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USPA Judging Program



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1. Introduction

1.1. General

- 1.1.1 This chapter describes the USPA judging program.
- 1.1.2 Any USPA member wishing to be rated as a judge is required to follow the guidelines and procedures in this chapter.

1.2. Purpose

- 1.2.1 To ensure the highest possible standards of judging at the local, national and international levels for competition and records.
- 1.2.2 To provide a mechanism to train, rate and enable currency of USPA members interested in serving as judges.

2. Definitions

2.1. Regional Judge

- 2.1.1 A judge who has met the qualifications outlined hereafter, successfully completed a Regional Judge Training Course, and is qualified to serve as a Principal, Event, or Chief Judge at local/regional meets.

2.2. National Judge

- 2.2.1 A judge who has met the qualifications outlined hereafter, successfully completed a USPA National Judge Training Course, and is qualified to exercise the all privileges of a Regional Judge as well as serve as a Principal, Event, or Chief Judge at a USPA National Championships.
- 2.2.2 A Performance National Judge is someone whose National Judge rating has expired and who is now qualified to perform all duties of a Regional Judge plus judge National Performance Records.

2.3. International Judge

- 2.3.1 A judge who has met the qualifications outlined hereafter and in the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale Sporting Code, Section 5. Said judge is qualified to exercise all the privileges of a National Judge as well as the privileges granted by the FAI Sporting Code, Section 5.

3. Qualifications And Procedures

3.1. Regional Judge

- 3.1.1 To earn a USPA Regional Judge rating, a current USPA member in good standing must successfully complete a Regional Judge Training Course (RJTC).

3.2. National Judge

- 3.2.1 To earn a USPA National Judge rating, a candidate must meet all the following requirements:
 - be a current USPA member in good standing
 - have been a USPA member for at least one year
 - have met all the requirements to qualify as a Regional Judge
 - have successfully completed a National Judge Training Course (NJTC)
- 3.2.2 A Performance National Judge rating can only be acquired through the expiration of a National Judge rating.

3.3. International Judge

- 3.3.1 To receive approval to attend an International Judge rating course, a National Judge must meet the following requirements:
- 3.3.2 (W) indicates requirements that may be waived by the USPA Competition Committee on a case-by-case basis.
 - meet the current FAI requirements as outline in Section 5 of the FAI Sporting Code
 - be a current regular USPA member in good standing
 - have been a regular USPA member for at least 24 months (W)
 - held the National Judge rating in that discipline for 12 months (W)
 - judged at least two USPA National Championships, two Second Category ISC Events, or one each in the discipline for which the rating holder wishes to be rated (W)
 - be recommended by the Chief Judge of the most recent USPA Nationals that the candidate judged at and two International Judges (who need not be USPA-rated judges)
 - receive approval from the USPA Competition Committee

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- 3.3.3 A holder of a Performance National Judge rating is neither eligible to receive approval to attend an International Judge rating course nor to receive an FAI Evaluation in the respective discipline. They must first restore their National rating status (see 5.1.2.4) and then meet the requirements listed in 3.3.2.

3.4. Disciplines

- 3.4.1 Judges may be rated in the following disciplines, or combination thereof:

- Accuracy Landing (AL)
- Artistic Events (AE)
- Canopy Formation (CF)
- Canopy Piloting (CP) (includes Canopy Piloting – Freestyle)
- Formation Skydiving (FS)
- Speed (SP)
- Wingsuit Flying (WS)

3.5. Procedures

- 3.5.1 Upon successful completion of a training course, candidates must submit the following to USPA Headquarters:

- a completed Judge Rating Proficiency Card
- all required fees
- a 1.5 x 1.5-inch passport-type photograph

3.5.1.1 The Judge Rating Proficiency Card can be obtained from USPA Headquarters or online at www.uspa.org/downloads.

3.5.1.2 The initial judge rating fee is \$35 and includes a logbook. Subsequent judge rating fees are \$25 each. There is no annual rating renewal fee. Additional/replacement logbooks are available from USPA Headquarters.

3.5.1.3 Electronic submissions of the photograph are acceptable. These can be submitted to competition@uspa.org.

3.5.1.4 A new Regional or National judge rating is effective after the Director of Competition has validated all proficiency requirements and the rating fee has been paid.

3.5.1.5 A new judge rating will be valid once all paperwork, photo, and payment are submitted, processed, and complete.

- 3.5.2 Any judge on the official panel at a National Championship will have their next membership renewal at no cost to the judge.

