

USA Climbing Policy – National Team Eligibility

USA Climbing does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.

USA Climbing believes that every athlete should be allowed to compete in a respectful, safe and harassment-free environment. USA Climbing also believes that every athlete should be allowed to participate in fair competition in accordance with USA Climbing's rules, policies, and mission.



Purpose & Scope:

The USA Climbing National Team Eligibility Policy ("this Policy") sets forth the requirements and procedures regarding a USA Climbing member athlete's eligibility to be a USA Climbing National Team member, considering factors that include US citizenship, US residency, and/or past IFSC climbing competition participation representing a non-US National Federation.

This Policy includes directives for athlete advancement pathways that inform the rules and procedures for athlete eligibility to advance to the next competition round and/or Championship level for each competition Series, as well as Team Selection procedures.

Policy:

The USA Climbing National Team Eligibility Policy is influenced by IFSC policy, which requires an athlete to have US citizenship in order to represent the US National Federation in IFSC competitions. Further, IFSC policy does not allow a US citizen athlete to represent the US if that athlete has represented another (non-US) National Federation (NF) in an IFSC competition and has not taken the necessary steps, and acquired the necessary approvals, to restore their eligibility to represent the US. (See the [IFSC Rulebook](#), in particular, Rules 2.10 through 2.13.)

The goal of the USA Climbing National Team Eligibility Policy is to balance several interests:

- A fair and uniform selection pathway for athletes to represent the US at international competitions.
- Development and achievement opportunities for youth who reside in the US, regardless of their eligibility to represent the US at international competitions.
- Enhanced access to competitive climbing in the US.
- Transparency in USA Climbing processes and competition results.
- Maintenance of USA Climbing member privacy to the extent possible.

It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to ensure accurate and current information relevant to this Policy is provided to USA Climbing, including during membership registration and event registration. Inaccurate information relevant to this policy for an athlete may result in the athlete's competition eligibility being denied, their USA Climbing membership being suspended, and/or the athlete being removed or disqualified from a competition.

Any questions regarding this Policy may be directed to USA Climbing at info@usacimbing.org.

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1 Competition Series

- 1.1 USA Climbing has several competition Series (as defined in the USA Climbing Rulebook); this Policy considers each separately, as each Series has a different set of purposes and considerations.

Series	Regarding National Team Eligibility
Elite	<p>The primary purpose for the Elite Series is the selection of National Teams to represent the US in IFSC events.</p> <p>As such, the membership of the National Team and athlete advancement to the next round/competition is heavily weighted toward US citizens who are eligible (by IFSC policy) to represent the US.</p>
Youth	<p>Like the Elite Series, one of the purposes of the Youth Series is the selection of National Teams.</p> <p>In addition, the Youth Series also provides a broad set of competition opportunities to all US youth residents. It is in USA Climbing's interest to provide opportunities to non-US citizen resident youth who may, when able, work to obtain US citizenship and then be able to represent the US at IFSC competitions.</p> <p>Further, until the Recreational Series develops, the Youth Series is the primary avenue for growth of the sport in the US for youth.</p>
Collegiate	<p>A significant purpose of the Collegiate Series is to provide a community-based set of competition opportunities to athletes attending colleges or universities in the US, regardless of citizenship. Growth of the Collegiate Series is a strategic priority of USA Climbing.</p> <p>Another purpose of the Series is selection of National Teams; however, at this time, international competition occurs only every other year.</p>
Paraclimbing	<p>Like the Elite Series, the current primary purpose for the Paraclimbing Series is the selection of National Teams to represent the US in IFSC events.</p> <p>USA Climbing recognizes that the Paraclimbing Series also serves as a training and even team-selection opportunity for Paraclimbing athletes of other National Federations.</p> <p>Further, USA Climbing is looking to opportunities to be involved in the development of the Paraclimbing community.</p>
Recreational	<p>The Recreational Series has no National Team and therefore is not affected by this Policy.</p>

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2 Athlete National Team Eligibility Designations

