

Everything You Want to Know about Becoming a Figure Skating Judge but are Afraid to Ask

There are several ways an individual can become involved in the world of figure skating and serve the skating community. One of the most rewarding volunteer activities is judging; it is a wonderful way to impart skating knowledge and help young skaters achieve their skating goals.

U.S. Figure Skating is constantly on the lookout for individuals who have the desire, background, ethics, and interest in becoming figure skating judges. Figure skating has experienced much growth in the last decade, and the association forecasts continued growth and interest in the sport. Though this is welcomed news to U.S. Figure Skating, it does translate into more skaters taking more tests and competing in more competitions. Consequently, as the number of tests administered each year grows, so does the workload for our present judges. U.S. Figure Skating and the Judges Committee recognize that this creates a great need for additional judges and that efforts must be made to encourage individuals to become figure skating judges and rise within the judging ranks. However, it is imperative that the gains made toward increasing the pool of qualified judges not compromise setting and maintaining stringent and uniform standards of judging.

Seeking, identifying, and selecting individuals who may become accomplished judges in the future most often occurs at the grass roots level within the clubs because it is only after a judge has been appointed and is actively judging that their work really comes to the attention of U.S. Figure Skating. The test chairs and club officials are the association's front line in encouraging and selecting new judges. They often receive inquiries from interested parents, skaters, and volunteers about how to become a judge. Local area judges are also key in identifying pools of talent and qualified potential judges, and we encourage judges to talk about trial judging to people they think might be interested in becoming judges. This document is designed to facilitate those types of discussions.

People interested in trial judging often ask, "What does it take to become a figure skating judge?" This document addresses this question and answers many of the most frequently asked questions trial judges have asked their test chairs and monitors. It is designed to give all trial judges a solid foundation and realistic expectations about figure skating judging, with the goal of enhancing their readiness to trial judge and their satisfaction with the trial judging experience.

Would I make a good figure skating judge?

There are certain fundamentals that individuals should possess if they want to become qualified judges and have positive judging experiences. These characteristics include:

1. A sincere desire to be of service to the sport. Dedication is essential because all judges must spend hours studying and furthering their judging education—not only when working toward appointments, but for as long as they continue to judge. They must be willing to spend a lot of time judging both tests and competitions, even when they are trial judging at another level. Judges must also have the desire to serve in a manner that upholds and improves judging standards.
2. Ability to make an independent decision. Many characteristics create this all-important attribute, including objectivity, self-confidence, tact, and decisiveness. At the forefront is a person's ability to judge objectively and not be influenced by other persons or personalities, either on or off the ice. A person must be able to appraise a skater's accomplishments based on what is completed during a test or competition and mark them accurately and clearly and without fear or favor. Tact is also key in becoming a good judge. It dictates how a judge may handle disgruntled parents, upset children, and confrontational coaches.
3. Proper temperament and ability to handle stress. Judges often find themselves being judged by others, which can be stressful at times. A good judge must be able to control their temper and emotions, even after being challenged or ridiculed for a mark or placement. After test or event results are released, judges must be able to 'let go' of the event rather than brood over the results. As with many sports, judging cannot be an exact science—human beings have to make decisions that determine a passing or failing grade or a skater's placement in a competition. The safeguard in this decision making system is the use of multiple judges—from three to nine, depending on the significance of the event. There will be many times when a judge will differ from the rest of the panel, and that can cause stress. However, it is important for a judge that has done their conscientious best to forget the matter. Dwelling on such an outcome often

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perpetuates the problem by making the judge more nervous under similar conditions and possibly distorting his or her judgment.

4. **Knowledge of the sport.** Technical knowledge of figure skating is essential, but each person starts with a different degree of skating knowledge. While former skaters usually have a broader base of technical knowledge when beginning the judging process, ability as a skater is not in itself *the* measure of judging ability. There are many good judges who are poor skaters—in the long run, temperament and willingness to serve are of more importance. A limited skating background should not discourage anyone interested in becoming a judge, but if all else is equal, the skater has the advantage as a judge.

