



Where Olympic Journeys Begin

USA KARATE **NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS ELIGIBILITY FAQ** **FOR ATHLETES, COACHES, AND PARENTS**

1. Do athletes have to attend a National Qualifier to compete at Nationals?

Yes. The expected and primary pathway is that athletes participate in at least one USA Karate–designated National Qualifier, as outlined in the USA Karate National Championships Eligibility Policy.

This helps ensure athletes are prepared and that the National Championships remain the culminating event of the season.

2. How do we know if an event is a recognized National Qualifier?

Only events that are:

- Sanctioned by USA Karate and
- Displays the USA Karate Sanctioned Event logo and
- Officially designated and published by USA Karate under the USA Karate National Qualifier Event Policy count toward National Championships eligibility.

Not all sanctioned events are National Qualifiers, but all National Qualifiers are sanctioned events. Athletes, parents, and coaches are responsible for verifying an event's status before registering.

3. What if an athlete attends a sanctioned event that is not a National Qualifier?

Participation in a sanctioned event that is not designated as a National Qualifier does not satisfy the eligibility requirement for Nationals.

Athletes should always confirm qualifier status in advance using the official USA Karate National Qualifier list.



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4. What if an athlete cannot attend a National Qualifier?

USA Karate recognizes that travel, school, family, or scheduling conflicts can occur.

Athletes who are unable to attend a National Qualifier may still request eligibility by paying a Non-Qualifier Eligibility Fee during National Championships registration, as described in the National Championships Eligibility Policy.

5. Is the Non-Qualifier Eligibility Fee the same as attending a Qualifier?

No.

Athletes who attend a National Qualifier receive the full competitive benefits of season participation. Athletes using the Non-Qualifier Eligibility Fee:

- May be randomly seeded;
- May not receive ranking points or selection considerations tied to National Qualifier participation.

The fee exists as an exception, not a substitute for participation.

6. How will eligibility be verified?

Eligibility is verified through official USA Karate registration and results systems.

If National Qualifier participation cannot be verified, and the Non-Qualifier Eligibility Fee has not been paid or a waiver approved, the athlete will not be eligible to compete.

7. Are there any exceptions or waivers?

Yes, but they are limited. Waivers may be granted for circumstances such as:

- Documented injury or medical hardship;
- National team or international competition obligations;
- Extraordinary circumstances approved by USA Karate leadership.

All waiver requests must be submitted in writing, in advance to the National Office at natoffice@usankf.org



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8. Why is USA Karate making this change?

This eligibility structure:

- Preserves the meaning and integrity of the National Championships;
- Encourages season-long participation;
- Promotes consistent national competition standards;
- Helps athletes arrive at Nationals better prepared.

9. What should coaches, athletes, and families do now?

- Review the official National Qualifier list early each season;
- Plan to attend at least one recognized National Qualifier when possible;
- Treat the National Championships as the culminating event of the season.

10. Where can we find more information?

USA Karate will publish:

- The USA Karate National Championships Eligibility Policy;
- The USA Karate National Qualifier Event Policy;
- The official National Qualifier list each season.

Questions should be directed to USA Karate through official communication at natoffice@usankf.org.