- 2.1 Each athlete is assigned a Designation for each Series; an athlete may have a different Designation when competing in the Youth Series than when competing in a non-Youth Series.
- 2.2 When participating in the Youth Series, an athlete is designated as follows:

Notation	Athlete Designation – Youth Series
ICE	<p><u>International Competition Eligible (eligible for National Team)</u> Per IFSC policy, an athlete is eligible to represent the US in IFSC competitions if the athlete meets ALL of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The athlete is a US citizen; AND ii. The athlete does not have an IFSC license to represent another NF in an IFSC competition; AND iii. The athlete does not intend to represent another NF in future IFSC competitions.
NTE	<p><u>National Team Eligible (not international eligible)</u> An athlete who does not meet the requirement to be designated ICE is eligible for a Youth National Team if the athlete meets ALL of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The athlete must have permanently resided in the U.S. for the most recent two (2) years; AND ii. The athlete does not have an IFSC license to represent another NF in an IFSC competition; AND iii. The athlete does not intend to represent another NF in future IFSC competitions.
NTI	<p><u>National Team Ineligible (not international eligible)</u> An athlete who does not meet the requirements to be designated either ICE or NTE is not eligible for a National Team.</p>

- 2.3 When participating in the Elite Series, Collegiate Series, or Paraclimbing Series, an athlete is designated as follows:

Notation	Athlete Designation – Elite, Collegiate, and Paraclimbing Series
ICE	<p><u>International Competition Eligible (eligible for National Team)</u> Per IFSC policy, an athlete is eligible to represent the US in IFSC competitions if the athlete meets ALL of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The athlete is a US citizen; AND ii. The athlete does not have an IFSC license to represent another NF in an IFSC competition; AND iii. The athlete does not intend to represent another NF in future IFSC competitions.
NTI	<p><u>National Team Ineligible (not international eligible)</u> An athlete who does not meet the requirements to be designated ICE is not eligible for a National Team.</p>

For the avoidance of doubt:

- An athlete designated ICE in one Series would be designated ICE in all Series. (ICE is the designation of the vast majority of USA Climbing athletes.)
- An athlete designated NTE in the Youth Series would be designated NTI in the Elite, Collegiate, or Paraclimbing Series.
- An athlete designated NTI in one Series would be designated NTI in all Series

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3 Notation / Advancement / National Champion based on National Team Eligibility

3.1 For each Series, the following table sets forth:

- a) Notations that may be used on registration lists, Start Lists, and results displays at USA Climbing competitions.
- b) Advancement of competitors to the immediately next competition round or Championship competition.
- c) Eligibility to be National Champion or to establish a Speed National Record.

Series	Notation	Additional Advancement Implications	National Champion
Elite	NTI	<p>The advancement quota defines the number of athletes who advance, independent of designation. (i.e., there is no additional advancement of ICE athletes based on the ranking of NTI athletes.)</p> <p>There is a limit on the number of NTI athletes who are eligible to advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two (2) to Semi-Final round • One (1) to Final round, except in Speed • Zero (0) to Final round in Speed 	ICE are eligible
Youth	NTE NTI	<p>The advancement quota defines the number of ranked ICE athletes who advance.</p> <p>A NTE or NTI athlete will advance if they are ranked tied with or better than any advancing ICE athlete.</p> <p>NTI athletes are not eligible to advance to a Knockout Format Speed Final round. (NTE athletes are eligible to advance to a Knockout Format Speed Final round.)</p>	ICE and NTE are eligible
Collegiate	None	<p>The advancement quota defines the number of athletes who advance, independent of designation. (i.e., there is no additional advancement of ICE athletes based on the ranking of NTI athletes.)</p> <p>There is no limit on the number of NTI who may advance.</p>	All are eligible
Paralimbing	NTI	<p>The advancement quota defines the number of ranked ICE athletes who advance.</p> <p>A NTE or NTI athlete will advance if they are ranked tied with or better than any advancing ICE athlete.</p> <p>There is no limit on the number of NTI who may advance.</p>	ICE are eligible
Recreational	n/a	n/a	n/a

