

Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy for Officials



For the 2023-24 Season

Scope and Modification

Officials subject to this policy include members delineated in rule DOR 1.00.
U.S. Figure Skating reserves the right to modify this policy at any time.

Officials Creed Standard of Conduct

The Officials Creed Standard of Conduct outlined in rule DOR 2.00 is established for the guidance of all officials.

Policy – All Officials

- 1) I agree to comply with the bylaws, rules, standards, codes and policies of U.S. Figure Skating as delineated in rule DOR 2.03.
- 2) I will demonstrate the highest standards of accountability, fairness, honesty, integrity, inclusion, respect, and truthfulness.
- 3) I will always conduct myself with independence and neutrality.
- 4) I will show no favoritism for, or prejudice against, individuals involved in U.S. Figure Skating.
- 5) I agree that my conduct and feedback should generate confidence and trust.
- 6) I agree that U.S. Figure Skating properties, funds, services, and influence, including, but not limited to, any use of my position or identity as an individual certified by U.S. Figure Skating to officiate, are not to be appropriated or misused for my personal gain.
- 7) I agree that all activities of U.S. Figure Skating are to be conducted in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- 8) I agree not to accept payments, favors, and/or other benefits for my participation in any U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events and activities except for nominal gifts that meet applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations. This includes, but is not limited to feedback, monitoring, Coach Connect, etc.
- 9) I understand that expenses authorized and incurred in the performance of U.S. Figure Skating business will be reimbursed according to the U.S. Figure Skating Travel and Expense Policy.
- 10) I understand that my failure to abide by this Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy for Officials may result in my suspension, or may forever exclude me, from all U.S. Figure Skating activities.

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Conflict of Interest – All Officials

- 1) Officials may employ coaches for lessons for themselves or their family members. This does not necessarily create a conflict of interest even though there is a tangible financial benefit.

Additionally, this does not create a conflict for the official to evaluate other students of the coach. However, it is incumbent on each official to use their discretion and to notify the chief referee or test chair of the event in question.

- 2) If I am a coach or parent of a skater/team competing in a competition where I am also assigned as an official, I will avoid entering the officials' room for at least one hour before and at least one hour after the event in which my skater/team is competing unless it is necessary due to my officiating responsibilities.

Conflict of Interest – Coach Certified as a Test Judge

- 1) A conflict of interest exists when I (or my parent, sibling, child, spouse, skating or life partner) have accepted any payment during the past 12 months for coaching a test candidate.

Other conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

- a) Teaching/coaching/consulting for test candidates, either privately or semi-private (including e-classes), in but not limited to choreography, ballet, gymnastics, ballroom dancing, and/or physical fitness within the past 12 months.
- b) A coach conducting a seminar for which payment was given within the past 12 months. Following the seminar, the coach is required to disclose the names of all participants, as conflicts of interest, for 12 months.
- c) Commercial ventures that may suggest or have an appearance of a conflict such as sharpening skates, selling boots and/or blades, designing and/or making costumes, or providing financial support to athletes within the past 12 months. (See rule PSER 4.70 - Eligibility Classification Table.)
- d) Being the relative of a test candidate or being the relative of a test candidate's coach.
- e) Skating as a partner and/or teammate of a test candidate within the past 12 months.
- f) Serving as a team manager of a synchronized skating team within the past 12 months.
- g) An indirect conflict of interest could exist through any personal or financial relationship that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

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- 2) I will disclose all conflicts of interest to the test chair when accepting an invitation to officiate at a test session. If a conflict is discovered after the invitation has been accepted, I will notify the test chair.
- 3) If I discover a conflict or possible conflict while at a test session, I will notify the test chair and the judge-in-charge.

After disclosure, if the test chair and judge-in-charge agree that a conflict exists, I will remove myself from officiating on that test.

If those individuals do not agree, the judge-in-charge will make the final decision.

- 4) Coaches who are certified as test judges:
 - a) may only serve as a one-judge minority of a three-judge panel;
 - b) cannot serve as a single-judge panel; and
 - c) cannot judge competitions with the exception of Compete USA competitions.

