



**2022-2023 NATIONAL QUALIFYING SEASON  
SERIES LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (LOC)  
HANDBOOK & REQUIREMENTS TO HOST  
NATIONAL QUALIFYING SEASON TIMELINE**

Feb. 4 - Feb. 25 → Series LOC Application & Final Bids Open  
Feb. 23 - Mar. 11 → Review Period

Mar. 15 → Announce National Qualifying Season Hosts

June 1 - July 15 → NQS Skater Application (i.e. Qualifying Registration)

Mid-July - First Weekend of Oct. → Approved Series Competitions

Early Oct. → Qualifying Advancement

Nov. 2022 → Sectional Singles, U.S. Pairs & U.S. Ice Dance Finals

January 2023 → U.S. Championships & National Dev. Camp

**CONTACT**

U.S. Figure Skating's Events Department

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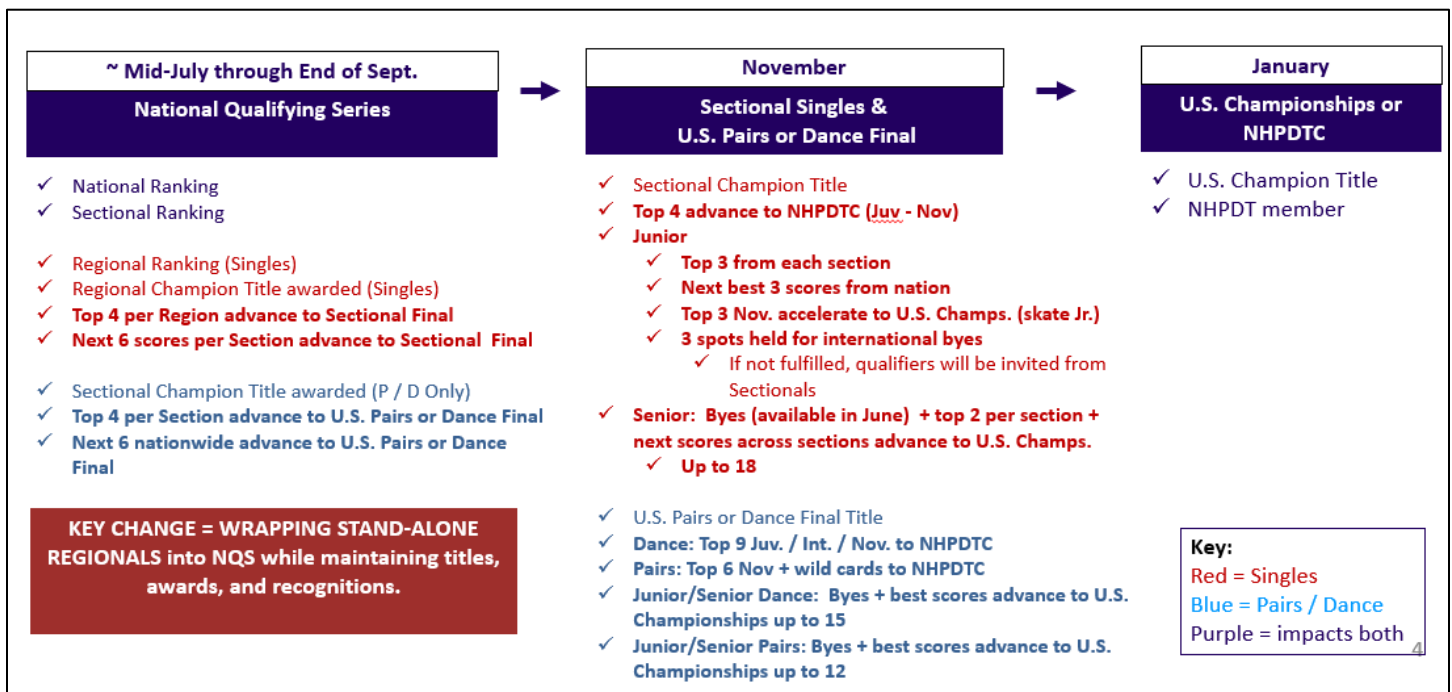
# OVERVIEW

The U.S. Figure Skating National Qualifying Series (NQS) was approved by the 2018 Governing Council and implemented in the summer of 2019. The NQS is a series of competitions hosted individually by member clubs nationwide, during the summer months, in which athletes enter and earn a score. They will earn a placement in the individual competition they enter, and an overall national ranking in their level, in addition to a regional and sectional ranking.

