

APPENDIX G

OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION POLICY

Amendments to this Appendix G are the responsibility of the Judges' Board. The Judges' Board can modify this Appendix by recommending changes to the Board of Directors for approval.

ARTICLE 1

1.01 Officials Requirements: All Officials must be a member of USA Artistic Swimming ("USAAS") at the appropriate level. Individuals 18 years old and older must be current in SafeSport training and must have completed the National Center for Safety Initiatives ("NCSI") Background Check every 2 years. Individuals younger than 18 years old are not required to complete the SafeSport course or Background Check. SafeSport training for minors is available but not required until the participant turns 18. Parent/Guardian consent is required should a minor choose to complete the training. See Appendix C.

CATEGORIES OF JUDGES:

Figure Judge: May judge figures at the competition for which they are certified.

Association, Regional, Zone, National, FINA/PAQ Judges: May judge routines and figures for which they are certified. Please note that in 2023 all figure judge levels, except Level 1F, are being discontinued except for those judges who currently hold that rating.

Exception: Should there be a shortage of judges in any category, the Officials Chair in charge or the Administrator of the Judges' Programs ("Judges Administrator") may use lower rated judges to fill vacancies.

1.02 Testing Policies: In order to obtain the specified ratings, the following procedures are required. Candidates who fail written or electronic tests may be retested. A judges' rating is good for 2 years from the date of completion of all requirements for the rating. The rating is good until December 31st of the year of expiration. Once the testing process has begun, judge candidates will have 2 years to complete the rating, or they must start over.

A. Level 1F: Association Figure Judge (Novice, Intermediate and 12 & Under Age Group Figures)

1. Minimum age: 15 years of age.
2. Training Courses and Fees: Online Course followed by Webinar or Online Course followed by In-person Classroom Course. Online course, webinar and test are complimentary. In-person classroom fees set by and payable to the Association.
3. USAAS Membership: Youth or Adult Instructor, Youth or Adult Professional, Youth or Adult Competitive Athlete, Youth or Adult Athlete, or Youth or Adult Life Membership required.
4. Training Materials: USAAS Rulebook and FINA Artistic Swimming Manual for Judges, Coaches & Referees.
5. Written or Electronic Test: Open book, with 2-hour time limit, 90% passing score.

6. Figure Practice Judging: Pass evaluation of all entries on an entire panel in Novice, Intermediate, and 12 & Under Age Group figures at an Association competition.
 7. Retaining Rating: Not available for a Level 1F judge.
- B. Level 1 – Association Judge Rating Requirements:** (Novice Free Routines with Technical Elements and Intermediate Free Routines with Technical Elements).
1. Minimum age: 15 years of age.
 2. Training Courses and Fees: Online Course followed by Webinar or Online Course followed by In-person Classroom. Online course, webinar and test are complimentary. In-person classroom fees set by and payable to the Association.
 3. USAAS Membership: Youth or Adult Instructor, Youth or Adult Professional, Youth or Adult Competitive Athlete, Youth or Adult Athlete, or Youth or Adult Life Membership required.
 4. Training Materials: USAAS Rulebook and FINA Artistic Swimming Manual for Judges, Coaches & Referees.
 5. Level Requirement: Current Level 1F Judge Certification or in active pursuit of Level 1F Certification. Must pass Level 1F before passing Level 1.
 6. Written or Electronic Test: Open book, with a 2-hour time limit, 85% passing score.
 7. Routine Practice Judging: Pass an evaluation of an entire routine event in Solo, Duet or Trio, and Team in Novice and Intermediate at an Association or Junior Olympic Regional competition.
 8. Retaining Rating: Not available for a Level 1 judge.
- C. Level 2 – Association and Junior Olympic Regional Judge Rating Requirements:** (13-15 Age Group Figures, all Technical and Free Routines)
1. Minimum Age: 15 years of age.
 2. Training Courses and Fees: Online Course followed by Webinar or Online Course followed by In-Person Classroom. Online course, webinar and test are complimentary. In-person classroom fees set by and payable to the Association.
 3. USAAS Membership: Youth or Adult Instructor, Youth or Adult Professional, Youth or Adult Competitive Athlete, Youth or Adult Athlete, or Youth or Adult Life Membership required.
 4. Training Materials: USAAS Rulebook and FINA Artistic Swimming Manual for Judges, Coaches & Referees.
 5. Level Requirement: Current Level 1 Judge Certification or in active pursuit of Level 1 Certification. Must pass Levels 1F & 1 before passing Level 2.
 6. Written or Electronic Test: Open book, with a 2-hour limit, 85% passing score.
 7. Figure Practice Judging: Pass evaluation of all entries on an entire panel in 13-15 Age Group Figures at an Association or Junior Olympic Regional competition. If the candidate has an existing 2F rating, no figure practice judging is required.
 8. Routine Practice Judging: Pass evaluation of an entire routine event at the Junior Olympic Association, Junior Olympic Regional, Junior or Senior Association competitions as follows:
 - 13 & over – Free Solo, Free Duet, Free Team and Free Combination.
 - 16 & over – Technical Solo, Technical Duet, Technical Team and Highlight.
 9. Level 2 Retaining Judge Rating: Obtained by passing the Level 2 test 2 more times, 2 years apart, after receiving the specified rating.
- D. Level 3 – Zone and Collegiate Regional Rating Requirements:** (All Figures, Technical Routines and Free Routines).

