

Excel Competition Series Handbook 2021 Season

Dear Skaters, Coaches and Parents,

On behalf of U.S. Figure Skating's Program Innovation Sub-Committee, we are thrilled to announce the 3rd season of the Excel Competition Series.

The purpose of the Excel Series is to offer young athletes an exciting, competitive, and safe environment that motivates them to focus on strengthening their program components and advancing their technical skills each season.

The primary mission of this program is to inspire more of our young athletes to continue training and remain committed to participating in figure skating by providing them with events that allow them to showcase their strengths. Additionally, this program serves as an opportunity for grassroots skaters and coaches to familiarize themselves with the fundamentals of the International Judging System (IJS) through a phased approach which allows them to become proficient and confident with the IJS.

While it is disappointing that the 2020 Excel Series was cut short due to the coronavirus pandemic, we are looking forward to reigniting excitement in the new modified Excel program this season with a focus on providing a safe experience for our athletes, coaches and officials.

We hope that the Excel program continues to inspire athletes to work hard and challenge themselves to achieve new technical and program component goals each season. We wish all competitors a great experience this season –have fun, stay safe and enjoy the Series!

Sincerely,

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Excel Technical Handbook
2021 Skater Registration Form

General Information

Welcome to the 2021 Excel Series!

Excel Series events are U.S. Figure Skating non-qualifying competitions, as per Rule 3060 in the 2021 U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook.

Overview:

The 2021 season will consist of 4 main elements:

1.) Jump Start (Optional)

As a jump start for the Excel Series and due to limited live competition options, the Colonial FSC will be holding an **Excel Virtual Elements Challenge** for registered Excel Series competitors in late **February**. Details on this event can be found in the coming weeks at www.colonialfsc.com. (Participation not required to participate in the Excel Series.)

2.) Live or Virtual Competitions

Skaters participating in the Excel Series must compete at 1 event <u>- either a live</u> <u>competition or a sanctioned virtual competition</u>. Any competition, including those initially designated as Series competitions, held between January 15 and July 4, 2021, and meets the following criteria will count towards qualification:

- For events to count towards qualification:
 - The following events must be run IJS: Preliminary Plus, Pre-Juvenile Plus, Juvenile, Juvenile Plus, Intermediate, Intermediate Plus, Novice, Junior, and Senior.
 - o The remaining events may be run IJS or 6.0: Beginner, High Beginner, Pre-Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile.
- Skaters who skate in a live competition will submit their protocol or final results sheet, along with <u>the submission form</u>, to the U.S. Figure Skating Excel Committee for inclusion in the standings.

3.) Virtual Excel Festival (June)

Like 2020, the 2021 Excel Virtual Festival will include programming for all Series participants, as well as a virtual competitive experience and recognition for top performers in the Excel Series.

4.) Excel Final (Mid-August 2021)

If conditions allow, an in-person Excel Final will be held in Strongsville, Ohio, during August. While this year will look different from the original Excel Festival, we hope to incorporate as many of the same elements as possible, including a Final competition and small camp experience. A decision on the feasibility of hosting an in-person Final and additional details will be announced no later than **June 15**.

Dates:

2021 Excel Series will run from January 15 to July 4, 2021. The Excel Virtual Festival will take place in June. Specific dates and times will be posted no later than April 30th. If conditions allow, the Excel Final will take place in August. A decision on the feasibility of hosting an in-person Final and additional details will be announced no later than June 15.

Eligibility & Test Levels

Athletes must be eligible members in good standing of U.S. Figure Skating and may be members of the figure skating club of their choice. All participants will be expected to abide by the Code of Ethics (GR 1.01) and the Code of Conduct (GR 1.02), as set forth in the 2021 U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook. Canadian skaters who are eligible members in good standing of U.S. Figure Skating may compete in the Series. Canadian skaters who are not members of U.S. Figure Skating may compete in Excel levels at any competition offering Excel events, but may not enter the Series.

All skaters must either compete at their test level or one level above their highest US Figure Skating free skating test passed.

