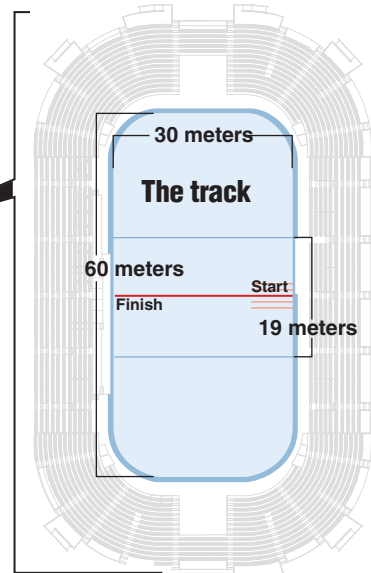


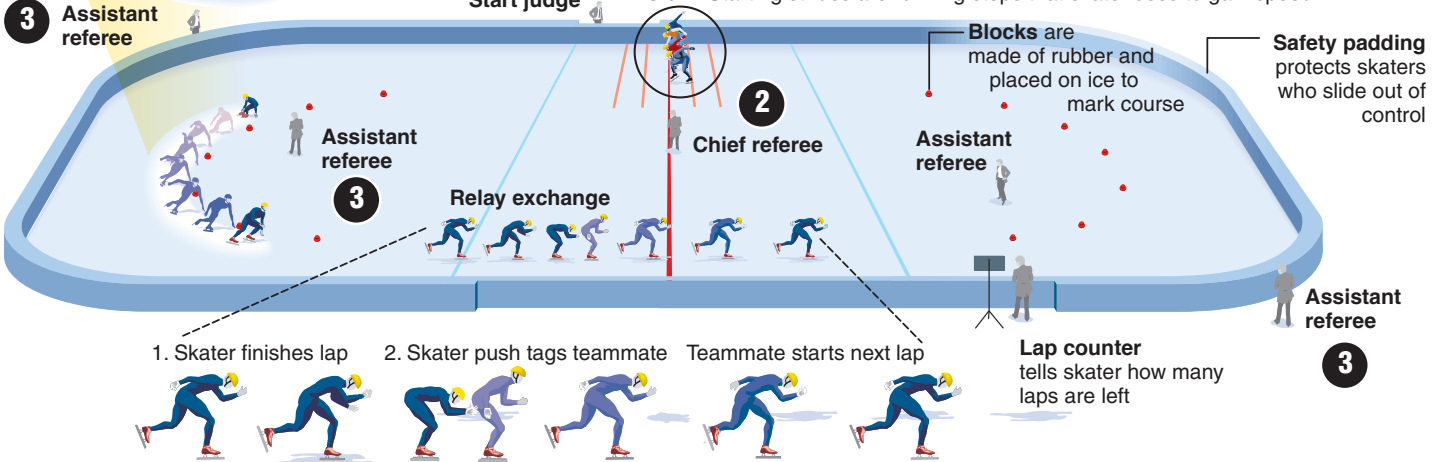
Short-track speedskating

This fast-paced sport consists of two types of races – individual and relay. Both men and women compete in 500 meter, 1,000m and 1,500m; there is a men's 5,000m relay and a women's 3,000m relay. In individual races, four to six skaters start at same time. The first two skaters in each heat advance to next round until only four skaters remain to skate in the final. Skaters begin with a standing start, then race counterclockwise (always turning left.) Skaters must pass each other cleanly and cannot block each other. Skaters are penalized for skating inside the blocks, but not for bumping them. Racers can reach 30 mph (48 kph).



Hand on ice

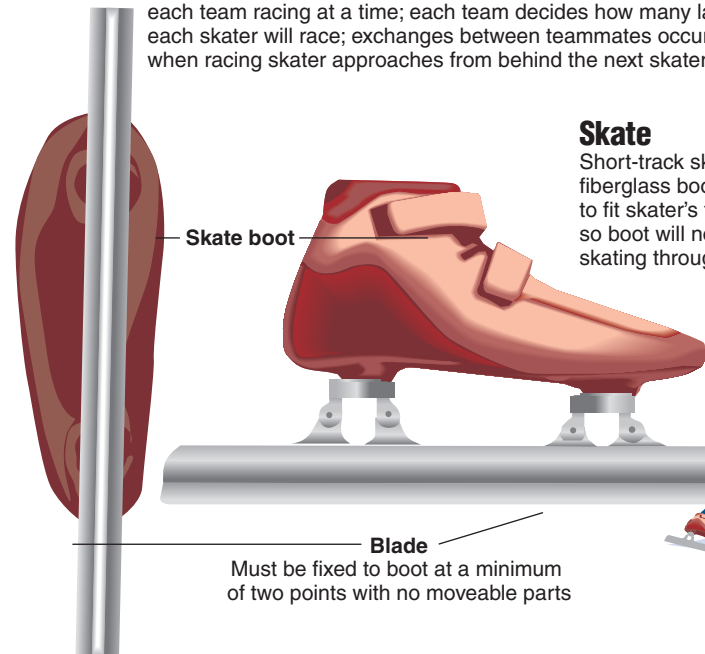
Skaters are allowed to touch ice with their hands to maintain balance in curves; tradeoff for balance is loss of speed, so hand contact with ice is kept to a minimum



Men's and women's relays

Relays take place over two days in semifinal, final competitions; eight teams of four skaters circle ice with only one member of each team racing at a time; each team decides how many laps each skater will race; exchanges between teammates occur when racing skater approaches from behind the next skater and

gives a push to maintain momentum; each exchange must take place between blue lines and the final exchange before red line; there are seven or eight relay exchanges per skater; final two laps are completed by same athlete



Skate

Short-track skate has two parts: fiberglass boot, blade; boot is molded to fit skater's foot; blade is offset to left so boot will not hit ice when athlete is skating through curves

Safety

Skaters must wear hard-shell helmet that fastens under chin, cut-resistant gloves, knee pads, neck protector, shin guards

Judges, officials

- 1 Start judge** gives signal with starter's pistol
- 2 Chief referee** supervises assistant referees, ensures all rules are applied
- 3 Assistant referee** helps control race, notes infractions