1. Minimum Age: 18 years of age.
2. Training Course and Fees: Online Course followed by Webinar or Online Course followed by In-person Classroom. Fees set by Zone or USAAS Board of Directors and payable to Zone or USAAS.
3. USAAS Membership: Adult Professional or Life Member.
4. Training Materials: USAAS Rulebook and FINA Artistic Swimming Manual for Judges, Coaches & Referees.
5. Level Required: Current Level 2 Judge Certification.
6. Written Test: Open book, with a 2-hour time limit, 90% passing score. Written tests may be given with prior approval from the Zone Officials Chair and Judges Administrator, at the specified testing time noted in the meet announcement, at any of the events or competitions listed below:
 - USAAS Convention (excludes 2022 Convention)
 - Any Zone Championship
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - 12 & Under or 13-15 Age Group Division at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
 - Coaches College (excludes 2022 Coaches College)
7. Figure Mentorship Session: To be completed before practice judging. May occur at any of the competitions listed below, or held virtually, with permission of, and administered by the Zone Officials Chair or designee. If the candidate has an existing 3F rating, no mentorship sessions are required.
 - Any 13-15 Zone Championship
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
8. Figure Practice Judging: Pass evaluation of all entries on an entire panel at 13-15 Zone Championship. If the candidate has an existing 3F rating, no figure practice judging is required.
9. Mentorship Technical and Free Routine Session: To be completed before practice judging. May occur at any of the competitions listed below, or held virtually, with permission of, and administered by the Zone Officials Chair or designee. Mentorship Sessions are to cover all categories of judging in Technical and Free Solo, Duet and Team, Free Combination and Highlight routine events. Maximum of four virtual events.
 - Any Junior or Senior Zone Championship
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior Championship
 - U.S. National Championship
 - 16 & over Age Division at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
10. Routine Practice Judging: Pass evaluation of an entire routine event at the Junior or Senior Zone Championship as follows:
 - Technical Solo, Duet and Team
 - Free Solo, Duet and Team
 - Free Combination
 - Highlight

11. Level 3 Retaining Judge Rating: Obtained by passing the Level 3 test 2 more times, 2 years apart, after receiving the specified rating.

