



British Ice Skating
Synchronized Skating
Technical Advisory Committee

Competition Criteria Proposal 2019/20

Update – 18th July 2019
changes underlined for clarity

The Synchro Technical Advisory Committee have suggested some changes to the competition categories with the aim of providing a clearer pathway and progression from Beginner to Senior for both teams and athletes. These changes fall under the following two themes:

- Remove barriers to team progression into higher standards of competition
- Make a clear pathway for teams to progress through, making competitions fairer and teams more evenly spread throughout the categories.

Removing barriers to progression

We proposed to remove barriers to team progression into higher standards of competition by:

1. Simplifying the field move requirements for the Junior B, Senior B and Novice categories.
2. Removing the short program from the Junior B and Senior B categories.
3. Remove the proposed maximum field moves levels for the Intermediate category.

2018 Competition Criteria

Category	Program Time	Requirements	Min-Max No Skaters and max of 4 alternates	Ages by/before 1st July 2016
Senior	Short Program: 2 mins 50 secs (Max)Free Program:4 mins (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU	16 (+4 Alts)	Must have reached 15 yrs. or over by July 1st 2018
Junior	Short Program:2 mins 50 secs (Max) Free Program: 3 mins 30 secs (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU	16 (+4 Alts)	Must have reached 13 yrs. but not 19 yrs. by July 1st 2018
Advanced Novice	Free Program: 3mins (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU	16 (+4 Alts)	Must have reached 10 yrs. but not 15 yrs. by July 1st 2018
<p>For non-ISU categories the 80% / 20% age rule applies to the total number of skaters involved. At least 80% of those actually performing the programme in the event must meet the age category while 20% or less may be outside the age criteria of the category.</p>				
Senior NISA Category B	Short Program: 2 min 50 secs (Max) Free Program: 4 mins (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU	12-16 (+4 Alts)	Of the members of the team actually performing the programme, if the team comprises of 12, 13 or 14 skaters – 2 skaters with no age restrictions are allowed. If the team comprises of 15 or 16 skaters – 3 skaters with no age restrictions are allowed. Balance of the team must have reached 15 yrs. or over by July 1st 2018
Junior NISA Category B	Short Program: 2 mins 50 secs (Max) Long Program: 3 mins 30 secs (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU	12-16 (+4 Alts)	Of the members of the team actually performing the programme, if the team comprises of 12, 13 or 14 skaters – 2 skaters with no age restrictions are allowed. If the team comprises of 15 or 16 skaters – 3 skaters with no age restrictions are allowed. Balance of the team must have reached 13 yrs. but not 19 yrs. by July 1st 2018
Basic Novice	Free Program: 3 mins (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU	10-16 (+4 Alts)	Must have reached 10 yrs. but not 15 yrs. by July 1st 2018
Juvenile	Free Program: 3 mins (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU Basic Novice	9-16 (+4 Alts)	Must not have reached 13 yrs before July 1st 2018
Elementary	Free Program: 3 mins (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU Basic Novice	9-16 (+4 Alts)	Must not have reached 16 yrs before July 1st 2018
Preliminary	Free Program: 3 mins (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU Advanced Novice	9-16 (+4 Alts)	Must not have reached 21 yrs before July 2018
Mixed Age	Free Program: 3 mins (-/+10 secs)	Per ISU Advanced Novice	12-16 (+4 Alts)	Must have reached 10 or over by July 1st 2018
Adult	Free Program: 3 mins (-/+10 secs)	Per ISU	8-16 (+4 Alts)	Must have reached 18 yrs with 50% of the team over 25yrs by July 1st 2018