The determination of level will be based upon test level as of the 2021 Excel Series entry deadline of May 2, 2021, or when the skater submits their registration to be an Excel Series participant (whichever date is earlier).

If a skater plans to take a free skating test during the 2021 Excel Series season, they should start the season registered to compete one level above their current highest US Figure Skating free skating test passed in order to remain eligible to compete within the Series after passing their next free skating test.

For example, if a Pre-Preliminary tested skater plans to take their Preliminary test during the Series season, they should register for the series to compete in Excel Preliminary or Excel Preliminary Plus in order to remain eligible to compete in the Series after passing the Preliminary free skating test.

Skaters may not change or move up levels in the 2021 Excel Series once the registration deadline has passed. Exception: 2021 Excel Series skaters competing in levels Excel Beginner through Excel Pre-Juvenile may move up one level for the 2021 Excel Final, if it is held, but they may not enter an Excel Plus event at the 2021 Excel Final.

Skaters must be under 22 years of age as of the registration deadline of May 2, 2021.

<u>Exception: Skaters who were registered for the 2020 Excel Series must be under 23 years of age</u> as of the registration deadline of May 2, 2021.

Any skater who was a Sectional Competitor in Singles or Pairs in the 2019-2020 season is not eligible to compete in the 2021 Excel Series (<u>unless they competed in the Sectional event thru a fill-up rule.</u>)

Any skater who medaled at the 2019 Excel National Final <u>in any Plus level event or Novice</u> must register and compete in the 2021 Excel Series at least one level above the level in which they competed during the 2019 Excel Series.

Series Registration:

Skaters interested in participating in the 2021 Excel Series will need to complete the online Excel Series registration form and pay a \$50.00 fee to U.S. Figure Skating by May 2, 2021, or prior to their first live or virtual competition or Excel Virtual Elements competition – whichever is earlier. Additionally, skaters must register for the individual Series competitions they wish to enter. Each registered athlete may only compete in one level for the entire Series.

The online form to enter the Series will be <u>available here.</u> The Series registration fee is non-refundable, and included participation in the Virtual Excel Festival and a t-shirt.

In order for skaters to submit a protocol to earn standing and recognition, they must be registered with U.S. Figure Skating as an Excel Series participant prior to competing in an Excel event.

Entry Fees:

All skaters must register for the individual Excel Series competitions within the Series separately through the LOC hosting each individual event. Excel Series event entry fees will be set by the LOC hosting the individual competition and will be listed within their announcement. Skaters are responsible for registering directly with each Excel Series competition they wish to compete in.

Judging System:

In order for an event to be eligible to submit protocol/results sheets and receive standing and recognition:

- For all Excel "PLUS" levels, and_Juvenile through Senior levels, IJS scoring must be used. (Please refer to the Excel Program Technical Handbook for IJS guidelines for Excel events found here.)
- For Excel Beginner, High Beginner, Pre-Preliminary, Preliminary and Pre-Juvenile levels, either 6.0 or IJS scoring may be used.
- Choice of scoring is up to each individual LOC for each competition and not all competitions may offer IJS scoring. Please pay attention to each competition's announcement, for rules.

Protocol / Results Sheets Submission:

- For all competitions, a copy or photo of the protocol/results sheet must be sent along with the submission form here.
- All submissions must be received no later than 1 week after the end of the competition.

Awarding of Points for Recognition and Advancement

Points will be awarded by the U.S. Figure Skating Program Innovation Sub-committee as detailed below.

- Points will only be awarded to athletes who are registered for the Series. No points
 will be awarded to an athlete not registered as a participant in the Series by the
 entry deadline of the competition or by the May 2, 2021 Excel Series entry deadline,
 whichever is earlier.
- Skaters must participate in one live <u>or virtual</u>, U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned competition in order to have their points recognized. Skaters may enter and submit scores from any competition, anywhere in the country, whether or not they are designated as a series competition.

