2026 USS CONGRESS PROPOSAL SUMMARY

	REVIEW WORKGROUP:	PROPOSED BY:	PROPOSAL:	RATIONALE:	FINANCIAL IMPACT:	SUPPORTERS/ADDITIONAL INFO:
1	Long Track	Leah Lambert and Lisa Dahlin	Would like to add an additional grouping at the final long track American cup each season where younger skaters at the JR D level and Junior C skaters that have not met the American cup time are maybe given an opportunity to participate in this competition. Development A-C skaters (maybe new youth skaters who haven't had the opportunity to skate at an indoor rink to get the qualifying time: appropriate distances 500, 1500, 500, 1000 Development D skaters: age appropriate distances 500, 700, 500, 600	To give skaters on that bubble of what the have to look forward too as a lot of kids drop out of sports at around 13 years old . A lot of junior skaters may have just gotten on the ice for the first time in October or September when the jr development camp is held and for a lot of them this is the only time they can make the am cup time. By allowing them to participate in the final am cup would allow them another opportunity when they have been on the ice longer and feel more comfortable to achieve one of the times and than they would be set for the next season to participate in all the am cups. As for the jr d grouping I think it's a way to keep those skaters engaged in the sport with a special opportunity to participate in a bigger competition.	Would increase USS revenue for this competition by have more participants.	DASH coaches Midway coaches Other independent coaches at Pettit
2	Long Track	Matt Vraa	Adoption of Category-Specific Performance Ratios for Cross-Disciplinary Time Conversions: Currently, US Speedskating lacks a standardized, data-driven methodology to convert Short Track (ST) performance times into Long Track (LT) equivalents (and vice versa) for competition qualification. This gap often forces athletes to choose a single discipline prematurely or miss qualification opportunities due to a lack of local facility access. This proposal seeks to adopt a "Category-Specific Factor" model. By utilizing specific multipliers for Seniors, Juniors, and Masters, US Speedskating can more accurately identify talent in "crossover" athletes and provide equitable qualification paths for skaters regardless of their primary training environment.	The proposed conversion factors are derived from an analysis of US Speedskating performance data (2020–2026). The analysis recognizes that a "one-size-fits-all" multiplier is insufficient due to: • Technical Maturation: Juniors typically exhibit a narrower performance gap (Ratio: 0.912). This is attributed to a developing mastery of the specialized clap-skate technique, the distinct mechanics of cornering on a 111.12m vs. 400m track, and the varying aerodynamic demands between disciplines. • Observed Performance Trends: Statistical trends indicate that the performance gap is most pronounced among Senior men (Ratio: 0.852). In contrast, the conversion ratios for women and Masters skaters are notably more compact. This proposal ensures geographic and environmental equity. Skaters in regions with only Short Track facilities (or only outdoor Long Track ice) deserve a statistically validated method to prove their status and qualify for national-level events based on their raw athletic potential rather than facility proximity.	Neutral to Positive. Implementing these standards requires no capital expenditure but is expected to increase athlete retention and event revenue by opening qualification paths to a wider pool of multi-disciplinary - "crossover" talent.	Please see proposal submission document for more information that was included.
