



## A Guide to the 2021-22 USA Climbing Youth Speed Qualifying Series

### Overview

The Speed discipline for the B, A and Junior categories involves competitors climbing a standardized route of specialized holds while harnessed into an auto-belay system, striving to reach the top of the route as fast as they can. The length of the route is either 10 or 15 meters tall. For the C category, the Speed routes do not have the same nationally standardized route requirements in terms of the type of holds, their placement, or the length of the route. All Speed competitors are timed from the moment of the computerized starting “beep” until the moment that they touch the finishing pad at the top of the route. If a climber false starts or falls before reaching the finish pad, they do not receive a time for that attempt. More details on the rules for the Speed discipline can be found in sections 9 and 16 of the USA Climbing Rulebook.

The Youth Speed Qualifying Series operates differently from Bouldering and Lead/Top Rope in a number of ways.

- Qualification Speed Trials (QSTs) are the equivalent of Qualification Events (QEs) in Bouldering and Lead/Top Rope. QSTs are held at facilities that have the walls, holds, belay systems, and timing systems necessary to comply with USA Climbing’s certification standards.
- QSTs can be held from October 16 to May 15, so there may be QSTs that take place after the completion of the Boulder or Lead/Top Rope QEs. In addition, **an athlete may compete at and achieve a qualifying time at any QST in the country; it does not need to be located in their home Region or Division.** You can find dates and locations of QSTs at <https://usaclimbing.org/compete/regions/>.
- Most Speed QSTs will only be open to athletes in the B, A and Junior categories. Some will include an opportunity for C category athletes to compete. In addition, at every Lead/Top Rope Divisional championships, there will be a QST for C category athletes. There are no USAC-sanctioned Speed competitions for D category athletes.
- The goals for those competing at QSTs are to practice and improve their Speed climbing skills in a competition environment and - for B, A, and Junior athletes - to achieve a qualifying time that meets or beats the national benchmark time established by USA Climbing for their age/gender category. Those benchmark times are listed at the end of this document.
- Eligibility for B, A and Junior athletes to compete in the Speed discipline at the Youth National Championships is based on whether they achieve the relevant benchmark time on at least one of their runs at a QST; their rank order finish at the event does not impact their eligibility. For example, an athlete could hypothetically finish first in their category at a QST but not achieve the benchmark time (and therefore not earn eligibility for Nationals), OR they could hypothetically finish last and successfully achieve the benchmark time and become eligible.
- Because of the use of non-standardized Speed routes for the C category, those athletes earn eligibility to compete at Nationals simply by achieving at least one valid time (i.e., finish the route) at a USAC-sanctioned QST.

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### **Competition Format**

At a minimum, a QST consists of a single Qualification Round, which provides each competitor with two runs (a QST may also have more than one Qualification Round). In addition, a QST may include an optional knockout-format Final Round of four or eight competitors - assuming that there are at least four competitors in that category. A practice round is also optional, however, any times recorded during a practice round do not count towards Nationals eligibility.

For the Qualification Round, all registered competitors within a category are put into a randomized Start List. Half of the athletes will start on Lane A and the other half will start on Lane B. For their second run, they will climb on the other lane. Note: climbers are given a minimum of five minutes rest between their two runs.

Here is a hypothetical Start List for a six-person Qualification Round:

Run #	Lane A	Lane B
1	Climber #1	Climber #4
2	Climber #2	Climber #5
3	Climber #3	Climber #6
4	Climber #4	Climber #1
5	Climber #5	Climber #2
6	Climber #6	Climber #3

Most QSTs are run using an automated timing system that has a series of audible tones to start the climbers, monitors for false starts, and then records the climbers' time when they touch the finish pad. In cases where a gym does not have an automated timing system, a QST may use volunteers to record times with manual stopwatches, with at least two timers per lane and the average of the times calculated as the recorded time. See Rules Addendum A for more details.

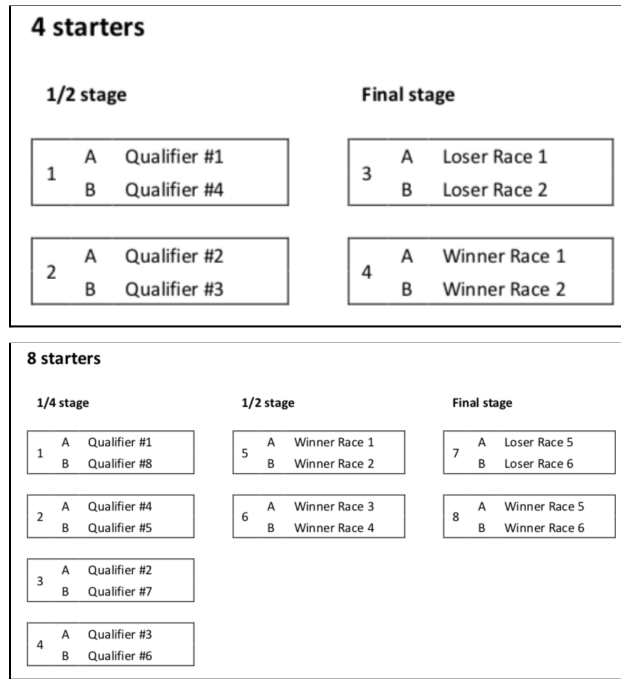
In the event that a climber false starts, they do not get to re-run that race. However, any valid times recorded in previous races will still count towards Nationals eligibility, and the climber may still compete in subsequent races at the QST (i.e., they can still compete in the Final Round).

If the QST includes an optional knockout-format Final Round and there are at least four competitors in an individual category, the knockout round is organized as follows:

- All competitors are ranked in their category from fastest to slowest based on the best time of their two runs, regardless of whether those times meet the benchmark time.
- The Final Round will consist of either the fastest four competitors (if there are between four and seven competitors in the category with a valid time from the Qualification round) or the fastest eight competitors (if there are eight or more competitors in the category with a valid time).

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- The four or eight competitors are then matched up in a standard single elimination bracket, run as a series of head-to-head races, with the fastest climber from Qualifications paired with the slowest climber, etc., and the winner of each race advances to the next stage. See the brackets below for how the 4- and 8-competitor formats for a Final Round work.
- Any valid time recorded during a Final Round may also be used to achieve eligibility for Nationals.



### Qualification Speed Trials Benchmark Times for 2022 Youth National Championships

Youth Category	Benchmark Time for 15m Wall	Benchmark Time for 10m Wall
FJR	16.75 seconds	11.25 seconds
FYA	16.75 seconds	11.25 seconds
FYB	18.75 seconds	12.50 seconds
MJR	12.25 seconds	8.25 seconds
MYA	12.25 seconds	8.25 seconds
MYB	14.75 seconds	10.00 seconds

QST results and Speed National Championship eligibility lists will be posted on the USA Climbing website at [www.usaclimbing.org](http://www.usaclimbing.org).

**We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming QST!**