

American Riviera Figure Skating Club (ARFSC)

How to Prepare for a USFS Test

Your coach has been working with you or your child and has indicated that you or your skater is ready to take a test. Here are a few items to consider in order to make sure that the whole process goes smoothly.

Membership Currency: Make sure your USFS membership is current. Memberships are valid from July 1st of one year to June 30th of the following year. This is in order to synchronize with the membership term of United States Figure Skating (USFS) that we are affiliated with. If a membership is submitted anytime between July 1st and June 30th it still expires on June 30th. This is a USFS policy that ARFSC cannot do anything about. Your home club membership at ARFSC also enrolls you as a member with full privileges in USFS. There is no need to separately register for USFS membership. Please make sure to submit your membership application well in advance of the test session to allow time for processing.

Letter of Permission for Non-Home Club Members: ARFSC and most other USFS affiliated clubs require a letter of permission from an official of your home club before a test application can be executed. Please allow time for the letter to be generated and processed. A good rule of thumb is 2 weeks before you intend to submit the test application. If you are already a club member at ARFSC this is not necessary.

Submit your test application early: The best way you can assure your position on a test session is to get your test paperwork in early. Doing so will allow us to plan for the amount of ice we need as well as the judges we need, and get those judges here for the tests. We try to schedule judges appropriate for the type of test applications we receive.

Also remember that when we have limited ice time tests are given priority in the order that the applications are received. Club members get priority over 2nd club members who in turn get priority over non-club members up until the week before the test. In the last week leading up to the test club members cannot bump a non-club member off the session. Remember to leave time to have your coach sign your test form.

Payment: Payment in full for the test is required with the test form submission. Checks are held until the test is conducted in case the session needs to be cancelled due to issues beyond our control.

The Day of the Session: Get to the rink early! If there are test cancellations or failed tests your test could take place earlier than originally scheduled. A minimum rule of thumb is to be ready to take the ice 1/2 hour before your warm-up group is scheduled.

Judges: US Figure Skating judges are unpaid volunteers. They participate in the sport as judges because they love the sport. Professional coaches are not allowed to judge USFS tests. The judges

have a long history with the sport and many are former competitors. The judges are here to help you develop your skills. One of the most important things to remember is that the judges want you to pass and have a successful test. They are on your side, so don't fear them, they want to see you do well.

Not all judges are capable of judging every test. Judges get certified at three different levels in each of the disciplines we test: moves in the field, single freeskating, pairs freeskating, and ice dancing. Depending on the test mix requested we need to schedule an appropriate set of judges. By waiting too long to submit your test application you will run the risk that the type of judges you need for your test will not have been scheduled. Most of the judges we use live in the Los Angeles area and we must book our test sessions around their availability.

Attire: Skaters should dress appropriately, making sure they are warm. Skaters skate better when they are warm - you can't skate well if you're shivering! If you're a skater who tends to be cold on the ice, wear a long-sleeve outfit with no cut-out on the back or bodice. If you want to, wear body-conscious jackets and gloves to prevent shivering.

Skaters at any level should clean and polish their skates prior to testing. Dirty skates show little respect for the testing process, the skater and the judges. Long skate-lace tails looping outside of boots, whipping around visibly as test elements are performed are distracting as well as hazardous – make sure they're secure. You wouldn't compete with dirty skates and long lace tails – this is your sport, show pride in your appearance.

Test Etiquette: Understand the order in which you will skate your moves in the field tests. It is not the judges job to tell you what move to skate next. You should dry run your test several times - in the order that you will skate it - well in advance of the test. After each move is complete move to the starting point for the next move and wait for the head judge to signal that they are ready for you to skate the next move.

After the completion of the test, a skater should go to the skate door and wait to see if the judges want a reskate or if the test is complete. Waiting in front of the judges does not give them an opportunity to talk with the judge in charge about a reskate. If a reskate is requested, the scoring from the judges is close and they really want to give you an opportunity to pass the test.

Virtual tests that are held on freestyle sessions may have several skaters on the ice. Please wear a sash that identifies you as the person being tested. This allows other skaters to yield the right of way to you in a similar fashion as when your program music is playing. It also allows the judges to pick you out of the crowd. For virtual skating skills tests all of the skills must be filmed in one continuous take. It is up to you to know the skill order and to promptly move through the skills.

For many low level moves tests there may be multiple skaters testing simultaneously. If this is the case space yourself away from the other skaters so that each of you has room to complete your move without having to dodge another skater. A follow-the-leader approach with appropriate spacing works well in this environment.

SMILE! Be proud of what you have learned and what you can do. Judges know how much you've worked on your skills. They're on your side!