



PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Overview

The National Qualifying Series (NQS) is the first stage of the U.S. Figure Skating singles, pairs, and ice dance qualifying pipelines. NQS is comprised of nonqualifying competitions between mid-July and early October. Athletes participating in the juvenile, intermediate, novice, junior, and senior levels can have the scores they earn at these designated competitions count toward the overall NQS standings. The final NQS standings will be used to determine which individual athletes/teams will advance to the NQS Finals and eventually the U.S. Figure Skating Championships (junior and senior) or National High Performance Development Team (juvenile – novice).

[2025 – 2026 National Qualifying Series Calendar](#)

Key Dates

- May 7, 2025: Registration for competitions from July 10 – Aug. 10 opens*
- June 11, 2025: Registration for competitions from Aug. 11 – Sep. 10 opens*
- July 2, 2025: NQS application opens at 12:00 p.m. ET
- July 9, 2025: Registration for competitions from Sep. 10 – Oct. 5*

*See subsequent sections for information about the times each competition is opening for registration.

Eligibility

Events

The series is available for juvenile, intermediate, novice, junior, and senior level athletes in the disciplines of singles, pairs, and ice dance.

Athletes may register for only one level per discipline.

If an athlete wishes to change their series level, they 1) will only be permitted to move to a higher level and 2) must request the change at least 10 business days prior to the NQS competition where they will be competing at the new level. If a level change is made, all previous standings and advancement opportunities made from the previous scores will be void.

Membership

Athletes must have a current membership prior to completing the Series Application. Membership at the time of the series application will determine an athlete's competitive region/section for inclusion in the standings.

For pairs/ice dance teams, the home club of the partner who registers the team will be used for establishing their competitive section.

Athletes/teams will not be permitted to change home club after they have completed their series application.

As the start of NQS aligns with the new membership season, please verify that your membership for the new season has been fully processed with U.S. Figure Skating in your Members Only profile (www.usfsaonline.org) prior to starting your series application.

Age Requirements

Athletes must meet the age requirement for their desired level as of July 1, 2025. Age requirements and minimum test levels can be found in Rules [6400](#) (Singles), [7400](#) (Pairs), and [8400](#) (Dance).

Test Requirements & Competitive Floor

Athletes may register at the level of their competitive floor or skate up one level from their highest test level.

Example: An athlete's competitive floor is the level of the most recently completed NQS or Excel series application. The NQS competitive floor may be one level lower than the level established by the Excel Series application. For example, if an athlete registered for the 2024 Excel series at Intermediate and has their pre-silver singles test, the athlete may register in 2024-25 NQS at juvenile, intermediate, or novice as long as all additional age/eligibility requirements are met.

If an athlete skates up to a level above their highest test on record, per Rule 2421 they must complete the required tests for their competitive level by the conclusion of the series to advance to the Final. All test paperwork must be fully processed with U.S. Figure Skating no later than November 1. Athletes can confirm if a test is on their official record by reviewing their Members Only profile under "Skate Test History".

Citizenship & Residency Requirements

Athletes must meet the citizen and residency requirements for participation in U.S. Figure Skating qualifying competition as stated in Rules 2230 – 2243.

Registration

Series Application

The series application must be completed (including payment) prior to the first day of an athlete's first NQS competition for their score to count towards their standings. No scores will be retroactively added to the standings if an athlete does not complete the series application prior to the competition start date. The series application fee is non-refundable under any circumstances. Athletes may withdraw from the series, but all withdrawals are considered final.

For pairs and ice dance teams, only one partner will need to register the team. The home club of the athlete registering the team will be used to determine their section representation. See the Eligibility – Membership section for additional details.

To access the series application, go to usfsaonline.org → [EMS](#) → Series Information → choose the series → Start Application.