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4 Deadlines

- 4.1 All athlete information relevant to this Policy must be appropriately and accurately submitted prior to, or concurrent with, the athlete's registration for a competition in the USA Climbing membership platform. Once submitted to USA Climbing, any change to an athlete's citizenship or residency status must be updated in the USA Climbing membership platform; athletes may contact USA Climbing at info@usacimbing.org for assistance.
- 4.2 Athletes who are anticipating changes to their citizenship status are expected to notify USA Climbing in a timely manner (e.g., 30 days prior to the competition's registration deadline) to allow USAC to anticipate such changes, guide the athlete through relevant processes, and/or extend an information deadline (not a registration deadline) if USA Climbing determines that such an extension is warranted.
- 4.3 As set forth in this Policy, submission of inaccurate information is subject to disqualification, ineligibility, and/or suspension.

5 Storage and Retention of Information

- 5.1 Information relevant to this Policy, including an athlete's citizenship, residency, and participation in IFSC competitions shall be stored in USA Climbing's membership platform and/or other data storage mechanisms.
- 5.2 USA Climbing will make, and help others make, best efforts to provide appropriate privacy safeguards, though it is important to note that much of that information is used to determine athlete Designation, which is information that is publicly visible.

6 Speed Knockout Format

- 6.1 In the Elite Series and Youth Series, the Speed Knockout Format Final rounds have special considerations. A format like the head-to-head knockout bracket is effective and fair when all competitors are competing for the same limited-availability goals. In a situation where some athletes are competing towards National Team Selection and some athletes are not, undesired effects may occur.
 - a) Elite Series athletes/competitors who are not eligible to represent the US internationally (designated NTI) are not eligible for Speed Knockout rounds.
 - b) Youth Series athletes/competitors who are not eligible for the Youth National Team (designated NTI) are not eligible for Speed Knockout rounds.

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Procedures:

7 Data Collection by USAC

- 7.1 In order to determine an athlete's designation under this Policy, USA Climbing membership registration and/or event registration includes questions regarding citizenship, residency, and IFSC participation representing a non-US National Federation (NF).

Such membership/event registration may include the following questions and selections.

"Which of the following best describes your citizenship and residency status?"

- 1) Citizen of only US
- 2) Citizen of US and at least one other country (aka "dual citizen")
- 3) Not US citizen but year-round resident of US for the most recent 2 continuous years
- 4) None of the above

"Which of the following best describes your IFSC participation?"

- 1) I always represented the US while participating in an IFSC competition.
- 2) I have represented a National Federation other than the US while participating in an IFSC competition.
- 3) I have never participated in an IFSC competition.

- 7.2 As set forth in this Policy, submission of inaccurate information is subject to disqualification, ineligibility, and/or suspension.

8 Data Review by USA Climbing

- 8.1 USA Climbing may (but is not required to) review IFSC results at any time to determine if a USA Climbing member athlete has competed for another National Federation and, if so, take action consistent with this Policy.

9 Information Presentation

- 9.1 When displaying Series rankings, registration status, Start Lists, and competition results, only the athlete Designations that affect the display of information may be shown. Designations that do not affect the display should not be shown.

For example, as the Designations NTE and NTI have no impact on Collegiate advancement, those Designations should not be shown on Collegiate Series competition results.

In the event that an athlete has a Pre-Qualified Designation, that prequalified Designation (e.g., "PQ") is displayed instead of NTE or NTI, as relevant.

- 9.2 As an alternative to 9.1 above, Series rankings, registration status, Start Lists, and competition results displays at a USA Climbing competition may use the notation EA (Extra Advancement) to indicate athletes whose designation/status impacts the advancement of additional athletes in identical ways.

For example, if the Rulebook sets forth that Youth athletes designated "Pre-Qualified" (PQ) cause additional advancement for a given Series, competition, or round ranking, then NTE, NTI, and PQ may all be designated EA on the relevant Series rankings, registration lists, Start Lists, and results displays.

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10 Actions due to Discovery of Inaccurate Designation

10.1 An athlete’s designation may affect the advancement of that athlete and may also affect the advancement of other athletes. As such, accurate designation is a priority.