Individuals that are new to the sport must be willing to put in the hours necessary to acquire technical knowledge, from studying texts and attending judge's schools to skating themselves (preferably with quality instruction). However, no judge, regardless of how seasoned, should stop studying, all the while keeping an open mind to new ways of evaluating skating and keeping abreast of technical changes.

Qualified candidates who persevere and remain committed to the sport will experience many rewards throughout their judging careers. Not only are they doing the sport a distinct service, most judges create long-lasting relationships with other judges and individuals that share their passion for figure skating.

How do I go about becoming a trial judge?

The first step is to contact the regional vice chair (RVC) of the Judges Committee for your region and register as a trial judge. You can find the name and contact information for this person in the U.S. Figure Skating directory or by contacting U.S. Figure Skating directly. Those interested in synchronized skating contact the sectional vice chair for synchronized judges in your section. You will receive a trial judge kit via e-mail with link information to trial forms and other information. You will also be assigned a monitor to guide and mentor you through the trial judging process and maintain all of your official trial papers and records. If there is a judge with whom you have good rapport and an existing relationship, you may mention that to the RVC and ask that they take that into consideration when making the assignment.

How do I prepare to trial judge?

The first step in preparing to trial judge is ordering a current U.S. Figure Skating rulebook, which will become your primary source for technical information on judging, test requirements, and competition rules. You should also obtain a copy of the *Guidelines for Bronze Test appointment* and trial judging forms, both available from the U.S. Figure Skating website: www.usfigureskating.org.

Guidelines: <http://www.usfigureskating.org/membernews.asp?id=248&sid=20823>

Forms: <http://www.usfigureskating.org/membernews.asp?id=248&sid=20820>

Before you trial judge a test, please review the elements that need to be completed during the test and familiarize yourself with the passing standard. For moves-in-the-field tests, you will have to become familiar with how well an element has to be executed for it to pass, and for other free skate and dance tests, you will have to learn the overall quality of execution required to pass the test. You will also want to read the sections of the rulebook pertaining to how a test session is conducted and how and when the reskate of elements occurs.

If you are completely new to any phase of judging, you might want to begin by evaluating basic skating skills. Call your local club and see if they run a Basic Skills Test program and begin by learning to judge at the Basic Skills level. If you are an experienced skater and/or have studied the low-level test, you may want to begin by judging in the Basic Skills program and trial judging low tests.

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How do I begin trial judging?

You may want to trial at your home club first, where you will likely be more comfortable in this new capacity. Feel free to ask judges ahead of time for helpful hints on how to judge most efficiently and effectively. They will have good 'tips' for you regarding shorthand, what to include in your comments, and what to look for during the tests. After the tests are over, you may ask the judges to discuss the results with you. For example, you may want to review some of the tests and find out why a particular test passed or failed and how strong or weak various tests were. This process will help you evaluate your reasons for passing or failing a test and your final decisions. If your reasons for your decision match those of the judges, then you are seeing and evaluating the same things in approximately the same manner. It is important to keep your evaluations confidential; they are not to be discussed with people other than the judges involved.

When you are comfortable trial judging, you may call the test chair of various nearby clubs for permission to trial upcoming test sessions. Your monitor and other local judges can be helpful in this process by introducing you to other area judges and keeping you informed of area test sessions. Trial judging with a variety of judges is important in your development as a well informed and educated judge. If there are no nearby clubs or very few tests in your area, you may want to call a 'center' of skating—a large club that operates all year round—and plan to attend one of their major test sessions for maximum trialing with minimum time and expense.

When you trial a test session, it is important to give the test chair a stamped, addressed envelope (or manila mailer if there are more than four papers) addressed to your monitor. Although your monitor will receive your trial papers, you should also keep careful records reflecting where, when, and with whom you have trialed and the results of each test. Your record gives you a running score on your progression and serves as a check when your monitor prepares to send in your papers for an appointment.

How do I learn more about judging and skating?