E. Level 4 – National Judge Rating Requirements:

1. Minimum Age: 18 years of age.
2. Training Course and Fees: Classroom instruction or online course followed by webinar. Fees set by USAAS Board of Directors and payable to USAAS.
3. USAAS Membership: Adult Professional or Life Member.
4. Training Materials: USAAS Rulebook and FINA Artistic Swimming Manual for Judges, Coaches & Referees.
5. Level Requirement: Current Level 3 Judge Certification.
6. Written Test: Open book, with 2-hour limit, 90% passing score. Written tests may be given, with prior approval from the Judges Administrator or designee, at the specified testing time noted in the meet announcement at any of the events or competitions listed below:
 - USAAS Convention (excludes 2022 USAAS Convention)
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior Championship
 - U.S. National Championship
 - U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
 - Coaches College (excludes 2022 Coaches College)
7. Figure Mentorship Session: To be completed before practice judging. If the candidate has an existing 4F rating, no mentorship sessions are required. May occur at any of the competitions listed below:
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior Olympic Championships
8. Figure Practice Judging: Pass evaluation of all entries on an entire panel at any of the competitions listed below:
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - 13-15 Age Division at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
9. Mentorship Technical and Free Routine Session: To be completed before practice judging. May occur at any of the competitions listed below, or held virtually, with permission of, and administered by the Judges Administrator or designee. Mentorship Sessions are to cover all categories of judging in Technical and Free Solo, Technical and Free Duet and Technical and Free Team, Free Combination and Highlight routine events. Maximum of four virtual events.
 - U.S. 13-15 National Championship
 - U.S. Junior National Championship
 - U.S. National Championship
 - 13-15 or 16 & over Age Division at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
10. Technical Routine Practice Judging.
 - a. Pass evaluations in an entire Technical Solo, Duet, and Team routine events at any of the competitions listed below:
 - U.S. Junior National Championship
 - U.S. National Championship
 - 16 & over age group at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship

11. Free Routine Practice Judging:

- a. Pass evaluations in an entire event for Solo, Duet, Team, and Free Combination routine events at any of the competitions listed below:
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior National Championship
 - U.S. National Championship
 - 16 & over age group at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship

12. Level 4 Retaining Judge Rating: Obtained by passing the written Level 4 test 2 more times, 2 years apart, after receiving the specified rating.

F. Level 5 FINA and PAQ Judge Rating Requirements:

1. Level Requirement: Current Level 4 Judge Certification
2. Citizenship: U.S. Citizen
3. Age Requirements: Meet FINA and PAQ age requirements
4. Candidate Recommendations: Openings shall be filled by the USAAS International Relations Committee with recommendations from the Judges' Board. Recommendations will be based on evaluations, attendance, cooperation, and availability.

G. Evaluator for the U.S. National Championship:

1. Level Requirement: Current Level 4 Judge Certification
2. Citizenship: U.S. Citizen
3. Selection Process: Selected by the Judges Administrator.

1.03 Maintenance of Specific Rating: Judges who fail to meet the minimum requirements to maintain their current level of certification shall hold their judges' rating on a conditional basis. All judges who become conditional or lapsed will be notified in writing 30 days following the USAAS Convention.

A. Required Attendance:

1. **Association Judges** (Existing Levels 1F and Level 1):
 - a. Attend and judge a USAAS Association competition at least 2 times per year.
 - b. If there are no judging positions open, practice judge and submit to the Association Officials Chair.
 - c. Attend a Judges Update Clinic every 4 years.
2. **Association and Junior Olympic Regional Judges** (Existing Levels 2F and Level 2):
 - a. Attend and judge a USAAS Association Championship, Junior Olympic Regional Championship or Collegiate Regional competition at least 2 times per year.
 - b. Attend a Judges Update Clinic every 4 years.
3. **Zone and Collegiate Regional Judges** (Existing Levels 3F and Level 3):
 - a. Attend and judge any Zone Championship every 2 years.
 - b. Attend and judge a USAAS Association Championship, Junior Olympic Regional Championship or Collegiate Regional competition at least 2 times per year.
 - c. Attend a Judges Update Clinic every 4 years.
4. **National Judges** (current Level 4F):
 - a. Attend and judge at least 1 National Championship each year. Attend 4 National Championships within an Olympic Quad. These shall include:
 - U.S. Collegiate Championship
 - U.S. 12&U Invitational\U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior Olympic Championship (lower age division)

- U.S. Masters Championship

The number of competitions required will be prorated for any judge not beginning at the start of the Olympic Quad.

- Attend and judge an Association level competition each year.
- Attend and judge a Regional or Zone Championship each year.
- Attend a Judges Update Clinic every 4 years.

5. **National Judges (Level 4):**

- Attend and judge at least 1 National Championship each year. Attend 5 National Championships within an Olympic Quad. These shall include:

- U.S. Junior Olympic Championship (lower age division)
- U.S. Junior Olympic Championship (upper age division)
- U.S. Masters Championship
- U.S. Collegiate Championship
- U.S. 12&U Invitational/U.S. 13-15 Championship
- U.S. Junior Championship/U.S. National Championship

2 of the first 3 listed Championships must be attended at least 1 time within the quad; the other 3 may be any of the 6. The number of competitions required will be prorated for any judge not beginning at the start of the Olympic Quad.