Series Application Open – July 2, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. ET

Series Application Fee - \$50

Competition Registrations

To post a score in the NQS standings, athletes/teams must register for, compete in, and post a total score at one (1) NQS designated competition. Singles athletes are allowed to register for a maximum of three (3) total NQS competitions. There are no limitations on the maximum number of competitions for pairs and ice dance teams.

Competition hosts (LOCs) reserve the right to set a maximum capacity and close registration at any time, even if it is earlier than the posted registration deadline. Capacities will not be published, and it is at the discretion of the LOC if they will maintain a waitlist for additional entries after closing.

Withdrawals from an NQS competition will be considered final once the registration deadline has passed or registration for the competition has closed. Refunds will not be offered for withdrawals after the registration deadline.

Registration for all competitions will take place in [EMS](#) → Competition Registration → click “Register” under your desired competition. NOTE: NQS competitions will appear under the “nonqualifying” section.

Competition registration will take place in three phases based on the competition's date. The time that each competition opens their registration will be based on the section (Eastern, Midwestern, or Pacific Coast) the competition is taking place in. A detailed chart for the registration timeline is listed below.

[Click here for a more detailed version of the 2025-26 NQS Registration Timeline Chart.](#)

Registration Opens		Sec.	Competition Name
May 7	12 ET	E	Lake Placid Ice Dance Championships
		E	Philadelphia Summer Championships
		E	Cranberry Open
	12 CT/1 ET	M	Dallas Classic
		M	DuPage FSC Open Competition
	12 PT/3 ET	P	Glacier Falls Summer Classic
		P	Silicon Valley Open
June 11	12 ET	E	Potomac Memorial Open
		E	Atlanta Open
		E	The 99th Annual Middle Atlantic Championships
	12 CT/1 ET	M	Skate Detroit
		M	Greater Chicagoland Fall Invitational
	12 PT/3 ET	P	Silver State Open Championships
		P	Golden West Championships
July 9	12 ET	E	Challenge Cup
		E	Boston Open
	12 CT/1 ET	M	Colorado Springs Invitational
		M	Maplewood Fall Classic
		M	Skate Cleveland
		M	Texas Trophy
	12 PT/3 ET	P	Carousel Classic
		P	LA Autumn Classic

Series Standings

The NQS Standings will be available for viewing in [EMS](#) → Series Information → choose the series → Standings.

Athletes will not appear in the NQS standings until a total score has been achieved. Only an athlete's highest earned total score will appear in the standings. Scores are updated within approximately 72 hours of the conclusion of the competition.

If you have any questions regarding the standings, email events@usfigureskating.org.

Athlete Recognition

Digital Certificates

All participants who post a score in the series standings will receive a digital participation certificate via email after the series concludes.

As of 8/19/25

Pins

Pins will be sent to the home club of each athlete or to the home address of individual members to recognize the following achievements:

- Top 25% nationally – gold pin
- Top 26-50% nationally – silver pin
- Remaining participants will receive a participant pin

Medals and Trophies

Medals and trophies will be awarded at the NQS Finals for top NQS placements as follows:

Singles – medals will be awarded to the top four highest scoring athletes per level, per region; a trophy will be given to the highest scoring athlete per region

Pairs and Ice Dance – medals will be awarded to the top four highest scoring teams per level, per section; trophies will be given to the highest scoring team per section

Technical Conduct of Events

When there are more than 24 entries in an event, the referee will divide competitors into groups per the Rulebook. There will be no qualifying, consolation, or final rounds for NQS. Athletes will remain in the same groups for each applicable segment to obtain their total score.

For events with multiple segments, athletes must compete in the “combined” event (e.g. short program and free skate; pattern dances and free dance). Both segments must be skated to receive a total score. If an athlete/team withdraws after the first segment of an event, their score will not be posted to the NQS standings.

Feedback will be offered for all NQS events following the guidelines set forth by the Competitions Committee. These guidelines will be shared prior to the first NQS competition.

