



## Excel Webinar Questions & Answers

### Excel Technical Questions

Q: Would you be able to provide an example of steps/turns that meet the requirements in the step sequence for Juvenile Plus and above?

A: *For the 2019-2020 season all intermediate and below will use a choreo step sequence and novice through senior will use a step sequence with a maximum of level 2. The difficult turns and steps that may count towards a level feature are: rockers, counters, brackets, loops, twizzles and Choctaws.*

Q: Eight revolutions is no longer required to receive a level. If a skater at the lower Excel Levels can do 8 revs in one position, then what level does that get called as?

A: *Eight revolutions is still a feature. For levels intermediate and below the 8 revolution feature can be achieved once per spin. For novice through senior, the eight revolution feature can be achieved once per program. The eight revolution feature will count in a camel, layback, or difficult variation of a sit spin, upright, or non-basic position. Please consult ISU communications #2253 and #2254 for more information.*

Q: Is a "half toe loop" what was previously known as a mazurka?

A: *Yes, they are quite similar. A half toe loop may land on either foot. If IJS is used for the beginner levels, it will be up to the technical panel to determine whether the skater's intent was a half toe loop jump or a mazurka as a transition.*

Q: Can a skater achieve a level 1 by holding a basic position (no variation) for 8 revolutions?

A: *The eight revolution feature will count in a camel, layback, or difficult variation of a sit spin, upright, or non-basic position as per ISU communication #2253 and #2254.*

Q: Will you ever offer a short program for the Excel levels?

A: *The committee is currently performing a needs assessment to ascertain whether there is enough demand to warrant Excel Short program events. We welcome all ideas and suggestions and will re-evaluate annually.*

Q: Why are the Excel Juvenile Plus and Excel Intermediate Level jumps the same?

A: *We recognize that there are a lot of levels and there is redundancy among some of the levels. The issue driving these decisions at present is that there are many skaters who have tested up to say, Juvenile or Intermediate, with the minimum test requirements. Many of these skaters still enjoy competing so there needs to be a level appropriate for them. That being said, the Excel program was created out of a need to provide more challenging, yet still levelled, events for skaters who are technically far more proficient than the minimum test requirements, but who are struggling to experience success competing in the well-balanced events.*



Q: Will there be a Tech Panel webinar to help clarify the calling for the Excel Series competitions?

A: *The PSA is a great resource and offers intro to IJS webinars. Please check for past webinars as well as the upcoming schedule which will help to de-mystify IJS for well-balanced and Excel. In addition, we are currently working with the PSA to incorporate some excel specific material in an upcoming IJS webinar.*

Q: Can you give an example of a level 2 spin?

A: *A level two spin would be a spin where two features are achieved. The features as well as requirements for each feature appear in ISU Communications #2253 and #2254.*

Q: What do these levels mean or where can I find information about it?

A: *For more information, please consult ISU communications #2253 and #2254. They are found in the "technical Info" tab on the U.S. Figure Skating website in the "Singles/Pairs" box. In addition, please consult the Excel Technical Information Handbook. It can be found in the "Programs" tab on the U.S. Figure Skating website in the "Excel Series" box.*

Q: When do the new 2019-2020 Excel Free Skate requirements take effect?

A: *For all fall of 2019 competitions, please be sure to check the competition announcement. If a specific Excel Free Skate chart is referenced in the competition announcement, that is the chart that must be used. If neither Excel chart is specifically referenced in the competition announcement then the 2019-2020 chart must be used for all competitions taking place as of September 1, 2019.*

Q: For Regionals, do we use the old or the new Excel Free Skate chart?

A: *For all fall of 2019 competitions, please be sure to check the competition announcement. If a specific Excel Free Skate chart is referenced in the competition announcement, that is the chart that must be used. If neither Excel chart is specifically referenced in the competition announcement then the 2019-2020 chart must be used for all competitions taking place as of September 1, 2019.*

Q: As a coach I really feel that there are too many levels - has there been a discussion about this?