3.5.2.1 Judges not on the official panel but who have judged a National Championship at their own expense may receive the following year's membership at no cost pending recommendation of the Chief Judge and the approval of the USPA Controller.

3.5.2.2 The maximum benefit in a single calendar year is one year of membership.

3.5.2.3 Immediately upon completion of all events within a discipline, the Chief Judge shall provide the list of official judges to the USPA Controller.

4. Authority Of Judges

4.1. Regional Judge

- 4.1.1 A Regional Judge may:

- serve as a Principal, Event, or Chief Judge at local/regional meets
- judge state records in disciplines for which they are rated
- serve as an additional judge on a state record for which they are not rated
- serve as an additional judge on a national performance record for which they are rated
- attend National Judge Training Courses.

4.2. National Judge

- 4.2.1 A National Judge may perform the duties of a Regional Judge and:

- serve as a Principal, Event, or Chief Judge at a USPA National Championships
- judge national records in disciplines for which he/she is rated
- serve as an additional judge on a national record for which they are not rated
- serve as an additional judge on an international performance record for which they are rated

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- train USPA National Judges in disciplines for which they are rated, with the approval of the USPA Competition Committee
 - train USPA Regional Judges in disciplines for which they are rated, as approved by the Director of Competition
 - apply for appointment as a USPA Judge Examiner
- 4.2.2 A Performance National Judge may perform the duties of a Regional Judge and:
- judge national performance records in disciplines for which he/she is rated
 - serve as an additional judge on a national performance record for which they are not rated
 - serve as an additional judge on an international performance record for which they are rated.

4.3. International Judge

- 4.3.1 An International Judge may perform the duties of a National Judge and—in accordance with FAI Sporting Code, Section 5—judge international records and at international competitions.

5. Judge Requirements

5.1. Currency

5.1.1 Regional Judges

- 5.1.1.1 A Regional Judge's rating is permanent, concurrent with USPA membership.
- 5.1.1.2 Proof of currency is the judge's USPA membership card and logbook.

5.1.2 National Judges

- 5.1.2.1 A National Judge rating, unless renewed as outlined below, automatically expires at the end of the fifth calendar year beginning in the award/renewal year. The first such expirations can occur no earlier than December 31, 2025.

For example, if a Formation Skydiving National Judge rating was awarded on March 6, 2021, that rating could expire as early as December 31, 2025.

If at the time of expiration, the rating holder meets the renewal requirements for a Performance National Judge, their rating will instead be converted to Performance National Judge. If the holder had been on the ISC Judges List at the time of the expiration, they remain eligible to be on the list as an International Category-2 Judge.

A Performance National Judge Rating will expire at the end of the 2nd calendar year after the holder last reported performance record judging activity in their annual report due December 1.

- 5.1.2.2 A National Judge rating may be renewed prior to expiration as follows:

- Upon successful completion of a USPA-approved National rating or FAI initial or renewal course.
- Upon successful performance serving as a Principal Judge, Event Judge, or Chief Judge, at either a USPA National Championships, National Collegiate Championships, or an FAI First- or Second Category Event in the relevant discipline.
- Upon successful performance as a Judge Examiner at an approved USPA course, or Chief of Judge Training at an FAI First Category Event.
- Upon successful completion of an Evaluation by a Judge Examiner, which includes the National written test in the discipline, and the corresponding practical evaluation that would otherwise be administered in a National Judge Training Course. If successful, the Judge Examiner must submit an After-Action-Report to USPA's Competition Department prior to the last business day before expiration of the rating would otherwise occur.

- 5.1.2.3 If a judge is selected to judge at a USPA National Collegiate Skydiving Championships and that judge's National rating expires in the same competition year as, that rating is automatically extended to include only the official competition days. Section 5.1.2.2 applies from the original competition year, not the extended days.

- 5.1.2.4 A Performance National Judge Rating may be promoted to a National Judge rating upon successful completion of an Evaluation or full National Judge Training Course. An expired Performance National Judge Rating is no longer renewable. A new application is required.

- 5.1.2.5 At the time when any National Judge rating is to be expired (or converted to a Performance National Judge rating), if no corresponding Regional Judge Rating exists for that member, it will be created automatically.

5.1.3 International Judges

- 5.1.3.1 International Judges must satisfy currency requirements as set forth in the FAI Sporting Code.
- 5.1.3.2 International Judges who are removed from the annual list for any reason shall be deemed to have an expired rating.

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5.1.3.3 National Judge ratings are not affected by 5.1.3.2.