Excel Beginner, High Beginner, Pre-Preliminary, Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile:

For the above events, points will be awarded for each skater's top placement earned at any sanctioned live <u>or virtual</u> competition as follows: <u>1st place</u>, <u>8pts</u>; <u>2nd place</u>, <u>6pts</u>; <u>3rd place</u>, <u>4pts</u>; <u>4th place</u>, <u>3pts</u>; <u>5th place</u> and <u>below</u>, <u>2pts</u>.

Excel Preliminary Plus, Pre-Juvenile Plus, <u>Juvenile</u>, <u>Juvenile</u> Plus, <u>Intermediate</u>, <u>Intermediate</u> Plus, Novice, Junior & Senior

For the above events, each skater's top protocol score earned at any sanctioned live <u>or virtual</u> competition will be used.

Earning Series Awards, Recognition and Invitations

Excel Preliminary Plus, Pre-Juvenile Plus, Juvenile Plus, Intermediate Plus, Novice, Junior & Senior:

- Skaters may compete in as many competitions during the Series season as they desire, however, only the skater's top finish will be used towards their standings and recognition.
- Skaters must compete in at least one live <u>or virtual</u> U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned competition in order to be eligible to advance to the Live Excel Series Final and Finalists Camp and/or receive recognition during the 2021 Excel Virtual Festival.
- All athletes registered for the Excel Series will be eligible to participate in the 2021 Virtual Excel Festival in June 2021.
- If conditions allow for a live final to be held in August, a final decision about the number of athletes who will qualify will be made in conjunction with U.S. Figure Skating and the LOC, in accordance with state and local guidelines. Details will be announced on the U.S. Figure Skating website no later than June 15th.

Excel Beginner, High Beginner, Pre-Preliminary, Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile, Intermediate:

- Top points earners in each section will receive special recognition awards at the 2021 Excel Virtual Festival.
- Skaters may compete in as many competitions during the Series season as they desire, however, only the points earned from a skater's top finish at a live <u>or virtual</u> U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned competition will be used to compute their point total.
- If conditions allow for a live final to be held in August, all athletes who competed in one live, U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned competition will be invited to compete in the final.

Entries may be limited based in accordance with state and local guidelines. Details will be announced on the U.S. Figure Skating website no later than June 15th.

Excel Series 2021 FAQs

When should I register for the series?

If you choose to participate in the Excel Elements Challenge, you must register for the Excel Series prior to the event. If you choose to compete in a live event, where offered, you must register prior to competing in that event or by May 2, whichever is earlier. If you wish to join the Virtual Excel Final, you must register for the Excel Series by May 2.

Does registration for a live competition or the Excel Virtual Elements challenge automatically register me for the series?

No, you must register separately for the Excel Series.

Do I need to register for the Excel Series if I want to compete in the Virtual Elements Challenge? If you choose to participate in the Excel Elements Challenge, you must register for the Excel Series prior to the entry deadline.

Do I have to compete in the Excel Virtual Elements Challenge?

No, this event, hosted by the Colonial FSC, is being offered as a jump start event for the Excel Series. It is not required for participation in the series. Protocols from the Excel Virtual Elements Challenge will not be used for advancement to a live final, if it takes place.

Do I have to compete in a live competition?

Our primary concern is the health and safety of all of our athletes. No athlete will be required to attend a live competition to join the series and participate in the Virtual Excel Festival in June 2021. For qualification for the Final, either a live or virtual competition placement/score will be considered.

If the live competition(s) I entered are cancelled, can I receive a refund for the Series? Unfortunately, we will not be able to offer refunds for the series. Registration for the Series will include the registration fee for the Excel Virtual Festival as well as a t-shirt.

Will there be a separate registration fee for the Excel Virtual Final?

Registration for the 2021 Excel Series will include the registration fee for the Excel Virtual Festival as well as a t-shirt.

Can I change levels from the Excel Virtual Elements Challenge to the rest of the Series? Yes, skaters may participate at any level in the Virtual Elements Challenge as per the rules outlined in the announcement. This does not need to be the same level the skater registers in for the Excel Series.

