

2026 USAAS RULES PROPOSALS TO BOARD OF GOVERNORS/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Please note that World Aquatics will be posting new rules approved by the World Aquatics Bureau on October 15, 2026, on the World Aquatics website at <https://www.worldaquatics.com/rules> and <https://www.worldaquatics.com/artistic-swimming/rules>

A draft of the rule changes is expected to be posted on September 22nd, following which the Rules Committee will meet to discuss and make recommendations, and then will host a community Zoom meeting to allow all interested members to provide input prior to the USAAS BOD voting on any possible US exceptions to the new AQUA rules.

As AQUA rule changes are accepted, please note that some of our USAAS rules (including in the proposals below) may be changed via housekeeping.

ITEM #1:

FIGURES – Update to Figure Rule IV

Figures Subcommittee Recommends Approval

Rules Committee Recommends Approval

Figure Rule IV, Basic Positions for Figures, E. Remove Bent Knee Dolphin Arch Position and any reference in the description to dolphin arch as the figure this applies to has been removed in the past.

~~Bent Knee Dolphin Arch Position and Bent Knee Vertical Position:~~

~~In the ~~Dolphin Arch~~ or the Bent Knee Vertical position, with the thigh of the bent leg parallel to the surface of the water, the toe of the bent leg is in contact with the inside of the extended leg at the knee or higher.~~

~~In the Bent Knee Vertical Position, the thigh of the bent leg is parallel to the surface of the water.~~

Rationale: This position is no longer in the AQUA Manual or AQUA Figure Manual.

ITEM #2:

FIGURES – Update to Figure Rule V

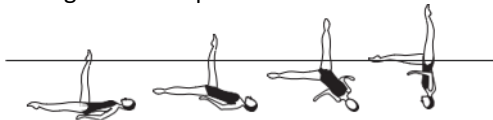
Figures Subcommittee Recommends Approval

Rules Committee Recommends Approval

Figure Rule V, Basic Transitions and Movements – delete F. Rising Catalina rotation Rising

~~Rising~~

~~From a Submerged Ballet Leg Position, while maintaining the 90° angle between the legs, the body descends as the hips rise during a 180° rotation of the head and trunk, without lateral movement of the head and trunk, to assume a Fishtail Position. The final water line is established as the rotation is completed and the foot of the horizontal leg is at the surface of the water regardless of the height of the hips.~~



Rationale: This movement is no longer listed as a Basic Movement in the AQUA Manual or AQUA Figure Manual.

ITEM #3:**FIGURES – Update to Figure Rule V****Figures Subcommittee Recommends Approval****Rules Committee Recommends Approval**

Figure Rule V, Basic Transitions and Movements – change Q to read “ Surface Front Pike Position to Fishtail Position”

Q. Surface Front Pike Position to Fishtail ~~Crane~~ Position:

From a **Surface Front Pike Position**, without movement of the head and trunk, and with minimal change in water level, one leg is lifted to assume a **Fishtail** ~~Crane~~ Position.

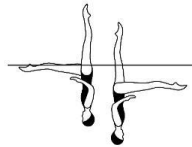


Rationale: The Crane Position is no longer used.

Housekeeping: Delete Figure Rule IV, Basic Positions for Figures, F. Remove Crane Position (and re-letter remaining)

~~F. Crane Position:~~

~~The body is extended in a **Vertical Position**, perpendicular to the surface of the water, with the head downward, head (ears specifically), hips and one ankle in line. The other leg is extended forward, parallel to the surface of the water at a 90° angle to the trunk.~~



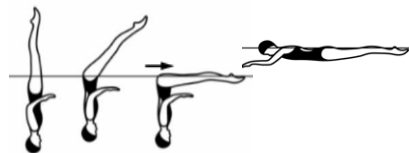
Rationale: This position is no longer used by AQUA.

ITEM #4:**FIGURES – Update to Figure Rule V****Figures Subcommittee Recommends Approval****Rules Committee Recommends Approval**

Figure Rule V, Basic Transitions and Movements – delete V “Vertical Position to Front Layout Position”.

~~V. Vertical Position to Front Layout Position:~~

~~From a **Vertical Position**, without movement of the head and trunk, the legs are lowered to assume a **Surface Front Pike Position**. The feet and hips move along the surface of the water until the body straightens to assume a **Front Layout Position** as the head surfaces at the position occupied by the hips at the beginning of this action.~~



Rationale: Not listed in AQUA Basic Movements. Is it needed?

ITEM #5:**NOVICE - Adjustment to Synchronization Technical Control for Novice Routines
Rules Committee Recommends Approval As Amended****AMENDED PROPOSAL****OD 3.3.3 Synchronization Technical Controllers:**

OD 3.3.3.1 There shall be 3 Synchronization Technical Controllers (“STC”) who record the number and type of synchronization errors (unequal actions) observed in real time during the performance of a routine, except during the solo event.

Exception: For Novice Free Routines with Technical Required Elements, see Appendix L, Article 5.

Appendix L, Article 5**Novice Free Routines with Technical Required Elements (Note)****Note:**

1. All Novice routines shall include the Technical Required Elements and may also include 1 optional Free Hybrid. The optional Free Hybrid may be placed anywhere in the routine and will be judged under Artistic Impression (no Acrobatic Movements permitted).
2. The Coach Card/Element Card is not required for Novice routines.
3. **In reference to OD 3.3.3.1, Synchronization Technical Controllers shall only record Major errors.** There will be a maximum synchronization error deduction of ~~10~~ **15** points **(5 Major errors)** for Novice duet, trio and team routines

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL**OD 3.3.3 Synchronization Technical Controllers:**

OD 3.3.3.1 There shall be 3 Synchronization Technical Controllers (“STC”) who record the number and type of synchronization errors (unequal actions) observed in real time during the performance of a routine, except during the solo event.

Exception: For Novice Free Routines with Technical Required Elements, see Appendix L, Article 5.

Appendix L, Article 5**Novice Free Routines with Technical Required Elements (Note)****Note:**

1. All Novice routines shall include the Technical Required Elements and may also include 1 optional Free Hybrid. The optional Free Hybrid may be placed anywhere in the routine and will be judged under Artistic Impression (no Acrobatic Movements permitted).
2. The Coach Card/Element Card is not required for Novice routines.
3. There will be a maximum synchronization error deduction of ~~10~~ **9** points **(3 Major errors) per Duet, Trio and Team Novice routine.** ~~for all Novice routines.~~ **Synchronization Technical Controllers shall record the number and type of Major synchronization errors (unequal actions) observed in real time during the performance of a routine, except during the Solo event.**

Rationale: This amendment aligns synchronization judging with the developmental purpose of novice competition while maintaining synchronized technical control for significant routine errors.

Background: Novice athletes are at the earliest stage of development in artistic swimming. At this level, swimmers are primarily learning foundational skills such as body position, timing awareness, transitions, and routine structure. Unlike higher competitive categories, novice routines are not designed to be fully synchronized performances but rather an introduction to performing choreography in a group setting. At the recent Cactus Classic Artistic Swimming Meet, all but one novice routine incurred more than 10 points in synchronization penalties, reaching the maximum penalty threshold. Some errors were in the Major category, but most deductions were largely due to expected timing differences among athletes who are still developing basic synchronization awareness.

Problem: The current synchronization technical control standard may be too strict for the novice level. When novice routines accumulate maximum synchronization penalties for minor timing differences, the scoring no longer meaningfully differentiates performances or reflects athletes' actual skill development. Applying high-level synchronization standards at the novice stage can have several unintended consequences:

- *Scores become compressed due to widespread maximum penalties.*
- *Feedback becomes less meaningful for athletes and coaches.*
- *Early-stage athletes may feel discouraged when large deductions occur for expected developmental mistakes.*

Proposal For Novice category routines: Synchronization technical control should be applied only for major synchronization errors, such as:

- *An athlete significantly missing or skipping a movement.*
- *An athlete performing an incorrect sequence.*
- *A swimmer clearly out of phase due to forgetting choreography. Minor timing differences that occur during normal learning should not trigger synchronization technical penalties.*

Benefits: Adjusting the rule for novice routines would:

- *Better align judging criteria with the developmental goals of novice athletes.*
- *Encourage participation and confidence at the entry level.*
- *Provide more meaningful scoring differentiation between routines.*
- *Allow athletes to focus on learning skills before being judged on precise synchronization.*

Conclusion: Novice athletes are learning the fundamentals of artistic swimming and group performance. Synchronization is an important skill, but strict technical control for minor timing differences at this stage does not reflect the intent of the novice category. Limiting synchronization penalties to major errors only would create a scoring system that better supports athlete development while still maintaining accountability for significant mistakes.

