

**Report of the International Group (Group 5)
2022 Board of Directors and Governing Council Meetings
April 2022**

International Group – Robert Horen, Group Coordinator and ISU Representative

International Committee	Laurie Johnson, Chair
Singles Subcommittee	Wendy Enzmann, National Vice Chair
Pairs Subcommittee	Tina Lundgren, National Vice Chair
Dance Subcommittee	Sharon Rogers, National Vice Chair
Synchronized Skating Subcommittee	Colette Nygren, National Vice Chair
International Coaches Subcommittee	Kelley Morris-Adair, National Vice Chair
International Officials Committee	Deveny Deck – Chair
International Selections Subcommittee	Debbie Currie, National Vice Chair
International Officials Management Subcommittee	Kevin Rosenstein, National Vice Chair

As coordinator for the International Group (IG) and ISU representative, I participate in the activities of all subcommittees in this group and have seen first-hand the work that has been done this season in adapting to the changing environment while preparing for major events and the 2022 Olympic Winter Games. It was a monumental task performed admirably by the IG team. The reports that follow will highlight the results of their work.

Many thanks to our partners in the U.S. Figure Skating High Performance Department — Mitch, Justin, Courtney, Ingrid and all of the team!

Below, you will find reports of activities from each of the chairs of the International Group committees and subcommittees.

International Committee – Laurie Johnson, Chair

We are fortunate enough to return to international competitions after a year of cancellations. However, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our athletes for a second season in a row. We had to react to the changing landscape of international competitions. The International Committee and our athletes needed to remain flexible and resilient, and adapt to the changing environment.

As a result, we have made several changes, moving athletes around as needed to offer opportunities for our top athletes to earn world standing points, and have criteria points for future considerations. Each discipline has done an excellent job adapting to the changing environment and remaining inclusionary, flexible, and motivating to our international athletes. Our athletes need to be commended for their resilience and flexibility when events were moved, canceled, or modified with little notice.

International competitions, events and camps for this season have been held virtually, canceled or postponed, or became ineligible, leaving our athletes with limited opportunities to compete for Team USA, earn world standing points, or obtain a minimum score. The international season started with several adjustments and exceptions being made.

- 1) Team USA Camps
 - a. Singles camp conducted virtually
 - b. Pairs camp conducted virtually
 - c. Dance camp conducted virtually
 - d. Champs Camp was held with COVID-19 restrictions
 - e. National High Performance Development Camp was held with COVID-19 restrictions
 - f. World Junior Team Selection Camp was held with COVID-19 restrictions
- 2) Junior Grand Prix (JGP)
 - a. JGP 2 was changed from Canada to remaining in Courchevel, France for a second week.
 - b. Russia was not allowed to enter JGP 1 or JGP 2 and therefore was allowed to increase their entries in JGP 3 and JGP 4
 - c. Korea was allowed to enter three ladies into JGP 2
 - d. Qualifications to the JGP Final were modified
 - e. Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final was canceled
 - f. World Junior Championships were recently rescheduled
- 3) Challenger Series (CS)
 - a. CS Nepala competition was canceled
 - b. CS Autumn Classic men's event did not qualify for international points, but the pairs event was added so the entire competition didn't lose eligibility
 - c. CS Asian Open competition became ineligible, and no disciplines qualified for international points

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- 4) Grand Prix (GP)
 - a. GP China was official moved to Italy
 - b. ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final was canceled

Two new international competitions were established in the United States, 2021 Cranberry Cup and 2021 John Nicks Pairs Challenge. The Cranberry Cup was held in Norwood, Massachusetts, and the John Nicks Pairs Challenge was held in New York, New York. With the cancelation of other events and the concern there might be even more cancellations later in the season, it was very helpful to our teams to have these two events available for points and readiness. Many junior and senior athletes/teams had an opportunity to compete in an international event and earn world standing points as well as a minimum score.

