



2026 Excel Competition Series Athlete Handbook

Excel Competition Series

January 15 – June 1, 2026

2026 Excel National Final & Festival

Dates: July 15 – 19, 2026

Location To Be Announced December 10th

ATHLETE CHECKLIST

RENEW MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025-26 SEASON

REGISTER FOR EXCEL SERIES VIA SERIES APPLICATION (Dec 15, 2025 - March 1, 2026)

REGISTER FOR AT LEAST TWO APPROVED EXCEL SERIES COMPETITIONS VIA EMS

TRACK YOUR SERIES STANDINGS ON EMS

EXCEL SERIES ATHLETE RESOURCE LIST

[Excel FS Requirements Chart](#), [Excel Technical Handbook](#)

[2026 Excel Series Competitions List](#)

[2026 Series Application](#)

[Event Management System \(EMS\)](#)

- Series Application
- Competition Registration
- Series Standings
- Skater Portal: My Coaches, Music, PPC
- Coach Portal: My Skaters, Coach Schedule

QUESTIONS

Series & General Inquiries:

SkatingPrograms@usfigureskating.org

EMS Registration & Standings:

MemberServices@usfigureskating.org

Technical Questions:

WeitzmanM@aol.com

Welcome to the 2026 Excel Series Season!

On behalf of the U.S. Figure Skating Excel Sub-Committee, we are thrilled to welcome you to the 7th season of the Excel Competition Series!

The Excel Series provides athletes with an exciting competitive environment designed to encourage growth in both program components and technical skills each season. Events will be hosted at select nonqualifying competitions across the country, with the list of participating competitions to be announced no later than mid-November, 2025.

The mission of the Excel Series is to inspire skaters to continue training, developing, and celebrating their love of the sport by offering meaningful opportunities to showcase their strengths. The program also introduces grassroots skaters and coaches to the International Judging System (IJS) through a progressive format that builds confidence and understanding of IJS principles.

As we launch another exciting season, we hope every athlete embraces the challenge to set new goals, refine their skills, and find joy in their performances. We wish all competitors an incredible experience—skate your best, have fun, and enjoy the Series!

Warm regards,

Marc Weitzman

National Vice Chair, Excel Program Sub-Committee

EXCEL SERIES STRUCTURE

DECEMBER 15 – MARCH 1 <i>Register for the Series</i>	JANUARY – JUNE <i>Compete</i>	JULY <i>Compete & Celebrate</i>
Excel Series ‘Open’ Events (Aspire 1-4, Pre-Prelim) Register for Series through EMS	Register for & compete in at least 2 <u>(but not more than 4)</u> Excel Series Competitions *	EXCEL NATIONAL FESTIVAL (Competition & Festival) Registration will open via EMS in May
Excel Series ‘Qualifying’ Events (Preliminary Plus – Senior) Register for Series through EMS	Register for & compete in at least 2 <u>(but not more than 4)</u> Excel Series Competitions * <i>See advancement section on pg. 7 of this handbook for details</i>	EXCEL NATIONAL FINAL & FINALIST CAMP (Competition & Camp) Invitations will be sent out in May. Registration required within 48 hours of receipt of invitation

***Series skaters may compete in a maximum of 4 Excel Series Competitions.**

STEP 1: REGISTER FOR U.S. FIGURE SKATING OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Athletes of all levels who wish to compete in the Excel Series – Aspire 1 through Senior, must be current members of U.S. Figure Skating. A current membership for the 2025-26 season is required before you can complete the [series application](#). Membership must be fully processed with your home club *and* U.S. Figure Skating.

Athletes are automatically entered into one of the three sections based on the location of their home club, or if an individual/direct member of U.S. Figure Skating, their home address. All registrants are bound to their geographic designation at the time they complete their Series application, and no changes are permitted. Club representation stays intact for the entirety of the Excel Series season even if an athlete changes clubs.

STEP 2: DETERMINE COMPETITIVE LEVEL & ELIGIBILITY

1. Athletes may complete an Excel Series registration at ONE level only.

May I change my level?