For the 2022-2023 season, the Competitions Committee has proposed a National Qualifying Season combining the stand-alone October qualifying competitions, Regional (singles) and Sectional (pairs and ice dance) Challenges, into series competitions from mid-July to early October allowing athletes to advance to the Sectional Singles, U.S. Pairs and U.S. Ice Dance Finals in November 2022 and culminating with the 2023 Toyota U.S. Figure Skating Championships and National Development Camp in January 2023.

If interested in bidding on the November Finals, click [HERE](#) for more information.

## 2022-2023 NATIONAL QUALIFYING SEASON



The series competitions will consist of existing non-qualifying competitions that agree to a set of standards and requirements relating to registration process, scoring system, conduct of competition and officials for qualifying levels (Juvenile - Senior) from mid-July through the first weekend of October. Any U.S. Figure Skating member club that is hosting a non-qualifying competition during this timeline may apply to be part of the series. These requirements ensure a standard, consistent and fair experience for participation athletes.

Athletes at the qualifying levels (Juvenile - Senior) will register directly with U.S. Figure Skating for the qualifying season from June 1 through July 15 (tentative and subject to change) and then select the series events they wish to participate in. There is no maximum number of competitions an athlete/team can register for. All athletes/teams are encouraged to register for at least ONE approved series competition to post a score regardless of bye status. Athletes may enter any approved competition in any geographic location. Only the athlete/team's highest score will count towards their regional, sectional, and national ranking, and dictate advancement to the Finals in November.

There will be a separate series for Singles, Pairs and Ice Dance. The host club may designate which discipline (Singles, Pairs, Ice Dance) they would like to host within their [EMS Series Application](#) and are responsible only for meeting the standards in that discipline. They may apply for one, two or all three disciplines.

**Please note, detailed athlete information for the 2022-23 National Qualifying Season will be available at the end of March.**

*This composition of the qualifying season (i.e. merging stand-alone Regional Singles/Sectional Pairs and Ice Dance Challenges into the Series competitions) is contingent on approval at the 2022 U.S. Figure Skating Governing Council. If this proposal does not pass, the qualifying season will be conducted in accordance with the [2021-22 U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook](#), including an updated NQS series timeline and selecting hosts for the Regional Singles and Sectional Pairs and Ice Dance Challenges in October 2022.*

## REQUIREMENTS TO HOST

U.S. Figure Skating is the national governing body (NGB) for the sport of figure skating, as recognized by the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). To maintain our certification as an NGB, U.S. Figure Skating is required to comply with the USOPC certification program.

Beginning January 1, 2022, part of the NGB Compliance Standards include U.S. Figure Skating's oversight of event sanctioning, and specifically that competitions must follow the appropriate NGB's standards for qualified officials, the provision of recording of appropriate records, have proper medical supervision for all participating athletes and that all policies, and requirements of the U.S. Center for SafeSport are followed.

**All these standards are outlined in this document to host. U.S. Figure Skating and the U.S. Center for SafeSport reserves the right to audit any competition within the National Qualifying Season for their compliance with these standards. LOCs that fail to implement one or more of these standards may lose their privilege of hosting a sanctioned event.**

## SKATESAFE COMPLIANCE

In accordance with federal law, specifically S.534 - Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017, U.S. Figure Skating, as a National Governing Body, and all member figure skating clubs, as Local Affiliated Organizations, are under the jurisdiction of

the U.S. Center for SafeSport. All sanctioned events must comply with U.S. Figure Skating's SkateSafe policies. This includes:

- Identifying a Compliance Chair that has passed a U.S. Figure Skating background check and completed the SafeSport™ Training ("compliant") and strictly complying with U.S. Figure Skating's SkateSafe Policies and Compliance Requirements
- Enforcing Participant Compliance
  - Mandatory Athletes, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers, Event Medical and LOC Leadership
    - Required volunteer positions include locker room monitors and event medical staff

U.S. Figure Skating's [SkateSafe Handbook](#) outlines all rules and policies regarding athlete protection that are in accordance with the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC).