The **Junior Grand Prix** events have demonstrated continued improvements in our junior skaters/teams at these events both in placement and scores. Team USA won 17 medals this season (six gold, six silver and five bronze medals) in JGP events. Several skaters/teams qualified for the JGP Final: Lindsay Thorngren (junior women), Isabeau Levito (junior women), Illia Malilin (junior men), Wolfkostin/Chen (junior dance) and Brown/Brown (junior dance) but, unfortunately, this event was canceled due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions.

The **Challenger Series** events for this season have been a continued challenge as many events have been canceled or did not meet the necessary criteria to qualify as a challenger series, which left us having to continually move/switch skaters from assigned events, including the Asian Open 2022 Olympic Winter Games test event in Beijing, China. The International Committee decided to withdraw our entire delegation from Asian Open due to canceled flights, enhanced COVID-19 restrictions, event points ineligibility, officials' withdrawals, and the overall risk and safety of our delegation. Team USA won 16 medals this season (six gold, three silver and seven bronze) in Challenger Series events. Many of the athletes/teams earned points that will contribute to their world standings for next season.

The **Grand Prix** events also produced a high medal count for our senior skaters/teams, with Team USA winning 12 medals this season (three gold, five silver and four bronze). Several skaters/teams qualified for the Grand Prix Final: Nathan Chen (senior men), Jason Brown (senior men), Vincent Zhou (senior men), Hubbell/Donohue (senior dance) and Chock/Bates (senior dance) but, unfortunately, this event was canceled due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions.

The **ISU Four Continents Championships** was another event in which the venue location changed. This event was moved to Tallinn, Estonia. Team USA won four medals (two gold, one silver and one bronze). A newly formed dance team (Bratti/Somerville) placed fifth in only their third international event.

The **2022 Olympic Winter Games** were truly unforgettable! The United States had our biggest figure skating delegation at the Olympic Winter Games since 2006 with three women, three men, three dance teams and two pairs teams. We continue to show improvement and growth in the placements and scores of our athletes/teams. Nathan Chen earned the GOLD medal and had the highest score ever recorded. Hubbell/Donohue had very strong performances which earned them the BRONZE medal. Chock/Bates (4), Jason Brown (6), Alysa Liu (7), Mariah Bell (10), and Hawayek/Baker (11) all had top 11 finishes. Our pair teams of Knierim/Frazier and Cain-Gribble/LeDuc both had a top eight finishes for the first time since 1998. Vincent Zhou unfortunately had to withdraw from the men's singles event after testing positive for COVID-19 but was able to participate in the team event, which also included Karen Chen in the women's discipline and Chock/Bates in the dance discipline, helping Team USA earn the SILVER medal.

The **2022 World Figure Skating Championships** is scheduled for March 21-27, 2022, in Montpellier, France. We are looking forward to a successful event which will secure our World Championships berths for next season. Leading this charge will be three men (Nathan Chen, Ilia Malinin and Vincent Zhou), three women (Mariah Bell, Karen Chen and Alysa Liu), two pair teams (Ashley Cain-Gribble/Timothy LeDue and Alexa Scimeca Knierim/Brandon Frazier), and three dance teams (Madison Chock/Evan Bates, Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker, and Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue).

Synchronized Skating

This committee has devoted itself to creating the fairest way for synchronized teams to qualify for the International Selection Pool (ISP) and Team USA. They divided the international competitions into three tiers, with Challenger Series events at the top, and decided not to send any teams out before the start of 2020. They decided to require any junior or senior team interested in competing internationally to attend two of three specific competitions (one in the East, one in the Midwest and one in the Pacific Coast). Committee members helped outline the target scores to be achieved by junior or senior teams at these specific events.

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If a team achieves their target number at their first event, they will be given competition preference; however, they will still be required to attend the second competition.

The new required competitions rule and target scores were very well received by the coaches and teams. Many have reached out to express their gratitude for the concrete numbers and expectations we have imposed. It helped motivate the teams and coaches this season as they had opportunity to go head-to-head domestically. They had clear and objective goals to be attained for international assignment selections.