A: *We recognize that there are a lot of levels and there is redundancy among some of the levels. The issue driving these decisions at present is that there are many skaters who have tested up to say, Juvenile or Intermediate, with the minimum test requirements. Many of these skaters still enjoy competing so there needs to be a level appropriate for them. That being said, the Excel program was created out of a need to provide more challenging, yet still levelled, events for skaters who are technically far more proficient than the minimum test*



requirements, but who are struggling to experience success competing in the well-balanced events.

Q: When will the Excel Program include IJS for testing protocol?

A: *We realize this has been a request from many participants in the excel program. We are currently working with the various committees in U.S. Figure Skating to make the necessary changes to be able to offer test credit. We will be sure to keep all interested parties abreast of all updates.*

### **Excel Series Questions**

Q: Can you move up a level once the series has begun?

A: *No, skaters must compete at a single Excel level throughout the series. Skaters may compete at their current free skate test level or one level higher.*

Q: Can our skaters still skate up from their test level?

A: *Yes, skaters may compete in the Excel Series at their current free skate test level or one level higher.*

Q: If your skater registers for a level but then passes up a level past March 1, are they able to compete up a level?

A: *Skaters must register for and compete at a single level throughout the Excel Series. If you anticipate your skater will be passing a free skate test during the course of the Excel Series, you should plan in advance by having them register for the Excel Series and compete one level up from their current test level.*

Q: I have questions about the chart for awarding of points for the standard levels. Who will be recognized? How will they be recognized? Last year the boys who are most likely to be in a group of only 1-2 did not get recognized and never really had a chance to be.

A: *The top finishers in each Excel 'open' levels of the 2020 Excel Series will be recognized at the 2020 Excel National Festival. Additionally, they will receive an award at the 2020 National Festival and mention in Skating Magazine for their accomplishment. In accordance with U.S. Figure Skating rules, boys' and girls' events may be combined at the Pre-Juvenile level and below.*

Q: One concern I see is that it appears that the Excel standard levels have been lumped into the same category with Compete U.S.A.

A: *Compete U.S.A has historically and continues to be a competitive structure that includes from LTS U.S.A Snow Plow Sam through Well Balanced Preliminary and Excel Preliminary Plus levels.*

Q: The competitors competing at the (Excel) standard level are most likely struggling with the axel and are in danger of quitting. We need do something to keep them motivated to keep going. Has this been thought of? Or, what are the thoughts behind that?



A: We agree. There are a number of points along a skater's competitive career at which they may reach a plateau and may be more inclined to give up the sport. This is one of the reasons we developed the Excel program. Giving skaters a competitive experience where they can showcase their strengths instead of having to compete against skaters with far more technical proficiency. And at the same time providing the experience of the Excel National Festival as a mechanism to revive interest in these skaters to dedicate themselves more fully to their training. Which ideally, in the end, will help them progress past their current technical plateau.

Q: You mentioned that this series might be good for skaters not qualifying for sectionals. The novice skaters are trying double axels in their programs but not making it to sectionals. Would they be able to compete in this series and would they have to test to senior to do so?

A: A skater with their Novice test can compete in the Excel Series at either the Novice or Junior level.

Q: What is the maximum age to compete in Excel Novice, Excel Junior and Excel Senior?

A: There are no age restrictions for entering non-qualifying competitions at any Excel level. To register for the Excel Series, skaters must be under 22 years old as of March 1, 2020.

Q: When do you need to have your skater registered to receive Excel Series Points?

A: Skaters must be registered before March 1, 2020 or before they compete in their first 2020 Excel Series competition that they wish to earn points at, which ever date is earlier.

Q: If you enter a Plus event and do not qualify for the Festival at that level, can you go to the festival in the open level? Example- try to qualify for Intermediate Plus and not in top 6- can that skater skate Intermediate at Festival?

A: No, this is not permitted as skaters must compete in a single level throughout the Excel Series; their competitive level in the Series dictates their level for and how they receive an invitation to the Excel Final and Festival.