All NQS competitions and their participants are required to abide by all [SkateSafe®](#) policies and meet any applicable compliance requirements set forth by U.S. Figure Skating.

Eligibility and Advancement to the NQS Finals

Advancement Numbers

- Singles
 - Juvenile – Novice: 24 athletes per level
 - Top 4 overall from each region + next best 12 overall scores from the section
 - Junior – Senior: 18 athletes per level + byes
 - Top 4 overall scores from each region + next best 6 overall scores from the section + byes

- Pairs
 - Juvenile – Novice: 24 teams per level
 - Top 4 overall scores from each section + next best 12 overall scores nationally
 - Junior – Senior: 18 teams per level plus byes
 - Top 4 overall scores per section + next best 6 overall scores nationally + byes
- Ice Dance
 - Juvenile – Novice: 24 teams per level
 - Top 4 overall scores from each section + next best 12 overall scores nationally
 - Junior – Senior: 18 teams per level plus byes
 - Top 4 overall scores per section + next best 6 overall scores nationally + byes

Advancement Notification and Registering for the NOS Finals

Advancement information will be sent out via email to advancing athletes in the week following the last NQS competition. Each qualifier will be required to complete registration and pay the entry fee in EMS within 72 hours of receiving their advancement email. Failure to respond will result in forfeiture of advancement and an alternate will be invited. All withdrawals and declined advancements must be submitted via email by the athlete or, if the athlete is a minor, the athlete's parent to events@usfigureskating.org (phone calls will not be accepted).

The dates and locations of the 2026 NQS Finals are below and subject to change.

2026 Pacific Coast Sectional Singles and U.S. Ice Dance Final
Nov. 3 – 9, 2025 | Henderson, NV

2026 Eastern Sectional Singles Final
Nov. 10 – 16, 2025 | Charleston, SC

2026 Midwestern Sectional Singles and U.S. Pairs Final
Nov. 17 – 21, 2025 | Lansing, MI

Once available, additional details for these competitions will be posted [HERE](#).

Per Rule 2477, skaters competing in senior singles events (men and women) must meet a set minimum combined total element score (CTES) in order to advance to the Finals. Scores must be achieved at an NQS or ISU competition in the current season. The CTES may use a short program TES and a free skate TES from separate competitions.

- Senior Women: CTES = 45.00
- Senior Men: CTES = 49.00

Alternates

Per U.S. Figure Skating rules 2471 C, 2473 C, and 2475 C, alternates will be the next best ranked competitors in the nation.

Advancement to National Development Camp & U.S. Figure Skating Championships

Information about athletes/teams advancing to camp and the U.S. Championships will be released prior to the NQS Finals.

Per Rule 2505, competitors who advance to the U.S. Championships in the senior events must meet a minimum combined total element score (CTES) at one of the following competitions in the same season: NQS competitions, the NQS Finals, or any ISU competition. The CTES may use a short program TES and a free skate TES from separate competitions.

- Senior Women minimum CTES = 67.00
- Senior Men minimum CTES = 74.00
- Senior Pairs minimum CTES = 67.00
- Senior Ice Dance minimum CTES = 65.00

SkateSafe® Policies and Compliance

All participants should be aware of and familiar with the policies within the U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® Handbook. All Participants and personnel are required to adhere to these policies for the duration of any NQS competition they attend. In addition, Adult Participants are required to be familiar with and adhere to the SkateSafe® Travel Policy.

All coaches and mandatory athletes must be fully compliant in accordance with current requirements prior to checking in to any NQS competition.

As a reminder, all Adult Participants of U.S. Figure Skating are mandatory reporters and must report sexual misconduct and child abuse to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and to local law enforcement. All other violations, such as emotional and physical misconduct, bullying, harassment, or violations of the U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® Handbook, must be made directly to U.S. Figure Skating. Please contact skatesafe@usfigureskating.org for more information.