Proposed 2019 Competition Entry Criteria

Category	Program Time	Program Composition	Number of Skaters	Field Move Requirements	Ages
Senior	Short: 2 Mins 50 Secs Max Free: 4 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Per ISU	16 (+4 Alts)	25% Level 7 and above 50% Level 5 and 6 25% Level 3 and 4	Must have reached 15 years on 1 st July 2019
Junior	Short: 2 Mins 50 Secs Max Free: 3 Mins 30 Secs (+/-10 secs)	Per ISU	16 (+4 Alts)	25% Level 6 and above 50% Level 4 and 5 25% Level 2 and 3	Must have reached 13 years but not 19 years on 1 st July 2019
Advanced Novice	Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Per ISU	16 (+4 Alts)	50% Level 3 and above 50% Level 1 & 2 FM	Must have reached 10 years but not 15 years on 1 st July 2019
Basic Novice	Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Per ISU	12-16 (+4 Alts)	25% Level 3 and above 75% Level 1 & 2 FM	Must have reached 10 years but not 15 years on 1 st July 2019
Adult	Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Per ISU	8-16 (+4 Alts)	N/A	Must have reached 18 years but 50% of the team must be over 25 years by 1 st July 2019
Senior B	Free: 4 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Per ISU	12-16 (+4 Alts)	50% Level 5 and above 50% Level 3 and 4 FM	Must have reached 15 years on 1 st July 2019
Junior B	Free: 3 Mins 30 Secs (+/- 10 secs)	Per ISU	12-16 (+4 Alts)	50% Level 4 and above 50% Level 2 and 3 FM	Must have reached 13 years but not 19 years on 1 st July 2019
Pre-Juvenile	Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Basic Novice	9-16 (+4 Alts)	N/A	Must not have reached 11 years on 1 st July 2019
Juvenile	Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Basic Novice	9-16 (+4 Alts)	N/A	Must not have reached 13 years on 1 st July 2019
Intermediate	Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Basic Novice	9-16 (+4 Alts)	<u>N/A</u>	Must have reached 10 years but <u>not 21 years</u> on 1 st July 2019
Mixed Age	Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)	Per ISU	12-16 (+4 Alts)	Minimum of 50% of the named skaters must hold level 2 FM or above	No age restrictions apply
<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Free: 3 Mins (+/- 10 secs)</u>	<u>Basic Novice (No elements called higher than level 2)</u>	<u>9-16 (+4 Alts)</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>No age restrictions apply</u>
<u>Inclusive</u>	<u>Free: 3 Mins (+/- 30 secs)</u>	<u>Rotating Circle, Artistic Wheel, Linear Line, Artistic Block, Intersection,</u>	<u>8-16 (+4 Alts)</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>No age restrictions apply</u>

*80/20 rule will apply to these categories. Of the skaters ACTUALLY performing the programme the number of skaters permitted outside the age rule is as follows; 9-12 skaters = 2 skaters, 13-16 skaters = 3 skaters Please note as of 2020/21 season Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile and Intermediate will require a minimum number of 12 to enable teams to achieve basic requirements for elements and their features within.

Skaters	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
Within age bracket	13	12	11	10	10	9	8	7
Outwith age bracket	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2

Rational

The following table shows the number of teams competing within each category since 2015.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Senior	3	3	3	3	3
Senior B	0	0	1	1	1
Junior	1	1	2	2	1
Junior B	2	6	3	2	4
Advanced Novice	1	1	1	1	1
Advanced Novice B	0	0	2	1	
Basic Novice A	1	1	0	0	2
Basic Novice B	2	1	0	1	
Juvenile	4	4	4	5	3
Elementary	5	11	11	12	11
Preliminary	9	11	13	10	8
Mixed Age	10	8	9	11	10
Adult	9	2	11	13	13
Adult 2		9			

We believe that a significant barrier to team progression into the ISU categories are the field move requirements. As the table above demonstrates, the majority of teams are 'stuck' in the categories with no minimum requirements.

This is further evidenced by high scoring teams in the lower categories as shown below.