ITEM #6:

NOVICE – Change in Routine Requirements

Rules Committee Recommends Approval

Appendix L, Article 5

NOVICE FREE ROUTINES WITH TECHNICAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS

#1-6 and #8 (to be renumbered) remain the same, as do Notes 1-3

~~#7 Solo, Duet and Trio General Routine Requirement – Technical Required Elements # 1-4 shall be performed parallel to the sides of the pool where the panels of judges are seated."~~

Appendix L, 2.04

2.04 For Duet, Trio and Team: With the exception of the Deck Work, Entry into the water, getting into and out of the Circle (Team), and Acrobatics, the Technical Required Elements, Free Hybrids and Transitions are to be performed simultaneously and facing the same direction by all Duet, Trio or Team members.

- **Exceptions:**

- ~~For Novice exception, see Novice Chart in this Appendix L.~~
- For Intermediate exception, see Intermediate Chart in this Appendix L.
- For Masters exception, see Masters Chart in this Appendix L.

Rationale: Having extra restrictions on Novice routines makes it more likely that coaches familiar with Junior/Senior tech routine rules will forget and make mistakes. The expectation is that almost all routines will keep all elements parallel as that has been seen for JR/SR tech routines nationally and internationally, even though they don't have the parallel requirement. Keeping the requirement adds one more thing that a coach has to remember and one more thing that can trip them up when they think that the requirements are like a technical routine. This also provides more options for choreographing pool patterns.

ITEM #7:**INTERMEDIATE – Change in Routine Requirements
Rules Committee Recommends Approval****Appendix L, Article 5****INTERMEDIATE FREE ROUTINES WITH TECHNICAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS**

#1-6 and #8 (to be renumbered) remain the same, as do the Acrobatic Safety Limits and the Hybrid Family Declaration Limits
~~#7 Solo, Duet and Trio General Routine Requirement~~ – Technical Required Elements # 1-4 shall be performed parallel to the sides of the pool where the panels of judges are seated."

Appendix L, 2.04

2.04 For Duet, Trio and Team: With the exception of the Deck Work, Entry into the water, getting into and out of the Circle (Team), and Acrobatics, the Technical Required Elements, Free Hybrids and Transitions are to be performed simultaneously and facing the same direction by all Duet, Trio or Team members.

- **Exceptions:**

- For Novice exception, see Novice Chart in this Appendix L.
- ~~For Intermediate exception, see Intermediate Chart in this Appendix L.~~
- For Masters exception, see Masters Chart in this Appendix L.

Rationale: Having extra restrictions on Intermediate routines makes it more likely that coaches familiar with Junior/Senior tech routine rules will forget and make mistakes. The expectation is that almost all routines will keep all elements parallel as that has been seen for JR/SR tech routines nationally and internationally, even though they don't have the parallel requirement. Keeping the requirement adds one more thing that a coach has to remember and one more thing that can trip them up when they think that the requirements are like a technical routine. This also provides more options for choreographing pool patterns.

ITEM #8:**INTERMEDIATE – Change in Routine Requirements
Rules Committee Recommends Approval****Appendix L, Article 5****INTERMEDIATE FREE ROUTINES WITH TECHNICAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS****INTERMEDIATE SOLO (1:45), DUET / TRIO (2:05) AND TEAM (2:35)**

Technical Required Elements # 1-3 ~~must be performed in the order listed~~ **may be performed in any order**. Placement of additional routine requirements # 4-6 is optional.

Rationale: Having extra restrictions on Intermediate routines makes it more likely that coaches familiar with Junior/Senior tech routine rules will forget and make mistakes. In addition, now that Intermediate Duets/Trios/Team have the requirement for 1 Free Hybrid and either 1 ChoHY or 1 Acrobatic, it would be of great benefit for teams to be able to choreograph all the required elements in the order that works best for them and for their own pool specs. When first using the new scoring system, there was a lot of concern from judges about the need to strictly follow the listed order of elements, but this has not really been an issue and dropping this requirement to allow coaches more options.

ITEM #9:

JOs – Changes to figures competition at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship (follow up on 2025 Item #42 which was referred back to the Rules Committee for further consideration)

Rules Committee Recommends Approval as Amended

AMENDED PROPOSAL

CP 4.3.3.1 Junior Olympic Youth and Youth Championships: One group of 2 figures shall be performed. This group of figures shall consist of 2 figures drawn from the Section A, B or C from the Youth Age Division Figure Selection Groups listed in Figure Rule II.D.

1. The Youth Figure Section A, B or C shall be drawn first, then the order of appearance shall be drawn. Then 1 of the 2 figure groups of the drawn Section will be drawn. For example, if Section B, Group 4 is drawn, then all competitors shall compete Section B, Group 4.
2. The Youth athletes shall be divided into an appropriate number of figure flights as determined by the Vice President Competitive Programs or the appropriate Technical Chair (or appointed representative), with both figures panels placed on one side of the pool where possible.

CP 4.3.3.2 Junior Olympic 12 & Under; ~~Intermediate and Novice Championships:~~ One group of ~~4~~ 2 figures shall be performed.

1. The Compulsory Figures for the 12 & Under Age Division listed in Figure Rule II.D shall be considered as Figure Selection Group 4.
2. The 12 & Under Figure Selection Group 1, 2, 3 or 4 shall be drawn first, then the order of appearance shall be drawn. For example, if Selection Group 2 is drawn, then all competitors shall compete Selection Group 2.
3. The 12 & Under athletes shall be divided into an appropriate number of figure flights as determined by the Vice President Competitive Programs or the appropriate Technical Chair (or appointed representative), with both figure panels placed on one side of the pool where possible.

Renumber the following as 1 and 2 under a new CP 4.3.3.3

Intermediate and Novice Championships: One group of 4 figures shall be performed.

1. **For Figure competition at Intermediate Championships,** the group of figures shall consist of the 2 Intermediate Compulsory Figures combined with 1 group of 2 figures from the Intermediate Figure Selection Groups.
 - For the Immediate figures, refer to Figure Rule II.B.
2. **For Figure competition at Novice Championships,** the group of figures shall consist of the 4 Novice Compulsory Figures from the Novice Figure Group.
 - For the Novice figures, refer to Figure Rule II.A.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

CP 4.3.3.1 Junior Olympic Youth and Youth Championships: One group of 2 figures shall be performed. This group of figures shall consist of 2 figures drawn from the Section A, B or C from the Youth Age Division Figure Selection Groups listed in Figure Rule II.D.

3. The Youth Figure Section A, B or C shall be drawn first, then the order of appearance shall be drawn. Then 1 of the 2 figure groups of the drawn Section will be drawn. For example, if Section B, Group 4 is drawn, then all competitors shall compete Section B, Group 4.
4. The Youth athletes shall be divided into an appropriate number of figure flights as determined by the Vice President Competitive Programs or the appropriate Technical Chair (or appointed representative), with both figures panels placed on one side of the pool.

CP 4.3.3.2 Junior Olympic 12 & Under; ~~Intermediate and Novice Championships:~~ One group of ~~4~~ 2 figures shall be performed.

4. The Compulsory Figures for the 12 & Under Age Division listed in Figure Rule II.D shall be considered as Figure Selection Group 4.

5. The 12 & Under Figure Selection Group 1, 2, 3 or 4 shall be drawn first, then the order of appearance shall be drawn. For example, if Selection Group 2 is drawn, then all competitors shall compete Selection Group 2.
6. The 12 & Under athletes shall be divided into an appropriate number of figure flights as determined by the Vice President Competitive Programs or the appropriate Technical Chair (or appointed representative), with both figure panels placed on one side of the pool.

Renumber the following as 1 and 2 under a new CP 4.3.3.3

Intermediate and Novice Championships: One group of 4 figures shall be performed.

1. **For Figure competition at Intermediate Championships,** the group of figures shall consist of the 2 Intermediate Compulsory Figures combined with 1 group of 2 figures from the Intermediate Figure Selection Groups.
 - For the Immediate figures, refer to Figure Rule II.B.
2. **For Figure competition at Novice Championships,** the group of figures shall consist of the 4 Novice Compulsory Figures from the Novice Figure Group.
 - For the Novice figures, refer to Figure Rule II.A.

Rationale: Item #42 from the 2025 Rules Proposals (Eliminate Figures competition at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship) was referred back to the Rules Committee for further consideration as no consensus was reached during the 2025 Convention. The committee approached this reconsideration as follows:

A survey was sent out to the entire body following convention to gather ideas and received nearly 200 responses, with the following results:

Summary results

- *Eliminate Figures (32.4%): Oppose figures continuing both as they currently stand and in an altered state.*
- *Want Figures in Some Form (25.9%): Want figures to continue as they currently stand and would also support them continuing in an altered state.*
- *Want Change of Figures (26.5%): This group does not want figures as they currently stand, but they would support figures continuing in an altered state.*
- *Want Figures as Is (15.1%): Wants figures to continue as they currently stand but would not support a change to an altered state. They prefer the status quo to any proposed variation.*

Summary of Suggestions

The two most common suggestion categories were:

- *Limit Participants (37 respondents): This includes suggestions to reduce the number of athletes who compete in figures, such as:*
 - *Only having the top 12, 15 or 20 routines after prelims do figures.*
 - *Only having solos and duets do figures.*
- *Logistics/Format (37 respondents): These suggestions focus on improving the competition process to save time and reduce judge fatigue, including ideas like:*
 - *Running multiple figure stations or panels concurrently.*
 - *Implementing better logistical flow (e.g., staging lanes, a clear calling system, pre-assigned flights).*
 - *Simply planning more time for the event or starting earlier.*

A Rules Committee Zoom meeting was then held to discuss all of the ideas, at which time we agreed on the four proposals that had the most support and actually seemed workable.