- Athletes competing in events Pre-Preliminary through Senior may NOT change level after registering and competing in one or more Excel Series competitions.
- Athletes competing in Aspire 1-4 events may move up ONE level during the Series and/or for the Excel Final. Skaters may not move ‘down’ in level.

2. **Meet the citizen and residency requirements as stated in Rules 2230 -2243.** Foreign or released athletes residing in the U.S. who currently represent another ISU federation other than U.S. Figure Skating may register and compete at approved Excel Series

competitions. However, they are **not eligible** to complete the Series Application nor receive a score within the Series Standings.

3. Eligibility

- Skaters must be under 21 years of age as of the registration deadline of March 1, 2026.

Minimum Ages:

- Excel Preliminary Plus skaters must be **at least 9 years of age** as of March 1, 2026
- Excel Pre-Juvenile Plus skaters must be **at least 9 years of age** as of March 1, 2026
- Excel Juvenile and Juvenile Plus skaters must be **at least 10 years of age** as of March 1, 2026
- Any skater who competed in the 2025 Excel Series may not enter the 2026 Excel Series at a lower level.

EXCEPTION: Skaters who competed at Excel Preliminary in the 2025 season, may register to compete at Excel Pre-Preliminary for the 2026 season. To request this exception, please contact us at SkatingPrograms@usfigureskating.org

- Any skater who medaled at the 2025 Excel National Final in Preliminary Plus through Junior must register and compete in the 2026 Excel Series at least one level above the level in which they competed during the 2025 Excel Series. *(For skaters who medaled in Excel Juvenile or Excel Intermediate; moving to the "Plus" level will be considered moving up in level. For example, a skater who medaled in Excel Juvenile at the 2025 Excel Final may compete at Excel Juvenile Plus in the 2026 Excel Series.)*

EXCEPTION: Skaters who medaled in Juvenile Excel Boys, Juvenile Excel Plus Boys, Intermediate Excel Men, Intermediate Excel Plus Men, Novice Excel Men or Junior Excel Men in 2025 will not be required to move up in level for 2026

4. The following athletes are ineligible to compete in the 2026 Excel Series:

- Any athlete who qualified to compete at the 2026 U.S. Figure Skating Championships.
- Any athlete who competed in the 2025-26 Sectional Singles Finals in a singles event.
- Any athlete who competed in the 2025-26 National Qualifying Series (NQS) **and** who earned a score of at least:
 - Juvenile: 44 points
 - Intermediate: 86 points
 - Novice: 98 points
 - Junior: 110 points
 - Senior: 114 points

Clarification: Any skater who attained a score listed above in the 2025-26 NQS season, is ineligible to compete in the 2026 Excel Series **at any level**. For example, a skater who competed Juvenile in 2025-26 NQS and attained a score of 42 or higher, is **INELIGIBLE** to register for the 2026 Excel Series at any level.

- Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Excel Program Sub-Committee.

STEP 3 – EXCEL SERIES APPLICATION

Beginning December 15, athletes can complete their registration via [the Series Application](#) on EMS. The Series Application is the key requirement for registration. All interested athletes MUST complete this step prior to the start of their first approved EXCEL SERIES competition (first day of competition).

	Application Open	Application Close	Fee
Standard	December 15	March 1	\$90
Late	March 3	March 14	\$175

*Note: the application will close on March 1 at 11:59 p.m. ET and re-open March 3rd at 12:00p.m. ET for **late entries**. During this time, the Series Status will be listed as "Registration Closed".*

- Without a paid Series Application, no scores will be posted to the standings, and thus unregistered athletes cannot advance to the Excel Final, Camp or Finalist Camp and/or Excel Festival.
- If an athlete competes in an approved Excel Series competition prior to completing their [Series Application](#), the scores will NOT count in the Series – no exceptions.
- *Online payment via credit card is the ONLY accepted form of payment for the Series Application. No cash, checks or mail orders will be accepted by U.S. Figure Skating.*
- No refunds are provided for the Excel Series Application Fee under any circumstances (medical withdrawals included).
- Entry fee refund policies for approved Excel Series competitions are at the discretion of each host club.