Mentor teams have been working closely (and remotely) with the synchronized teams to support them in the best way possible. The program is coach-driven, so the process in which everyone works together is slightly different but is tailored to the team's goals and direction. This program has become very popular. Junior and senior teams submitted videos to their "Check Point Teams" and in turn the received feedback on any technical issues as well as a judge's point of view.

The synchronized skating teams have had their share of COVID-19 obstacles. Initially the committee planned to select more than one team to events, send team leaders and team doctors to attend several international competitions, and to send teams out to more than one competition. Unfortunately, as the season just started to begin, the events started to unravel. Three long-standing competitions (Zagreb, Italy, and Sweden) were canceled due to COVID-19, and three of our senior teams were unable to travel internationally. Fortunately, 11 teams were able to attend competitions in Poland, the Netherlands, Austria, France and Switzerland. We completed the international season with seven medals: two gold, four silver, and three bronze.

The committee has selected the 2022 World Junior Team (Teams Elite and Skyliners). They will be competing at the 2022 ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships in Innsbruck, Austria (March 17-19). The 2022 ISU World Synchronized Skating Championship will be in Hamilton, Ontario (April 7-9). Teams will be selected at the conclusion of our 2022 U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships in Colorado Springs, Colorado (March 2-5).

International Coaches Subcommittee – Kelley Morris-Adair, National Vice Chair

The International Coaches Subcommittee functions as an advisory committee that serves coaches and provides input to the International Committee and International Working Group. Their goal is to create a platform where coaches can have open and confidential discussions about international selections, provide input for all events and camps, and relate any issues or challenges coaches might be facing. Their main objective is to build a community of coaches who can come together and support one another while developing top athletes.

This is the fourth year for this subcommittee, and it has been another extraordinary one as the country dealt with the Omicron breakout while heading into the qualifying season. Coaches continued to work incredibly hard to keep athletes and parents engaged in the sport. Many coaches and athletes were extremely grateful to be able to take advantage of several in-person events. The feedback was phenomenal.

I continue to participate on a weekly Zoom call with the International Group. This season was filled with all things Olympic Games. Revisions of policies and plans were reviewed and discussed weekly. This subcommittee will continue to develop the platform to be a helpful resource for the International Committee and for ISP coaches.

Current members serving this subcommittee:

- Singles – Kirsten Miller-Zisholz
- Pairs – Kyoko Ina
- Dance – Kelley Morris-Adair
- Synchro – Saga Krantz
- Athlete – Marissa Castelli
- Athlete – Caroline Zhang
- Laurie Johnson, Oversight

I continue strong communication with the Coaches Committee chair, Phillip DiGuglielmo. His committee is full of knowledgeable coaches out in the field of play, and it is very helpful to have their input. I think it would be beneficial to have the International Coaches Subcommittee selected from the active Coaches Committee members. The subcommittee disciplines would be represented by the highest qualified coaches possible for important discussions and input. This would enable a more cohesive communication plan without duplicating services.

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Per rule ICR 3.03, the responsibilities of the International Coaches Subcommittee (ICS) are:

- To provide input to the International Committee to develop strategies for success in international competitions.
- To serve as a resource for each of the discipline subcommittees, in carrying out their duties as defined by ICR 3.01 (C).
 1. This may include members voting on specific matters relating to duties defined by ICR 3.01 (C).
 2. In the case where an official vote is required, and there is more than one coach member in that discipline, the vice chair of the International Coaches Subcommittee will select the member to represent the International Coaches Subcommittee.
- Recognize coaching accomplishments in partnership with the PSA through annual awards and other methods, with regards to coaches at the senior and international levels.

We are a coach's advisory committee that is here to serve coaches and provide input to the International Group. Our goal is to create a platform where coaches can have open discussions about international selections, input to the Athlete High Performance Department, feedback for all events and camps, and any issues or challenges coaches might be facing. Our main objective is to build a community of coaching relationships that can come together and support one another and keep the United States developing top athletes! Congratulations to the entire U.S. Figure Skating team, committee members, coaches and athletes for a wonderful and heart-warming Olympic experience!