1. *Figure competition includes all Solos, all Mixed Duets, all Gender Inclusive duets, all Men Duets, top 20 Women Duets, and top 20 Teams*
2. *Figures are an optional event at JOs*
3. *12U athletes only do two figures, with four panels*
4. *12U athletes only do two figures, with two panels, and 12U and youth figures run simultaneously with two flights.*

Another survey was then sent out to the entire body to narrow the proposals down to the two most favored, with the following results:

Total Respondents: 99 (some chose two options, so were counted as ½ vote for each)

	Proposal #1	Proposal #2	Proposal #3	Proposal #4
Coaches (47)	23.5	8.5	2	13
Athletes (41)	4	11	13	13
Officials (11)	6	0	1	4
TOTALS:	33.5	19.5	16	30

The two most favored proposals (1 and 4) were then written out in more detail, as follows:

Proposal #1

Figure competition will include all athletes in Finals Only events (Solos, Men Duet, Mixed Duet, Gender Inclusive Duet routines).

Figure scores added to their routine score will determine the top 12 for awards.

Figure competition will also include the athletes who place in the top 20 for Women Duet and the top 20 for Team routines based upon their preliminary routine score.

Figure scores added to their preliminary routine score will determine the 12 Women Duet and Team routines that advance to Finals in these two events.

Proposal #2

All 12U and Youth athletes participate in Figure competition at JOs.

12U athletes perform only two figures, using two panels of judges.

Youth Athletes perform only two figures, using two panels of judges.

12U and Youth athletes are each divided into two figure flights.

Both 12U and Youth figures run simultaneously on opposite sides of pool using the flights.

This would allow all athletes within a division to be judged by the exact same judging panels.

These two proposals were sent out to the four Zone Admin Chairs, who were requested to facilitate discussion and a vote amongst both their zone athletes and their zone coaches and officials during their championship meets, with the following results:

East Zone: Proposal #1 – athletes 73, coaches/officials 3

Proposal #2 – athletes 32, coaches/officials 23

North Zone: Rejected both proposals and asked to revisit the option of NO figure competition at JOs

South Zone: Coaches and officials overwhelmingly preferred Proposal #1

Athletes were somewhat in favor of Proposal #2

West Zone: The WZ Board of Governors recommends to the USAAS Rules Committee by a majority vote, and the WZ athletes by a unanimous vote (note that WZ Champs includes a 12U Invitational and those athletes were also voting) Proposal #2, two figures each for 12U and Youth done simultaneously using figure flights.

Proposal #2 was most favored, but due to the North Zone requesting to revisit having NO figure competition at JOs, the question was put to the Rules Committee members as follows:

A: Proceed with writing legislation for proposal #2 (2 figures 12U and 2 figures Youth/2 panels/run simultaneously using figure flights).

B: Revisit as a full committee the idea of NO figure competition at National JOs.

The committee's votes were:

Non-Athlete Reps: A – 5 B – 1 Abstain – 2

Athlete Reps: A – 3 B – 0 Abstain – 3

Therefore, Item #9 has been submitted as the preferred proposal for figure competition at JOs and is recommended for approval by the Rules Committee.

ITEM #10:**JOs - Eliminate figures competition at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship****Rules Committee Recommends Rejection of #10 as amended****AMENDED PROPOSAL****CP 3.5.5.2 May be held once a year in the following age divisions and routine events:**

12&Under	Youth	15-17	18-19/20	16-19/20
Figures *	Figures *	Solo (Technical and Free)	Solo (Technical and Free)	Free Combination
Solo (Free)	Solo (Free)	Duet (Technical and Free)	Duet (Technical and Free)	Acrobatic
Duet (Free)	Duet (Free)	Team (Technical and Free)	Team (Technical and Free)	
Team (Free)	Team (Free)			
Free Combination	Free Combination			

*** At regional championships only. No Figures at U.S. Junior Olympic Championship.**

CP 3.5.5.5 ~~All 12 & under and Youth competitors in Solo, Duet and Team free routines shall compete in the Figure competition. The Figure results shall be added to the Preliminary Free routine score to determine~~ The top 12 Duets and Teams ~~that~~ qualify for the Final Free routine competition. Number 13 shall be the preswimmer.

- ~~1. The Figure results shall be added to the Solo Final Free routine scores to determine final placement.~~
- ~~2. The Solo and Free Combination events shall be a Final events, and shall not include the Figure scores.~~

CP 3.5.6 Regional Championships:

CP 3.5.6.1 May be held once a year in the age divisions and routine events listed in Rule CP 3.5.5.2. See CP 3.5.5.3-4.
Competition in the 12 & under and Youth divisions shall include figure competition. Final results for routines must include figure scores for purposes of qualification for U.S. Junior Olympic Championship.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL**CP 3.5.5.2 May be held once a year in the following age divisions and routine events:**

12&Under	Youth	15-17	18-19/20	16-19/20
Figures	Figures	Solo (Technical and Free)	Solo (Technical and Free)	Free Combination
Solo (Free)	Solo (Free)	Duet (Technical and Free)	Duet (Technical and Free)	Acrobatic
Duet (Free)	Duet (Free)	Team (Technical and Free)	Team (Technical and Free)	
Team (Free)	Team (Free)			
Free Combination	Free Combination			

CP 3.5.5.5 ~~All 12 & under and Youth competitors in Solo, Duet and Team free routines shall compete in the Figure competition. The Figure results shall be added to the Preliminary Free routine score to determine~~ The top 12 Duets and Teams ~~that~~ qualify for the Final Free routine competition. Number 13 shall be the preswimmer.

- ~~1. The Figure results shall be added to the Solo Final Free routine scores to determine final placement.~~
- ~~2. The Solo and Free Combination events shall be a Final events, and shall not include the Figure scores.~~

Rationale: This is a resubmission of a rules change proposal to eliminate the figures competition only at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship. The rationale below includes comments made during the annual North Zone meeting. We would like to have the “no figures” proposal reconsidered.

Athlete Workload & Welfare: Significant concern was expressed regarding the physical and mental demands placed on athletes—particularly 12U and Youth. Current JO schedules can result in extremely long days (up to 6+ hours in the water), which was described as excessive and not aligned with athlete well-being standards seen in other sports. Comparisons were made to USA Swimming guidelines limiting younger athletes’ pool time.

Impact on Younger Athletes: Younger athletes are not represented in voting processes (e.g., Convention), yet are most affected by these decisions. Concerns included burnout, physical strain, and reduced enjoyment of the sport. It was noted that many of these athletes may never advance to higher levels, reinforcing the importance of a positive JO experience.

Purpose of Figures in the Competitive Pathway: Figures remain an important developmental component of the sport.

Maintaining figures as a qualifying mechanism (Association and Regional levels) and not having figures competition at the national level does not eliminate this developmental component. This approach would:

Maintain technical development standards

Reduce redundancy at the national championship level

Allow JO to serve as a culmination of the season focused on performance.

Quality vs. Quantity in Routines: The sport now has increasing technical demands in routines (e.g., required hybrid elements, acro). With limited pool time, athletes are already balancing significant training loads. Adding figures at JO was viewed as potentially detracting from routine quality especially at the end of the season when athletes are focused on “base mark free” competitions.

Scheduling & Feasibility Concerns: Concerns the involve figures competition specifically at U.S. JOs include:

Extremely long competition days

Overcrowded pool decks

Logistical strain on athletes, coaches, and officials.

Volunteer and Judging Impact: Eliminating figures at JO was seen as a way to:

Reduce the number of required volunteers

Ease strain on officials (who often work extended 7–8 day meets with long hours)

Improve overall meet efficiency

Athlete Experience & End-of-Season Focus: U.S. Junior Olympics should celebrate athletes’ hard work and showcase routines.

Removing figures at this meet is viewed is a way to:

Improve athlete enjoyment

Create a more positive and memorable championship experience

Align with the evolving direction of the sport

In Summary:

Figures are still required at earlier stages. The intent is to support athlete development and well-being, not eliminate figures entirely.

The change is specific to U.S. Junior Olympics only.

The goal is to have an exciting, memorable and positive experience at the largest national championship for our younger athletes so that they continue in the sport.

