

# About USFS Levels and Testing

Skaters who have reached ISI Level Freestyle 1 or LTS-USA Level Freeski 2 may want to consider joining USFS and starting their testing structure. USFS membership and testing tends to be for the more serious skater who is planning to commit more time and financial resources to their skating. USFS is the road to the Olympics and is for the more serious minded skater. Skaters may also want to consider testing if they would like to consider being a coach. Many facilities use USFS and ISI tests and competition history when hiring for their arena.

The USFSA defines a system of "Tests" which allow a skater to progress through a sequence of logical steps in his or her competitive development. The Tests also establish a benchmarking structure for competitive purposes. All USFSA sanctioned competitions group skaters according to levels of Tests passed. This allows skaters of similar abilities to compete against each other.

**Judged Tests:** A much more formal test structure is designed for skaters who have advanced past the basics. These tests are judged by USFSA-appointed judges at formal "test sessions". The results are forwarded to the USFSA which keeps official records of each skater's test accomplishments.

In each skating discipline, many levels of achievement are defined. See USFSA Test Requirements for more information on the specifics for each level. Note that a skater's age does not figure into his or her skating level -- only the demonstration of his/her proficiency through the passing of tests (note though that for competitive purposes there are some age limits placed upon skaters at certain levels -- see Competitive Qualification Requirements for more information).

A summary of USFSA Test levels and Test disciplines is shown below:

Moves in the Field	Singles FS	Pairs	Dance
Pre-Preliminary	Pre-Preliminary	Preliminary	Preliminary
Preliminary	Preliminary	Juvenile	Pre-Bronze
Juvenile	Juvenile	Novice	Pre-Silver
Intermediate	Intermediate	Junior	Silver
Novice	Novice	Senior	Pre-Gold
Junior	Junior		Gold
Senior	Senior		Junior International
			Senior International

Moves-in-the-field is a technical discipline designed to improve skater's abilities in areas such as stroking, turns, edge work, etc. It is necessary for all skaters to take and pass the Moves-in-the-Field (MIF) test associated with a particular level before taking the Freestyle or Pairs test at that level. It is not possible for a skater to "opt out" of the Moves-in-the-Field tests. It is ok to have a higher MIF test level than you do FS level, if that is your choice.

## How are Tests Conducted?

Test Sessions are held on a regular basis by most USFSA affiliated clubs. A test session is usually a very official event at which many skaters will test. All Tests are judged by a panel of USFSA appointed judges who may not be related to the skater or the skater's coach. All results from a Test Session are sent by the host club's Test Chairperson to the USFSA headquarters, which registers the skater's accomplishment and publishes a notice of that accomplishment in Skating magazine.

Skaters who are ready to test make application to the Test Chairperson of their club (or to another area club if their own club does not hold test sessions). There is a fee associated with the taking of tests. This covers ice time, administrative expenses associated with the paperwork, and the judge's travel expenses (judges are not paid for their work, however inasmuch as many have to travel quite a distance to get to test sessions, they do receive reimbursement for the costs of their travel). Generally, the Test Chairperson will post a schedule of skater's test times a few days before the test day. Skaters should be at the rink and ready to skate at their appointed time.

Your coach may be present at a test session, but should not disrupt the flow of the test.

Usually, a test session is an "all-day" event. You will probably be scheduled in a grouping with several other skaters taking the same or similar tests. Your group will be scheduled for a "warm-up" time, followed immediately by the skating of the tests within that group. Usually, you will be the only one on the ice during your actual test, but for some tests (some moves-in-the-field, and the pre-preliminary freestyle) you may share the ice with others.

There will be judges there to evaluate your performance. Usually, there are 3 judges for all tests. For some tests (lower-level) it is acceptable for a single high-level judge to judge your test, and this is sometimes done when ice-time is limited. The judges are usually off the ice in a hockey-box or similar area, and will usually have clipboards with your test papers on them. Usually, there will be one judge called the "judge-in-charge". If your test requires "instruction" (i.e. if the judges need to talk to you), then it is this judge that does the talking.

When it is time for your Test, the judges or an announcer will inform you of your opportunity.

If this is a Freestyle or Pairs program, or a Dance test, you should skate to your starting position and wait for your music to start. If it is a Moves test or Pre-Preliminary or Adult PreBronze Freestyle test you should go to the judges for instructions on how they will conduct the test.

When you have finished your test, you should stay on the ice until the judges dismiss you. You should approach the judges, but not "too close" (sometimes they will need to discuss aspects of your test privately). The judges might ask you to "reskate" an element or two from the test. If this is done, it is because that element was "not quite right", and the judges want to give you another chance to try it. Usually, they will tell you what it was about the element that they would like to see improved. If you are asked to reskate an element, you will be given the opportunity to "warm it up" before you do it for real, if you choose to do so. If you do want to warm it up, you need to tell the judges before you do it that you are doing a warmup.

After you are dismissed, you will need to wait for your results. Usually, the judges will complete a group of skaters before handing in their paperwork. Eventually though, you will get copies of your "Test Papers". These will have the judge's comments on your performance, and at the bottom will have an indication of your "Pass" or "Retry" status. With a 3-judge panel, you must receive a passing mark from at least 2 judges in order to pass the test. Usually, you are allowed to keep copies of your test papers, and you and your coach should use them as a tool for developing your instructional plans.

If you should fail to pass a test, you are required to wait a minimum of 28 days before retrying the test (see section TR 19.02 in the Rulebook).

## Clothing for Tests

A Test is a pretty formal occasion, but is not a competition. There is no audience to impress. You don't need to wear your fanciest dress or clothing. You should dress neatly though (no sweats!). A nice practice dress is more than adequate for any test. If you need it, a sweater or light gloves are fine.

## Finally, note the following about judges

Please be aware that judges are not terrible horrible people, and they don't bite! Judges are often skaters themselves, or past skaters, or parents of skaters. They have your best interests at heart, and really want you to pass (they will not however pass a test for which the skater is not adequately prepared). Don't be afraid of them, and don't let them make you feel nervous. Just skate your best and show them what you can do.