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all the discipline subcommittee vice chairs and members for all their hard work. They have done an amazing job throughout this season, and I could not have done it without them. Many thanks to Bob Horen, International Group coordinator, as well as Athlete High Performance staff: Mitch Moyer, Justin Dillon, Courtney Burson and Ingrid Benson for their guidance and continued support throughout this season. This season was successful due to the cohesive structure the International Committee has established with the Athlete High Performance Department. It is a privilege and honor to have served in this position.

International Officials Committee – Deveny Deck, Chair

The International Officials Committee is comprised of two subcommittees: the International Officials Management Subcommittee and the International Officials Selections Subcommittee. We are moving forward with the implementation of a third subcommittee; the International Team Leaders Subcommittee, which will focus on training, feedback and recruitment of team leaders. A vice chair and subcommittee members will be appointed later this spring. The selection of team leaders to specific events will remain the responsibility of the International Selections Subcommittee.

With the reactivation of the international competitive season, the work of the International Officials Committee has been steady and productive. Our international officials attended more than 35 international competitions representing all disciplines (singles, pairs, ice dance and synchronized skating) during the 2021-22 season. We are grateful for their service, especially when officials stepped up to fill vacancies with little notice.

The USA delegation successfully represented our country at the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, Beijing, China. Under the most challenging circumstances, including a strict COVID-19 bubble environment, onerous testing protocols and intense media scrutiny, our officials served with the highest level of professionalism and effectiveness: Team Managers Kathaleen Cutone and Deveny Deck; judge of the pairs events, Peggy Graham; judge of the women's events, Tina Lundgren; judge of the ice dance events, Jenny Mast; and technical specialist for the pairs events, Troy Goldstein. Moreover, our athletes made us proud on and off the ice with their performances, grace and integrity.

Because of the lack of international competitions over the past two years, there will continue to be challenges getting our officials the activity required to maintain their appointments and/or test for promotion. The ISU has indicated that no one will be demoted for lack of activity, but it may be more problematic for those officials who need specific activity to test for promotion.

We have continued our practice of weekly calls with other members of the international team: Peggy Graham (past chair, international officials), headquarters staff (Mitch Moyer, Ingrid Benson, Juliet Newcomer and Courtney Burson), Bob Horen (ISU representative and International Group coordinator), Sam Auxier and Laurie Johnson (past and current chairs of the International Committee), Kelley Morris-Adair (national vice chair of the International Coaches Subcommittee) and athlete representatives rotation including Rachael Flatt (chair of the Athletes Advisory Committee).

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The 2021-22 international competitive season has been a successful reality for our officials, athletes and Team USA. The teamwork of vice chairs Kevin Rosenstein and Debbie Currie, the headquarters support of Juliet Newcomer, and the leadership of International Group Coordinator Bob Horen have been invaluable as we navigated the unexpected challenges of the season.

International Officials Selections – Debbie Currie, National Vice Chair

In the new year we have had several changes in officials and team leaders assignments due to various reasons. We continue to monitor and, fortunately, we have been able to fill vacated assignments with officials and team leaders who have had flexible schedules. Several have stepped in at the last minute. We have been fortunate to have Juliet Newcomer and Courtney Burson assist us, especially with all the changes we have had this past year. We can't thank them enough for their hard work and dedication.

International Officials Management – Kevin Rosenstein, National Vice Chair

The International Officials Management Subcommittee (IOMS) is primarily involved in monitoring, educating, and promoting or removing officials at the international level. Although still impacted by COVID-19, opportunities to test, recertify, and gain activity have increased since the last report.

Promotions

Earlier this year, IOMS recommended and the Board of Directors approved submitting applications for Kathaleen Cutone and Stefanie Mathewson to take the ISU judges examination in single and pair skating. As is long-standing tradition, the exam was held in person in Oberstdorf, Germany, during the Nebelhorn Trophy. Both Kathaleen and Stefanie passed their exams, and IOMS congratulates them both on their promotions.