Liability

U.S. Figure Skating, the host club(s) and/or interclub associations, the organizing committee, and the ice arenas utilized for these events accept no responsibility for injury or damage sustained to any participant in these National Qualifying Series events (U.S. Figure Skating Rule 1600).

Contacts

U.S. Figure Skating Events Department

Email: events@usfigureskating.org

Phone: (719) 635-5200

U.S. Figure Skating Product Support (EMS)

Email: productsupport@usfigureskating.org

Phone: (719) 635-5200

2025-26 NQS Competitions

The following provides an overview of NQS competitions. All provided information is subject to change. Athletes should refer to the respective event websites, competition announcements, and EMS for the most up-to-date information.

Registrations Opening May 7

Dallas Classic | July 12 – 14 | Plano, TX | Dance

- Competition Website: <https://www.dallasfsc.org/copy-of-learn-to-skate-usa>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: June 6, Late Reg Deadline: June 10
- Entry Fee: \$335 for all levels
 - Late Fee: \$50
- Contact: Chelliebowden@sbcglobal.net

Lake Placid Ice Dance Championships | July 28 – 31 | Lake Placid, NY | Dance

- Competition Website: www.lakeplacidolympiccenter.com/todo/lake-placid-ice-dance-championships/
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: June 29
- Entry Fee: \$350 for all levels
- Feedback: Individual feedback only, held after the conclusion of the free dance in the Empire Room on the lower level of the Olympic Center
- Contact: cutone@msn.com

Glacier Falls Summer Classic | July 30 – Aug 3 | Anaheim, CA | Singles; Pairs

- Competition Website: www.glacierfalls.com
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm PT/3pm ET
- Registration Deadline: July 6
- Entry Fee: Singles - Juvenile \$185, Intermediate-Senior \$295; Pairs – Juvenile-Intermediate \$205, Novice-Senior \$315
- Contact: russcscott@gmail.com

Philadelphia Summer Championships | July 30 – Aug 3 | Aston, PA | Singles

- Competition Website: www.iceworkssc.org
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: July 16
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$225, Intermediate-Senior \$335
- Feedback: Group feedback provided approximately 15 minutes after the results are final
- Contact: shaw@iceworks.net

DuPage FSC Open Competition | Aug 1-3 | Evanston, IL | Singles

- Competition Website: www.dupage.org
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: June 27, Late Reg Deadline: July 3
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$200, Intermediate-Senior \$300
 - Late Fee: \$50
- Contact: dupagefscopen@yahoo.com

Cranberry Open | Aug 4-8 | Norwood, MA | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://scboston.org/cranberry/>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: June 15
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$290, Intermediate-Senior \$360
- Contact: events@scboston.org

Silicon Valley Open | Aug 8 – 9 | San Jose, CA | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://www.peninsulaskatingclub.org/competitions>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm PT/3pm ET
- Registration Deadline: June 6
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$225, Intermediate-Senior \$300
- Contact: pricePSC@yahoo.com

Registrations Opening June 11

Potomac Memorial Open | Aug 14 – 17 | Ashburn, VA | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://www.washingtonfsc.org/competitions/>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: July 17
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$240, Intermediate-Senior \$360
- Contact: sherrywlewis@yahoo.com

Skate Detroit | Aug 20 – 23 | Bloomfield Hills, MI | Singles; Pairs; Dance

- Competition Website: <https://dscclub.com/events/skate-detroit>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: July 7, Late Reg Deadline: July 11
- Entry Fee: Singles – Juvenile \$185, Intermediate-Senior: \$275; Pairs – Juvenile-Intermediate \$275, Novice-Senior: \$350; Dance – Juvenile-Senior: \$350
 - Late fee: \$50
- Contact: hcook@dscclub.com

Silver State Open Championships | Aug 21 – 24 | Henderson, NV | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://www.citynationalarena.com/center-of-excellence>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm PT/3pm PT
- Registration Deadline: July 9
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$195, Intermediate-Senior \$290
- Contact: cmortenson@VegasGoldenKnights.com