5.2. Active Judge List

- 5.2.1 To be included in the current USPA active judges list, all judges are required to contact the Director of Competition by December 1 and provide the following information:
- name
 - address
 - day and evening phone numbers
 - email address
 - dates, locations, and disciplines of events judged in the last 12 months
 - interest in taking international judge rating courses and/or evaluations during the next year, enumerated by discipline
- 5.2.2 The Director of Competition must submit the International Judges renewal roster, denoting disciplines, to the ISC Judge Committee no later than December 31 of each year, as required by the FAI Sporting Code.

5.3. Judging Logbook

- 5.3.1 All judges must maintain a logbook that contains all relevant personal data, to include a photograph and the ratings earned.
- 5.3.2 Each entry shall contain the name of event/competition, dates, and the number and type of skydives judged.
- 5.3.3 Judges conducting training courses are highly encouraged to record relevant data about all courses in their logbooks.
- 5.3.4 Principal or Event Judges serving at a USPA National Championships must have their logbooks validated by the Chief Judge.
- 5.3.5 Chief Judges serving at a USPA National Championships must have their logbooks validated by the Meet Director.
- 5.3.6 Any judge certifying a state or national record must have their logbook validated by another judge on the same record, an S&TA, a USPA Board Member, or USPA official.

5.4. Judge Experience Database

- 5.4.1 USPA shall maintain a file for each active USPA-rated judges detailing their experience judging competitions, taking or teaching judge rating courses, and taking or conducting judge evaluations.
- 5.4.2 Entries shall include at a minimum Dates, Competition / Course / Evaluation, Discipline & Role(s).
- 5.4.3 The entered information should be sourced from verifiable documents, including but not limited to signed judges' logbooks, Chief Judge After-Action-Reports, and Judge Training Course After-Action-Reports.
- 5.4.4 Applicable portions of this database shall be made available upon request to the Competition Committee, Judge Examiners, to confirmed Chief Judges considering candidates for USPA-sanctioned competitions, and to confirmed Meet Directors considering Chief Judge candidates.

6. USPA Judge Training

6.1. Introduction

- 6.1.1 USPA Judge Training Courses may be held at the discretion of Judge Examiners or as approved by the Competition Committee

6.2. Purpose

- 6.2.1 To present the best possible program to those candidates selected to attend each course.

6.3. Judge Training Authority

- 6.3.1 National and International Judges may apply for appointment by the Competition Committee as a Judge Examiner, if they:
- have been on the USPA active judges list (see 5.2) for at least five consecutive years
 - have served as a judge (or participated as competitor) at three or more USPA National Championships or International sporting events in the last five years
 - have attended any Judge Training Course (JTC) or annual judging seminar in the last three years
 - have conducted two judge courses, one within the last two years, with satisfactory results, as determined by the committee
 - have a demonstrated background in instructional methods
- 6.3.2 Judge Examiners may conduct courses at their discretion but should notify USPA in advance and are encouraged to give the membership notice through the USPA website and Parachutist events calendar.

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- 6.3.3 All Judge Examiner appointments will automatically expire with the election of a new USPA Board of Directors, except for those Judge Examiners who have either received their initial appointment, or taught or assisted with a JTC within the past three years.
- 6.3.4 Any rated judge may attend any JTC or annual judging seminar as a matter of continuing education.

6.4. Duties of a Judge Examiner

- 6.4.1 A Judge Examiner has the responsibility of ensuring that each candidate has adequate training and meets the standards expected of a judge for the rating sought.
- 6.4.2 A Judge Examiner must use standardized syllabuses, tests, and materials as available from USPA.
- 6.4.3 A Judge Examiner may dismiss from the course, without granting a rating, any candidate not able to fit in and function in the working environment.
- 6.4.4 A Judge Examiner must submit an after-action report to the USPA Director of Competition within 30 days after completion of the course.
- 6.4.5 A Judge Examiner may appoint any USPA National Judge in the relevant discipline to assist with judge training, including teaching one or more components of a course, administering written tests, and evaluating candidates.
- 6.4.6 Incremental judge training of different components of a course at different times (and possibly by different teachers), is permitted. The rating must be completed within 1 year of the first component “sign-off”, otherwise the expired component(s) must be re-taught.