ITEM #11:

JOs - Add 16-19/20 Free Trios at the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship and eliminate the 16-19/20 Free Combination

Rules Committee Recommends Rejection

CP 3.5.5.2 May be held once a year in the following age divisions and routine events:

12&Under	Youth	15-17	18-19/20	16-19/20
Figures	Figures	Solo (Technical and Free)	Solo (Technical and Free)	Free Combination Trio (Free)
Solo (Free)	Solo (Free)	Duet (Technical and Free)	Duet (Technical and Free)	Acrobatic
Duet (Free)	Duet (Free)	Team (Technical and Free)	Team (Technical and Free)	
Team (Free)	Team (Free)			
Free Combination	Free Combination			

1. A competitor may only enter a specific routine event (Solo, Duet, **Trio**, Team, Acrobatic Routine, or Free Combination) in 1 age division. A competitor may enter a routine event (Technical or Free) in different age divisions as long as the competitor only enters 1 type of routine in the competition. (For example, Youth Free Duet and 15-17 Technical Duet). See Rule CP 3.1.4.
- ~~2. A competitor may enter either the Free Combination event or the Acrobatic Routine event in the 16-19/20 age division, but not both.~~
3. All Technical routine events, Free Solo, **Free Trio**, Acrobatic Routine, and Free Combination events shall be Final events.

CP 3.5.5.3 Each Zone shall qualify up to 8 Solos, 12 Duets and 12 Teams in each event in each age division. Each Zone shall qualify up to 12 Free Combination routines in the 12 & under **and** Youth ~~and 16-19/20~~ age divisions. Each Zone shall qualify up to **8 Free Trios and up to 12** Acrobatic Routines in the 16-19/20 age division.

#1 and bullet point remain the same

CP 3.5.5.4 No Region shall have more than its proportionate share of the 8/12. In the Solo, Duet and Team events in the Regional Championships, each Region shall qualify competitors by ranking in the:

- Combined Free routine and Figure competition (12 & under and Youth); or,
- Free routine or Technical routine competition (15-17 and 18-19/20).
 1. In the Solo event, 2 entries per region per age division shall qualify to the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship.

Add new #2 and renumber remaining

2. In the Free Trio event, each Region shall qualify its proportionate share of Trio Routines in the 16-19/20 age division.

~~2 3.~~ In the Free Combination event, each Region shall qualify its proportionate share of Free Combination routines in the 12 & under, **and** Youth ~~and 16-19/20~~ age divisions.

Bullet points and #3 (renumbered as #4) remain the same

CP 3.5.5.5 remains the same

CP 3.5.5.6 All 15-17 and 18-19/20 competitors in Solo, Duet and Team may compete in the Technical and/or Free routine events. The Preliminary Free routine score shall be used to determine the top 12 Duets and Teams that qualify for the Final Free routine competition. Number 13 shall be the pre-swimmer.

1. All Technical routine events, Free Solo, **Free Trio and** Acrobatic Routine ~~and Free Combination~~ shall be Final events.

Rationale: We have repeatedly heard at convention that a desire exists "to bring back Trios" to our competitive structure. With the addition of the Acro event for 16-19/20, this proposal is to eliminate the Free Combination event at the Junior Olympic level and add the Trio event. This would assist small clubs in having an additional event for older athletes. It may also give some athletes the opportunity to compete in a Trio if they are moving into a collegiate program. The proposal is to use the same number of required elements as described in collegiate rules.

ITEM #12:**COLLEGIATE - Eligibility housekeeping per updated NCAA rules****Collegiate Committee Recommends Approval as Amended**
Rules Committee Recommends Approval as Amended**AMENDED PROPOSAL**

CO 1.3 Eligibility: A program shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements and USAAS has certified the student-athlete's eligibility. Each institution is expected to follow eligibility and amateurism regulations set forth in the Division I NCAA Manual – ~~Bylaw 12 (Amateurism)~~ and Bylaw ~~14~~ **12** (Eligibility).

~~Exception to Bylaw 12.8.3.2.1.1: Student Athletes representing the National Team of their Federation shall have a maximum of 3 years after their high school graduation date to enroll full time in a collegiate institution. Enrollment after the 3 USAAS Rules 2026 41 year period shall be permitted and will result in the loss of eligible competitive seasons equivalent to the number of years beyond the 3 year grace period.~~

Period of Eligibility: A student-athlete's period of eligibility shall be determined in accordance with the current NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw 12.6 (Five-Year Period of Eligibility), except as provided below:

National Team Athlete Exception: Notwithstanding NCAA Division I Manual Bylaws 12.6(b) and 12.6.1, a student-athlete representing the National Team of their Federation shall have a maximum of three years after their high school graduation date to enroll full time in a collegiate institution. If the student-athlete enrolls within this three-year grace period, the five-year period of eligibility shall begin with the student-athlete's initial full-time collegiate enrollment. Enrollment after the three-year grace period shall be permitted; however, the five-year period shall be deemed to have begun upon expiration of the three-year grace period and shall run continuously thereafter.

Collegiate Committee Waiver: Notwithstanding NCAA Division I Manual Bylaw 12.6.8, a waiver of the application of Bylaw 12.6 to USAAS Collegiate competition may be granted at the discretion of the Collegiate Committee. A waiver request shall be submitted in writing to the Collegiate Committee before the first competition for which the waiver is requested. Any waiver applies only to eligibility for USAAS Collegiate competition season and does not supersede an eligibility determination or participation restriction imposed by the student-athlete's institution, athletic conference or other governing body.

CO 1.3.6 Graduate Student-Athlete/Post Baccalaureate Participation: A student-athlete may participate in intercollegiate athletics, provided the student-athlete:

- Has eligibility remaining and such participation occurs within the applicable ~~5-year~~ **five-year** period set forth in ~~the current~~ Division I NCAA Manual, **Bylaw 12.6**. ~~Bylaws 12.8 and 14.2.2.1.5.~~

Following bullet points remain the same.

CO 1.3.6.1 One-Time Transfer Exception: A graduate student-athlete who is enrolled in a graduate or professional school of an institution other than the institution from which they previously received a baccalaureate degree may participate in intercollegiate athletics if the student-athlete fulfills the conditions of the one-time transfer exception set forth in Division I NCAA Manual Bylaw 14.5.5.2.10 and has eligibility remaining per Division I NCAA Manual Bylaw ~~12.6~~ **12.8**.

All following provisions remain the same.

Rationale: Amateurism status has fluctuated in the current NCAA model and has been removed from the handbook. Bylaw 14 has now been moved to 12 for athletic eligibility. NCAA Division I Manual Bylaw 12.6 establishes the new five-year period of eligibility, and Bylaw 12.6.8 provides that waivers of the five-year period are not available. This proposal incorporates the NCAA rule by reference rather than repeating it in the USAAS rules. It states only the areas in which USAAS will differ: retaining the existing National Team delayed-enrollment exception and permitting the Collegiate Committee to grant waivers for USAAS Collegiate competition at its discretion.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

CO 1.3 Eligibility: A program shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements and USAAS has certified the student-athlete's eligibility. Each institution is expected to follow eligibility and amateurism regulations set forth in the Division I NCAA Manual – ~~Bylaw 12 (Amateurism)~~ and Bylaw ~~14~~ **12** (Eligibility).

Rationale: Amateurism status has fluctuated in the current NCAA model and has been removed from the handbook. Bylaw 14 has now been moved to 12 for athletic eligibility.

ITEM #13:

COLLEGIATE - Updated score ranges for technical competition

Collegiate Committee Recommends Approval

Rules Committee Recommends Approval

CO 2.2 Categories for Technical Competition:

CO 2.2.1 The Technical Competition shall consist of 4 Technical Categories A, B, C and D which are based on the qualifying average Figure, Solo, Duet or Team Technical routine score. See Rule CO 2.2.3.

1. Category A: ~~71.000~~ **73.000** or higher or National Team student-athlete.
 - For the purpose of this rule, a National Team student-athlete shall be any student-athlete who has competed for their home country's National Team within the last 2 calendar years.
 - International Student-Athletes who have competed for their Federation's Junior or Senior National Teams within the last 2 calendar years and have achieved an average figure score below the Technical Category A minimum (~~71.000~~ **73.000**) may request entry into the Technical Category of the corresponding figure or element average from the most recent year by submitting the Student-Athlete Technical Affidavit Form and the video submission process. See Rule CO 2.2.2.
2. Category B: ~~64.000 to 70.999~~ **66.000 to 72.999**.
3. Category C: ~~52.000 to 63.999~~ **54.000 to 65.999**.
4. Category D: ~~51.999~~ **53.999** or lower.