Conflict of Interest – Judge, Referee, <u>Technical Controller</u> and/or Accountant

- 1) I will not officiate as a judge, referee, technical controller and/or accountant in any U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events if I am coaching figure skating, except for instruction of skaters who have not passed any U.S. Figure Skating tests.

Such instruction must be as part of a learn-to-skate or Learn to Skate USA group lesson program and cannot include private lessons.

- 2) I will not officiate as a judge, referee, technical controller and/or accountant on U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events in which I may have a conflict of interest or the appearance of a possible conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

- a) Teaching/coaching/consulting for test candidates and/or competitors, either privately or semi-privately (including e-classes), in but not limited to choreography, ballet, gymnastics, ballroom dancing, and/or physical fitness within the past 12 months.
- b) Commercial ventures that may suggest or have an appearance of a conflict such as sharpening skates, selling boots and/or blades, designing and/or making costumes, or providing financial support to athletes within the past 12 months. (See rule PSER 4.70 - Eligibility Classification Table.)
- c) Being the relative of a test candidate or competitor or being the relative of a test candidate's coach or competitor's coach.

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- d) Serving on events in which I may be competing later in the season.
 - e) Skating as a partner and/or teammate of a test candidate or competitor within the past 12 months.
 - f) Serving as a team manager of a synchronized skating team within the past 12 months.
 - g) An indirect conflict of interest could exist through any personal or financial relationship that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.
- 3) For qualifying events (including National Qualifying Series events at nonqualifying competitions), I will not participate in the entirety of any event in which I have a conflict of interest in any portion of the event (i.e., conflict in intermediate women free skate group A would prohibit an official from officiating in any other intermediate women's groups and/or final rounds at that respective competition).
 - 4) I will disclose all conflicts of interest to the LOC when accepting an invitation to officiate at a nonqualifying competition. If a conflict is discovered after the invitation has been accepted, I will notify the chief referee.
 - 5) I will disclose all conflicts of interest when submitting my availability to officiate at qualifying competitions. If a conflict is discovered after I have been assigned to a qualifying competition, I will notify the chair of the Domestic Selections Committee.
 - 6) If I discover a conflict of interest or possible conflict while at a competition, I will notify the chief referee.

Conflict of Interest – Technical Specialist, Data Operator and/or Video Operator

- 1) A conflict of interest exists when I (or my parent, sibling, child, spouse, skating or life partner) have accepted any payment during the past 12 months for coaching a competitor.

Other conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

- a) Teaching/coaching/consulting for competitors, either privately or semi-privately (including e-classes), in but not limited to choreography, ballet, gymnastics, ballroom dancing, and/or physical fitness within the past 12 months.
- b) A coach who is also certified as a technical panel official conducting a seminar for which payment was given within the past 12 months. Following the seminar, the coach is required to disclose the names of all participants, as conflicts of interest, on all competition availability forms for 12 months.
- c) Commercial ventures that may suggest or have an appearance of a conflict such as sharpening skates, selling boots and/or blades, designing and/or making costumes, or

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providing financial support to athletes within the past 12 months. (See rule PSER 4.70 - Eligibility Classification Table.)

- d) Being the relative of a competitor or being the relative of a competitor's coach.
 - e) Serving on events in which I may be competing later in the season.
 - f) Skating as a partner and/or teammate of a competitor within the past 12 months.
 - g) Serving as a team manager of a synchronized skating team within the past 12 months.
 - h) An indirect conflict of interest could exist through any personal or financial relationship that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.
- 2) For qualifying events (including National Qualifying Series events at nonqualifying competitions), I will not participate in the entirety of any event in which I have a conflict of interest in any portion of the event (i.e., conflict in intermediate women free skate group A would prohibit an official from officiating in any other intermediate women's groups and/or final rounds at that respective competition).
- 3) I will disclose all conflicts of interest to the LOC when accepting an invitation to officiate at a nonqualifying competition. If a conflict is discovered after the invitation has been accepted, I will notify the chief referee.
- 4) I will disclose all conflicts of interest when submitting my availability to officiate at qualifying competitions. If a conflict is discovered after I have been assigned to a qualifying competition, I will notify the technical panel captain, (if known), and the chair of the Domestic Selections Committee.
- 5) If I discover a conflict of interest or possible conflict while at a competition, I will notify the technical panel captain (if applicable), technical controller of the event, and chief referee.

