

Speed skating – the fast and elegant sport essay



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In 13th century, as a means of transport, speed skating began in Holland. Speed skating is one of the different forms of skating on ice or ice skating. In speed skating, the athletes race and compete with each other to complete a given distance on their ice skates.

This sport is performed in a speed skating ring. This sport is fast as well as elegant. The skaters can reach up to speeds more than 50 kmph. There are various types of speed skating: marathon speed skating, short track speed skating, long track speed skating.

The long track speed skating in the Olympic Games is known as ' speed skating,' while the short track speed skating is referred to as ' short track'. The Winter Olympics, which was first held at Chamonix in 1924, contained speed skating and till today it is the part of the Games. It was a men's event. The women's skating event was officially held on Squaw Valley Winter Olympics in 1960. At the Olympic Games the event of speed skating takes place on the 400m oval specially designed skating ring.

The men's event in the Olympic Games consists of team pursuit, 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 5000m and 10000m. The women's event consists of team pursuit, 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 3000m and 5000m. The skaters skate in lanes and compete in pairs. Once in every lap they change lanes to equal out the distance that is covered.

Turin Olympics saw the introduction of team pursuit in 2006. In this two teams comprising of three athletes compete with each other. The skaters of the team take turns to take the advantage of the flow of air currents. Race is finished when the last skater of the team crosses the finishing line. A number

of elimination rounds follow leading to the final race. Equipment for speed skating: Blade: The longer the blade, the faster the skate is.

The blade should not be so long that it becomes a hindrance. The thickness of the underside of the racing blade should be only 1mm. Armbands: The skaters who skate in the outer lane wear a red armband and the skaters who skate in the inner lane wear a white armband. Glasses: The eyes of the skater are protected by the glass from the ice chips and direct wind. The lens in the glass is anti-glare. It also improves the track visibility.

Clap skates: Contrary to the conventional skates, the heel of the blade of the clap skate is not affixed to the boot. With the help of the hinged apparatus the toe of the clap skate blade is affixed to the boot. Racing suit: To decrease the resistance offered by the air, racing suits with hoods which are skin tight are required by the speed skaters to wear. The racing suits should be such that they blend with the natural body of the skater.

No objects or devices can be attached or inserted in the suit to create some different form of shape.