Continuing education in the areas of judging and skating requirements is vital for individuals who want to progress as judges and receive new appointments. It is also the responsibility of every judge to study and learn as much as possible about skating. Remember, the skaters have spent a lot of time, money, and effort preparing to test, and judges must be able to provide them with constructive comments about what the skater has completed well and what needs to be improved in order to pass a test. Judges and trial judges are no longer required to take an annual exam, however, there is an annual rules review that all judges/trial judges are encouraged to submit. There is an exam required for any promotion and a passing score is required to receive a judging appointment. Judges/trial judges also attend a judges' school before applying for any promotion. You can contact local clubs, judges, U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters, or the U.S. Figure Skating web site to determine where and when schools will be held. At the completion of a school, you will receive a certificate of attendance, which you will want to keep and send in when you apply for an appointment.

As you begin trial judging and even receive your first appointment, you may want to begin trialing in another discipline. Becoming a qualified bronze test judge in a variety of disciplines—free skate, moves in the field, pairs, and dance appointments—will make you a very valuable judge to clubs in your area. Why? The greater number of tests occurs at these lower levels, and a well-qualified judge at this level across disciplines is a truly valuable asset to any club.

How do I prepare to trial my first test session?

It is important to begin the trial judging experience with realistic expectations. Trial judging (and future judging activities) will cost you money and time and may cause you some stress and frustration at different times during your judging career. However, keep in mind that the potential rewards are enormous. Since trial judging does require the commitment of both financial and personal resources, it is important to make your trial judging experiences as pleasant, rewarding, productive, and efficient as possible. As such, here are several helpful hints you may want to follow as you prepare to trial judge your first test session. You will most likely incorporate many of these hints and activities into your trial judging routine and develop some of your own. Again, talking with your monitor, other judges, and the test chair will be helpful.

Before the test session:

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1. It is important to call or write ahead to the test chair requesting to trial judge at a particular test session (see TR 7.13 in the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook). The number of spaces available for trial judges is often limited based on the number that the test chair or judge-in-charge (JIC) can handle.
2. To make sure you will be able to judge once you arrive, remember to apply to the test chair in advance. You can find a listing of test chair names and addresses for each club in the Member Clubs section of the U.S. Figure Skating Directory. Some clubs have designated trial judge chairs responsible for coordinating trial judge activity. At this time, you should ask for a test schedule for the remainder of the skating season so that you can plan your schedule effectively.
3. You should also contact U.S. Figure Skating and order a copy of the current rulebook so that you can review the elements of the tests you will trial judge prior to arriving at the test session.

Before the test:

1. You should prepare a trial judge bag or briefcase that contains all of the important items you will need during a test session. It should include a clipboard, U.S. Figure Skating rulebook, pencils, pens, and blank test sheets and schedules. You will also want to include enough clothes to make sure you are warm enough to concentrate during the session. Hint: Bring your own 'survival food'—many clubs provide food for officials only and you may not have time to find something to eat.
2. Arrive at the rink early, to allow time to fill in test sheets, meet other judges, and learn about the logistics of the session.
3. Introduce your self to the test chair; this person will be a great source of information during the session. There are several items to ask the test chair about:
 - Test session schedule
When you arrive, identify yourself to the test chair and ask to see a copy of the test session schedule so that you can fill in the names of the candidates on your trial sheets. When you spend time in the judges' room, you may see or hear information about skaters that is confidential; it is to remain confidential. Simply note the information YOU need to trial judge and keep anything else you see to yourself.
 - Trial judge seating
It is important to ask the test chair where trial judges sit for free skating, moves, pairs and dance tests. Make sure you are in your designated seat on time—early is better—so that you don't miss the beginning of a test and that you make sure you can see well from this location.
 - Judge in Charge
If you don't know the official judges, ask the test chair to point out the JIC (Judge in Charge) of your panel(s). You'll want to keep this person in sight to make sure you are in the right rink at the right time. Introduce yourself to this judge and let him or her know that you will be trial judging tests during the session. The JIC will have to sign all of your trial papers once a test is complete and you have filled all of your comments.
 - Discussions or reviews
Ask the test chair if there is a plan for the official judges to discuss the tests with the trial judges later on.
4. The next step is to fill out your trial sheets, writing clearly the name of the candidate and the test date, signing your name, and noting your USFSA member number. For dance tests, be certain you know if the candidate is the man or the woman.
5. When you enter the arena to trial judge, make sure you take several pencils, your rulebook, and a pen (for the JIC to use to sign your papers). It is important to be alert but inconspicuous and conduct yourself in a professional manner which will not distract the skaters or the official judges from their duties.