	2015 entries	top score	bottom score	2016 entries	top score	bottom score	2017 entries	top score	bottom score	2018 entries	top score	bottom score	2019 entries	top score	bottom score
Advanced Novice	1	41.87		1	42.68		1	46.67		1	33.29		1	52.01	
Advanced Novice B							2	32.03	24.46	1	27.59				
Basic Novice A	1	23.56		1	27.47								2	28.82	21.83
Basic Novice B	2	30.99	20.97	1	23.27					1	35.97				
Juvenile	4	28.87	20.73	4	35.79	19.88	4	42.21	21.86	5	43.07	16.81	3	27.38	20.46
Elementary	5	20.32	10.86	11	24.88	12.19	11	23.24	6.89	12	26.1	14.64	11	28.00	14.43
Preliminary	9	33.38	11.48	11	36.89	13.15	13	35.48	11.12	10	40.28	17.38	8	39.61	23.10
Mixed Age	10	41.76	20.71	8	37.57	21.99	9	41.64	14.73	11	41.22	21.26	10	43.44	22.41

The proposal to remove the short program from both the Junior B & Senior B categories is designed to reduce the size of the jump from Advanced Novice competitions and encourage progression towards ISU categories. Both Junior and Senior rules have more demanding and complex elements and the need to only complete one programme would make it easier for the many teams that have limited ice time to make the step in this direction.

Feedback from coaches was that the maximum level on Intermediate posed problems in fielding some of their teams. Its intention was to make it clear as a teenage entry level

category, but we had no intension of limiting the ability to compete, the limit has been removed to encourage field move progression for individuals.

Feedback from coaches was also that a total beginner category was missing for start-up club / teams. This had existed successfully in the past and in response to the interest from new clubs we have tried to allow as much scope as possible for them to compete.

Feedback from coaches was a request to include competition criteria for inclusive clubs.

The 80/20 rule is an internationally recognised rule for synchronized skating whereby teams are able to skate 20% outside of the age rule in the non-ISU categories. By implementing this rule in the UK, we are encouraging more participation by enabling clubs to field competitive teams that would otherwise be unable to participate, thereby also generating additional membership and entry fees for BIS.

Financial implications

We believe that there will be no significant loss of revenue to British Ice Skating by the removal of the field move requirements for the following reasons:

- 1.As demonstrated by the table above, the number of teams competing at these levels is consistently very low but stable, so there will be no 'loss' if this number of test pass levels are not obtained in the future.
- 2.We can confirm that our own skaters continue to progress through the test system for their own achievement, even when test passes aren't required.

For Examples:

- Starlight Rain, an Adult team of 15 skaters, have accumulated more than 20 FM test passes since 2015 and there are no FM requirements for this competition category .
- Sheffield Synchro Club field moves test taken are shown in the table below:

Season	Total Club membership	Skaters that Competed synchro only	Total tests taken	Tests taken by Synchro only skaters	
2011-2012	45	12			
2012-2013	42	10	8	2	Competed Junior B @ club International (Won) but mixed age UK
2013-2014	50	9	17	2	Competed Junior B @ club International (Won) but mixed age UK
2014-2015	45	10	23	2	Competed Junior B @ club International (Won) but mixed age UK
2015-2016	40	12	31	8	First time @ UK Junior B
2016-2017	50	17	22	7	
2017-2018	45	10	16	5	
2018-2019	48	10	43	9	

3. Reviewing the general approach in a mix of Synchro only rinks and multi-disciplinary rinks, there was a common theme that whether or not skaters required FM tests for competition participation, the skaters continued to progress through the FM tests as a confirmation of personal progression. Coaches use the BIS test

curriculum as a structure for encouraging skaters to continue to improve their skills and continue to have lessons.