3	Long Track	Matt Vraa	Adoption of the American Cup All-Around Championship or American Cup Grand Prix Series Format (name to be determined by USS): This proposal outlines the implementation of the American Cup All-Around Championship or American Cup Grand Prix Series (name to be determined by USS), a unified, season-long points-based competition framework for U.S. Speedskating (USS). By integrating the American Cup Racing Series (ACRS/AmCup) and Age Group Nationals (AGN) into a single overarching standings title, USS can incentivize participation across both metric and pack-style formats. This strategic initiative aims to bridge the gap between indoor and outdoor racing, improve athlete development through multi-disciplinary exposure, and increase event registration and retention across all age divisions. All competition and scoring will be standardized by age-group divisions across both metric and pack-style formats.	The primary driver of this proposal is the transition from an "either or" event format (metric or pack) to a more robust strategic season and athlete narrative. By unifying the American Cup (metric) and Age Group Nationals (pack style), U.S. Speedskating creates a competitive ecosystem that rewards versatility, commitment, and developmental breadth. • Solving the Participation Imbalance: Currently, outdoor events—specifically those in venues like Roseville, MN—suffer from lower registration numbers as athletes prioritize high-altitude indoor metric times. By weighting AmCup 1 (Outdoor) and AGN at 1.25x points, we pivot the value proposition from "ice quality" to "championship points." • The "Complete Skater" Developmental Model: International success in modern speedskating requires more than raw speed; it requires the tactical drafting and positioning skills found in pack-style racing (essential for Mass Start and Team Pursuit). This framework forces elite "metric-only" skaters to engage with AGN, ensuring our national talent pool is technically and tactically well-rounded. • Standardization and Clarity: The current fragmentation of age divisions between ACRS and AGN creates confusion for parents, coaches, and officials. Standardizing the Junior E through Master divisions across the entire series simplifies the athlete pathway and provides a clear "ladder" for progression. • Increasing Athlete Retention: A season-long points race provides an incentive for athletes to remain engaged throughout the entire winter. Athletes who may have a poor performance at AmCup 1 still have the "Overall Standings" to chase, discouraging the mid-season drop-off often seen after the first few metric events.	Revenue generation, operational & administrative efficiencies, cost mitigation for families.	Please see proposal submission document for more information that was included.
4	Long Track	Matt Vraa	Adoption of the "Model-Based" Age Group National Long Track 500m Time Standards: It is proposed that the following 500m time standards be adopted for qualification for Age Group Nationals and other long track events in the American Cup Series. These standards provide a bifurcated entry system: an Indoor Base for results recorded at high-performance indoor facilities (Salt Lake City and Milwaukee) and an Outdoor Standard that incorporates a 12% Environmental Tax to account for the physical resistance of outdoor venues as proposed in the Adoption of the "Model-Based" Environmental Tax on Time Standards proposal.	Data-Driven Inclusivity: The proposed standards are derived from analysis of 2022–2025 U.S. Age Group National protocols sourced from U.S. Speedskating. Methodology: Both indoor and outdoor Age Group National qualification frameworks were evaluated to develop the most accurate model for determining cut times. Standards were calibrated to achieve a consistent ~90% inclusion rate, balancing competitiveness with accessibility across varying racing conditions. Environmental Fairness: The 12% Outdoor Tax accounts for one standard deviation of the documented performance drop at venues like the John Rose MN Oval due to wind and ice friction as detailed in the Adoption of the "Model-Based" Environmental Tax on Time Standards proposal. This ensures athletes competing outdoors are not unfairly penalized when attempting to meet national benchmarks. Developmental Modeling: For the Junior E division, where historical indoor 500m data was insufficient, regression modeling was performed based on the performance slopes of Junior D and C skaters to establish a fair entry point for young athletes	Neutral to Positive Impact: Implementing a revised time standard table carries no direct cost to the organization. Indirect benefits may include improved athlete retention, as more realistic qualification standards better reflect outdoor racing conditions across diverse regions. Increased Participation and Revenue: Introducing slightly more inclusive standards for developmental divisions (e.g., Junior E) is expected to boost participation at Age Group Nationals, leading to higher entry-fee revenue. Additionally, setting a high inclusivity threshold (e.g., 90%) for Masters and Seniors may further increase registration volumes. Reduced Attrition: Establishing fair, outdoor-based standards helps retain athletes in regions with variable weather conditions, supporting consistent club participation and long-term membership stability.	Please see proposal submission document for more information that was included.