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6. For dance trial judges, you should know the dances you will be trialing or judging to the point where you don't require a rulebook. Feel free to have it there for reference purposes, but you should know the dance steps well enough that you don't have to follow the diagrams during the test. In addition, dance diagrams are on the trial sheets.

During the test:

1. It is important not to talk with other judges or trial judges during the test session. If you have a question, ask the JIC.
2. When you begin judging, watch the skater carefully—noting the completion of elements as well as the quality with which they are performed. Remember to judge only what you see the skater do that day. Even if you know a skater is capable of completing an element but misses it during the test, you must mark the skater's performance at that moment. For free skate, moves, and dance, the skating you see during the test is **the only thing** you judge—don't be swayed by a skater's reputation or past performances.
3. As you evaluate the test, write as much as you can—there is no such thing as too many notes. Not only is this the best way to show what you know, it will help you practice making useful comments for the skaters once you receive your first appointment and begin judging. Your comments should reflect what the skater does well and what he or she needs to improve in order to pass the test the next time or prepare for the next level.
4. Important hints on marking:
 - Write your comments legibly and concisely.
 - Learn the fundamentals, and then give a mark to show that you expect these to be done correctly.
 - Don't try to guess what the official judges are thinking or writing—your marks should reflect what you think the quality level and outcome of the test should be.
 - Try to avoid marking on the borderline of pass/retry. If you think the test should be retried, let your marks reflect the problems with the test. Not passing a test by 0.1 is too close to passing to not give the skater the benefit of the doubt.
 - Add your marks and write/circle the result, 'pass' or 'retry'. Consider what is best for the skater; do you think they have mastered these elements and are ready for the next test?
 - Don't worry about making a mistake...every judge has made one at one point or another, and you will most likely make many over the years.
 - Keep your papers to yourself.
5. When evaluating dance tests, be sure to keep an equal balance of all facets of the dance in determining your mark. Don't allow any one aspect to be the reason for your mark—one detracting point could well be offset by some other very good point. Keep the concept of the 'Big Picture' in mind and look at the overall dance.
6. Once the tests are completed, give your trial sheets immediately to the JIC for their signature.
7. You should be prepared to discuss your results with the JIC if asked to do so. This will help you prepare for when you are an official judge and are asked to talk to skaters about their tests results.

After the test:

1. Following the test, you should take time to listen to the official judges. If they do discuss the test with the trial judges it should be done in a private situation, away from skaters, parents, and coaches. Listen carefully to the judges' explanations, and don't hesitate to ask questions, but do not discuss the judges' marks or yours unless you are asked to do so. Hint: Never argue with the judges.

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2. As a trial judge, you should never discuss a test with anyone except the officials who saw the test. Any comments to skaters, parents, and coaches are inappropriate. If any of these individuals approach you about a test that you trial judged, refer them to the JIC or to the test chair to set up a time to discuss their questions with the official panel.
3. Before you leave, remember to thank the JIC and the test chair for the opportunity to trial judge.

Follow Up:

After the test session, you may want to contact your monitor to discuss how the session went and review any problems or challenges you experienced. Your monitor will help you identify the areas you might need to improve and also point out the areas in which you are excelling. He or she will help you move toward your next appointment and help you realize your full potential in the judging ranks.

As you begin judging, you will encounter many different circumstances and situations, especially as you begin to travel to rinks outside of your area. Though there are basic standards in terms of how test sessions are conducted, you will find some clubs have their own unique activities. These differences can be as small as whether or not clipboards are provided for each judge or as significant as how much the judges interact with coaches and skaters following a test. You will need to observe these differences when you judge for the first time in a new rink. Remember to stick to the judges' training you have received to that point, but be open to learning from the new judges you meet.