4. In consultation with a cross-section of coaches, it was felt that the FM requirements were an impediment to participation in competitions at times and did not have a noticeable impact on the overall quality of skating of the team.
5. The FM requirements were introduced a number of years ago in an effort to improve the quality of skating within our Synchro teams. Whilst a small number of skaters undoubtedly did have to take FM tests to make the team qualification, the discussions with coaches indicates that those skaters would have continued their progression through the various levels for their own personal achievement. This has been the case in skating for the past 60+ years both in the UK and abroad. Test passes are an achievement in their own right and recognised as such.
6. When the test pass requirement was introduced, it was intended to help improve the success levels of our teams under the newly introduced IJS requirements. Sadly, the IJS requirements have moved on significantly in those intervening years but the NISA Field Move test system has not. Much of what is contained within the system is no longer fit for purpose and requires a significant restructuring in order to better serve our skaters with IJS competition ambitions. For this reason alone, it makes no sense to retain a requirement that was put in place for technical skating reasons where the only justification is a potentially (but unlikely) very small (if any) financial impact on the association finances. The purpose of the association is the promotion of figure skating and the expansion in participation, not simply to find ways of making its members pay for participation – they already do that with their membership subscriptions.
7. What has been proposed is intended to increase and encourage participation with a better pathway through our competition structure for Synchronized Skating participants. This should result in a fairer and more supportive environment for our skaters and teams with a positive financial contribution to the association.
8. The two new categories should make it easier for beginner clubs/ teams to enter competitive synchro and therefore should have a positive effect on the number of new members joining to the association in order to compete.
9. In the UK, we have the most restrictive skating qualification participation criteria compared to the most successful Synchro world level countries. In those countries, skaters are eligible for certain categories solely based on age rather than skating skill tests. This includes the reigning and former World Champions; Russia, Finland, Canada and Sweden. Our clubs are therefore able to take their teams to compete internationally rather than domestically because of the limitations the field move requirements impose. For example, Team Aura from Lee Valley who are the reigning Mixed Age champions, would be competing internationally only this season in the Senior B section because they would be unable to enter any events in this country. This will result in the loss of 20 memberships and competition entry fees to BIS.

Operational implications

The removal of the short program from, Junior B & Senior B competitions should remove approximately 22 minutes of competition time per team.

The implication of this on the last 4 year of British Championship is shown below:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Senior B			22 minutes less in schedule	22 minutes less in schedule	22 minutes less in schedule
Junior B	44 minutes less in schedule	132 minutes less in schedule	66 minutes less in schedule	44 minutes less in schedule	88 minutes less in schedule

