



Virtual Test Guidelines

Updated 8/12/2021

Whether or not to offer virtual testing is at each club's discretion, but virtual testing can be used to allow skaters to test in circumstances where it may prove burdensome or impossible to hold in-person test sessions. A club can offer virtual testing across the board, or it can offer a combination of in-person and virtual testing. For example, a club may find that holding in-person test sessions for free skate and moves in the field tests is relatively easy but may need to hold a separate virtual test session for high level dance and pair tests.

Following are guidelines to ensure the successful conduct of virtual test sessions. The guidelines are divided into sections by type of participant, but all participants are encouraged to read all guidelines.

General Guidelines

Virtual test sessions are organized and conducted by U.S. Figure Skating member clubs. No virtual test can be submitted directly to U.S. Figure Skating.

There may not be more than eight other skaters on the ice during a skater's test. Even if eight skaters or less are on the ice, the video must not be submitted if any skater disrupts the testing skater or prevents the testing skater from being the focus of the video. Judges must contact the test chair with any video concerns – this may result in the video not being acceptable for virtual testing. If the video is questionable, it is probably best to not submit it.

It is the responsibility of each judge to determine if the video for a test they have been assigned is of sufficient quality to evaluate the skater. If the judge does not feel the video is of sufficient quality, the judge must contact the test chair with their concern and withdraw from judging the test. This applies only to the quality of the video recording, and not to the quality of the skating. Once a judge has submitted a completed test form to the test chair, the judge cannot reject the video.

Test chairs should make sure to provide all documentation to judges. This includes:

- Correct test form with skater name and membership number
- Signed affidavit
- Release and Consent
- Video

Skater Guidelines

In moves in the field tests, there is a mandatory deduction of one point (-1) for not executing the correct introductory steps (Rule 5036). "Each element (in moves in the field tests) must be commenced from a standing, stationary position with a maximum of seven introductory steps unless specified otherwise in (the) rules (U.S. Figure Skating

Rulebook, 5021).” In virtual testing, while the video must be a continuous recording, skaters do not need to be continuously skating (short breaks between elements are allowed). It is important that one element in a moves in the field test does not run into another.

Skaters may stop briefly between moves in a moves in the field test, but the stop must be brief (10 seconds or less). The video must continue recording the entire time. If stops between moves become too long, a new video may be required.

There is to be no coaching of the skater during the performance of their test (with the exception of brief breaks between moves in moves in the field tests and breaks between partnered and solo portions of a pattern dance test) (Rule 4302). Violation of this rule may disqualify the video.

Because there are no reskates in virtual testing, it is in the skater’s best interest to not submit videos with missing elements or other major errors (such as moves out of order, less than the required number of patterns in a pattern dance, etc.).

Video Guidelines

Videos must be recorded in landscape mode and must be of the highest quality possible (at least 720p). It is important that the skater is framed from head to toe during the entire test. The video must be of a high enough quality that the judges can clearly make out the skater’s expression and feet while the skater is testing. The video must be as stable as possible with minimal “jittering” of the camera. Please refer to the “Virtual Testing Video Requirements” document for more details. If a judge does not feel the video is of sufficient quality to evaluate the skater, they must inform the test chair of their concern and withdraw from judging the test.

If a competition video meets the requirements for virtual testing as provided in Rule 4104 (C) and is of acceptable quality, it can be used for a virtual test.

Test Chair Guidelines

Test chairs must make sure expectations are clear when inviting judges (such as number of tests to be assigned, when the tests will be sent, due dates, etc.). This will help the judges plan their time and know what to expect.

Test chairs must create a schedule of virtual tests (much like a schedule at an in-person test session) with judge assignments. This schedule should be sent to the judges. This will help each judge know who the other judges are who are assigned to judge a test.

It is important for it to be clearly communicated to the judges, and indicated on the test schedule, what tests are contingent. These contingent tests must only be sent to the judges AFTER all judging is complete on the prerequisite tests, and the tests have passed.

Judges must return the completed test form to the test chair only and not share with anyone else. It must not be uploaded to the shared Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.

Test chairs must review the submitted videos (even if only a portion) to screen for quality and other issues. Test chairs must also verify the skater name and test in the video match what is provided to the judges.

It is strongly suggested that clubs provide judges a gift card with a value of at least \$15 for 1-5 tests, \$20 for 6-10 tests, etc. This not only shows the judges they are appreciated but can help offset costs incurred while judging (such as electricity, Internet service charge, paper, printing, etc.). It is advised to include this information in the invitation to judge so they know what to expect. If a judge has expenses beyond what is offset by the gift card, they should submit for reimbursement in accordance with U.S. Figure Skating rules and guidelines.

Judge Guidelines

Before accepting an invitation to judge virtually, judges should make sure expectations are clear (such as number of tests to be assigned, when the tests will be sent, due dates, etc.). Any uncertainties must be addressed with the test chair.

Judges must behave as though they were at an in-person test session. Rule 4524 regarding use of electronic communicative devices applies to virtual tests. Judges should attempt to watch the entire test in one sitting without break. The test must be viewed at normal speed. The video may be paused between elements in moves in the field tests, and between partnered and solo patterns in dance, to write comments. Judges may rewatch the video to check for missing elements.

Timing of free skate, free dance, and pairs tests are the responsibility of each judge. Use of time stamps on the video are not acceptable, as they are not precise enough – a physical stopwatch or stopwatch on a cellular phone may be used.

For pattern dance tests, it is the responsibility of each judge to determine if the music meets the requirements listed in the rules (8223) because there is no judge-in-charge in a virtual testing environment.

Judges must refrain from discussing the test until the other judges have submitted their completed testing sheet to the test chair. Concerns with video quality must be addressed with the test chair and not discussed by the panel. Once a judge has submitted a completed test form to the test chair, the judge cannot reject the video.

Judges must return the completed test form to the test chair only and not share with anyone else. It must not be uploaded to the shared Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.

When judging virtual tests, the standard is the same as during in-person test sessions. The skater must not be given any special considerations. Remember that the skater and coach are responsible for the video submitted. If there is an issue with the video, or the skating within it, the skater can choose to not submit the video.

Once a judge has submitted their completed test form to the test chair, changes to comments and scores cannot be made (except for correcting sum errors in the total, circling the test result, and signing their name). The judge cannot reject the video after their completed test form has been submitted to the test chair.