

Keys to success using the ISU Judging System mini system at U.S. Figure Skating Competitions

There are a few keys to successfully using one of the new mini systems at a U.S. Figure Skating competition.

The document is intended for those clubs and interclub associations who have purchased or are thinking about purchasing the mini system and the accountants who will be using those systems.

1. Each system should have a qualified custodian.

There should be a person assigned to be responsible for all aspects of setup, operation, maintenance, storage and transportation of the system. This person should be computer knowledgeable and familiar with accounting procedures. A computer-wise accountant is best.

The system is defined as the scoring and video software and hardware needed to run a competition using the ISU Judging System (IJS). Note that the mini system components are from two different vendors – one for the video portion and one for the scoring application.

The duties of the custodian are to:

- Install the system at a competition
- Train the accountants in its use
- Update the system with software releases as they happen
- Advise the LOCs about rinkside setup requirements

2. Every custodian should be supported by a qualified support person.

Each custodian should be guided by a qualified support person, either on-site or by telephone. Contact Mike Meyer to locate a qualified person to support your system's custodian.

The custodian should contact the support person early to establish the steps to configure and operate the system. If any special configuration tools or instructional papers are available, they should be sent out early.

3. The system should have a dedicated laptop computer, preferably two dedicated laptops.

The goal is to have a plug-and-play system. Unpack it, plug it in, and it comes up and runs.

It can be tricky to configure the results system that runs on the laptop on which the mini system (judges' stations and technical panel hardware) operates. Once it is configured and works, it is best to leave it alone and not do it again, so it is recommended that you purchase one or two laptop computers for each system. These laptops would be configured by the custodian and then dedicated to the system. If other laptops are used, significant extra time is needed to configure

them and install the required software, with the very real possibility that they may not work with the mini system the first time.

The use of two laptops provides a backup machine in the event of a failure of the primary machine.

An accountant's personal laptop, though it may be satisfactorily used in the accounting room, should not be used at rinkside. Actual experience has shown that configuring a laptop to operate with the rinkside system can cause it to be unable to later access the Web or a LAN. In other words, once it has been configured to work with the rinkside system, it may be very difficult to undo the changes and get it back to where it was before.

4. Every system should have a LaserJet printer at rinkside.

It is best if the printer is dedicated to the system. That way, time is not needed to install printer drivers on the rinkside laptop before the competition begins.

Remember – we want ‘plug and play.’

The printer should be fast; the IJS system generates much more paper for results than the 6.0 system, and this paper should be printed at rinkside in between events. Since the time between events is generally short and there is a great deal of paper, a fast printer is required.

5. The system should be configured by the support person or the custodian working with the support person.

The two of them should work together to install the software, configure the software and set the computer's static IP address.

6. Allow at least one full day to install the system and train the accountants, judges and technical panel.

This means that the judges' stand should be ready early, and that the system and its laptop should be ready to plug and play the morning prior to the first day of competition.

7. The system should be operated by a trained person.

The custodian and/or support person should train the accounting computer operators the day before the competition. In general, accountants have not been trained to operate the rinkside computer; technical accountants have done this in the past. One person is required at rinkside for each event. Since competition days are long, multiple operators are required.

Training is necessary as there are a few 'gotchas' in its operation. Innocent mistakes by untrained operators can lead to incorrect results and/or crashing the system, and may result in the competition taking longer than planned.

8. The system must have the latest software, installed by the custodian.

The mini system and the accounting laptops require the latest software. Even though the mini system is not PC-based, it does have software that changes. This software is loaded into the judges' panels using a utility program on the accounting laptop. This is yet another task for the system custodian. Updates will

happen at least yearly and possibly more frequently. In addition, the scoring application may have updates as well that need to be loaded onto the laptops. Failure to properly update your applications may well result in incorrect competition results.

9. Check the members-only section of the U.S. Figure Skating web site – www.usfigureskating.org – for further information.

The latest information will be available there.

If you have questions, contact Mike Meyer, the national vice chair of the Competitions Committee for Special Projects. Mike can be reached at mmeyer18@insightbb.com.

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