5	Long Track	Matt Vraa	Adoption of the "Model-Based" Environmental Tax on Time Standards: The current qualification criteria for Age Group Nationals (AGN) under the 2025-2026 Long Track Speedskating Rules and Regulation Age Group Nationals V1.1 (pages 4 and 5), do not sufficiently account for the "environmental tax" imposed on athletes competing at outdoor venues like Roseville, MN, or Lake Placid, NY. This proposal moves away from arbitrary standards toward a 12% Outdoor Tax model. This figure is supported by a comprehensive analysis of protocols from 2022–2025 (sourced from US Speedskating) and is validated by international normalization metrics used in the Netherlands and Canada. This adjustment ensures that skaters in regions without access to indoor "fast ice" have an equitable path to qualification. While this originally came out of a single cutoff time for the Age Group National, the math and modeling behind it could be use of any time standards that US Speedskating chooses to set.	The primary rationale is geographic and environmental equity. Under the current system, a skater's ability to qualify for Nationals is often dictated by their proximity to an indoor oval rather than their raw athletic potential. By implementing a data-driven 12% conversion, we acknowledge that a 44-second 500m in a Roseville windstorm is often a more "elite" athletic feat than a 40-second 500m in the climate-controlled Salt Lake City oval. This proposal stabilizes the qualification process and ensures we are sending the best athletes to Age Group Nationals or other events with qualifying times, not just the ones with the best weather.	Neutral to Positive: There is no direct cost to the organization to implement a revised time standard table. Indirectly, this may increase athlete retention by providing realistic qualification goals for outdoor-based clubs. Furthermore, a slightly more inclusive standard for developmental divisions (Junior E) may increase participation numbers and entry-fee revenue at Age Group Nationals.	Please see proposal submission document for more information that was included.
6	Long Track	Daniel Greene and Mary Murphy	Transition Age Group Long Track Nationals to a metric racing format for Junior D and older. Proposed distances: 500, 1000,1500, 3000 mass start Junior E athletes may remain in the current pack style format.	Transitioning to metric racing for Junior D and older would strengthen athlete development while maintaining the integrity of national championship competition. Metric racing better aligns with this pathway, as higher-level long track competition—including AmCup, Junior National Team, and Olympic racing—follows ISU metric racing formats. A metric format would better prepare athletes for advancement, provide objective, time-based performance evaluation, and reduce barriers for athletes uncomfortable with pack-style racing.	Transitioning Age Class Long Track Nationals to a metric format may significantly increase athlete participation by reducing barriers associated with pack-style racing. This change would likely attract additional Masters athletes who prefer not to invest in additional equipment, junior skaters who are uncomfortable with close-contact racing, and high-level metric racers who wish to avoid the risk of blade damage during pack-style events. A metric format also aligns with how long track is typically trained and raced at higher levels and opens participation to athletes who prefer skating against the clock. Increased participation would support financial sustainability through higher registration revenue, as well as increased attendance from athletes' families traveling to the event, strengthening overall event visability.	Daniel Greene and Mary Murphy

7	Long Track	Daniel Greene and Mary Murphy	Remove Pack-Style Racing from Developmental Team Requirements	Long track competition at the Developmental, Junior National, Senior National, and Olympic levels follows ISU metric racing formats. Pack-style racing does not reflect the discipline athletes are preparing for and is therefore not an appropriate selection criterion. Developmental Team athletes train alongside Junior and Senior National Teams, and selection should reflect the skills required at those levels, including metric race performance, technical ability, time-based benchmarks, and consistency across standard distances. Removing pack-style requirements improves alignment with ISU standards and strengthens the athlete development pathway.	Removing pack-style racing requirements from the Long Track Developmental Team pathway may reduce financial barriers and increase participation among athletes pursuing long track development. This change would likely attract athletes who do not typically attend pack-style events, expanding the talent pool and making Developmental Team spots more competitive. Athletes may also attend additional metric competitions to prepare for selection, further supporting participation and strengthening the long-term development pathway.	Daniel Greene and Mary Murphy
8	Long Track	Brian Kretschmann	Require the wearing of 2 arm bands (one on each arm) by Long Track skaters in races 3000m and longer AND in any races run as a quartet.	An increasing number of skaters are racing with 2 arms on their back, including in corners, which restricts the visibility of the single arm band to track side Officials. This reduced visibility could lead to missed infractions or assessment of penalty to the wrong skater. Additionally, many skin suits are multi colored and arm bands blend in, making the arm bands less visible.	Skaters and/or facilities will have to invest in more arm bands.	Wisconsin Speedskating Association Board Members
9	Long Track	Steve Fisher	Require clubs/teams/skaters to provide their own standard compliant race armbands for athletes at USS long track competitions, with host venues maintaining a limited backup supply for emergency use.	Currently, host venues are responsible for providing, distributing, and collecting race armbands. This has led to recurring operational challenges, including:Armbands not being returned after racesOngoing wear and tear requiring replacementAccumulating replacement costs over timeAdditional volunteer resources required for distribution and collectionRace delays when armbands are missing or unavailableAt the international level (ISU competitions), teams are already responsible for providing their own armbands. Aligning USS long track competitions with this model would reduce operational burden on host venues and improve consistency across levels of competition.This proposal also supports a more streamlined race-day process by reducing reliance on volunteers and minimizing equipment-related delays.	For host venues:Reduction in ongoing costs associated with replacing lost or damaged armbandsReduced need for volunteer staffing dedicated to armband managementFor clubs/skaters:Initial cost to acquire armbands (one-time or infrequent replacement)Consideration:To minimize impact on smaller clubs, a phased implementation and/or continued availability of venue-provided backup armbands is recommended.	This proposal has been discussed informally among multiple long track venues and operational staff. Initial feedback indicates general support for reducing venue burden and aligning with ISU practices, while also noting concerns regarding potential impact on smaller clubs. This proposal has been circulated for input among venues, and operational staff, with feedback continuing to be collected.