6.5. Minimum Standards for Qualification

- 6.5.1 Cross Training: A current Regional or National Judge desiring to become rated in an additional discipline is required to complete only the discipline-specific requirements.
- 6.5.2 Regional Judge Requirements
- receive a briefing on the General Competition Rules (SCM Chapter 1) from a Judge Examiner
 - receive a briefing on the State and National Records Program (SCM Chapter 3) from a Judge Examiner
 - demonstrate fundamental competence to judge competitions and record attempts of the rating sought
 - achieve a minimum score of 75% on the written exam
 - achieve a minimum score of 80% on the practical exam
- 6.5.3 National Judge Requirements
- assist an appropriately rated and current National or International Judge in judging one complete meet in the discipline sought. For disciplines judged by video and/or data analysis (i.e. CF, FS, AE, SP, WS) this meet may be simulated by the course director.
 - receive a briefing on the rules specific to the discipline sought by a Judge Examiner rated in that discipline, to include a review of the performance requirements for each event in that discipline
 - receive a review of the General Competition Rules (SCM Chapter 1) from a Judge Examiner
 - receive a thorough overview of scoring equipment necessary to judge the specific discipline
 - receive a briefing on meet administration and required paperwork from a Judge Examiner
 - receive a briefing on documentation of performance(s) and collation of scores
 - receive a briefing on the State and National Records Program (SCM Chapter 3) from a USPA National or International Judge
 - achieve a minimum score of 80% on the written test administered by a Judge Examiner
 - achieve a minimum score of 85% on the practical test administered by a Judge Examiner
- 6.5.4 Combined RJ/NJ Course procedures
- 6.5.4.1 An NJTC and RJTC may be taught concurrently to candidates who possess no prior judge rating in the discipline.
- 6.5.4.2 In such cases, all prerequisites for both the RJTC and NJTC must be met (except for the requirement of having already passed the RJTC), and all subject matter for both rating levels must be taught, tested, and evaluated. Both written exams shall be administered and may be done so concurrently. The exams should not overlap in specific questions. A single practical evaluation must be comprehensive to cover all skill areas required for both ratings.
- 6.5.4.3 It is possible for a candidate to successfully pass the RJTC component of the course without having passed the NJTC component. In this case, the candidate has passed the RJTC and can apply for that rating only.
- 6.5.4.4 When both training courses are passed, the Regional Rating must be applied for to also apply for the National Rating.

6.6. Specific Competition Discipline Requirements

- 6.6.1 Formation Skydiving and Canopy Formation
- Attain at least 80% match of absolute assessments.

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- Attain at least 95% of absolute formations in time.
- The course should include a minimum of three rounds per event.
- All videos should be drawn from jumps utilizing the current dive pool for each event.
- In the event of changes to the dive pool(s) videos from the preceding pool may be utilized until updated videos are available.

7. Judges Advisory Working Group

7.1. Term

- 7.1.1 The USPA Director of Competition will chair a volunteer working group and nominate its members at the Summer BOD meeting to serve a one-year term. Members may serve on the working group repeatedly with no term limits. Nominations for the Working Group must be approved by the USPA Competition Committee. Vacancies may be filled or members removed for cause at any time by the Chair with Competition Committee approval.

7.2. Composition

- 7.2.1 The Working Group will comprise at least one area expert in each of USPA's active competitive disciplines where possible. Additional members who have broad-based expertise may also be nominated by the chair. All approved members must hold a current USPA National Judge rating.

7.3. The mission of the working group includes:

- 7.3.1 Generation of a prioritized list of suitable Chief Judge candidates for all Chief Judges of USPA national competitions taking place in the year following the start of the Working Group's term. The ordering of the lists is used to communicate preference by the Working Group to the Meet Director, but the Meet Director is not obligated to give any consideration to such preference.
- 7.3.1.1 Candidates for Chief Judge must be current USPA members in good standing and have served as a judge in the same discipline in any capacity at any USPA National or FAI International Sporting Event at least twice in the 5 years preceding the event under consideration. The same candidate may not serve as Chief Judge for more than two consecutive years in the same discipline.
- 7.3.1.2 The Working Group should endeavor to build and maintain a broad reserve of experienced Chief Judges over time in every discipline.
- 7.3.1.3 The Working Group chair will submit a report containing the candidate lists to the Competition Committee Chair for final approval before then submitting to the Meet Director. If the requirements in 7.3.1.1 cannot be met from the available candidate pool for a discipline, the report must state this and still provide at least two recommended candidates in that discipline deemed most suitable, even though they do not meet all the requirements. The report will be added to the minutes of the next USPA BOD meeting.
- 7.3.2 Maintenance of the Regional & National Judge written exams for each discipline.
- 7.3.3 Assisting with proposing & vetting policy & rule changes to any section of the SCM.