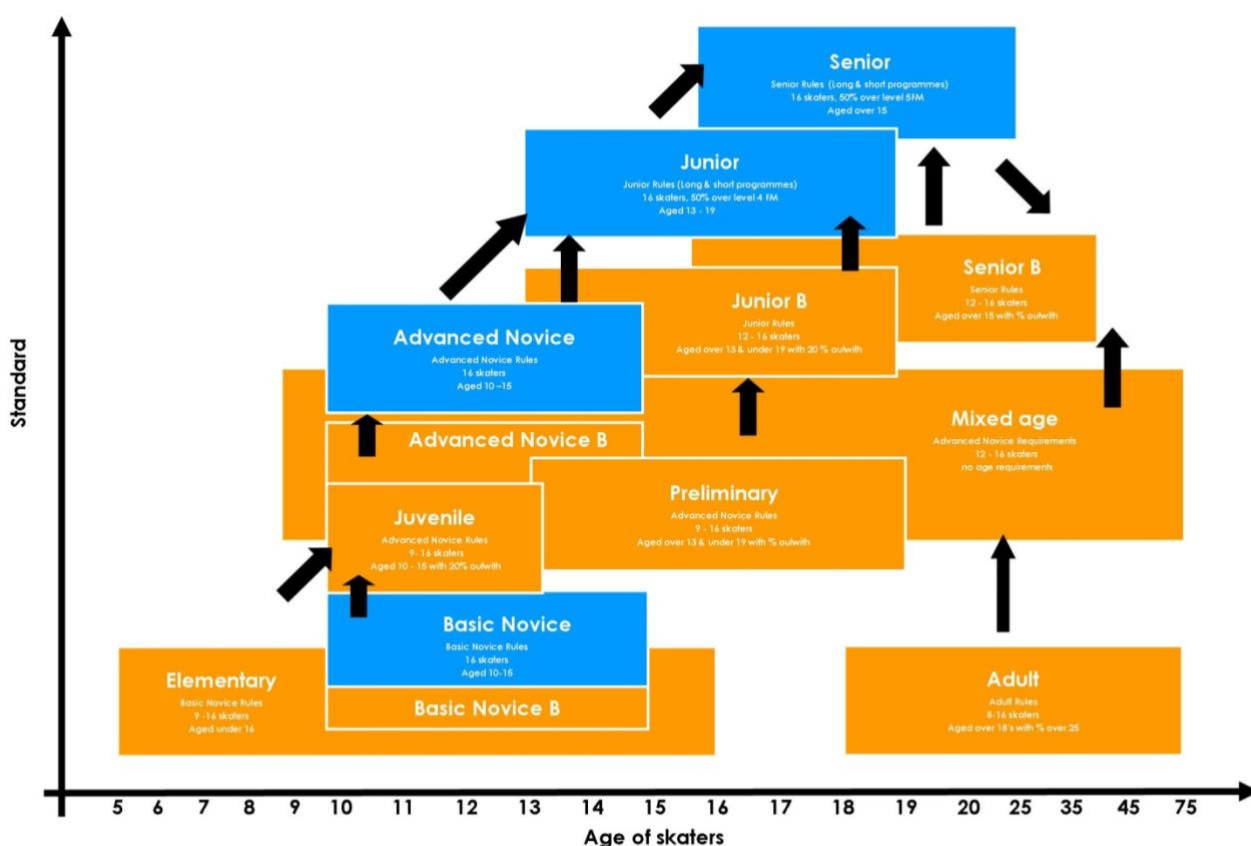
We believe this time spared from senior B & Junior B short programmes will accommodate any new teams entering the beginner or inclusive categories.