While the ISU traditionally holds its Global Seminar each July in Frankfurt for all other promotions and recertifications, testing was moved online and done virtually this year due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

During odd-numbered years, the Global Seminar provides opportunities for referees to test for initial appointments as international referees and promotions to the ISU referee role, while judges test for their international appointments. Because the Global Seminar had been canceled in 2020, there was some expectation that the ISU might include technical panel promotions this year. However, the ISU returned to its standard rotation. IOMS is carefully monitoring guidance from the ISU about activity to ensure that all our officials are maintaining their required activity level for recertification and testing in the future.

Based on IOMS recommendation, the Board of Directors approved Peggy Graham to apply to take the promotional exam to become an ISU referee in singles and pair skating. Peggy passed her exam, and IOMS congratulates her for her promotion.

Kathaleen Cutone was recommended and approved to test for her international ice dance referee appointment. She passed her exam, and IOMS congratulates her for her promotion (and tenacity for a two-exam season).

Eric Hampton was recommended and approved to test for his international single and pair skating judge exam. Eric passed his exam, and IOMS congratulates him on his promotion.

Recertification and Continuing Education

After canceling the Global Seminar, the ISU migrated the recertification process online. Through the dedication of our officials and with support from Juliet Newcomer, all our officials completed their recertifications.

For judges, the ISU provided an option for a one-year "bridge" online educational training since most in-person seminars had been canceled. IOMS, with Juliet, worked to make sure that all current judges took the online course. Given the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, IOMS wanted to ensure that our judges were taking advantage of every opportunity to document their continuing education.

Pipeline

In early spring, IOMS solicited interest of all national singles/pairs judges under 50. Twenty current judges replied expressing their interest. IOMS is currently working on evaluating the number of judges that we anticipate needing to meet our commitments and to maintain the needed activity levels over the next five years. In parallel, we are developing our list of criteria against which to evaluate the candidates.

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As a part of the pipeline discussion, we have started to speak to our dance community about potential candidates to move into international roles. Currently, there is a very limited pipeline of domestic candidates, jeopardizing the pipeline at the international level. We request and encourage a larger strategic initiative around the recruitment, promotion and retention of dance judges.

It has been an honor to serve as vice chair of the International Officials Management Subcommittee. As always, none of the work of the subcommittee could be accomplished without the amazing support of headquarters staff, especially Juliet this year, and the leadership and guidance provided by Deveny and Bob.

ISU Representative – Robert Horen

This has been the year of planning, reviewing and then re-planning as conditions change. As we entered season 2021-22, we were hoping that conditions would allow us to return to a more normal competition season. Training had returned to a more normal state as skaters prepared for the season. But, as we all know, the best laid plans...

From the ISU:

The Junior Grand Prix was held with one change of venue, and JGP 1 and JGP 2 were both held in Courcheval, France. The Senior Grand Prix had one change of venue also — from China to Italy — and the six competitions went as planned otherwise. Unfortunately, the Grand Prix Final and Junior Grand Prix Final could not be held in Japan and, with the tight schedule, were canceled. The Challenger Series events went on for the most part with a few cancellations and some issues regarding minimum numbers of entries. Four Continents was held, but in a new location at the same venue as Europeans.

The 2022 Olympic Winter Games were successfully held in the Beijing “bubble”, and I am sure that everyone is aware of the successes of Team USA. Congratulations to our medal winners and to all of the outstanding competitors. We now look forward to the ISU World Figure Skating and World Junior Figure Skating Championships.

Synchronized skating also experienced similar changes, and our own competition had to be canceled because of not having minimum entries. However, many international competitions are continuing, and our teams have been quite successful.

Unfortunately, many of the changes have affected our skaters’ ability to compete and earn the points needed to gain in the rankings. This is exacerbated because of cancellations, travel and the fact that most of the competitions are in Europe.

We are now beginning the planning for the season 2022-23. The 2022 ISU Congress is scheduled to be held in June, and there are some significant changes proposed. The final proposals and agenda will be posted on the ISU website on April 30. The Senior Grand Prix draw for entries will also be held in June.

As we enter a new quad, there will be more changes, and the work for the International Committee and International Officials Committee will meet the challenges of the new season. It has been my honor to be the ISU representative during these “most interesting” times.