

Q&A for Partner Background Screens

Q1: Why are background screens going to be required of partners?

- Partners on tests have more physical contact with minors than people in any other position – volunteer or paid – within U.S. Figure Skating. Background screens:
 1. Protect U.S. Figure Skating participants from known offenders so that such known offenders cannot participate in U.S. Figure Skating programs and events;
 2. Deter offenders who have not been caught from joining U.S. Figure Skating clubs because the organization has a known policy against abuse;
 3. Protect U.S. Figure Skating’s reputation as a sport where participants are safe from abuse;
 4. Protect U.S. Figure Skating member clubs, programs, events and all members from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants.

(U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program Handbook, Section IV, page 30)

Q2: How will the background screens be done? Is it the club’s responsibility to do it or to ask the partner to do it?

- Adult test partners (18 and over) must submit information for and pass a background screen prior to partnering any tests with minors (under 18). Once the background screen is passed, it is good for the remainder of the season (through June 30), but partners will need to submit information for and pass a new background screen each season they are going to partner tests. Anyone who is a coach and has submitted information for and successfully passed the annual background screen as a part of coach compliance meets this requirement.
- The burden is on the adult partner, as they should know ahead of time that they will be partnering tests, since partnering usually involves advanced planning to practice with the candidate and be at the test session. Partners should allow 10-14 business days for the background screen to be processed.

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- The background screens will be done through the Members Only site, just as they are now for coaches. To submit information for the background screen, partners need to go to <https://www.usfsaonline.org>, log in and select the “Coach/Partner Compliance” menu (see screen shot below):

The screenshot shows the US Figure Skating website interface. At the top left is the logo. At the top right, there is a user profile section with a name, a "Sign Out" link, and a red "Impersonation Mode" warning. Below this is a navigation bar with several menu items: "Events", "Coach/Partner Compliance" (circled in red), "General Info", "Pending Approvals", "Merchandise", "Directory", and "Account". The main content area is titled "Coach/Partner Compliance" and is split into two columns. The left column contains a welcome message for the 2017-2018 season, a link to "COACH COMPLIANCE.pdf", and a link to "PARTNER REQUIREMENTS.pdf". The right column is titled "Your Compliance Status" and lists four items: "Current Regular Membership" (Green Light), "Background Screen" (Green Light), "CER Completion" (None On File), and "Proof of Insurance Verified" (None On File). The "Current PSA Member" status is also listed with a Green Light icon.

- Once a person has submitted to and passed the background screen, their name will be added to the “Coach and Partner Compliance List” (see Q3 below for additional information).
- U.S. Figure Skating hopes the clubs will partner with us in informing their members of this new rule. U.S. Figure Skating will utilize tools such as SKATING magazine, Facebook, Twitter and email to spread the word. Clubs are strongly encouraged to use communication tools available to them including their own website, Twitter and Facebook pages and club newsletters. U.S. Figure Skating can provide sample language to clubs to help with these communications.

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Q3: Whose responsibility is it to ensure that partners have submitted to and passed the required background screen?

- It's the responsibility of the club running the test session, just as it is that club's responsibility to verify the credentials of the coaches. Partners who complete a background screen will pull into the "U.S. Figure Skating Coach and Partner Compliance Report" available on U.S. Figure Skating Online at <http://www.usfigureskating.org/story?id=84158> (from www.usfigureskating.org, go to "Coaches" and then "Information for Clubs"), so they can be checked at the same time coach credentials are checked without adding an extra step. Below is an example of how the report will look.

2017-18 U.S. Figure Skating Coach and Partner Compliance Report							
Name	City, St	Reg Mem Valid Thru	Background Screen	Proof of Ins	CER	Can Coach	Can Partner
Coach, Super	Denver, CO	6/30/2018	Green	Y	A	Y	Y
Partner, Awesome	Denver, CO	6/30/2018	Green	N		N	Y
Skater, Suzie	Denver, CO	6/30/2018	Under 18	Y	A	Y	Y
Skater, Bob	Denver, CO	6/30/2018	Under 18	N	A	N	Y

- We recommend that clubs add the following questions to all of their test registration forms for partnered pair and dance tests:
 - Is the test candidate under 18 (yes or no)?
 - Who will be partnering the test?
 - Is the partner under 18 (yes or no)?
 - Parent/Guardian agreement via signature to the following statement or a similar statement: "I understand that if the candidate is under 18 and the partner is 18 or over, the partner must submit information for and pass a background screen through the U.S. Figure Skating Members Only site before being able to partner the candidate on any pair or dance tests. I further understand that a background screen can take 10-14 business days to process, and if the partner does not meet the background screen requirements, he or she will not be able to partner the candidate on the test and the test will either need to be taken with a different partner or postponed to a later date."

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Q4: If a member partners a test without taking and/or passing the required background screen and this is discovered later, will it invalidate the result of the test?

- No

Q5: What is the penalty for not following this rule?

- As with coaches, a partner who has not submitted information for and passed the required background screen will not be allowed to partner skaters in a test session, and if they attempt to partner at a test session in violation of the rule, they will be subject to disciplinary action by U.S. Figure Skating.
- If a club knowingly chooses to allow someone to partner tests without submitting information for and passing the required background screen, that club opens themselves up to a liability risk as well as a possible sanction by U.S. Figure Skating.

Note: It is possible that unique scenarios could arise. It is important to remember that unique scenarios that arise during a test session become a field of play decision of the test chair, and different test chairs may come to different decisions. Therefore, U.S. Figure Skating strongly recommends that any person who is 18 years or older who may be partnering one or more minors on a test session take the necessary steps to submit information for and pass the background screen in advance of the test session. U.S. Figure Skating strives to provide a safe environment for its members that is free of abuse and harassment, and the protection of our minor skaters far outweighs any inconvenience to the adult partners.