National Routesetter Development Track

USA Climbing Policy
National Routesetter Development Track

Purpose & Scope
The purpose of the National Routesetter Development Track is to establish an accelerated pathway for highly skilled routesetters and/or climbers identified as capable of contributing to elite-level USA Climbing events in a certified routesetting role.

This pathway is intended for individuals who demonstrate exceptional potential to operate within high-performance routesetting environments but may not have progressed through the traditional Level 1–Level 4 certification pathway. The Development Track enables expedited integration into national-level events while maintaining appropriate evaluation, mentorship, and quality control standards.

Guiding Principles

- **Performance-Based Identification**
  Individuals are identified for this pathway based on demonstrated skill, judgment, and the ability to positively contribute within high-level competitive setting environments.

- **Structured Evaluation**
  Participation in the Development Track includes clear evaluation processes designed to assess readiness, technical proficiency, professionalism, and long-term potential.

- **No Automatic Endorsements**

Entry into or participation in this pathway does not guarantee certification, event selection, or advancement beyond the role and scope specifically approved by USA Climbing.

- **Athlete-Centered Outcomes**
  All decisions within the Development Track should support the creation of fair, effective, and relevant field-of-play experiences for athletes.

Eligibility & Identification
Candidates may be identified through clinics, competitions, or recommendation from a National Head Routesetter or National Head Instructor. All candidates must complete a formal vetting process including a remote interview with Routesetting Committee (RSC) and Routesetting Program Manager (RPM). The RSC in conjunction with the RPM is tasked with approval, evaluation, and advancement of all participants.

Development Pathway

Phase 1 - National Practicum

Practicum – Candidate will participate in two (2) championship events as a developmental crew member under an approved Head Routesetter (HRS). Candidate will be assesed during their participation in the event by the HRS. Eligible events are NACS or Youth National Championships. Travel, lodging, and a food stipend provided by USAC.

Evaluation – After each event, a remote debrief will take place between the candidate, HRS, and RPM. Candidate's performance will be evaluated, and advancement is only granted upon approval of the RPM and RSC.

Certification – After successfully completing the two (2) championship events and corresponding evaluations, the candidate will be granted a Level 3 certification with no endorsements. Candidate is now eligible for all apprentice roles at USAC events.

Phase 2 - Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship – Candidate will participate in two (2) championship events as an apprentice routesetter under an approved HRS. Candidate will be assessed during their participation in the event by the HRS. Candidate will be compensated at the standard Apprentice rate.

Evaluation – After each event, a remote debrief will take place between the candidate, HRS, and RPM. Candidate's performance will be evaluated and advancement is granted only upon approval from the RPM and RSC.

Certification – After successfully completing the two (2) championship events and corresponding evaluations, the candidate will be granted a Level 4 certification with no endorsements. Candidate is now eligible for Elite event selection and International opportunities.

*Endorsements & Head Routesetter Eligibility – No endorsements are granted through this track. Standard requirements must be met for HRS all roles.