

2025
2026



PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Program handbook for Arctic Edge Unity Synchronized
Skating Team participants of all team levels.

2025-2026 SEASON HOUSE 1 TEAM OVERVIEW

AEU Team Definition: A team of 4-12 skaters, ages 4-9 years old



2025-2026 HOUSE 1 TEAM FAST FACTS:

- AEU's "House 1" Team will learn synchro material based on the US Figure Skating Learn-to-Skate Synchro course content. Performance routine elements will be based on the requirements of the USFS Aspire 1 Synchro Level.
- AEU "House 1" Team will perform multiple times locally and may participate in up to one (1) sanctioned USFS synchro competition event after January 1.

2025-2026 AEU HOUSE 1 SKATER PROFILE:

- Skaters participating in our House Level 1 team are generally ages 4-9 and enrolled in Learn-to-Skate USA classes. Skill level for safety is passed a Basic 1-2 class, but higher level skaters are welcome.
- Successful House 1 team skaters generally skate at least one time per week outside of synchronized skating and continue their individual growth either as a part of a Learn-to-Skate class or with a private instructor.

2025-2026 AEU HOUSE 1 TEAM FACTS:

- The House 1 team accepts skaters during the annual registration period (April 1 thru Sept. 30). Skaters are welcome to experience synchro and better get to know the team/coaches during spring team clinics, tryouts, and events, but are also welcome to sign-up anytime during the open registration period by age/skill.
- This team is designed to serve as an ideal training environment for skaters who want to learn the foundational skills of synchronized skating, have fun skating with others, and prepare for continued synchro opportunities at the AEU House Levels or future opportunities at AEU's Club levels.



HOUSE TEAMS



HOUSE TEAM SUMMARY

House teams at AEU are designed to be an inclusive, accessible, fun entry point for skaters interested in synchronized skating. These teams can be used as a skill-building or social opportunity (or both!) and are a great way for skaters to learn the fundamentals of the discipline in a shorter format, lower-commitment season. Skaters will get the opportunity to learn a routine and perform in costumes at 2-4 performances, including up to one (1) local competition.

HOUSE TEAM LEVELS

HOUSE 1 LEVEL

AGES 4-9 - ALL SKILL/EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Recommended Requirement for Success: Skaters should feel, at minimum, comfortable with forward skating/gliding and pumping (USFS Basic 1+ Equivalent - Higher levels welcome)

HOUSE 2 LEVEL

AGES 10-16 - ALL SKILL/EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Recommended Requirement for Success: Skaters should feel, at minimum, comfortable with forward skating/gliding, forward pumping and one-foot gliding (USFS Basic 3+ Equivalent - higher levels welcome)

GENERAL COSTS & COMMITMENTS

- ✓ House team fees are generally split into a three-payment format (about 6 weeks per payment), with costs starting around \$20 per week.
- ✓ Registration open April 1 thru September 30

HOUSE TEAM SEASON

- March** ● **Team Placement Sessions**
Official/Initial team placements for all AEU levels (House, Club, Travel)
- April/May** ● **Addtl. Info/Skills Sessions**
Information sessions and/or follow-up sessions available for both committed and new/interested skaters.
- April -Sept.** ● **Open Registration Period**
Additional skaters can register for available House Team positions.
- Oct. - Feb** ● **House Team Season**
House teams will take a 10-14 day break over December holidays.

PERFORMANCES & COMPETITION

Local Events (under ~20 min travel)
Incl. home ice performances

2-3 events

Area Events (under ~1 hour travel)

1-2 events

CONTACT/LEARN MORE:

✉ ArcticSynchro@gmail.com

🌐 www.ArcticSynchro.com

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Section I - General Program-Wide Guidelines & Rules

Part I - Program Mission & Goals

PROGRAM MISSION

Our mission is to participate, in partnership with our families, in the formation of well-rounded, confident, and resilient amateur athletes that excel in all areas of life, on and off the ice. As an organization, we are committed to the ideals of hard-work, discipline and offering skaters the privilege of being part of a team.

With a focus on personal and team development and success, we strive to nurture the constructive opportunities synchronized skating has to offer while maintaining a supportive, safe and socially stimulating environment where skaters can grow and achieve their goals.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To offer skaters a fun and rewarding, skill-building opportunity they can participate in conjunction with their individual skating.
- Open the door for skaters to future opportunities in synchronized skating, including additional competitive teams at AEU and/or further synchro and figure skating opportunities in middle school, high school, and beyond.
- Give skaters the rewarding opportunity to become a part of a team. In synchronized skating, working together and sportsmanship is encouraged above all else. Skaters are able to learn invaluable life lessons that they will take with them into their other activities.

Part II - Program Leadership and Coaching

Erin Cullen - Program Founder, Head Coach, and Director of Synchronized Skating.