Rationale: Over the past several seasons, we have seen inflated tech routine and figures scores across collegiate competitions. This has forced several student-athletes to move up to a more rigorous technical category than their skill level is prepared for. Through our scores we have seen that often these athletes that should remain in their current category are bumped up by .5-1.5 points in their average scores from the season. We believe by adjusting the curve by two points, those athletes that should be moving up in their technical categories will still achieve those scores while those that need to remain in their technical categories will have the opportunity to do so.

ITEM #14:**COLLEGIATE - Updated Trio Elements**

Collegiate Committee Recommends Approval
Rules Committee Recommends Approval

Appendix L, Article 5
**JUNIOR / SENIOR TECHNICAL AND FREE ROUTINES AND COLLEGIATE FREE/ DEVELOPMENTAL ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS –
 SET NUMBER OF ELEMENTS (continued)**

7. Collegiate Trio Free	2:45	8	• Trio Required Elements (combination of Pair Acrobatics*, Free Hybrids, and Choreography Hybrids (“ChoHY”)***) will be determined by the Collegiate Committee prior to the start of each season. • The Collegiate Committee will advise all Collegiate coaches of the Trio Required Elements via email no later than October 1st of each year. • <u>3 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine)</u> • <u>2 Choreography Hybrids (“ChoHY”)***)</u> • <u>3 Pair Acrobatics* (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic)</u> * See Article 1, Section 1.05. *** See Article 1, Section 1.02.
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Rationale: Given that trios are a unique category to collegiates, we piloted adding two choreography hybrids in addition to three pair acrobatics and two DD hybrids to this event at the 2026 championship. We are proposing to add one more DD hybrid as only having two this past season made for very long hybrids for our athletes and only two opportunities to include moves from all the difficulty families for our developing athletes. Adding one more DD hybrid will balance out the hybrids by having transition time in between and allow for another hybrid opportunity to complete all the required elements.

ITEM #15:**AWD – Program Name Change**

AWD Subcommittee Recommends Approval
Rules Committee Recommends Approval

RULE IX**~~ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES (AD)~~****ADAPTIVE ARTISTIC SWIMMING (AA)**

Rationale: To align the name with other adaptive swimming programs, and to remove the word “disability,” which is a deterrent to some athletes and parents who do not prefer to be labeled as such.

Housekeeping to update verbiage throughout the USAAS Code, Technical Rules, Figures Section and Appendix L

ITEM #16:**AWD – Make Figure Competition an optional event****AWD Subcommittee Recommends Approval****Rules Committee Recommends Approval****AD 2 COMPETITION REGULATIONS**

AD 2.1 Competitions shall consist of Figures and Free routines for the physical and cognitive categories, respectively.
~~All competitors shall perform Figures. See Rule CP 3.1.1.~~

Add new #1 and #2

- 1. Figure competition shall be an optional event.**
- 2. Figures and Free Routines shall be scored as separate events.**

AD 2.2 Competitions for competitors with physical or cognitive disabilities are based on Tier level only.

AD 2.2.1 Competitors from different disability categories may compete together in Duet, Trio and Team routines. Routines that include both competitors with a cognitive disability and competitors with a physical disability shall compete in the physical disability category.

AD 2.3 The coach is responsible for declaring the competitor's physical or cognitive category and the Tier level on the Official Club Entry Form.

~~AD 2.3.1~~ ~~In order to determine the Tier level for a Duet, Trio and/or Team, the Tier levels shall be averaged, and if necessary, rounded up to the next highest Tier.~~

AD 2.4 Competitors participating in the physical and cognitive categories will be exempt from TR 4.2, allowing a coach to instruct the competitor during the Figure and Free routine competitions.

AD 5 JUDGING AND SCORING

AD 5.1 Figure Competition: Figure competition shall be judged and scored according to OD 2.6.1 and OD 5.1.2.1 and OD 5.1.2.2, respectively.

AD 5.2 Routine Competition: Routine events shall be judged and scored according to Rule ~~MS 5.3.4~~. **OD 2.5.2.**

~~AD 5.3~~ ~~The routine figure average shall be computed using the figure score of the competitors who actually swam in the routine.~~

~~AD 5.4~~ ~~The average Figure score shall be added to the Free routine score to determine the Final score for placement in the category.~~

Rationale: Allows athletes and coaches to compete in figures as an additional event if they choose but does not require those athletes to participate in figures.

ITEM #17:**AWD – Changes to Figures for AWD****AWD Subcommittee Recommends Approval as Amended****Rules Committee Recommends Approval as Amended**

AMENDED PROPOSAL (the amendment pertains only to rule AD 3 – no changes to the remainder of the original proposal)

AD 3 FIGURE COMPETITION

AD 3.1 The Figure Tiers for both physical and cognitive disability categories are listed in Figure Rule II.E.

Add new AD 3.1.1, AD 3.1.2 and AD 3.1.3

AD 3.1.1 Tier 5 Figures: One group of 2 figures shall be performed. This group of figures shall consist of 2 figures drawn from the Section A, B or C from the Youth Age Division Figure Selection Groups listed in Figure Rule II.E.

- 1. The Youth Figure Section A, B or C shall be drawn first, then the order of appearance shall be drawn. Then 1 of the 2 figure groups of the drawn Section will be drawn. For example, if Section B, Group 4 is drawn, then all competitors shall compete Section B, Group 4.**

AD 3.1.2 The Figure Section shall be drawn 18-72 hours before the start of the Figure competition by the Vice President Competitive Programs or appropriate Technical Chair (or appointed representative).

AD 3.1.3 For all tiers, in the event that an athlete requires an accommodation, a figure with an equivalent DD may be substituted.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

FIGURE RULE II

E: ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES - PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE FIGURES:

TIER 1 COMPULSORY FIGURES:

BPA Back Layout	0.4
460 Oyster	1.2
<u>BPK Front Layout Position</u>	<u>0.4</u>
<u>BPR Inverted Tuck Position</u>	<u>0.4</u>
<u>BMP Front Pike Position (Assume)</u>	<u>0.7</u>

TIER 1 SELECTION GROUPS:

Group 1 (Odd year)		Group 2 (Even year)	
475 Tub	1.1	BPK Front Layout Position	0.4
BPO Split Position	0.6	BPE Bent Knee Vertical Position	0.6

TIER 2 COMPULSORY FIGURES:

100 Bent Knee, Alternate	1.1
302 Blossom	1.4
<u>201 Dolphin</u>	<u>1.4</u>
<u>358 Snapping Turtle</u>	<u>1.7</u>
<u>316 Kipnus</u>	<u>1.4</u>

TIER 2 SELECTION GROUPS:

Group 1 (Odd year)		Group 2 (Even year)	
310 Somersault, Back Tuck	1.1	BMK Front Pike Position (Assume)	0.7
BPO Split to Close at Ankles	0.8	201 Dolphin	1.4

Note: The Tier 2 figures shall remain the same as the USAAS Novice figures. If the Novice figures change, the Tier 2 figures shall also change as housekeeping to align with the Novice category.

TIER 3 COMPULSORY FIGURES:

101 Ballet Leg, Single	1.6
306 Barracuda, Bent Knee	1.7
<u>301 Barracuda</u>	<u>1.8</u>

TIER 3 SELECTION GROUPS:

Group 1 (Odd year)		Group 2 (Even year)	
316 Kipnus	1.4	344 Neptunus	1.6
360 Walkover, Front	1.9	419 Crayfish	1.7
<u>318 Kip, Bent Knee</u>	1.8	<u>348 Tower</u>	<u>1.9</u>
		<u>420 Walkover, Back</u>	<u>2.1</u>

Note: The Tier 3 figures shall remain the same as the USAAS Intermediate figures. If the Intermediate figures change, the Tier 3 figures shall also change as housekeeping to align with the Intermediate category.

TIER 4 COMPULSORY FIGURES:

106 Ballet Leg, Straight	1.6
301 Barracuda	1.8

TIER 4 SELECTION GROUPS: —

Group 1 (Odd year)		Group 2 (Even year)	
311 Kip	1.6	348 Tower	1.9
359 Front Ariana	2.2	420 Walkover, Back	2.1

TIER 4 COMPULSORY FIGURES:

106 Straight Ballet Leg	1.6
301 Barracuda	1.8

TIER 4 SELECTION GROUPS:

Group 1 (2027)		Group 2 (2028)		Group 3 (2029)	
359 Front Ariana	2.2	363 Water Drop	1.8	311 Kip	1.6
348 Tower	1.9	401 Swordfish	2.1	227d Swanita Spinning 180	1.9

Note: The Tier 4 figures shall remain the same as the World Aquatics 12 and under figures. If the World Aquatics 12 and under figures change, the Tier 4 figures shall also change as housekeeping to align with the World Aquatics 12 and under category.