STEP 4 – REGISTER FOR AT LEAST TWO EXCEL SERIES COMPETITION VIA EMS

- All athletes must register for at least TWO approved EXCEL SERIES competitions via U.S. Figure Skating's Event Management System (EMS) and compete!
- For the 2026 Excel Series, skaters may compete in up to a maximum of FOUR EXCEL SERIES COMPETITIONS.
- Athletes must enter each approved EXCEL SERIES competition directly, in accordance with the entry deadline and entry fees set forth by the host club. It is the sole responsibility of each athlete to complete this step to ensure their scores will post and count towards the Series and thus the opportunity to advance to the Excel National event.

Note: In order for scores to count toward the Series Standings, participants must compete in at least two approved Excel Series Competitions and must register for the Excel Series prior to their first competition.

EXCEL SERIES STANDINGS

For Excel Series 'Qualifying' Events

The Excel Series Standings for 'qualifying events' will be available for viewing in EMS. The standings will display a sectional rank.

Qualifying events are: Excel Preliminary Plus through Senior.

To access the standings:

- Log into Members Only [HERE](#)
 - Select EMS.
 - Click "Series Information."
 - Choose "2026 Excel Series."
 - Select "Standings."

At the end of each approved Excel Series competition, all IJS competition results will be uploaded to EMS by the chief accountant as soon as possible following the event's conclusion. Each skater's score is transmitted to the Standings. Only a skater's current two highest scores are officially recorded. If a skater finishes a competition and beats one of their previous two highest scores, the scores will be updated. If a skater competes but does not beat one of their current two highest scores, the previous two scores stand.

An athlete will not appear on the Excel Series standings until they have earned a score at an approved Excel Series competition for the level of their completed Series Application. Skaters must be registered for the Series prior to the competition start date for any Series competition; Scores achieved without having a completed Series application prior to the start of a competition will not count towards Series standings.

Please note, invitation to the Excel Final and Finalist Camp is tied to the two highest posted scores in the Series Standings, NOT from individual event placements at approved Excel Series competitions.

For Excel Series 'Open' Events: Aspire 1-4 and Pre-Preliminary

Athletes competing in these levels will receive recognition through the online podium found [HERE](#). Athletes placing in 1st through 4th place in Aspire 1-4 & Pre-Preliminary must submit their results in advance in order to have results reflected in the online podium. Submit results [HERE](#).

ADVANCEMENT TO EXCEL NATIONAL FINAL

Qualifiers:

- Preliminary Plus through Senior athletes.
- Advancement information will be sent via email, outlining the EMS registration process and competition details the week of June 1st.
- Each qualifier will be required to complete registration and pay their entry fee within 48 hours of receipt of advancement email from U.S. Figure Skating HQ.
- If there is no response, the spot will be forfeited, and alternate will be invited.
- The entry fee for the Excel National Final will cover Free skate events and Camp experience.

Advancement by Event

Below are the minimum number of athletes who will qualify at each event level.

Updated list will be posted by March 31st

Excel Preliminary Plus Girls

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Pre-Juvenile Plus Girls

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Juvenile Girls

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Juvenile Plus Girls

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Intermediate Women

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Intermediate Plus Women

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Novice Women

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.

- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Junior Women

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 2 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (20 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Excel Senior Women

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 2 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (20 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

All Boys/Men Events

- The top 6 skaters in each section.
- Plus, the skaters with the next 6 highest scores nationally - regardless of section.
- (24 total) - will earn an invitation to participate in the National Excel Final.

Aspire 1-4 and Pre-Preliminary (Open Levels)

- Registration information will be sent via email to all 'open level' Excel Series registered athletes outlining the registration process for the Excel Final & Festival in May.
- Register early to guarantee your skater's spot! The deadline to register for Open level athletes to register for the Excel Final and Festival will be June 3; although registration may close early based on space limitations.
- Entry fees for Excel National Final will cover Excel Freeski event and Festival experience.