How do I become a competition judge?

If you are interested in judging qualifying competitions, you have to become a competition judge. Competition judging differs from test judging in that judges are required to evaluate each skater's performance, and, in the 6.0 system, compare them to other performances completed in the event, and then rank the performances based on the technical execution and presentation of the program. In the IJS system of judging the skater is evaluated against a standard. It is not recommended to begin trialing competitions until you have a good understanding of skating elements, presentation, and overall skating quality.

The first competition appointment is the regional appointment, which as the name implies permits the judge to judge through the regional level of competition. Competition judges are required to trial judge both short and free skate (long) programs at qualifying competitions (such as a regional championships) and other local area competitions that are approved by the Judges Committee for trial purposes. These competitions are listed on the U.S. Figure Skating website.

How do I prepare to trial judge a competition?

Before you trial judge your first competition, you may want to first attend a local non-qualifying competition and observe events from the stands. Use worksheets designed for note taking purposes to keep track of the jumps, combinations, spins, movements, and footwork completed.

Before the Competition – using the 6.0 system

1. You should read your U.S. Figure Skating rulebook and familiarize yourself with the requirements for the various programs you will be evaluating during the competition.
2. Practice your note-taking skills, using abbreviations for jumps and spins which you can jot down quickly and decipher later, during your event reviews.
3. Meet with your monitor or another judge in your area to talk about how to mark programs and how to track skaters with a ranking system if using the 6.0 system.

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4. You should plan on arriving at the rink at least 1 hour before your first event—this will give you enough time to fill-out your trial papers, meet the trial judge coordinator for the competition, and familiarize yourself with the rink.
5. Familiarize yourself with where the trial judges will be sitting and who will be evaluating the event. Confirm where and when the trial judge critique meeting will take place.

During the Competition – using the 6.0 system

1. Keep track of all of the elements completed during each performance, using the worksheets provided in the trial judges' room. If you find that you like one worksheet in particular (there are several versions), keep one clean copy and bring copies with you to subsequent events and competitions.
2. After the first skater, the referee or trial judge monitor will tell you the median mark of the official panel. You can either use these marks as the marks for the first skater, or you can keep your original marks.
3. Judge each skater in terms of both technical ability and presentation and reward two independent marks to each skater.
4. Following the event, you will turn in your worksheet and official competition papers to the trial judge monitor, who should be situated at the trial judges stand. You will receive copies of your papers at the critique session.

After the Competition

1. You will need to attend the event critique in order for your trial activity to count toward an appointment. The critique will be led by an official judge from the panel or a designed JET.
2. During the critique, you should be prepared to discuss the performances of specific skaters. Your JET will ask you to review the elements attempted and completed in a given performance, along with your observations regarding the presentation of the program.
3. The critique is a time to demonstrate your ability to identify elements and evaluate overall skating ability. Keep your comments succinct, but thorough.
4. The critique is also a time to ask questions. If you are unclear about an element or a placement, feel free to ask a question. If your questions are long and involved, it may be best to ask the JET privately following the critique so that the critique doesn't become too long.

Note: US Figure Skating is now using the IJS system of judging at all qualifying competitions and many of the non-qualifying competitions. This is a highly specialized system and is not explained in this document.

What do I need to know to prepare for trial judging dance tests?

The judging of dance applies the same basic principles as singles and pairs judging; however, there are some distinct differences that you may want to review before trial judging dance tests. For those dances that require a partner and solo, both a partnered dance and the solo dance play a role in the overall evaluation of the test. Your remarks should reflect the skater's performance in each portion of the test.

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The partnered dance

1. Evaluate the partnered dance in terms of the two division of marks:
 - Technique (accuracy, placement, style and unison)
 - Timing/Expression

You should be sure to reward good expression and style of the partner that is testing and not judge the performance of the partner that is taking the tester through the test.