If an athlete’s designation is found to be incorrect due to the athlete (or their representative) submitting inaccurate or misleading information to USA Climbing, it may result in the athlete’s competition eligibility being denied, their USA Climbing membership being suspended, and/or the athlete being removed or disqualified from a competition.

10.2 In any case where an athlete’s designation is found to be incorrect, USA Climbing will make reasonable efforts to correct the athlete’s designation in the membership, registration, and scoring systems as relevant, so that advancement of that athlete and other athletes is correct.

However, once the relevant appeal deadline has passed (as set forth in the USA Climbing Rulebook), any advancement indication for other athletes (athletes whose designation was not incorrect) that has been based on inaccurate designation information will stand, and such advancement will not be retracted.

Athlete was Incorrectly Designated as:	Athlete should be Correctly Designated as	Action(s)
ICE or NTE	NTI	The athlete is immediately suspended for 6 months, including removal/disqualification from any upcoming event.
ICE	NTE	If the inaccuracy is confirmed more than 48 hours prior to the start of a competition, USA Climbing will make a best effort to provide opportunity for any athlete who becomes newly eligible to register because of the correction. If the inaccuracy is confirmed before or during a competition, USA Climbing will make a best effort to adjust advancement so that other additional athletes may advance as they would were the athlete’s designation to be accurate, even if the incorrectly designated athlete is not removed from the event or disqualified.
NTI	NTE	The athlete faces no sanction.
NTI or NTE	ICE	If the inaccuracy is confirmed more than 48 hours prior to the start of a competition, USA Climbing will make a best effort to update the athlete’s designation. Less than 48 hours prior to the start of the competition or during a competition, the athlete’s designation will not be updated, and any advancement eligibility for other athletes (athletes whose designation was not incorrect) between rounds at the competition or to the next competition in a Championship pathway is not retracted.

10.3 A USA Climbing membership suspension may be replaced with an official warning if the athlete’s incorrect designation had no impact on other athletes in the prior twelve (12) months. (e.g., Collegiate Series competitors)

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Review/Complaint Processes:

Note: the term “appeal” used in this Policy is distinct from the term Appeal defined in the USA Climbing Rulebook for challenges to field-of-play decisions.

11 Grievances/Appeals - General

11.1 The [USA Climbing Grievance Policy](#), as administered by the USA Climbing Judicial Committee, sets forth several kinds of grievances/appeals that may be filed with USA Climbing. A USA Climbing member may submit a grievance/appeal by way of the Grievance Policy if, for example, they believe USA Climbing has not adhered to USA Climbing Bylaws, Rules, and Policies.

12 Grievances/Appeals – Member Non-Adherence to National Team Eligibility Policy

12.1 If one USA Climbing member believes that a second USA Climbing member has not adhered to the National Team Eligibility Policy, the first member may submit a grievance/appeal by way of the [USA Climbing Grievance Policy](#).

13 Grievances/Appeals –Anti-Discrimination

13.1 A grievance/appeal regarding violations of the USA Climbing Anti-Discrimination Policy or other policies (where examples include, but are not limited to, threatening to withhold athletic opportunity, or harassment of any individual on the basis of nationality or origin, or a breach of confidentiality regarding citizenship and/or residence) should be sent to USA Climbing by way of the [USA Climbing Grievance Policy](#) and are subject to disciplinary action.

13.2 A USA Climbing member who is aware of conduct that violates USA Climbing policy should submit a grievance/appeal (as noted in the prior paragraph) or otherwise report the conduct to judicial@usaclimbing.org. Such reports will be treated as confidential and may be submitted anonymously.

External References:

- [USA Climbing Rulebook](#)
- [USA Climbing Policies](#)
 - [USA Climbing Judicial Complaint Policy](#)
- [IFSC Rulebook](#)

Terminology:

See the USA Climbing Rulebook Glossary.

Approvals / Dates:

Approved	USA Climbing CEO and Board of Directors 2023-09-26
Effective	2023-09-26
Review	yearly

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