TIER 5 COMPULSORY DIVISION FIGURES:

140 Flamingo, Bent Knee	2.3
301d Barracuda, Spinning 180°	2.0

TIER 5 SELECTION GROUPS: —

Group 1 (Odd year)		Group 2 (Even year)	
154 London	2.0	355a Porpoise, Half Twist	2.2
423 Ariana	2.5	240 Albatross	2.2

Section A:

Group 1		Group 2	
307e Flying Fish Spinning 360°	2.9	308h Barracuda Airborne Split, Spin Up 180°	2.9
437 Cyclone, Open 180°	2.6	407 Swordfish, Straight Leg Ariana Rotation	2.6

Section B:

Group 3		Group 4	
356f Whip, Continuous Spin 720°	3.0	352 Venus	3.0
441 Saturn	2.5	240i Albatross, Spin Up 360°	2.5

Section C:

Group 5		Group 6	
140j Flamingo, BK Comb Spin 360°+360°	3.1	440d Ipanema, Spinning 180°	3.1
421 Walkover, Back, Closing 360°	2.4	154f London Continuous Spin 720°	2.4

Note: The Tier 5 figures shall remain the same as the World Aquatics Youth figures. If the World Aquatics Youth figures change, the Tier 5 figures shall also change as housekeeping to align with the World Aquatics Youth category.

TIER 6 COMPULSORY FIGURES:

140e Flamingo, Bent Knee, Spinning 360° 2.4

301h Barracuda, Spin Up 180° 2.4

TIER 6 SELECTION GROUPS:

Group 1 (Odd year)

313 Kip, Split, Closing 180°

2.2

407 Swordfish, Str. Leg Ariana Rotation

2.6

Group 2 (Even year)

356 Whip

2.6

240c Albatross, Twirl

2.3

Note: These figures need not be performed in the order listed.

AD 3 FIGURE COMPETITION

AD 3.1 The Figure Tiers for both physical and cognitive disability categories are listed in Figure Rule II.E.

Add new AD 3.1.1 and AD 3.1.2

AD 3.1.1 Tier 5 Figures: One group of 2 figures shall be performed. This group of figures shall consist of 2 figures drawn from the Section A, B or C from the Youth Age Division Figure Selection Groups listed in Figure Rule II.E.

- 1. The Youth Figure Section A, B or C shall be drawn first, then the order of appearance shall be drawn. Then 1 of the 2 figure groups of the drawn Section will be drawn. For example, if Section B, Group 4 is drawn, then all competitors shall compete Section B, Group 4.**

AD 3.1.2 The Figure Section shall be drawn 18-72 hours before the start of the Figure competition by the Vice President Competitive Programs or appropriate Technical Chair (or appointed representative).

Rationale:

- Tier 1 is a level below novice. For those athletes with disabilities that do not allow for complex or compound movements.
- Aligning Tiers 2-5 with Novice, Intermediate, Age Group 12 & Under, and Youth allows for clubs to align Adaptive Artistic Swimming athletes with their able-bodied athletes at practice and for inclusion.
- The goal is to grow this program within USAAS, and this will help clubs with limited resources to include these athletes within their existing groups.

ITEM #18:

AWD – Change Routine Competition to Free Routines with Required Elements

AWD Subcommittee Recommends Approval

Rules Committee Recommends Approval

AD 4 ROUTINE COMPETITION

AD 4.1 Free Routines with Required Elements:

AD 4.1.1 The competition shall consist of Solo, Duet, Trio and Team events in each competition. See Rule CP 3.1.1.

AD 4.1.2 Maximum time requirements for routines shall be as follows:

Tier	Solo	Duet/Trio	Team
Tier 1	1:00 <u>1:30</u>	1:00 <u>1:30</u>	1:00 <u>1:30</u>
Tier 2	1:00 <u>1:30</u>	1:00 <u>1:30</u>	1:00 <u>1:30</u>
Tier 3	1:45	2:15 <u>2:05</u>	2:30 <u>2:45</u>
Tier 4	2:00	2:30	3:00
Tier 5	2:15 <u>2:00</u>	2:45 <u>2:30</u>	3:15 <u>3:00</u>
Tier 6	2:15	2:45	3:30

AD 4.1.3 There shall be an allowance of 5 seconds plus the allotted time limit, but there shall be no minimum time limit.

AD 4.1.4 Walk-On: In routine events, the walk-on of the competitors from the designated starting point to the achievement of a stationary starting position(s) on deck and/or in the water may exceed 30 seconds. (Exemption from Rule CP 4.2.2.6.2).

1. Competitors with disabilities are allowed to have assistance or be guided to the correct starting point on deck or in the water.

AD 4.1.5 Deck movements are suggested to be 10 seconds as the competitors are exempt from the maximum allotment of Rule CP 4.2.2.6.3.

ADD NEW 4.1.6

AD 4.1.6 Required elements: See Appendix L, Article 5

Rationale: Allows judging/scoring to use the new/current system and gives coaches a guideline for what the routines should contain at each tier.

ITEM #19:

AWD – Delineate required elements for AWD Routines

AWD Subcommittee Recommends Approval

Rules Committee Recommends Approval

Appendix L, Article V

Add New Section for AWD (following Masters)

TIER I FREE ROUTINES WITH TECHNICAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS

<u>TIER 1 SOLO / DUET / TRIO AND TEAM (1:30)</u> <u>Technical Required Elements # 1-4 must be performed in the order listed and must be separated by other content.</u>
1. <u>BPA Back Layout Position. [DD 0.4]</u>
2. <u>BPR Tuck Position (Inverted). [DD 0.4]</u>
3. <u>BPK Front Layout Position [DD 0.4]</u>
4. <u>BMK Front Pike position, to assume [DD 0.4]</u>
5. <u>Acrobatic Movements are NOT permitted</u>
6. <u>General Guidelines: All Technical Required Elements #1-4 shall be performed parallel to the sides of the pool where the judges are seated, and performed simultaneously and facing the same direction by all competitors.</u>

Note:

1. **The Coach Card/Element Card is not required for Tier 1 routines**
2. **There will be a maximum synchronization error deduction of 7 points for all Tier 1 routines.**
3. **Mirrored actions or athletes using opposite legs in a Technical Required Element shall not be intentionally choreographed; however, no penalty shall be assessed should they occur.**

APPENDIX L

2.03 Technical Required Elements # 1-5 (Solo, Duet, Trio and Team) or # 1-4 (Novice Free Routines with Technical Required Elements) or # 1-3 (Mixed Duet Technical Team/Intermediate Free Routines with Technical Required Elements/Collegiate Developmental routines) can be performed in any order, unless otherwise specified. It is strongly recommended for clarity of judgment that any Technical Required Elements be separated by other content.

- **Exceptions:**

- For Novice exception, see Novice Chart in this Appendix L.
- For Intermediate exception, see Intermediate Chart in this Appendix L.
- For Masters exception, see Masters Chart in this Appendix L.
- **For AWD Tier 1 exception, see AWD Tier 1 Chart in this Appendix L.**

TIER 2 FREE ROUTINES WITH TECHNICAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS

TIER 2 SOLO / DUET / TRIO AND TEAM (1:30) Technical Required Elements # 1-4 must be performed in the order listed. Placement of optional routine requirement #5 is optional
1. <u>Figure # 316 Kipnus [DD 1.4]</u>
2. <u>Figure # 100 Bent Knee, Alternate [DD 1.1]</u>
3. <u>Figure # 358 Snapping Turtle [DD 1.7]</u>
4. <u>Figure # 460 Oyster [DD 1.2]</u>
5. <u>Solo, Duet, Trio and Team Optional Routine Requirement - One Free Hybrid may be performed (optional). Placement within the routine is optional.</u>
6. <u>Acrobatic Movements are NOT permitted</u>
7. <u>Solo, Duet and Trio General Routine Requirement - Technical Required Elements # 1-4 shall be performed parallel to the sides of the pool where the panels of judges are seated.</u>
8. <u>Duet, Trio and Team General Routine Requirement – All Technical Required Elements # 1-4 must be performed simultaneously and facing the same direction by all competitors.</u>

Note:

1. **All Tier 2 routines shall include the Technical Required Elements and may also include 1 optional Free Hybrid. The optional Free Hybrid may be placed anywhere in the routine and will be judged under Artistic Impression (no Acrobatic Movements permitted)**
2. **The Coach Card/Element Card is not required for Tier 2 routines.**
3. **There will be a maximum synchronization error deduction of 10 points for all Tier 2 routines.**
4. **Mirrored actions or athletes using opposite legs in a Technical Required Element shall not be intentionally choreographed; however, no penalty shall be assessed should they occur.**
5. **The Tier 2 Required Elements # 1-8 shall remain the same as the USAAS Novice category Required Elements. If the Novice Required Elements change, the Tier 2 Required Elements shall also change as housekeeping to align with the Novice category.**

Housekeeping to Routine Requirement #7 if Rules Proposals Item #6 is approved.
Housekeeping to Note #3 if Rules Proposals Item #5 is approved.