Cullen has been involved with Synchronized Skating for over 25 years. She is an ISU World Championship Synchronized Skating bronze medalist, six-time international competitor & nine-time US Synchronized Skating Championships medalist. Upon the conclusion of her competitive career, she skated and coached for Michigan State University Synchronized Skating Teams. Since graduating from MSU in 2012, she has stayed deeply involved with elite synchro as an athlete representative and committee member for US Figure Skating and as a consulting coach for multiple college and Team USA teams at the elite levels before founding AEU in 2016.

Krissy Stein - Coach and Associate Director of Development.

Stein has been involved in figure skating for over 35 years and has earned National Championships titles as a Junior and Senior team skater. She was a part of Team USA for 9 years, including as a member of the US World Team in 2000. After competition, she gained experience coaching singles skaters and as a sectional level judge. Stein has served on the advisory board of local synchronized skating organizations and, when off the ice, works as a licensed Physical Therapist, bringing her clinical knowledge of movement, body mechanics, and injury prevention to her coaching work.

Chelsea Unger - Coach and Associate Director of Operations.

Chelsea has been involved with figure skating for over 30 years. She skated for several synchronized skating clubs in the Chicago area for over 10 seasons and earned Midwestern Sectional and US National medals. She is a double gold medalist in Moves in the Field and Ice Dancing. Chelsea has been coaching in the Ann Arbor area for 10+ years and works with skaters of all ages and levels.

Additional Coaching Staff (Listed in alphabetical order)

Erin Buckeridge - Coach. Erin Buckeridge has been involved in figure skating for over 17 years and has competed at a national level for several seasons (including a silver medal finish in 2018). Erin B. coached at AEU from 2019-2022, took a short break to pursue her start at PT School at Central Michigan University, and returned to coaching in 2024. Erin is currently pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy (completion set for May of 2025). She looks forward to expanding her knowledge of coaching a sport she loves while incorporating rehabilitation techniques to build a healthy and strong environment for skaters to grow to their fullest potential.

Deanna Arnold - Coach. Deanna began skating at the age of 4 in freestyle, and later transitioned to ice dance. She is a six-time Gold Medalist in Moves in the Field, Freeskate, Solo Free Dance, Pattern Dance, International Pattern Dance, and Partnered Free Dance. Her coaching style incorporates an ice dance flair with a desire to see her students grow in character, confidence, and athleticism. She coaches Learn to Skate and private lessons at Novi, Arctic Edge and in the surrounding area and works with skaters of all ages and levels in skating skills, freeskate and ice dance.

Samantha Goldberg - Coach. Sam has been involved with figure skating for over 20 years. She grew up skating on the east coast with a number of synchronized skating teams, and is a 4-time national medalist. Sam competed internationally as a member of Team USA and at the collegiate level with the University of Michigan. Sam is a member of the SkateSafe committee with USFS and is a certified US Figure Skating technical specialist for synchronized skating. Outside of skating, Sam has a Masters of Social Work and works as a psychotherapist with children, adolescents, and adults in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Erika Root - Coach. Erika has been skating for over 25 years and has always been passionate about synchronized skating. At 15 she began assisting with her local learn to skate program and has been involved with coaching figure skating on and off ever since. She has also coached power skating skills with several local Michigan hockey teams. Erika was an early member of Adrian College Varsity Collegiate Synchronized Skating Team and was named captain during her senior year.

Jeannine Weinschrod - Advisory Coach. Weinschrod has been involved in synchronized skating for over 35 years and has played a meaningful role in the discipline's rapid growth during that time. During her tenure as a program director, she oversaw 18 US National Championships, 4 World Championship/World Cup berths, and countless sectional, national & international medals. Jeannine is Master Rated in Synchro and holds a Level 6 Ranking from the Professional Skaters Association, which is awarded to coaches for success of their teams at the World & Olympic levels. In 2004, she was named Synchronized Skating Coach of the Year by the Professional Skaters Association.

Part III - General Team Rules and Guidelines

The Arctic Edge Unity Head Coach/Director and Coaches have set forth the following rules to maintain appropriate standards of a high-performing synchronized skating organization:

Viewing Practice Sessions

Unless otherwise indicated, all practice sessions during the team season are considered “Closed” (i.e. parents are welcome to view their skaters through the lobby window/viewing areas, but are encouraged to remain out of the direct bleacher/ice areas). Closed practices help coaches and staff maintain team cooperation and ensure that skaters can stay focused during their training time.