Clear Pathway for skaters and teams

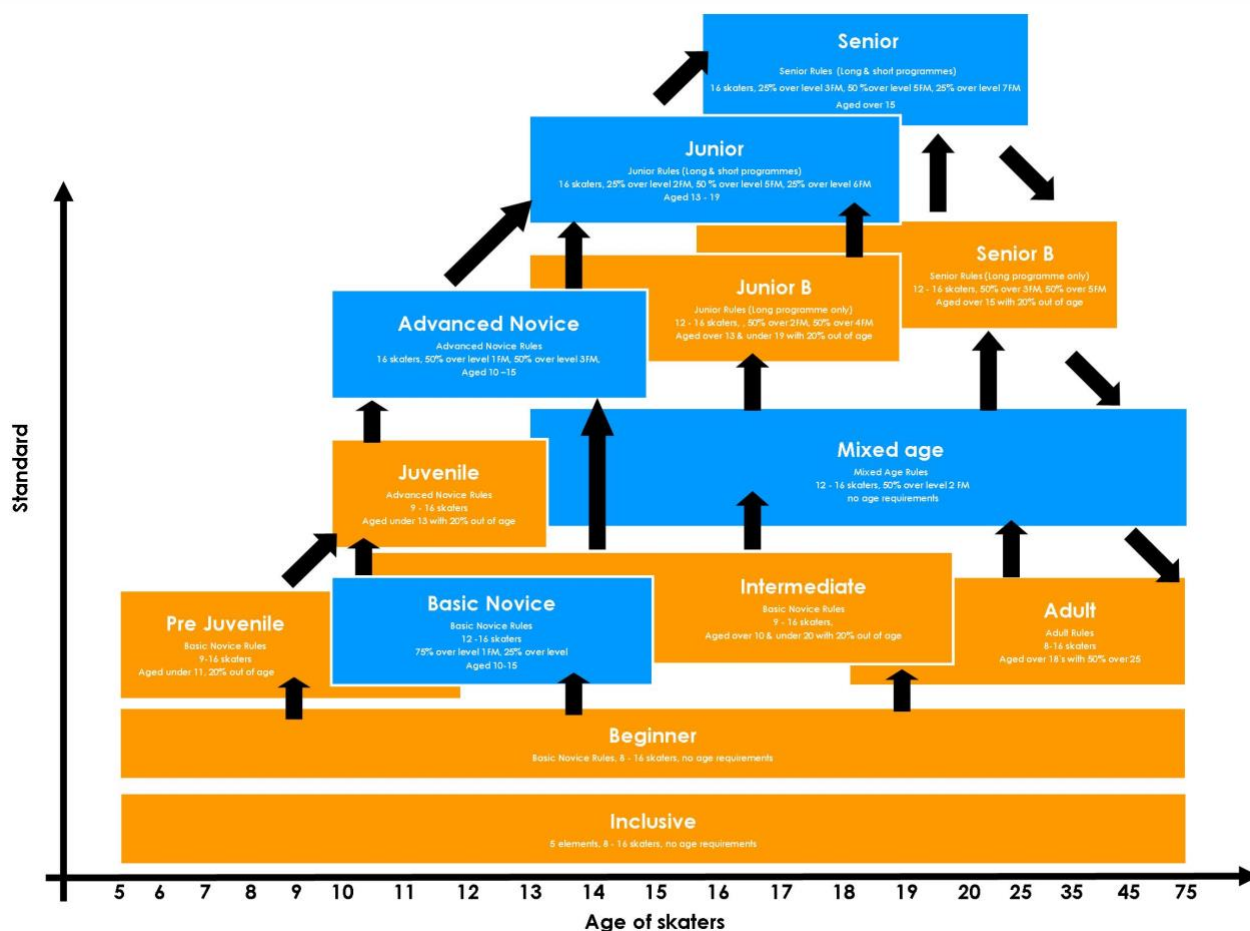
Make a clear pathway for teams to progress through to higher level events by making competitions fairer and spreading teams more evenly throughout the categories by:

1. Changing the Preliminary category to an entry level 'Intermediate' competition following the Basic Novice rules with a wider age range than that of Junior.
2. Changing the Elementary category to a Pre-Juvenile category that maintains the Basic Novice rules but makes the age range younger.
3. Introducing a Beginner category to allow start up teams and clubs.
4. Introducing an inclusive category.

2018 Pathway



2019 Proposed Pathway



Rational

The changes to the preliminary and elementary categories are intended to provide skaters of all ages an 'entry level' category skating Basic novice rules (or adult equivalent) and then a clear pathway for progression through the categories. This, coupled with the ability for teams to progress up through the categories, should even out the number of teams within each category and better match the ability levels of the teams in each competition.

The two new categories aim to make the pathway even clearer to beginner clubs/teams. The wider age range for intermediate aims to allow more skaters to continue skating competitively for as long as possible in clubs where adult teams don't exist or this route doesn't suit the skaters.

Operational implications

The Synchronized Skating Technical Advisory Committee do not anticipate that the proposed changes will have any negative implications for event organisers. It is our opinion that the events should attract the same, if not a slightly higher, number of teams competing but in appropriate groupings that support and encourage future progression. With the removal of the short program requirement from the Junior B and Senior B categories there would be no increase in the time that would be required to run the British Championships, which would mean that the proposed changes would not necessitate a third day of competition.

Financial implications

We believe that increasing the minimum number of skaters in each team at the lower levels, will bring additional membership revenue to British Ice Skating that would compensate for any potential loss of Field Move revenue (this issue has already been addressed earlier in this paper). This view comes from the fact that the majority of skaters wishing to compete in Synchro events join for the first time and re-new their memberships only in order to compete with their teams. This could bring as many as 50+ new members to BIS each year.