

USA Climbing Policy

National Team Eligibility



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

USA Climbing believes that every eligible athlete has the right to compete in a respectful, safe and harassment-free environment and has the right 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”) defines the requirements and procedures for a USA Climbing member athlete’s eligibility to be part of the USA Climbing National Team. It covers:

- The athlete’s U.S. citizenship status.
- The athlete’s representation of another National Federation (NF) at international climbing competitions.

This Policy establishes **two athlete designations**—National Team Eligible (NTE) and National Team Ineligible (NTI)—that affect an athlete’s ability to:

- Register and compete in specific events.
- Advance to the next round in certain competitions.

This Policy also sets forth requirements for being recognized as a **National Champion** and for establishing a **National Record** in the Speed Discipline.

Policy

This Policy is shaped by **IFSC requirements**, which state that:

- Athlete must be U.S. citizens to represent the U.S. National Federation in IFSC competitions.
- U.S. citizens who hold an IFSC license with another (non-U.S.) NF may not represent the U.S. unless they’ve taken the necessary steps and received required approvals to restore eligibility.

The goals of this Policy are to:

- Ensure a fair and consistent pathway for athletes to represent the U.S. internationally.
- Broaden access to competitive climbing within the U.S.
- Maintain transparency in USA Climbing’s processes and competition results.
- Respect athlete privacy to the extent possible.

Athletes are solely responsible for providing accurate, up-to-date information relevant to this Policy during both **membership registration** and **event registration**. Submission of inaccurate information may result in:

- Denied eligibility,
- Suspension of USA Climbing membership, and/or
- Removal or disqualification from competitions.

Questions about this Policy may be directed info@usaclimbing.org.

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Athlete National Team Eligibility Designations

There are two designations:

- **NTE – National Team Eligible**
- **NTI – National Team Ineligible**

An athlete is NTE if all the following are true:

- They are a U.S. citizen (including those with dual citizenship).
- They do not hold an IFSC license to represent another National Federation (NF).

Any athlete who does not meet the above criteria is NTI.

An athlete's designation applies across **all Series** and **all Disciplines** (e.g., Youth and Elite, or Lead/TR, Boulder, and Speed). ¹

Competition Series

USA Climbing competition Series have different purposes under this Policy:

Series	Regarding National Team Eligibility
Elite	Primary purpose: National Team selection for IFSC events. NTI athletes may compete, providing strong competitive fields for NTE athletes.
Youth	Purposes: National Team selection for Youth IFSC events and providing competition opportunities for all U.S. resident youth. NTI youth may compete, supporting opportunities for possible future U.S. citizens.
Collegiate	Purposes: National Team selection for the World University Games and providing opportunities for all U.S. college/university students, regardless of citizenship. Growth of this Series is a strategic priority.
Para	Purposes: National Team selection for IFSC events, training and team-selection opportunities for U.S. Para Climbing athletes, and development of the global Para Climbing community.
Recreational	No National Team is associated with this Series; this Policy does not apply.

¹ In other words, an athlete who competes in both the Youth Series and the Elite Series has the same designation for both Series, and in Lead/TR, Boulder, and Speed

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Advancement Rules

Advancement of competitors to the immediately next competition round or Championship competition.

Series	Additional Advancement Implications
Elite Series² Youth Series	- Advancement quota is based on ranked NTE athletes.³ - NTI athletes advance only if tied with or ranked better than an advancing NTE athlete. - NTI athletes may not advance to a National Championship Knockout Format Speed Final.⁴
Collegiate	Advancement quota applies equally to NTE and NTI athletes. No additional advancement for NTE athletes.⁵
Para	- Advancement quota is based on ranked NTE athletes. - NTI athletes may advance if tied with or ranked better than an advancing NTE athlete.

National Champion and National Speed Record Eligibility

Series	National Champion Eligibility	National Speed Record Eligibility
Elite and Youth	only NTE ⁶	only NTE
Collegiate	both NTE and NTI	both NTE and NTI
Para	only NTE	-

Timelines

- All information relevant to this Policy must be accurate at or before competition registration.
- Changes to citizenship or residency status must be updated in the USA Climbing Member Portal.
- Athletes anticipating citizenship changes must notify USA Climbing at least **30 days prior to registration deadlines**.
- Athletes may contact USA Climbing at info@usaclimbing.org for assistance.

² Note that the North American Cup Series (NACS) events are not USA Climbing events. NACS rules apply to that series

³ For Elite and Youth, if the advancement quota from the Qual to Semi Round is twenty-four (24):

- The top 24 NTE athletes (ranked among only NTE) advance to the Semi-Finals.
- All NTI athletes ranked the same or better than the 24th ranked NTE will also advance.