## EVENT MEDICAL COVERAGE

Approved event medical coverage is required for ALL competitive events at approved NQS events (not just Juvenile - Senior). There must be a minimum of ONE compliant medical professional/volunteer rink side for each competition surface.

Event medical teams may consist of athletic trainers (ATC), licensed physicians (MD/DO), physician assistants (PA-C), nurse practitioners (NP), nurses (RN), chiropractors (DC), physical therapists (PT), and emergency medical technicians (EMT).

All approved season competitions will be required to submit an event medical plan no less than 30 days prior to the start of their competition to outline event medical coverage, emergency action plans and COVID-19 protocols. *A sample plan will be provided by U.S. Figure Skating in conjunction with approved competition award documentation in mid-March.* Review the U.S. Figure Skating [Medical Standard of Care Guidelines](#) for additional information.

## CALENDAR/SCHEDULE

Approved NQS competitions must begin mid-July and conclude by the first weekend of October 2022.

Prior to submitting your Series Application via [EMS](#), you must verify your competition dates with your Regional Vice Chair (RVC) on the Competitions Committee.

There are no restrictions regarding the actual competition scheduling during the event. The Chief Referee will determine the competition schedule within the scope of the overall NQS requirements as listed within.

## EVENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS)

All NQS competitions must use [EMS](#) for registration and event management (free of charge).

Athletes first register to participate in the National Qualifying Season via [EMS](#), from June 1 through July 15 (subject to change), and pay an entry fee of \$35.00, which will be used to administer and support the series.

Athletes must then register separately and directly for each competition they wish to enter, via [EMS](#) (competitions are flagged if they are approved for the series). Host clubs set and receive all entry fees and practice ice fees for their competition; these fees are established by the competition and are not subject to approval by U.S. Figure Skating. **LOCs set and manage the entry deadlines and applicable late fees for their competitions.**

In addition to the entry and results transmittal, [EMS](#) provides host competitions with the following tools to manage their event, ensuring all U.S. Figure Skating rules and policies are met:

**EMS Digital Leaderboard**: the host club, and their Chief Accountant/Technical Accountant are responsible for uploading the competition (IJS) results to EMS at the conclusion of the competition. EMS (via Series Information) will host and maintain the NQS digital leaderboard for the length of the series.

- [See example from 2022 U.S. Figure Skating Champ. Series presented by Toyota](#)

**System Compliance**: connectivity to the U.S. Figure Skating database allowing the LOC to monitor and enforce requirements automatically for LOC leadership, coaches, officials, mandatory athletes, and volunteers automatically, pre-event and onsite via the [Onsite Check-In](#) tools.

**Officials' Management**: automatically verifies officials' eligibility through database search function, invites them to your competition and allows you to track and communicate with the group. Note: all LOCs are required to load an "accepted" official's list no later than 30 days prior to the start of competition to ensure NQS requirements are met.

**Financial**: budget module and reports support the LOC in planning, tracking and settlement of finances. All entry fees and practice ice fees are processed by U.S. Figure Skating and remitted to the LOC on a weekly basis via ACH deposit.

**Credentials**: a credential print portal, attached to the member database, allows LOCs to print credentials quickly for everyone associated with the competition, with a standard look and feel providing a consistent experience for all.

**Schedule & Practice Ice**: creation and publication of full competition schedule, sale of practice ice through customizable pathways (pre-purchase, open and onsite sales) with emphasis on mobile experience for athlete and coach.

## JUDGING SYSTEM

As stated in the [U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook](#), rule 1232, the official calculation software with the latest related version of the software and the official judging system hardware must be used. Hardware can be supplied by U.S. Figure Skating (reservation form [here](#)) or an approved third party system, full list [here](#) (see "List of Private Owners). This ensures consistency across all competitions and a timely and accurate publication of current standings via [EMS](#).