TIER 3 FREE ROUTINES WITH TECHNICAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS

TIER 3 SOLO (1:45), DUET / TRIO (2:05) AND TEAM (2:35) <u>Technical Required Elements # 1-3 must be performed in the order listed. Placement of additional routine requirements # 4-6 is optional</u>	
1A. Figure # 348e Tower spinning 360 [DD 2.0]	1B. Figure # 348 Tower [DD 1.9]
2A. Figure # 423 Ariana [DD 2.5]	2B. Figure # 420 Walkover, Back [DD 2.1]
3. Figure # 301 Barracuda [DD 1.8]	
4. Solo Additional Routine Requirement - maximum of 1 Free Hybrid*** or 1 ChoHY* must be performed. Placement within the routine is optional.	
5. Duet, Trio and Team Additional Routine Requirement - Placement within the routine is optional. • <u>1 x Free Hybrid*** and 1 x ChoHY*</u> - or • <u>2 x ChoHY*</u>	
6. A maximum of one Acrobatic Movement may be performed and will be judged under Artistic Impression.	
7. Solo, Duet and Trio General Routine Requirement - Technical Required Elements # 1-3 shall be performed parallel to the sides of the pool where the panels of judges are seated.	
8. Duet, Trio and Team General Routine Requirement - All Technical Required Elements # 1-3 must be performed simultaneously and facing the same direction by all competitors.	

***** Tier 3 Free Hybrid Family Declaration Limits for Solo, Duet, Trio and Team: Refer to the World Aquatics Hybrid Catalogue:**

<u>Hybrid Family</u>	<u>DD Limits</u>
<u>Thrusts</u>	<u>Level B - Level 4</u>
<u>Spins</u>	<u>Level B - Level 1</u>
<u>Twists</u>	<u>Level B - Level 1</u>
<u>Airborne Weight</u>	<u>Level B - Level 6</u>
<u>Flexibility</u>	<u>Level B - Level 3</u>
<u>Connections</u>	<u>Level B - Level 1</u>

Note:

1. There will be a maximum synchronization error deduction of 15 points for all Tier 3 routines.
2. Mirrored actions or athletes using opposite legs in a Technical Required Element shall not be intentionally choreographed; however, no penalty shall be assessed should they occur.
3. The Tier 3 Required Elements # 1-3 shall remain the same as the USAAS Intermediate category Required Elements. If the Intermediate Required Elements # 1-3 change, the Tier 3 Required Elements # 1-3 Required Elements shall also change as housekeeping to align with the Intermediate category.

Housekeeping to Routine Requirement #7 if Rules Proposals Item #7 is approved.
Housekeeping to info included in box Tier 3 Solo if Rules Proposals Item #8 is approved.

TIER 4 ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS

TIER 4 ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS - SET NUMBER OF ELEMENTS

Hybrid Safety Limits: In all Tier 4 routines, there shall be a Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 7.0 (inclusive of the Base Mark value of 0.5). A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limits.

Notes:

1. The requirement to include 1 declaration from each family in the routine is NOT applicable for Tier 4 Free Routines.

2. All hybrids may be declared as either a Free Hybrid*** for difficulty or as a ChoHY*.

3. Acrobatic Movements may be performed and will be judged under Artistic Impression

<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Total Elements</u>	<u>Summary</u>
<u>1. Solo Free</u>	<u>2:00</u>	<u>4</u>	• <u>4 Hybrids</u>
<u>2. Duet/Trio Free</u>	<u>2:30</u>	<u>4</u>	• <u>4 Hybrids</u>
<u>3. Team Free</u>	<u>3:00</u>	<u>4</u>	• <u>4 Hybrids</u>

Note:

1. There shall be no maximum synchronization error deduction in Tier 4 routines.
2. The number of Hybrids required in Tier 4 routines shall remain the same as the number of Hybrids required in the World Aquatics 12 & Under routines. If World Aquatics changes the number of Hybrids required in 12 & Under routines, the number of Hybrids required in Tier 4 routines shall also change as housekeeping to align with the World Aquatics 12 & Under category.

TIER 5 ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS

TIER 5 ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS - SET NUMBER OF ELEMENTS

Hybrid Safety Limits: In all Tier 5 routines, there shall be a Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 7.0 (inclusive of the Base Mark value of 0.5). A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limits.

Notes:

1. The requirement to include 1 declaration from each family in the routine (except for connections in Solo) is applicable for Tier 5 Free Routines.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Total Elements</u>	<u>Summary</u>
<u>1. Solo Free</u>	<u>2:00</u>	<u>4</u>	• <u>4 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine, except for connections).</u>
<u>2. Duet Free, Mixed Duet Free, Trio Free</u>	<u>2:30</u>	<u>5</u>	• <u>4 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine).</u> • <u>1 Pair Acrobatic* (free choice).</u> <u>*See Article 1, Section 1.05.</u>
<u>3. Team Free</u>	<u>3:00</u>	<u>7</u>	• <u>4 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine).</u> • <u>3 Team Acrobatics* with DD safety limit** (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic**)</u> <u>*See Article 1, Section 1.04.</u>

Note:

1. There shall be no maximum synchronization error deduction in Tier 5 routines.
2. The Tier 5 routine requirements shall remain the same as the World Aquatics 12 and under routine requirements. If the World Aquatics 12 and under routine requirements change, the Tier 5 routine requirements shall also change as housekeeping to align with the World Aquatics 12 and under category.

APPENDIX L

1.03 Coach Card/Element Card: For all routines, it is required that the Technical Required Elements # 1-5 (Solo, Duet, Trio and Team Technical routines) or # 1-4 (Novice Free routines with Technical Required Elements) or # 1-3 (Mixed Duet Technical routine/Intermediate Free routines with Technical Required Elements/Collegiate Developmental routines/**AWD Tier 4 and Tier 5 Free routines with Technical Required Elements**) or Free Elements (Hybrids and Acrobatic Movements) and Transitions be declared and submitted on the Coach Card/Element Card. The Coach Card/Element Card must indicate the degrees of difficulty for each Element selected to be performed, and the order of performance selected. The Coach Card/Element Card must be submitted prior to the competition.

Exceptions:

- **Novice/Collegiate:** The Coach Card/Element Card is not required for Novice and Collegiate Technical Category A and B compulsory routines.
- **Masters:** The Coach Card/Element Card is not required for Masters routines when the Technical Required Elements are performed in the order listed in this Appendix.
- **Athletes With Disabilities:** The Coach Card/Element Card is not required for Athletes With Disabilities ("AWD") **Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3** Free routines.
-

Rationale:

- Tier 1 is a level below novice. For those athletes with disabilities that do not allow for complex or compound movements.
- Aligning Tiers 2-5 with Novice, Intermediate and Age Group 12 & Under allows for clubs to align Adaptive Artistic Swimming athletes with their able-bodied athletes at practice and for inclusion.
- The goal is to grow this program within USAAS, and this will help clubs with limited resources to include these athletes within their existing groups.

ITEM #20:

AWD – Changes to Judging and Scoring procedures

AWD Subcommittee Recommends Approval

Rules Committee Recommends Approval

AD 5 JUDGING AND SCORING

AD 5.1 Figure Competition: Figure competition shall be judged and scored according to OD 2.6.1 and OD 5.1.2.1-2, respectively.

AD 5.2 Routine Competition: Routine events shall be judged and scored according to Rule ~~MS 5.3.2 & MS 5.4.3~~ **OD 2.6.2 and OD 5.1.2.3.**

AD 5.3 ~~The routine figure average shall be computed using the figure score of the competitors who actually swam in the routine.~~

AD 5.4 ~~The average Figure score shall be added to the Free routine score to determine the Final score for placement in the category.~~

Rationale: Routine events will now be judged under the new scoring system, and figures will now be an optional event.

ITEM #21:**Junior Olympic Track – Proposal for DD Limitations****Rules Committee Recommends Rejection**

CP 4.1.4 Junior Olympic: Competitions shall consist of Figures and Free routines for the 12 & under and Youth age divisions. In the 15-17 and 18-19/20 age divisions, competitions shall consist of Technical and/or Free routines. In the 16-19/20 age division, competition shall consist of the Acrobatic Routine and Free Combination. **For Hybrid Safety Limits specific to the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship and qualifying competitions see Appendix L.**

APPENDIX L**ARTICLE 4****16-19/20 FREE COMBINATION ROUTINE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS****Add new box at top of chart**

<u>There shall be a Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 9.0 (inclusive of the Base Mark value of 0.5). A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limits.</u>			
Event	Time (+5 sec)	Total Elements	Summary
1. Free Combination	3:30	10	• 4 Team Acrobatics* with DD safety limit** (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic**). • 1 x DD Solo Hybrid • 1 x DD Duet Hybrid • 1 x DD Trio Hybrid • 2 x DD Team Hybrids (must be executed with a minimum of 4 competitors) • Must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine (counted across Solo, Duet, Trio and Team DD Hybrids) • 1 x Team Choreography Hybrid ("ChoHY")*** must be executed with a minimum of 4 competitors) • Element parts cannot occur simultaneously (i.e. Team Acrobatic occurs while Solo Hybrid starts) *See Article 1, Section 1.04. ***See Article 2, Section 1.02.