After disclosure, if the technical panel captain (if applicable), technical controller of the event, and chief referee agree that a conflict exists, I will remove myself from officiating on that event.

If those officials do not agree, the chief referee will make the final decision.

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Procedure for Selection at U.S. Championships – Technical Panel Officials

- Assigned technical panel officials are not allowed to serve as a coach for any event.
- Assigned members of the technical panel may only serve as an official.

Applies to:

U.S. Figure Skating Championships
U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships
U.S. Collegiate Figure Skating Championships
U.S. Adult Figure Skating Championships

(See rule 2100 – Qualifying Competitions – Officials – and rule 3030 – Nonqualifying Competitions – Officials.)

Feedback/Monitoring/Coach Connect – All Officials

Feedback

If feedback is requested from an official, which is NOT linked to a recent competition and/or test session in which the official had officiated on the skater's/team's events and/or tests, then the below embargo periods apply for future events.

Feedback Embargo Periods for Officials

Event	Officials
Test (in-person and virtual)	15 days prior to the start date of the test session
Nonqualifying	15 days prior to the start date of the competition
Qualifying (including NQS events)	30 days prior to the start date of the competition
Championship	30 days prior to the start date of the competition

- The embargo periods apply within the respective discipline only.
 - For example, a judge may give feedback to a synchronized skating team and then judge the singles/pairs/dance test of a member of that synchronized skating team within the 15-day embargo period.
- See National Qualifying Series Handbook for particulars regarding feedback for National Qualifying Series designated events.
- See Virtual Test Guidelines document for particulars regarding judge guidelines for virtual tests.
- Any questions regarding technical levels awarded at an event must be directed to the technical controller of the event. Unless directed by the technical controller, it is not appropriate for any other member on the technical panel to provide this information.

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- Feedback can be given after any event segment ONLY at nonqualifying competitions (excluding National Qualifying Series events at nonqualifying competitions) if the feedback is available to all skaters/teams in that event (even if the feedback requires additional fees).
- If feedback is not available to all skaters/teams, it is not appropriate for a judge nor the technical controller (nor his/her designee) to give feedback, until ALL event segments are concluded.
- Officials who are assigned to U.S. Figure Skating Championships, U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships and/or the U.S. Adult Figure Skating Championships are advised to not go beyond commenting on the sectional singles final/U.S. Pairs Final/U.S. Ice Dance Final/synchronized skating sectional championship/adult sectional championship performances and marks (i.e., officials should not speculate/advise on how skaters/teams might make refinements, review videos of potential improvements, etc.).

Monitoring

A session for evaluation for International Selection Pool (ISP) consideration or general international readiness.

- Officials may monitor (including correspondence) skaters/teams despite the aforementioned feedback embargo periods, if the monitoring is requested by the International Committee or any of its subcommittees.

Coach Connect

An invitation-only program managed by U.S. Figure Skating pairing coaches with officials for mentoring.

- Officials may participate in Coach Connect (including correspondence) despite the aforementioned feedback embargo periods. (including National Qualifying Series events)
- However, the feedback embargo periods WILL apply for the sectional singles final/U.S. Pairs Final/U.S. Ice Dance Final/synchronized skating sectional championship/U.S. Figure Skating Championships/U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships.

<h2>Officials as Paid Employees of U.S. Figure Skating</h2>
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Officials may be paid employees of U.S. Figure Skating.

However, any paid employee of U.S. Figure Skating who has direct or indirect responsibilities for the direction, selection, and/or management of athletes is prohibited from officiating as an official.

Reporting

Where can I report a violation?

- <https://www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe>
- Click on “Report A Concern To U.S. Figure Skating” to access the i-sight online reporting form.

If filing an anonymous complaint, please ensure all relevant information is included in the report as the recipient of the report will not have your contact information to ask additional questions.