Can I change levels during the series?

No, skaters may not change levels during the Excel Series. Skaters may register for the series at their current test level or may skate up one level. Those skaters who plan on testing during the course of the series are encouraged to skate up a level.

Who is invited to the Excel Virtual Festival?

All skaters who register for the Excel Series will be invited to participate in the Excel Virtual Festival.

Who will be invited to the Excel Live Final?

The top finishers by section from submitted protocols for all Excel Plus levels as well as Excel Novice-Senior will be invited to the Excel Live Festival, if it takes place. The exact number of finalists will depend on local and state guidelines and will be announced by June 15th.

All Excel Beginner, High Beginner, and Pre-Preliminary-Intermediate skaters who are registered for the series and submit a protocol/results sheet will be invited to the Excel Live Festival, if it takes place. The number or entries may be limited due to local and state guidelines and will be announced by June 15^{th} .

If the competition I am entering does not offer IJS, can I submit results?

For all Excel Plus levels as well as Excel Juvenile-Senior, only IJS protocols will be accepted. Skaters are welcome to compete at events which use the 6.0 judging system, but those events and scores will not count towards recognition and qualification to the live final, if it takes place.

For all Excel Beginner, High-Beginner, Pre-Preliminary, Preliminary, and Pre-Juvenile either IJS protocols or 6.0 results sheets will be accepted and will count towards standings and recognition.

Do I have to compete in an event designated as a series competition?

No, for the 2021 season, skaters may compete and submit a protocol/results sheet from **any** U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned competition which takes place between January 15th and July 4th.

Can I submit a protocol or score sheet from a virtual competition?

Yes, skaters can submit a protocol/results sheet from a virtual competition; note that the virtual competition must be sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating.

When will more information be available about the virtual final?

The Excel Virtual Final will take place in June 2021. It will be similar in scope to the Excel Virtual 2020 Final. Details on classes, specific dates and times will be announced by May 3rd.

When will the decision be made about the ability to hold a live final in August?

A final decision about the ability to hold a live final will be made in conjunction with U.S. Figure Skating and the LOC, in accordance with state and local guidelines. Details will be announced on the U.S. Figure Skating website no later than June 15th.

How many athletes will qualify for the live final in Excel Plus Levels and Excel Novice-Senior?

A final decision about the number of athletes who will qualify for a live final will be made in conjunction with U.S. Figure Skating and the LOC, in accordance with state and local guidelines. Details will be announced on the U.S. Figure Skating website no later than June 15th.

How many athletes will be able to compete in the live final in Excel Beginner, High-Beginner, Pre-Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile, and Intermediate

All Excel Beginner, High Beginner, and Pre-Preliminary-Intermediate skaters who are registered for the series and submit a protocol/results sheet will be invited to the Excel Live Festival, if it takes place. However, the number or entries may be limited due to local and state guidelines and will be announced by June 15th.

Will the live Excel Final include a festival as it did in 2019?

A final decision about the ability to hold a festival/camp and specific details will be made in conjunction with U.S. Figure Skating and the LOC, in accordance with state and local guidelines. Details will be announced on the U.S. Figure Skating website no later than June 15th.

How do I submit a protocol or score sheet?

For all competitions, a copy or photo of the protocol/results sheet must be submitted through this link.

All submissions must be received no later than one week after the end of the competition.

Where and when will standings be posted?

Results and standings will be posted at least twice per month beginning by April 1st on the Excel Page of the U.S. Figure Skating website.

Any additional questions, please email ExcelSeries@usfigureskating.org

Summary of Important Dates & Deadlines

January 15, 2021: Excel Series begins

February: Colonial FSC's Excel Virtual Elements Challenge

April 30, 2021: Details on Excel Virtual Festival announced

May 2, 2021: Deadline to register for the Excel Series.

June: Excel Virtual Festival

June 15, 2021: Decision on hosting a live Excel Final announced

July 4, 2021: Excel Series ends

Mid-August, 2021: Live Excel Final (if feasible)