Attendance Policy

Skaters are encouraged to be in attendance at all training sessions whenever possible. If an absence or tardiness from a training session is unavoidable, communication should be made with a program coach/staff as soon as possible. *When building a routine in synchronized skating, consistent skater positions during training are important to the safety of all involved (i.e. skaters get used to the specific way each skater holds on to them and absent skaters can create changes to skater spacing needed to intersect through one-another, etc).*

The goal of our House Teams is to have every skater participate in all performances/competition events, but safety remains our number one priority. Excessive training absences leading up to a performance or event may result in a skater not being able to participate in that specific performance or event for safety/preparedness reasons. The program Director and House Team coaches will determine the definition of “excessive” as it relates to a skater’s ability to safely perform the position needed and communication will be made in advance if this consideration needs to be made.

Behavioral Standards

The safety, development, and success of our skaters is our top priority and any behavior that has the potential to jeopardize these priorities will be addressed swiftly and in a meaningful way. Furthermore, all members of the team are expected to listen to and obey all skating and behavior-related instructions given during training and/or competitions. Full attention and respect is to be given to the program director, all team coaches, team managers and other organizational volunteers.

As a part of a team, skaters and families should be aware that they no longer represent only themselves. Team members are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner during all team activities, including training, performances/competition, or any team events. This behavioral standard should be kept in mind not just during in-person interaction, but also when posting online, on social media and in other digital mediums.

Part IV - Performance & Competition Expectations & Guidelines

All Arctic Edge Unity teams will perform and/or compete throughout the season. All team participants are expected to abide by a basic set of expectations for competitions and performances.

Arrivals at Performances or Competitions

All skaters/families will receive a detailed schedule and packing list before all official competitions and/or performances slated for their team(s).

Skaters are expected to arrive at all events at the time set forth in their detailed schedule wearing the designated hair/makeup communicated by coaches in advance (additional details regarding arrival and readiness will be communicated via email to each team closer to the time of performances/competitions).

Special Note for Parents/Families of Skaters: We are all ambassadors for Arctic Edge Unity, and the Arctic Edge of Canton. Your behavior directly reflects upon our skaters and our entire skating club/synchronized skating organization. ***Don't forget, you represent Arctic Edge and Arctic Edge Unity wherever you go, whatever you do! It is expected that, along with the skaters, parents/families also practice these principles of good sportsmanship and civility in all team activities.***

Section II - Team Scheduling Information - House 1 Synchro Team

Part I - House Teams Pre-Season Activity Schedule

OPTIONAL/RECOMMENDED EVENTS FOR REGISTERED HOUSE TEAM SKATERS			
MONTH	DATE	EVENT	Details
JUNE 2025	Tent. June 8, 2025	All-Team Season Kickoff Picnic @ Local Municipal Park (Exact Location Still TBD)	Time TBD
JULY 2025	TBD July Weeknight	Annual AEU Glow Skate Party & FUNdraiser Event @ Arctic Edge Canton	Time TBD - Evening
SEPT. 2025	Tent. Sunday Sept. 14 OR 21, 2025	Pre-Season Skills Session @ Arctic Edge For all AEU House Team Skaters	Time TBD - Late Morning/Early Afternoon

Part II - House Teams Regular Season Training Schedule

HOUSE TEAM TRAINING SCHEDULE		
<p><i>Please note, all fall/winter schedules are not confirmed with arena management until July of each year. Times below are accurate, but are subject to a shift between ~10-30 minutes based on final ice confirmation over the summer. Any shift from time listed below will be communicated with registered skaters a minimum of 4-6 weeks in advance of the start of training.</i></p>		
MONTH	DATES	Details
OCTOBER 2025	Sundays Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26	Session Time: 11:40 a.m. - 12:55 p.m. 11:40 a.m.-11:55 a.m. - Brief Off-Ice Warm-Up and Stretching with team and coaches 12:05-12:55 p.m. - On-Ice Session with team and coaches
NOVEMBER 2025	Sundays Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Session Time: 11:40 a.m. - 12:55 p.m. 11:40 a.m.-11:55 a.m. - Brief Off-Ice Warm-Up and Stretching with team and coaches 12:05-12:55 p.m. - On-Ice Session with team and coaches
DECEMBER 2025	Sundays Dec. 14	Session Time: 11:40 a.m. - 12:55 p.m. 11:40 a.m.-11:55 a.m. - Brief Off-Ice Warm-Up and Stretching with team and coaches 12:05-12:55 p.m. - On-Ice Session with team and coaches
DECEMBER BREAK - NO TRAINING DECEMBER 15-JANUARY 3		
JANUARY 2026	Sundays Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25	Session Time: 11:40 a.m. - 12:55 p.m. 11:40 a.m.-11:55 a.m. - Brief Off-Ice Warm-Up and Stretching with team and coaches 12:05-12:55 p.m. - On-Ice Session with team and coaches
FEBRUARY 2026	Sundays Feb. 8, 15, 22	Session Time: 11:40 a.m. - 12:55 p.m. 11:40 a.m.-11:55 a.m. - Brief Off-Ice Warm-Up and Stretching with team and coaches 12:05-12:55 p.m. - On-Ice Session with team and coaches