2. Don't get hung up on unison; you must remember that these are test dances and that the couple may not have much experience skating together. There should, however, be some semblance of togetherness that occurs when each partner keeps time to the music and skates similar patterns. Although unison in dance tests might not be as prevalent as unison among competitive teams, dancing at any level implies a team that executes the dance similarly. Unison errors on gold and international dance tests should be marked more severely than on pre-gold and lower tests.
3. Be aware of tracking errors; they can detract from the unison and expression of the dance. You should reflect this in your marks, but keep in mind the minimal time the dance testers spend skating together.
4. Reward strong repetition of correct dance patterns and good, even flow throughout the dance and over the ice.

The solo

1. On lower tests, the solo is meant to check that the skater is able to do the dance reasonably well by themselves. Look for:
 - repeated timing errors,
 - errors in dance steps,
 - a pattern that becomes noticeably weaker,
 - consistent technical difficulty.

Also, be aware of errors that occur during the solo that didn't occur in the partnered dance test. You may also find that an error that occurred during the partnered test improves or does not occur during the solo. This is a good indication that the error was the fault of the partner and not necessarily the fault of the skater.

2. On the higher tests (pre-gold and above) the solo takes on more importance as a guide to judging the individual's skating caliber. The solo should reflect the test level of the dance being taken. Glaring weaknesses need to be penalized and expression needs to be emphasized.
3. On the gold and international tests, the solo should be just as strong as with the partner. As with the other skating disciplines, as you gain more experience trialing and judging dance tests, you will become more familiar with the standards at each level. You should take advantage of the times you spend judging with experienced judges who are willing to answer any questions you might have. The most formidable tool in becoming an outstanding judge is experience and practice.

What do I need to know to prepare for trial judging synchronized skating under the 6.0 system?

Note: US Figure Skating is now using the IJS system of judging at all qualifying competitions and many of the non-qualifying competitions. This is a highly specialized system and is not explained in this document.

Many of the general guidelines used for singles, pairs, and dance judging pertain equally to synchronized skating; however, synchronized skating has unique qualities, which require special attention and warrant special mention.

1. Familiarize yourself with the Competition (CR) Rules on synchronized skating in the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook.
2. Judge only what you see the team perform during the event. Every year brings changes to the participating teams and

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this year's team is rarely comprised of the same group of skaters as last year. Team roster changes can occur because skaters' ages change or they graduate from school/college and move on to careers. Do not judge based on reputation, past performances, or practice sessions. Also, do not let the placement of one team from a club influence your placement of another team from that same club in a different division.

3. A high degree of unison, accuracy and precision should be evident during a performance with a seamless passage from element to element (transition) executed on deep flowing and controlled edges with maximum run of the blade.
4. Look for quality skating, which includes executing the elements that make up the Technical Merit and Presentation marks in a superior manner. This includes skating a balanced program with good variety, performed in harmony with the chosen music. A well balanced Synchronized program includes:
 - Balance between maneuvers executed
 - Balance between holds used
 - Balance between step sequences used
 - Balance in utilization of ice surface
 - Balance in the direction of rotation and skating
 - Balance in tempo of music used
 - Balance between short and long edges
 - Balance between technical merit and presentationAdditional characteristics to evaluate include speed, edge control, unison, smooth transitions and interpretation.
5. Evaluate closely the presentation mark by asking the following questions:
 - a. Does the team express and interpret, with understanding, the character and structure of the music chosen?
 - b. Does the team present a well balanced program with adequate distribution of the highlights avoiding monotonous periods?
 - c. Are difficult features laid out over the entire ice surface?
 - d. Are there empty and dull moments in the program?
 - e. Does the team achieve effects by frequent repetition only?
 - f. Does the team flow evenly over the ice?
 - g. Do movements of the team express the melody, the rhythm or the tempo (beat) of the music?
 - h. Does movement of the body create the impression of natural harmony and easy flow?
 - i. Is the artistic aspect of the program, in relation to the music chosen, reflected by the teams' musical understanding?
 - j. If the music requires an expression of the rhythm or interpretation of the melody is the team able to comply with these requirements?
 - k. Does the music chosen correspond to the musical maturity of the team?
 - l. Does the choreography of the program emphasize the highlights of the music through adequate arrangement of the features of the program?
 - m. Is the music expressed by movements of the body the team is told to do or through the use of genuine skating movements?
6. All synchronized team skating judges must obtain at least a bronze singles/pairs test or bronze dance test appointment within two (2) years of being appointed a synchronized skating judge. (JR 8.02)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF JUDGES

