

Meet Mark O'Donnell

Burlington Post

Speed skating began in Oakville in 1993, as a program with 1 hour of ice time offered per week by the Town of Oakville, under administration of Parks and Recreation.

Mark O'Donnell became involved when he registered his son, Matthew as a participant, along with about 10 others.

In the beginning, this speed skating program offered old, very basic long track style skates, and no safety mats, consequently only limited speed skating techniques could be taught and learned.

At the start of the 1995 season, through discussions with other parents, the Oakville Speed Skating Club was formed, and Mark O'Donnell selected President.

Under his influence, the club pursued needs such as, more ice time, safety mats, and better skates.

Skaters were encouraged by Mark to enter competitions in Brampton, Cambridge and Kitchener Waterloo.

In 1995, the Canadian Special Olympics Committee endorsed the Oakville Speed Skating Club to include Special Olympics content in the on ice training.

In 2009, Oakville special Olympian, Scott MacHattie was featured in 'Canada's best speed skating story', which outlined the family's experience with speed skating and the Oakville Speed Skating Club.

In 1997, Mark volunteered to work at the speed skating event for the Special Olympics in Toronto.

This led to the opportunity to purchase the rink safety mats at the conclusion of the event. Another problem solved!

In 2001, the Oakville Speed Skating Club became independent of the Parks and Recreation program, and initiated its own registration and administration.

Growth exploded. The Oakville Speed Skating Club now numbers in excess of 160.

In Ontario competitions, Oakville now leads all clubs in participation and success.

A top flight volunteer coaching staff has club members competing at different levels in meets across Ontario, Canada and the USA.

Oakville skaters are now developing to the point of participating at the elite development programs of Ontario and Canada.

The Oakville Speed Skating Club, through the vision, commitment and dedication of Mark O'Donnell, has evolved from a recreational outlet, to a club developing provincially ranked short track speed skaters, of which the Town of Oakville is justly proud.



Inductee Mark O'Donnell
