

What Is the U.S. National Figure Skating Championships?

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"Nationals":

The United States National Figure Skating Championships is a yearly figure skating competition. The competition is called "Nationals" by the ice skating community. "Nationals" is considered the most prestigious event of the U.S. competitive figure skating season.

Events:

U.S. National Figure Skating competitors compete at senior, junior, and novice levels. The competition events are ladies singles, men's singles, pairs, and ice dance.

National Medalists Go to "Worlds":

Nationals is the competition that helps determine which skaters representing the United States will compete in the World Figure Skating Championships and the World Junior Figure Skating Championships. Participants competing at the Four Continents Championships and the Winter Olympics are also decided at Nationals.

Qualifying for Nationals:

To qualify for the U.S. National Figure Skating Championships, figure skaters first compete at a regional competition. There are nine regions in the United States. The top four finishers at each region compete at a sectional event. Skaters placing in the top four at sectionals make it to "Nationals."

How to Get a "Bye" to Nationals:

Ice skaters who placed in the top five in the senior events from the previous year are given byes to Nationals. Also, skaters who qualify for the Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final and/or the Senior Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final are given byes. If a skater is chosen to compete at an international event during regionals or sectionals, he or she is given a bye to the U.S. Championships.

Junior Nationals is NOT Nationals:

Sometimes the U.S. National Figure Skating Championships is called "Big Nationals" because lower level Juvenile and Intermediate skaters who qualify, compete at a separate event held earlier in the competition season called "Junior Nationals." What is sometimes confusing to understand is that Junior level events are held at "Big Nationals," not Junior Nationals.

History:

The first United States National Figure Skating Championships took place in 1914 in New Haven, Connecticut. Only singles and pair skating events were held. In 1936, ice dancing was added to the competition's events.