- Attend and judge an USAAS Association competition each year.
- Attend and judge a Regional or Zone Championship each year.
- Attend a National Judges Update Clinic every 4 years.

6. **FINA and PAQ Judges (Level 5):**

- Attend and judge at least 1 National Championship each year. Attend 5 National Championships with an Olympic Quad. These shall include:

- U.S. Junior Olympic Championship (lower age division)
- U.S. Junior Olympic Championship (upper age division)
- U.S. Masters Championship
- U.S. Collegiate Championship
- U.S. 12&U Invitational/U.S. 13-15 Championship
- U.S. Junior Championship/U.S. National Championship

2 of the first 3 Championships must be attended at least 1 time within the quad; the other 3 may be any of the 6. If a Level 5 Judge is assigned to judge at least 2 International competitions within an Olympic Quad, the judges need to attend any 4 of the 6 U.S. Championships (1 per year)

- Attend and judge a Regional or Zone Championship each year.
- Attend a FINA Judges School every 4 years.
- Attend competitions necessary to meet FINA and PAQ requirements.

B. Definition of Certifiable Attendance:

- The judge must be in attendance, available and willing to judge for a minimum of 2/3 of the events.
- The competitive year begins on January 1st for determining whether the judge meets the requirements of numbers/kinds of Championships attended/judged.

C. Judge Update:

- All Levels 1-3 judges must attend an Association update. Level 4 judges must attend the National Judges Update. Level 5 judges who have taken and passed a FINA

Certification Test are not required to attend a National Judges Update. See Section 1.04 G.2 below.

2. All Level 1-3 judges not attending the current Association update will be required to complete the online course and take a written test. Level 4 National Judges attending the National Judges Update must attend an Association Update and take a written test.
3. The Judges Update written test will be provided by February 1st for a \$50.00 fee. The test is to be taken and returned to the Judges Administrator or Education Director within 30 days of receipt. If the judge does not pass the test (85% for Levels 1 & 2, 90% for Levels 3 & 4 passing scores), it shall be returned to the judge for correction and must be returned to the Judges Administrator or Education Director for further correction within 2 weeks of receipt of the test. The judge may not officiate at any level as a judge until the written test is passed and reinstatement requirements are met.

D. Evaluations:

1. National Judges are required to meet minimum evaluation standards for each calendar year. The minimum standard is a passing Lowest Acceptable Rating (LAR) of 80% of all routine events and 80% of all figure events judged, within a given year, with a minimal bias rating.
2. If the minimum standard is not met for routines, or figures, or both, the judge shall be notified in writing by the Judges Administrator and the judge's rating shall become conditional upon review by the Judges' Review Subcommittee.
3. Failure to Meet Minimum Evaluation Standard (See Section 1.03 D above):
 - a. Evaluations for Routines:
 1. Practice judge 3 Preliminary routine events on deck at a U.S. 13-15, U.S. Junior or U.S. National Championship.
 2. Mentorship Session: If failed, the rating is lapsed.
 - b. Evaluations for Figures:
 1. Practice judge and pass an entire Figure event at a U.S. 13-15 Championship or U.S. Junior Olympic Championship (12&under or 13-15 age groups).
 2. Mentorship Session: If failed the rating is lapsed.

E. Conditional Rating: The Conditional rating is effective January 1 of the following year for a period of 1 year. Judges failing to meet the reinstatement requirements as listed in Section 1.03 G below shall have a Lapsed rating.

F. Reinstatement of Conditional Rating: To reinstate the original rating during the conditional period, the judge must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Failure to Meet Attendance Requirements:

- a. For existing Level 1F – Practice judge a complete Figure event at an Association Championship. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
- b. For Level 1: Practice judge a complete Figure event and 3 Routine events at an Association competition. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
- c. For existing Level 2F – Practice judge a complete Figure event at an Association or Junior Olympic Regional Championship. If failed the rating is lapsed.
- d. For Level 2 – Mentorship Session on any 3 events at an Association or Junior Olympic Regional Championship. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
- e. For existing Level 3F –
 - 1) Mentorship Session at any 13-15 Zone Championship. If failed, the rating is lapsed.