Atlanta Open | Aug 21 – 24 | Cumming, GA | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://atlantafsc.com/>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: July 17
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$210, Intermediate-Senior \$310
- Contact: competitions@atlantafsc.com

Golden West Championships | Aug 29 – 31 | Irvine, CA | Singles; Pairs

- Competition Website: www.allyearfsc.com
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm PT/3pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 1, Late Reg Deadline: Aug 6th
- Entry Fee*: Singles – Juvenile \$225, Intermediate-Senior \$325; Pairs – Juvenile-Intermediate \$275, Novice-Senior \$375
 - Late fee: \$50
- Contact: glidnby@yahoo.com

99th Annual Middle Atlantic Figure Skating Championships | Sept 3 – 7 | New York, NY | Singles; Pairs

- Competition Website: www.thescny.org
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 9
- Entry Fee: Singles – Juvenile \$300, Intermediate – Senior \$350; Pairs – Juvenile – Intermediate \$300, Novice – Senior \$425
- Contact: terrislevine@gmail.com

Greater Chicagoland Fall Invitational | Sept 4 – 7 | Evanston, IL | Singles; Pairs

- Competition Website: www.wwfsc.com
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: July 29
- Entry Fee: Singles - Juvenile \$225, Intermediate-Senior \$300; Pairs – Juvenile-Intermediate \$255, Novice-Senior \$380
- Feedback: Group feedback held after each event in the upstairs lobby
- Contact: lanny.nelson1942@gmail.com

Registrations Opening July 9

Colorado Springs Invitational | Sept 11-14 | Colorado Springs, CO | Singles

- Competition Website: https://www.centennials skatingclub.org/?page_id=314
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 6
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$195, Intermediate-Senior \$250
- Contact: lisa_landon@comcast.net

Carousel Classic | Sept 11-14 | Eugene, OR | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://www.carouselsherwoodfsc.org/carouselclassic>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm PT/3pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 5
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$195, Intermediate-Senior \$315
- Contact: president@carouselsherwoodfsc.org

Maplewood Fall Classic | Sept 18-21 | Vadnais Heights, MN | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/maplewoodfallclassic/home>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 17, Late Deadline: August 24
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$200, Intermediate-Senior \$250
 - Late fee: \$25, Late Music/PPC: \$35
- Contact: tracy.dexheimer@gmail.com

Challenge Cup | Sept 18 – 21 | Ardmore, PA | Dance

- Competition Website: www.pschs.org
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 21
- Entry Fee: \$295 for all levels
- Contact: pschs@pschs.org

Skate Cleveland | Sept 19-21 | Lakewood, OH | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://www.winterhurstfsc.com/competitions-events>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 10
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$200, Intermediate-Senior \$275
- Contact: nrksk8@netscape.net

Texas Trophy | Sept 30- Oct 4 | Plano, TX | Singles

- Competition Website: <https://www.dallasfsc.org/texastrophy>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm CT/1pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 29
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$220, Intermediate-Senior \$310
- Contact: pairofpairs@icloud.com

Boston Open | Oct 1 – 5 | Norwood, MA | Singles; Pairs

- Competition Website: <https://scboston.org/boston-open/>
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm ET
- Registration Deadline: August 15
- Entry Fee: Singles – Juvenile \$290, Intermediate-Senior \$360; Pairs – Juvenile-Intermediate \$360, Novice-Senior: \$400
- Contact: events@scboston.org

LA Autumn Classic | Oct 3-5 | El Segundo, CA | Singles

- Competition Website: www.lafsc.org
- Registration Opening Time: 12pm PT/3pm ET
- Registration Deadline: September 7
- Entry Fee: Juvenile \$210, Intermediate-Senior \$290
- Feedback: Group feedback only, held after the conclusion of the final event segment in locker rooms on lower level
- Contact: kborzi@comcast.net