FINALIST RECOGNITION

The theme for the Excel Series is "Excellent Execution"

Pins – Pins will be awarded to all athletes in IJS events at the Excel National Final who earn at least one +3 from a judge on any element during the Final.

Presentation Awards – The skater with the highest total PCS score at each qualifying level during the 2025 Excel National Final will receive an award which will be presented during the awards ceremony.

Founders Trophies – Two trophies will be awarded, one to the boy/man with the best presentation and one to the girl/woman with the best presentation as voted on by the judging panel during the 2025 Excel National Final. Awards will be presented during the awards ceremony.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Coach Compliance

Any coach attending the competition must be included within a skater's series application AND individual competition registration via EMS. Any coach declared at the time of registration will be included in the skater's registration confirmation email and have access to the EMS Coach Portal. Noncompliant coaches will receive automated email reminders through the start of the competition.

All Excel Series coaches must be fully compliant U.S. Figure Skating coaches & meet the criteria below:

- Must be a current full member of U.S. Figure Skating either through a member club or as an individual member.
- If 18 years or older, must submit information for proper payment and successfully pass a background check.
 - The background check will be valid for two seasons, the one in which it was completed plus one additional.
- If 18 years or older, must complete annual SafeSport Training.
 - The training will be valid for 365 days from date of completion and there is no cost for the training/certification.
- Must complete the Coach I.C.E requirements through US Figure Skating.
- Must submit proof of general liability insurance with limits of \$1 million per occurrence/\$5 million aggregate.
- Must agree to the U.S. Figure Skating Code of Ethics.
- Must complete three waivers: 1) Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release and Indemnification Agreement, 2) Medical Consent and 3) Name and Likeness Release and Consent Agreement.

Liability

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

Dates:

The 2026 Excel Series will run from January 15, 2026 to June 1, 2026 with the Excel Finalist Camp and Excel Series Final competition taking place at the Excel National Festival, July 15-19, 2026.

Music:

Music must be provided for events according to requirements in each competition's announcement.

Costumes:

The Excel Series will follow all costume rules and requirements as stated for singles events in the 2025 U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook. (Rules 6030-6035)

Judging System:

The IJS will be used for all Excel Preliminary Plus through Senior levels at ALL Excel Series competitions. Please refer to the Excel Program Technical Handbook for IJS guidelines for Excel events found [here](#).

Choice of either IJS, CJS, or 6.0 judging system is at the discretion of the LOC of each Excel Series Competition and will be specified in the announcement for the following Excel levels: Aspire 1-4 and Pre-Preliminary.

Warm-up Groups

Warm-up groups are at the discretion of the chief referee, and skaters will be notified prior to the start of the event if there is more than one warm up group.

**Group Size:

EXCEL SERIES COMPETITIONS			
Excel Level	Judging System	Suggested Max Warm Up Size	Suggested Max Event Group Size
Aspire 1-4	6.0, <u>CJS</u> or IJS	12	6
Pre-Preliminary	6.0, <u>CJS</u> or IJS	12	6
Preliminary Plus	IJS	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>
Pre-Juvenile Plus	IJS	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>
Juvenile	<u>IJS</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
Juvenile Plus	IJS	6	12
Intermediate	IJS	6	12
Intermediate Plus	IJS	6	18
Novice	IJS	6	18
Junior	IJS	6	18
Senior	IJS	6	18
<i>** Group sizes may be slightly smaller or larger at the discretion of the chief referee. If an IJS Excel event is split into separate groups, the chief referee is encouraged to keep the judging and technical panel as consistent as possible among the separate groups of a single event level.</i>			

CONTACTS

Series & General Inquiries: SkatingPrograms@usfigureskating.org
EMS Registration & Standings: MemberServices@usfigureskating.org
Technical Questions: WeitzmanM@aol.com