APPENDIX L
ARTICLE 5
YOUTH ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS

YOUTH ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS – SET NUMBER OF ELEMENTS			
<u>JUNIOR OLYMPIC TRACK Hybrid Safety Limits: In all Youth routines, there shall be a Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 8.0 (inclusive of the Base Mark value of 0.5). This restriction is in addition to all stated AQUA hybrid restrictions. A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limits.</u> <u>THIS RESTRICTION SHALL NOT APPLY TO THE U.S. YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP.</u> Note: The requirement to include 1 declaration from each family in the routine (except for connections in Solo) is applicable for Youth Free Routines.			
Event	Time (+/- 5 sec)	Total Elements	Summary
1. Solo Free	2:00	5	• 5 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine, except for connections).
2. Duet Free	2:30	6	• 5 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine). • 1 Pair Acrobatic* (free choice). *See Article 1, Section 1.05.
3. Mixed Duet Free	2:30	5	• 3 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine). • 2 Pair Acrobatics * (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic). • A minimum of 3 declared Sustained Surface Connections (“SuCon”) with travel (1m or more) or rotation (180° or more). * See Article 1, Section 1.05.
4. Team Free	3:00	8	• 5 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine). • 3 Team Acrobatics* with DD safety limit** (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic**). * See Article 1, Section 1.04.
5. Free Combination	3:00	9	• 4 Team Acrobatics* with DD safety limit** (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic**). • 1 x DD Solo Hybrid • 1 x DD Duet Hybrid • 2 x DD Team Hybrids (must be executed with a minimum of 4 competitors) • Must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine (counted across Solo, Duet and Team DD Hybrids) • 1 x Team Choreography Hybrid (“ChoHY”)** must be executed with a minimum of 4 competitors) • Element parts cannot occur simultaneously (i.e., Team Acrobatic occurs while Solo Hybrid starts) * See Article 1, Section 1.04. *** See Article 1, Section 1.02.

APPENDIX L

ARTICLE 5

JUNIOR / SENIOR / COLLEGIATE ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS

JUNIOR / SENIOR TECHNICAL AND FREE ROUTINES AND COLLEGIATE FREE/ DEVELOPMENTAL ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS – SET NUMBER OF ELEMENTS

JUNIOR OLYMPIC TRACK Hybrid Safety Limits: In all 15-17 and 18-19/20 routines, there shall be a Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 9.0 (inclusive of the Base Mark value of 0.5). This restriction is in addition to all stated AQUA hybrid restrictions. A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limits. THIS RESTRICTION SHALL NOT APPLY TO THE U.S. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP OR THE U.S. JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP.

Note: The requirement to include 1 declaration from each family in the routine (except for connections in Solo) is applicable for Free Routines only.

Event	Time (+/- 5 sec)	Total Elements	Summary
1. Solo Technical	2:00	6	• 5 Technical Required Elements • 1 Free Hybrid
2. Solo Free	2:15	6	• 6 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine, except for connections).
3. Duet Technical	2:20	7	• 5 Technical Required Elements • 1 Free Hybrid • 1 Pair Acrobatic* (free choice). *See Article 1, Section 1.05.
4. Duet Free	2:45	8	• 6 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine) • 2 Pair Acrobatics* (free choice, but may not repeat the same Acrobatic). *See Article 1, Section 1.05.
5. Mixed Duet Technical	2:20	7	• 3 Technical Required Elements • 1 Free Hybrid • 1 Required Hybrid (must contain only 1 <i>Thrust</i> declaration and 2 different Connection declarations (i.e., T8 C3 C4) • 2 Pair Acrobatics* (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic). • 3 declared Sustained Surface Connections (“SuCon”) with travel (1m or more) or rotation (180° or more) *See Article 1, Section 1.05.
6. Mixed Duet Free	2:45	7	• 4 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine) • 3 Pair Acrobatics* (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic) • Minimum of 4 declared Sustained Surface Connections (“SuCon”) with travel (1m or more) or rotation (180° or more) *See Article 1, Section 1.05.

8. Team Technical	2:50	8	• 5 Technical Required Elements • 2 Free Hybrids (1 of which must include a Cadence Action*) • 1 Team Acrobatic* (Max DD limit of 3.0 inclusive of Base Mark value). • May contain maximum of 1 Circle. *See Article 1, Sections 1.04 & 1.06.
9. Team Free	3:30	9	• 6 Free Hybrids (must include 1 declaration from each family in the routine) • 3 Team Acrobatics* (free choice, but must not repeat the same Acrobatic). *See Article 1, Section 1.04.

APPENDIX L

ARTICLE 7

GENERAL PENALTIES FOR 12&U, YOUTH, JUNIOR, SENIOR AND COLLEGIATE ROUTINES

Note: Collegiate Developmental Routine penalties, see Article 8

ALL 12&U ROUTINES	Exceeding the Hybrid Safety Limit of 7.0: A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 7.0 (inclusive of Base Mark value of 0.5). (Routine Requirements – Set Number of Elements Chart)
<u>ALL YOUTH JUNIOR OLYMPIC TRACK ROUTINES</u>	<u>Exceeding the Hybrid Safety Limit of 8.0: A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 8.0 (inclusive of Base Mark value of 0.5). (Routine Requirements – Set Number of Elements Chart)</u>
<u>ALL 16-17 AND 18-19/20 JUNIOR OLYMPIC TRACK ROUTINES</u>	<u>Exceeding the Hybrid Safety Limit of 9.0: A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 9.0 (inclusive of Base Mark value of 0.5). (Routine Requirements – Set Number of Elements Chart)</u>
<u>ALL 16-19/20 FREE COMBINATION ROUTINES</u>	<u>Exceeding the Hybrid Safety Limit of 9.0: A Base Mark shall be applied for each violation of the Hybrid Safety Limit Degree of Difficulty of 9.0 (inclusive of Base Mark value of 0.5). (Routine Requirements – Set Number of Elements Chart)</u>

Rational: Athlete safety needs to be considered seriously by USAAS. Athletes in distress were removed from the pool at the 2026 U.S. National Championship, U.S. Youth National Championship and U.S. Junior Olympic Championship. One way to improve safety is to set a cap on the maximum DD per hybrid in all routines on the Junior Olympic Track. This restriction would NOT apply to the U.S. National Championship, U.S. Junior Championship or Youth National Championship as those championships are conducted under World Aquatics rules. In conversations that took place at the 2026 U.S. Junior Olympic Championship, it was noted that many of the routines had hybrids that were very “DD heavy” at the beginning of the routine – this DD cap proposal would force them to space out their hybrid DDs, thus not exhausting the athletes so early in their performance, AND, as we’ve already seen in 12 & Under routines with the caps on DD, it demands us to bring back creative transitions and AI in between the hybrids! Also note as an example that the first place routine in 15-17 Women Solo Free Final at 2026 JOs had a declared DD of 43.2 but could have gone as high as 54 with these proposed caps! Below is a summary of the maximum DDs allowed with the proposed caps.

SUMMARY OF MAX DDs WITH PROPOSED CAPS:

Solo DD Caps

12U	4 hybrids	7 DD	28 Total	
Youth	5 hybrids	8 DD	40 Total	
15-17 & 18-19/20 Free	6 hybrids	9 DD	54 Total	
15-17 & 18-19/20 Tech	1 hybrid	9 DD	9 Total	+ TREs

Duet DD Caps

12U	4 hybrids	7 DD	28 Total	+ Pair Acrobatic
Youth	5 hybrids	8 DD	40 Total	+ Pair Acrobatic
15-17 & 18-19/20 Free	6 hybrids	9 DD	54 Total	+ Pair Acrobatics
15-17 & 18-19/20 Tech	1 hybrid	9 DD	9 Total	+ TREs & Pair Acrobatic

Team and Combo DD Caps

12U Team	4 hybrids	7 DD	28 Total	+ Acrobatics with current DD safety limits
12U Combo	4 hybrids	7 DD	28 Total	+ Acrobatics with current safety limits & ChoHY
Youth Team	5 hybrids	8 DD	40 Total	+ Acrobatics with current DD safety limits
Youth Combo	4 hybrids	8 DD	32 Total	+ Acrobatics with current DD safety limits & ChoHY
15-17 & 18-19/20 Free	6 hybrids	9 DD	54 Total	+ Acrobatics
15-17 & 18-19/20 Tech	2 hybrids	9 DD	18 Total	+ TREs & Acrobatic with current DD limit
16-19/20 combo	5 hybrids	9 DD	45 Total	+ Acrobatics with current DD safety limits & ChoHY