10	Long Track	Steve Fisher	For standard time trials only, allow flexibility in handling withdrawals after the official draw has been published by permitting pairs to remain unchanged when a skater withdraws, rather than requiring mandatory re-pairing in all cases.The remaining skater would skate alone, and the withdrawn skater would be recorded as WDR. Re-pairing may still occur at the discretion of the referee if time and operational capacity allow.	Under current practice, when a skater withdraws after the draw is published, pairings are rearranged. While this supports competitive fairness, it creates significant operational challenges, particularly in standard time trial environments where timelines are condensed and staffing is limited. Re-pairing requires:referee review and approval redistribution of updated draws communication updates (e.g., Sportity)re-entry into multiple timing systems (electronic timing, photo finish, transponders)These changes must often occur within a limited timeframe prior to racing, which can:delay the start of races increase the likelihood of technical or data-entry errorsplace significant strain on timing teams and event staff impact overall schedule integrity In many cases, there is insufficient time to complete all required updates accurately before racing begins.	Direct financial impact:Minimal to noneIndirect operational impact:Reduced risk of costly timing or data-entry errorsImproved efficiency of event operationsReduced strain on staffing resources, particularly timing team.	This concept has been discussed informally among timing teams and venue staff across multiple long track facilities, with general support for introducing flexibility in time trial environments where re-pairing presents operational challenges. The approach has also been tested during a time trial event (Beehive Burn), where maintaining original pairings contributed to a smooth and efficient competition. Additional feedback is being gathered to further assess support and considerations across different venues.
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11	Long Track / Short Track	Simon Cho	Ban use of smart glasses during competitions.	Given recent technological advancements in sports optics, a rule to mitigate tech doping may be worth consideration. Specifically, eyewear with smart capabilities should be banned from competition. 1) Eyewear with built-in electronics can pose a safety risk to the user and their competitors. 2) Smart glasses give users in both LT and ST a competitive advantage over skaters that don't wear them. 3) Smart glasses allow unauthorized individuals backdoor access to coaching skaters.	N/A	
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12	Short Track	Melissa Koenig	Skaters are required to go directly to the line upon entering the ice (not to the coaches box). Currently if a skater is late to the line the violation is charged to the skater, revise so the violation is charged to the coach	There is a habit of coaches calling skaters to the coaches box as the enter the ice, but the officials would like the skaters to be going directly to the line (unless directed otherwise). With the no false start rule a skater who is late to the line may be penalized (and asked to leave the ice). At Short Track nationals it was observed that the rule was not evenly applied to all skaters AND more importantly, despite coaches being warned, they continued to call skaters to the coaches box. It is unfair to put an athlete (especially a young athlete) into the situation of having to disobey a coach. The penalty should be on the coach not the athlete.	N/A	Melissa Koenig Laura Henderson Emilie Glogowski Brian Molenda Tony Sonn
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13	Events	Martin Lichtman	I propose that app or video based photofinishing timing (such as SprintTimerPro) be legal as the primary timing and judging device for sanctioned short track competitions. A backup secondary timing and judging source (which could be another independently operated photofinish app) is still necessary. The 0.2 second offset will still be added since this is not a calibrated 2000 fps system with a jitter-free operating system, but the resulting timing will be far, far more accurate than what human timers produce. Apps are now available that use an iPhone or iPad to record the finish with 0.01 second accuracy, and can be set up to trigger electronically from a starting device. Being able to scroll back through a photofinish picture allows scrutiny of the finish that cannot be accomplished with human timers and their fleeting memory.	Our current standard of using human timers and judges is very error prone. The typical meet uses a separate person and stopwatch for each skater, and yet another person to judge each finish position. The result is times that vary wildly, and often the order of the times do no correspond to the judged finish order. Nearly every meet has complaints about the inaccuracy of the timing, or the incorrect finish orders. We are not allowed to even use video to resolve challenges about the finish order. This way of doing things is very antiquated, and it makes reporting times to a hundreth of a second unreasonable accuracy that we cannot claim. Furthermore, this way of timing and judging requires many volunteers, which adds difficulty to organizing a meet.	$0 cost to USS. The cost to a typical meet would be $300 in equipment, which would be easily offset by needing fewer volunteers.	