Part III - Tentative Performances and/or Competition(s)

Note: “TBD” denotes the team's unconfirmed participation at this time, “Tent.” denotes unconfirmed date and/or time from organizers

TENTATIVE PERFORMANCE AND COMPETITION EVENTS		
AEU Season Kickoff Exhibition @ Arctic Edge	Tent. Sunday, November 9 or 16, 2025	Arctic Edge of Canton
TBD Arctic Edge Holiday Show	Tent. December 13, 2025	Arctic Edge of Canton
Winter Friends & Family Showcase	Tent. Sunday, January 4, 2026	Arctic Edge of Canton
Tri-State Synchronized Skating Competition	Tent. February 14, 2026	Location TBD
AEU End-of-Season Show	Tent. February 22, 2026	Arctic Edge of Canton

**Additional exhibition opportunities may be added to the schedule as they arise. All additional performances would be either at Arctic Edge or in the local vicinity (e.g. Campus Martius Detroit, Learn-To-Skate events, Hockey Games, etc.)*

Section III - Financial Overview - House 1 Team

Part I - General Financial & House Team Payment Guidelines

As a member of a House Team at Arctic Edge Unity, these are the general guidelines to ensure skater and team success:

- Skaters/Participants will submit a one-time \$65, non-refundable deposit fee at the time of registration to reserve their position. This payment will be applied to your skater's first invoice for October 1.
- House Team participants will be billed in three (3), roughly six-week installment invoices to cover all expenses for their season. For the 2025-2026 season, the invoicing schedule is below:
 - **FIRST INVOICE:** due October 1, 2025
 - **SECOND INVOICE:** due November 9, 2025
 - **THIRD INVOICE:** due January 4, 2026
- All team fees and payments are due upon receipt and should be paid in a timely manner (no later than 7 days of invoice receipt). This ensures your skater has their personal share of essential team and training expenses covered and can fully participate in their team's activities for the month.

Part II - Financial Specifics - House 1 Synchro Team

ITEMIZED EXPENSES PER SKATER	PAYMENT SCHEDULE	FEE AMOUNT
<u>House 1 SYNCHRO TEAM PROGRAM FEE</u> 3-Part Team Fee includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All practice Ice costs• Coaching (on-ice and off-ice instruction)• USFS Registration Fees• Competition/Performance Entry Fees (incl. Both team & individual fees)• Costumes for competitions and performances (skaters will be able to keep their costumes at the end of the season)• Exhibition and Show Costs• Music expenses (cutting, editing, competition discs, etc)• General operational expenses (accounting, administrative, staff, etc).	INVOICE 1 - OCT 1 INVOICE 2 - NOV 9 INVOICE 3 - JAN 4 <i>3 Payments Total</i>	\$165

Part III - Payment Methods

Payment Method 1: SportsEngine

Invoices can be paid directly through the SportsEngine portal using a debit or credit card or a bank account. There is a small transaction fee (typically 2-4%).

Payment Method 2: Zelle

Submit payment via Zelle, using your online banking website/mobile app or the Zelle app, to recipient AEUBilling@gmail.com Arctic Edge Unity Synchronized Skating Teams. Zelle does not charge a fee to send or receive money, however, we recommend confirming with your bank or credit union that there are no fees for Zelle transactions.

Payment Method 3: Check: Submit written or bank-issued checks payable to “Arctic Edge Unity.” Place checks in the silver locked “synchro skating” mailbox to the left of the rink front desk or mail to:

Attn: Arctic Edge Unity Synchronized Skating
Arctic Edge of Canton
46615 Michigan Ave
Canton, MI 48188

Payment Method 4: Cash or other Methods (Bank/Wire Transfer, SKATE Fundraising, etc.)

If you plan to use an alternative payment method outside of methods 1, 2 or 3, please contact our bookkeeper at AEUBilling@gmail.com to ensure receipt, accurate payment dates from banking/financial institutions and any documentation requirements.

Additionally, you may request full season billing if you prefer to pay for the season in one lump-sum payment upfront using any payment method listed, or if you'd like to setup an automatic recurring monthly payment plan through SportsEngine.

Part IV - Fundraising

Though not required to participate in fundraising activities, House Team Skaters are welcome to participate in AEU sponsored fundraising initiatives throughout the season to offset their invoice costs. As a 501c3 non-profit organization, we will plan to offer and support multiple fundraising events and activities that families can participate in during the season. Additionally, we are always looking for new, promising, and lucrative fundraising and sponsorship opportunities. *Please reach out directly to arcticsynchro@gmail.com if you have any fundraising ideas or would like to get more involved.*