During the trial judging process and once you become a judge, it is vital to keep in mind the primary responsibilities of figure skating judges. Judging is an honor that is laden with many responsibilities, the most important of which are highlighted here:

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1. A judge is an official representative of U.S. Figure Skating and should always conduct themselves in a manner befitting this status and must behave in a dignified manner regardless of the circumstances or situations. The judge must always have patience and be even-tempered, modest, and unassuming.
2. A judge must make independent decisions, based on their observations and supported by intelligent, objective, and technically-sound comments. The majority of a panel decides the outcome of a test or event, and the fact that one judge may be in the minority is not necessarily negative. It is the responsibility of each judge, however, to be able to support their decision with knowledgeable comments. Judges must make decisions independent of what they may hear in the judge's room and in the media, from coaches and other judges, or from past experiences.
3. A judge must concentrate fully on the skater, forgetting the audience, surroundings, and other judges except for the demands of courtesy.
4. A judge must treat all coaches and skaters equally and never suggest that a skater should pass or fail because they take lessons from a certain instructor. Judges unwittingly arouse distrust when they appear very friendly to some skaters or coaches but not to others.
5. A judge must always be objective and put aside personal likes and dislikes, club affiliations, and personal relationships. Opinions and forecasts publicly expressed before a test or competition are causes for banning a judge.
6. A judge should add their own marks independently before handing in test papers to the JIC and verify that the numbers achieve the desired results. It is important to give credit to the elements performed well and evaluate whether or not the positives outweigh the negatives, and therefore, constitute a passing test. Once the JIC has checked the papers for accuracy in computation, the results can then be discussed.
7. A judge must be prepared to talk to candidates, coaches, parents, and other judges about their test decisions and explain the reasons for their marks. It is helpful to the skater if a judge can pinpoint some of the areas that need to be improved for the next time the test is retaken, but the judge must not attempt to teach the skater. A judge should also find something positive to say regarding a skater's performance, in order to encourage the skater.
8. Judges are there to serve the skaters and help them with their evaluations. If there are times a judge feels that they may have missed an element or may have not seen a landing completely, the judge should give the skater the benefit of the doubt. In these discussions the judge must not criticize or imply criticism of other judges, nor should they attempt to teach the skater.
9. When judging an event with multiple portions (either dance or singles and pairs), a judge needs to keep in mind that each portion of the competition is separate and distinct from the others. Judges must not allow prior performance or standings in the previous event(s) to dictate where they place the team in the current or next event.
10. A judge may give praise to a skater publicly after a test or event; criticism, however, if given at all, should be offered privately and only when requested by those concerned. Judges should avoid arguments at all times; if a coach, skater, or parent become argumentative, especially in public, it is important for the judge to conduct himself or herself professionally.
11. A judge should never criticize another judge or second-guess the reasons for why another judge judged the way they did. If approached by someone questioning the results of another judge, the judge should recommend that the person discuss the matter with the appropriate judge only.
12. Except where there is open marking (in some competitions), judges should remember that individual marks and comments are confidential and should not be divulged except to the skater and the skater's parents and/or coach. Trial judges should pay particular attention to this.

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13. A judge must have thorough technical knowledge of what they are judging. Skaters have spent a great deal of time, effort, and money learning to perform the test requirements and they deserve to be judged by knowledgeable officials. It is the responsibility of the judge to commit to continual learning and training.
14. A judge must be sure that he or she is physically able to withstand the strain of judging, has good hearing and good eyesight, and is mentally fit to concentrate on the skating at hand.