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14	Masters	Mary Brophy Magnus	Age Group National Championships Age Division Classification / Qualification Time Standards Proposal to require Masters skaters to meet established time standards in order to qualify for competition at the National level, rather than time standards being recommended but not required. Time standards should be appropriate and attainable for each Masters age group so that Nationals remains meaningful while still encouraging participation.	Requiring a qualifying time standard establishes a meaningful performance benchmark for National-level competition. This helps maintain the quality, integrity, and competitive value of the Age Group National Championships while ensuring that all competitors have met established minimum performance standards. Requiring time standards also supports athlete safety by helping ensure that competitors have the necessary speed, experience, and race awareness to participate safely in National-level competition. National Championships should represent a performance-based level of competition consistent across all age divisions. This aligns with IMSSC international Masters standards, which apply age-based time standards to support safety, fairness and appropriate levels of competition across all age groups.	No direct financial impact is anticipated. However, requiring time standards may reduce the total number of Masters participants at Age Group Nationals, which could result in reduced registration fee revenue. This proposal is intended to promote fairness, consistency across age groups, and the overall competitive integrity of USS National-level competition. The intent of this proposal is not to reduce participation, but to ensure that National-level competition standards remain consistent, fair, and performance-based across all age divisions. Local and regional competitions would continue to provide important and accessible participation opportunities for Masters athletes of all ability levels.	Mary Brophy Magnus Tim VanFleet Dan Carney Sara Cushman Jen Kola Kate Stewart
15	Masters	Mary Brophy Magnus	Masters Classification System Proposal to remove Masters Category 3 (MST3) for Long Track and Short Track. Masters Category 3 currently recognizes all registered USS Masters members regardless of performance or qualification criteria. Recognition and classification categories should reflect performance, achievement, or qualification standards rather than automatic assignment based solely on USS membership.	There is currently no other age class that assigns a classification or recognition designation based solely on being a registered member of US Speedskating. Classification designations are generally intended to reflect performance levels, achievement criteria, or qualification standards. Assigning a classification designation based solely on membership is inconsistent with the purpose of classification systems and with how other age groups and classifications are structured. Aligning Masters classifications with performance- or achievement-based criteria would improve consistency across all age groups and help maintain the meaning and purpose of classification designations. This proposal does not affect Masters membership or participation opportunities, but only the classification designation structure.	No direct financial impact is anticipated.	Mary Brophy Magnus Tim VanFleet Dan Carney Sara Cushman Jen Kola Kate Stewart
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16	Hall of Fame	Will Gebauer	Addthe option to induct one classical era skater and one modern skater into the hall of fame each year.	This would ensure we're honoring those still in the sport. By having inductees who are more recently retired athletes allows clubs to engage with our members to drive participation. Inducting hall of fame carreers is priority number one but using the inductees to drive participation should be a secondary goal of the committee. Honoring those who have passed and those who don't have any connection to the sport anymore can't achieve this.	Inducting two HOF skaters would increase the runtime of award dinner at congress and additional flights and accomidations of the inductees would be paid for.	Brittany Bowe Conor McDermott-Mostowy