For example, if there are three NTI ranked at 13th, 21st, and 27th among 40 athletes, then:

- advancement is granted to the top 24 NTE ranked 1st-12th, 14th-20th, and 22nd-26th.
- The NTI ranked 26th or better also advance – in this case the NTI at 13th and 21st.
- The NTI ranked 27th does not advance.

Para advancement is similar.

⁴ The head-to-head knockout bracket is effective and fair when all competitors are competing for the same set of goals. If some athletes were to be competing towards National Team Selection and some athletes not, undesired and problematic effects could occur.

⁵ For advancement quota purposes, NTE and NTI are treated the same in the Collegiate Series and there is no additional advancement of NTE athletes based on the ranking of NTI athletes.

⁶ For example, the top-ranked NTE at the Youth National Championship is National Champion.

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Data and Privacy

Data Collection

- Membership and event registration may include questions about citizenship and NF representation in order to designate athletes as NTE or NTI.
- Athletes who restore U.S. representation after competing for another NF will have their profile updated by USA Climbing upon request.
- Information (citizenship, residency, NF representation) is stored in the USA Climbing Member Portal and related systems.
- Privacy safeguards will be applied.

Data Review

- USA Climbing may review IFSC results at any time to determine if a USA Climbing member athlete has competed for another National Federation and take any action consistent with this Policy.

Public Presentation

- Registration lists, start lists, and rankings may include a designation EA, which applies to athletes designated NTI, as well as athletes pre-qualified for the next round or competition

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Actions due to Discovery of Inaccurate Designation

An athlete's designation may affect the advancement of that athlete and may also affect the advancement of other athletes. As such, accuracy is a priority for NTE/NTI designations.

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 disqualification, ineligibility, or suspension.

When 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.

Once the relevant appeal deadline has passed (as set forth in the USA Climbing Rulebook), any athlete (whose designation was not incorrect) that was indicated to "advance" to the next round/competition will retain that advancement status - such advancement will not be retracted due to the error. The advancement status for the athlete whose designation was incorrect may be corrected/retracted.

Sanctions

The athlete whose designation was incorrect may be subject to sanctions as follows:

NTE → NTI: (correct designation is NTI)

- The athlete is immediately suspended for 6 months, including removal/disqualification from any upcoming event.
- 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: (correct designation is NTE)

- The athlete may face no sanction.
- 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.

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., for Collegiate Series competitors)

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Quick Athlete Summary

- Designations
 - **NTE (National Team Eligible):** U.S. citizen who is not IFSC-licensed with another NF.
 - **NTI (National Team Ineligible):** Everyone else.
- Competitions
 - All competitions open to both NTE and NTI
- Advancement
 - **Elite, Youth, Para:**
 - Advancement quotas based on NTE athlete rankings.
 - NTI advance only if tied with or ranked above an advancing NTE.⁷
 - NTI cannot advance to Speed Knockout Finals at Elite and Youth Nationals.
 - Collegiate:
 - Advancement quotas based on rankings among all athletes.⁸
 - NTI can advance to Speed Knockout Finals at Collegiate Nationals
- National Champion and National Speed Records
 - **Elite, Youth, Para:** Only NTE may be National Champion or set National Speed Records.
 - **Para:** Only NTE may be National Champion.
 - **Collegiate:** both NTE and NTI may be National Champion or set National Speed Records.
- Athlete Responsibilities
 - Keep citizenship/residency info current.
 - Misrepresentation / inaccurate info can lead to suspension or disqualification.

⁷ aka, EA (Extra Advancement) due to NTI

⁸ Collegiate NTI do not result in EA (Extra Advancement)

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Grievance Process

Individuals who believe that an action or decision was inconsistent with USA Climbing bylaws, rules, regulations, codes, or policies may submit a grievance by way of the [USA Climbing Grievance Policy](#). That policy is administered by the USA Climbing Judicial Committee and outlines the grievance submission process as well as how a grievance is processed. Grievances and/or questions may be sent to the Judicial Committee at judicial@usaclimbing.org.

External References

- [USA Climbing Rulebook](#)
- [USA Climbing Policies](#)
- [USA Climbing Grievance Policy](#)

Terminology

See the USA Climbing rules and regulations.

Approvals / Dates

Approved	USA Climbing CEO 2025-11-14
Effective	2025-11-14
Review	Yearly

Revision History

Date/Version	Changes
20230926	Initial version
20251114	Redefine the designations to only NTE and NTI. Reformat and simplify the language.