## OFFICIALS

The host competition will select their panel of officials, in cooperation with U.S. Figure Skating's Domestic Selections Committee. For the official series events, the following is required:

Referee → Chief Referee must be at the Regional level or higher.

- If Ice Dance, the Dance Referee must be at the Sectional level or higher.

Technical Panel → technical controller and technical specialists must be at the Regional level or higher for singles and Sectional level or higher for dance and pairs. Data operator must be at a Qualifying level or higher.

Judges → the panel of each event segment must consist of 5-7 judges. All judges must be at least the Regional level or higher for singles and pairs events and Novice Sectional or higher for dance events.

Accountants → Chief Accountant must be at the Sectional level or higher. The Chief Technical Accountant must be Level 2 or higher. Assistant accountants/TA's may be Regional/Level 1 or higher.

When submitting the application to host, competitions must submit the name of their CONFIRMED Chief Referee, Technical Controller and Chief Accountant, in addition to with the anticipated pool of officials that will be invited/have accepted an invitation to the competition and are expected to serve on the panels for the Juvenile - Senior events. U.S. Figure Skating will not be involved in any officials' panels that are not included in the official NQS portion of the competition. It is required that the competition will submit revised panels to U.S. Figure Skating if any changes are made after initial approval.

Approximately 30 days prior to the start of competition, the LOC, in conjunction with the Chief Referee must provide U.S. Figure Skating with a list of officials through EMS Official's Management. The list will be approved by U.S. Figure Skating Staff, in conjunction with the Domestic Selections Committee. Note: the 104 does NOT require approval.

If the official's requirements are not met, the National Qualifying Season designation will be removed from the competition for the season (i.e. registered skaters will NOT post a score from

the competition) AND the LOC may not participate in future National Qualifying Season competitions.

## FIELD OF PLAY & CONDUCT OF EVENTS

Competitions must allow athletes/teams to “skate up” one level from their current test level. Note: test and age eligibility for the qualifying season must be met by September 1, 2022.

## SINGLES

All series competitions for singles must offer the following events:

- Juvenile Girls (FS only), Intermediate Ladies, Novice Ladies, Junior Ladies, Senior Ladies
- Juvenile Boys (FS only), Intermediate Men, Novice Men, Junior Men, Senior Men

When there are more than 24 entries, competitors will be divided into seeded groups per the U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook. Based on final entries, Chief Referees may request group consolidation through the Chair of the Competitions Committee, Kathleen Krieger ([kriegerrph@msn.com](mailto:kriegerrph@msn.com)).

JUVENILE → each skater will compete in a Free Skate program only; in whichever group they have been assigned to. The score earned in that free skate is considered their Final, Total Score (TS), which counts as their official score for the National Qualifying Season standings.

INTERMEDIATE - SENIOR → all skaters in all groups will skate a combined Short Program + Free Skate = Total Score (TS). The TS earned in whichever group the skater is assigned to is considered their official score for their season ranking.

**FINAL ROUNDS, BONUS/CONSOLATION ROUNDS OR SEGMENT ONLY EVENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE HELD AT APPROVED SERIES COMPETITIONS. NO EXCEPTIONS!**

FINAL ROUNDS are NOT held as part of the NQS, nor will there be overall final round medalists as part of NQS. The ONLY score that counts towards NQS ranking is the Total Score earned in the combined SP + FS initial competition, regardless of how many groups for the respective level.

## ICE DANCE

All series competitions for ice dance must offer the following events:

- Juvenile Dance, Intermediate Dance, Novice Dance, Junior Dance, Senior Dance

All NQS Dance events will be held in accordance with Rule 8050 / Composition of Ice Dance Events. The event will consist of a rhythm dance and free dance, with a combined result for junior and senior, and a pattern dance and free dance with a combined result for juvenile, intermediate and novice.

## PAIRS

All series competitions for pairs must offer the following events:

- Juvenile Pairs (Free Skate only), Intermediate Pairs (Free Skate only), Novice Pairs, Junior Pairs, Senior Pairs

All NQS Pairs events will be held in accordance with Rule 7060 / Composition of Pair Events. The event will consist of a short program and free skate, with a combined result for novice, junior and senior, and a free skate for juvenile and intermediate.