- 2) Practice judge a complete Figure event at any 13-15 Zone Championship. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
- f. For Level 3 –
 - 1) Mentorship Session on any 3 events at any Junior or Senior Zone Championship. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
 - 2) Practice judge a complete Figure event at any 13-15 Zone Championship. If failed the rating is lapsed.
 - 3) Practice judge 3 events at any Junior or Senior Zone Championship. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
- g. For existing Level 4F:
 - 1) Mentorship Session at the U.S. 13-15 Championship or the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship in the 13-15 Age Group Division. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
 - 2) Practice judge a complete Figure event at the U.S. 13-15 Championship or the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship in the 13-15 Age Division. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
- h. For Levels 4 and 5:
 - 1) Complete a mentorship session in a minimum of 3 events at any of the following competitions, with a minimum of 2 National Judges on the panel. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior Championship
 - U.S. National Championship
 - 13-15 Age Division at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
 - 2) Practice judge 3 Preliminary routine events on deck at any of the competitions listed below. If failed, the rating is lapsed.
 - U.S. 13-15 Championship
 - U.S. Junior Championship
 - U.S. National Championship
 - 16 & over age group at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship
 - 3) For not attending a required Regional or Zone Championship in a given year, the judge must take the Level 3 written test.

G. Failure to Meet Judges Update Requirement: All judges are given the opportunity to attend Judges update Clinics in their associations. If not completed by the specified date, the rating is lapsed.

H. Reinstatement of a Lapsed Rating: To reinstate a Lapsed rating. Individuals who had been current within the past 3 years or less, must retake the appropriate level test. Individuals who have been lapsed for 4 years or more must petition the Judges Administrator for the reinstatement process.

1.05 Requirements for Specific Competitions:

A. National Championships:

1. It shall be the duty of the Judges Administrator, or designee, to select judges for all National Championships.
2. To be eligible to judge a Final event, a judge must also have been available for the Preliminary events.

B. Zone Championships:

1. It shall be the duty of the Zone Officials Chair or designee, to select judges for Zone Championships. If the Zone Officials Chair is affiliated, an unaffiliated official may be appointed by the Zone Officials Chair to assist in selecting judges.
2. To be eligible to judge a Final event, a judge must also have been in attendance and available for the Preliminary event.

C. Regional Championships:

1. It shall be the duty of the host Association Officials Chair, or designee, to select judges for Regional Championships.

D. Association Championships:

1. It shall be the duty of the Association Officials Chair, or designee, to select judges for Association Championships. If the Association Officials Chair is affiliated, an unaffiliated official may be appointed by the Association Officials Chair to assist in selecting judges.
2. In the absence of the Association Officials Chair: Duties shall be transferred to another official appointed by the Association Officials Chair.

1.06 Affiliation: A judge is considered affiliated if they:

- 4) Are a paid or volunteer coach, staff or administrator of a Team.
- 5) Have regularly scheduled attendance at Team practice.
- 6) Are a mother, father, sister or brother of a competitor.
- 7) Are within 1 year following separation of activity with a club. See USAAS Rule OD 2.3.3.1.

1.07 Judge Utilization for Figure Competition: Panels for figures shall be balanced by Zone, Association and club, taking into consideration the number of judges to be utilized per club, the number of panels and the degree of difficulty of the figures. For Selection of Judges, see USAAS Rule OD 2.3.4. Panel assignments shall be posted prior to Figure competition.

1.08 Rated Judges from Other Federations:

- A. Must reside in the USA.
- B. Must petition the Judges' Board.
- C. Present credentials to enter a mentoring program with a USAAS National Judge.
- D. May attain a comparable or higher rating after residing within the jurisdiction of the United States for at least 2 years.
- E. Meet all the requirements of the rating to be attained.

1.09 Judge Complaint & Review Procedure:

- A. Upon the Administrator receiving a written request for review of a judge's conduct, the Judges Administrator shall refer the matter to the USAAS Executive Director to be processed according to the USAAS Administrative Rules, Code of Ethics (Appendix P) or Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation Policy (Appendix S).