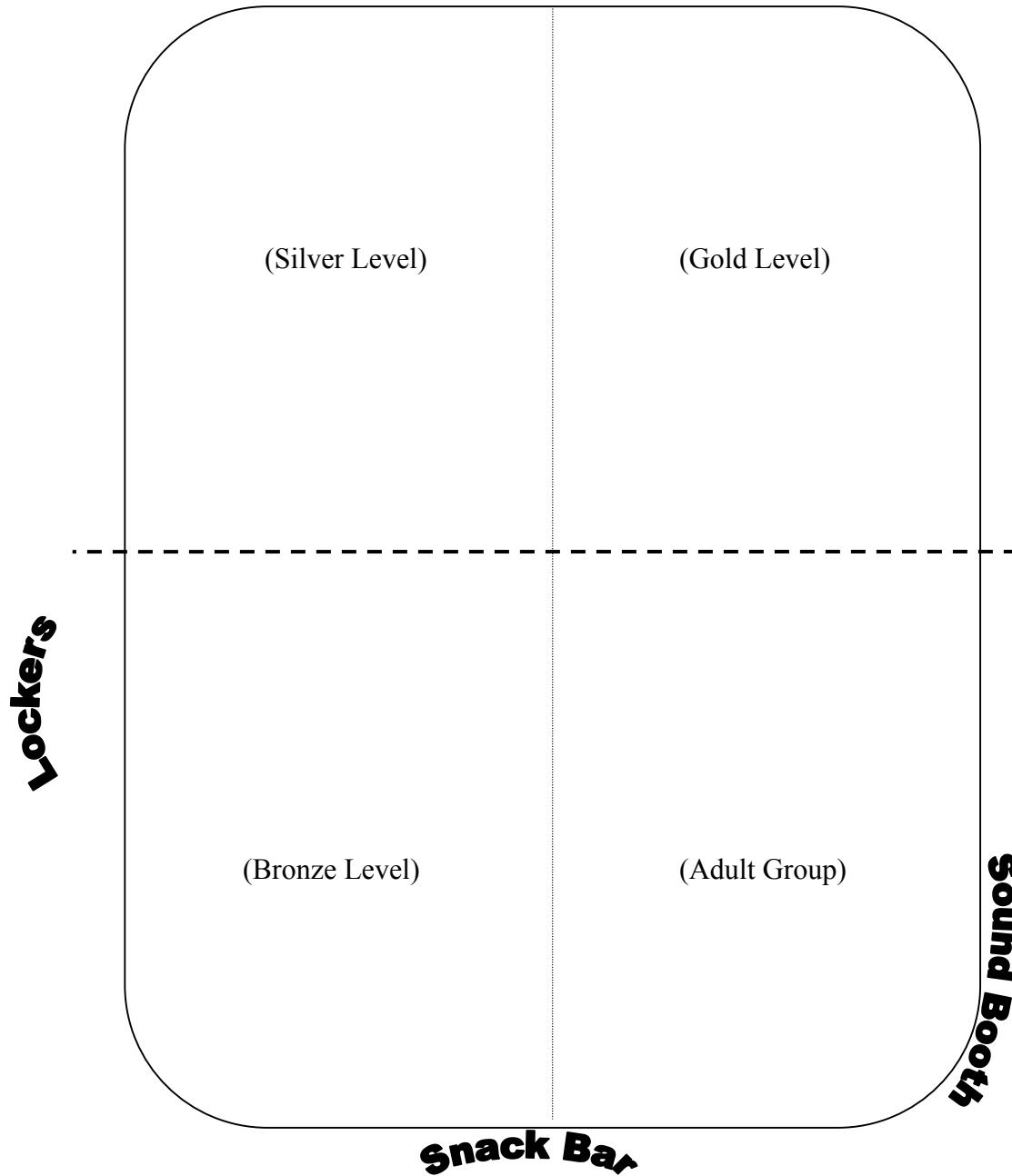
Thirds in Width Layout

(Skill level signs posted on back, side, and front walls)



Quadrants Layout

(Skill level signs posted across back and front walls)

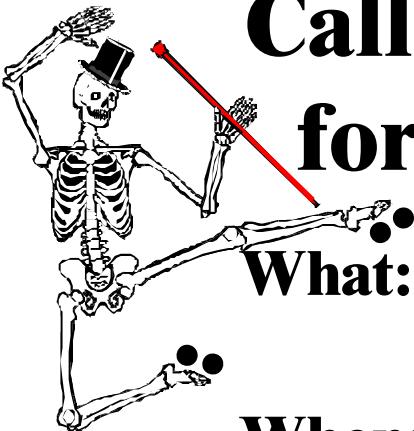


Special Class Events

Special events during class times have shown to promote more regular class attendance. Parents and guardians appreciate advance notice of upcoming specials as it allows them to plan ahead. Making regular announcements during class time and distributing flyers for several weeks before the event is an easy way to ensure adults can bring their young students to join in the fun. They may even invite a couple friends to come along.

While it is difficult at best to celebrate religious holidays without alienating customers, secular holidays abound that provide unique opportunities to add to the fun for all, and build team morale among volunteers. New Years Day, Valentines Day, Independence Day and Halloween lend themselves to fun and easy ideas. The following page illustrates a flyer that was used to promote a Halloween costume contest.

Planning a special event is a great opportunity for all volunteer team members to put their creativity and special skills to work. Conducting specials should never take more than a third of class time or involve elaborate preparations. A maximum of 10 to 15 minutes should be allotted. Lead instructors should present special event plans to management for approval at least one month in advance. Management, upon approval, should be willing to provide small “prize” items such as game tokens, free passes and beverages, which are hugely popular with kids.



Calling all skaters: Get ready for a *frightfully* good time!

What: *A costume contest, right after learn-to-skate class!**

When: *Saturday, October 27th*

9:15 – 10:00 a.m.

Where: *Skateland Playdaze*
132nd & 'B' Streets

Class will begin promptly at 9:15. We will break at 9:50 for the Hokey Pokey, during which time class instructors will award skaters for the following costumes:

- Scariest
- Funniest
- Most Original
- Prettiest
- Ugliest



Every skater in costume gets a **FREE** Fun Session and Class pass!



*Parents: For the fun and safety of all, please be sure that your student's costume does not hang below the top of the skating boots or impair his or her vision or mobility. Thank you!