## CRITIQUES

Critiques are NOT permitted at approved competitions, for any levels.

## APPLICATION TO HOST | [EVENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM](#)

The LOC Series Application will open on February 4, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. ET via [EMS](#).

The application is available to club presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, treasurers, sanction chairs OR competition chairs. Clubs will be asked to choose which discipline(s) they are applying for and agree to all the details throughout this handbook:

- Conduct of events for chosen disciplines
  - NO: final rounds, segment only events (i.e. Intermediate SP) or critiques
- Staffing approved events with required officials for the designated disciplines
- Use of [EMS](#) for registration, competition management and results upload/series standings
- Compliance with all SkateSafe policies and requirements
- Staffing competition with required event medical staff
- Willingness to partner with U.S. Figure Skating in preparation for the competition and series requirements

Review the Series Application instruction sheet [HERE](#).

If you need assistance with [EMS](#), email [productsupport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:productsupport@usfigureskating.org).

## SELECTION OF COMPETITIONS

For the 2022-2023 National Qualifying Season, the competition applications will be reviewed by the Competitions Committee in conjunction with selected U.S. Figure Skating staff. Please note, at this time, there is not a maximum number of competitions that will be approved. Competitions will be informed of their acceptance no later than March 15, 2022.

## QUESTIONS | EMAIL [EVENTS@USFIGURESKATING.ORG](mailto:EVENTS@USFIGURESKATING.ORG)



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How involved will U.S. Figure Skating be in the running of our competition?

U.S. Figure Skating requires that approved competitions follow a set of standards to provide a consistent, high quality and safe competition for competitors. This includes using the Event Management System (EMS) for efficient results tracking, the approved standard of event conduct, the newest IJS software, approved level of officials in addition to SkateSafe and event medical requirements.

U.S. Figure Skating only oversees the conduct of the qualifying events within the competition (Juvenile- Senior), and will not have any authority over the schedule, entry fees, practice ice, deadlines, etc. In addition, U.S. Figure Skating will have no authority over specialty or other events such as Excel, levels below juvenile, specialty events, etc.

U.S. Figure Skating expects a supportive partnership with the competition host, leading up to the competition to ensure the best and most fair experience for participating athletes.

### How will awards work?

Competitions will post results and give out medals, ribbons, etc., for their own events, as they always have. Total Score from the combined initial events carry over to the NQS standings, not their placement. Season awards and skater recognition will be provided to all competitors from U.S. Figure Skating Staff upon conclusion of the series.

### Can skaters that did not enter NQS with U.S. Figure Skating compete at our competition in the qualifying levels?

Yes. There are no restrictions on who may enter your event. If an athlete has officially entered the NQS, their Total Score will be extracted from the competition results and carried over to the NQS standings. If they have not, their score / result will simply be ignored in the NQS standings.

### Does our competition need to worry about which region or section participating skaters live in / represent?

No. Skaters enter the NQS by July 15 with U.S. Figure Skating, and for rankings and qualifying advancement, they are assigned to the region and section their home club is located. However, skaters may enter any competition, in any section they wish. When their Total Scores are extracted from the competition results, they are simply sorted into the appropriate region and section for the NQS.

### Can athletes enter more than one level?

Athletes may only register for ONE level in the NQS.

### Can athletes “skate up”?

Competitions must allow athletes/teams to “skate up” one level from their current test level.

Note: test and age eligibility for the qualifying season must be met by September 1, 2022.

### What about Final Rounds?

Final Rounds are no longer part of the NQS (nor are bonus/consolation rounds) and may NOT be offered by approved competitions.

### Can we offer segment only events (i.e. Intermediate Free Skate)?

Approved competitions may not offer segment only events for Intermediate - Senior events. No exceptions.

### Can we offer critiques?

As qualifying advancement is intimately connected to the NQS, critiques may not be offered at approved competitions (for any levels).

### Do we invite our own officials?

Clubs are responsible for inviting qualified officials that meet the series requirements. Unlike qualifying competitions, U.S. Figure Skating will not assign any officials.