Q: is there a rationale for awarding points if someone can still attend the series festival no matter of these placement? I think it was beneficial for the skaters who qualified via IJS. You can open it but maybe eventually some qualifying might be good for the lower levels as well.

A: The Excel Series and National Festival was created with a tiered approach in mind. Specifically, at the LTS U.S.A levels, access to the Festival is the most 'open' – a skater merely needs to be a registered LTS U.S.A member and they can register for the Festival.

The next 'tier' is the 'open' Excel Levels. Here we are asking for more of a commitment – membership, register for Series and compete at two Series competitions - to receive an invitation to Festival. Statistics show that there is a



lot of attrition among this group of skaters. We feel that the Excel Festival experience is an important retention tool to offer these skaters to help them remain committed to participating in the sport. We do not feel that skaters at these levels are looking for a 'qualifying' type experience yet; they are motivated more by the opportunity to participate.

Q: Where will competitions be posted?

A: The selected 2020 Excel Series competitions will be posted on the Excel webpage of the U.S. Figure Skating website. Click on Programs Tab, scroll to Excel Series. There is a Resources box in upper right corner of that page. A link to the list of competitions will be posted there. The list will be posted by end of September.

Q: Why wouldn't this track be in the summer when the skaters aren't busy with school activities?

A: We will be continually re-evaluating what specific season makes the most sense and provides the most opportunity for skaters. There are a number of factors and considerations in play. At least for the first few season of the Excel Series, this will be re-evaluated annually.

Q: Will you be increasing the number of competitions in the series?

A: Based on feedback we received and our desire to keep the Series as affordable to parents as possible, we are encouraging more competitions to apply to participate in the Series. If you would like to see more competitions in your area – reach out to your local club or interclub!

### **Excel National Festival & Final Questions**

Q: Is the Excel National Final going to be in Coral Springs, Florida again?

A: Bids are currently being accepted to host the 2020 Excel National Final. The selected location for the 2020 Excel National Final will be announced by end of September 2020.

Q: Did the host rink/club make any profit?

A: Yes. If you are interested in placing a bid to host the 2020 Excel National Festival, you may find the [RFP here](#). Those interested in learning more about the financials of hosting the Excel National Festival can contact Karissa Woienski, U.S. Figure Skating Program Manager, at [kwoienski@usfigureskating.org](mailto:kwoienski@usfigureskating.org)

Q: And will the Excel National event be rotated around the country?

A: Ideally, yes. Although this is dependent upon the bids to host the event that we receive.

### **General Questions**

Q: Could you link this PowerPoint on the Excel Series website in the documents box on the right for download?

A: Yes, the webinar powerpoint may be [accessed here](#).



Q: Why don't people register (for the Excel Series & Series competitions) by U.S. Figure Skating # instead?

A: *Skaters must use both their U.S. Figure Skating # and their full name when registering for any U.S. Figure Skating event or competition. The reports sent to the committee handling the computation of Excel Series points, do not include a skaters' U.S. Figure Skating #, only the skater's name. This is why it is important to register for the Excel Series and all Excel Series competitions using the same precise name. (i.e. not Elizabeth for Series and Liz for competitions)*

Q: How does the revised structure of U.S. Figure Skating competition try to make a figure skating career more financially accessible? Does U.S. Figure Skating help out skaters and families who have fewer economic resources to support a skating career?

A: *For the Excel Series, we encourage more clubs to host Series competitions in order to cut down on travel costs. Many U.S. Figure Skating clubs and local skating programs extend scholarship assistance to skaters. We encourage you to reach out to your local clubs and rinks.*

Q: The West Coast has very few competitions that fall between December and May so cannot be involved in that aspect. How does this affect skaters who want to participate?

A: *We are actively recruiting Pacific section clubs to host an Excel Series competition. Even if a club does not currently hold a competition during the Series season, they could start a competition specifically to offer Excel Series events. Help us by reaching out to your local club! Separately, we will be looking at other ways to potentially modify the Excel Series season in the future to make it more accessible across the country.*