

Frequently Asked Questions

Individual Neutral Athletes (AINs)

Background Information:

1. Why did the ISU make the decision to allow AINs?

- The ISU evaluated the recommendations of the IOC and detailed information gathered by the IOC regarding the participation of AINs in the Olympic Games Paris 2024. The ISU recognizes that participation in the Olympic Winter Games remains the pinnacle of any skater's career and therefore decided to create a special pathway to facilitate participation in designated ISU Olympic qualifying events.

2. Which events are designated ISU Olympic Qualification competitions for AINs?

The participation of AINs is limited to the following designated competitions:

- **Figure Skating:**
 - ISU Figure Skating Olympic Qualifying Competition – September 17-21, 2025 – Beijing, China
- **Short Track:**
 - ISU Short Track World Tour – October 16-19, 2025 – Montreal, Canada
 - ISU Short Track World Tour – October 23-26, 2025 – Salt Lake City, USA
 - ISU Short Track World Tour – November 20-23, 2025 – Gdansk, Poland
 - ISU Short Track World Tour – November 27-30, 2025 – Dordrecht, Netherlands
- **Speed Skating**
 - ISU World Cup Speed Skating – November 14-16, 2025 – Salt Lake City, USA
 - ISU World Cup Speed Skating – November 21-23, 2025 – Calgary, Canada
 - ISU World Cup Speed Skating – December 5-7, 2025 – Heerenveen, Netherlands
 - ISU World Cup Speed Skating – December 12-14, 2025 – Hamar, Norway

3. Will AINs be able to participate in ISU events other than Olympic Qualification events?

- The adaption of [ISU Communication 2469](#), which otherwise prohibits the participation of Skaters affiliated with ISU Members in Russia (Russian Skating Union and the Figure Skating Federation of Russia) and Belarus (Skating Union of Belarus) at ISU Events and International Competitions, only extends to the designated ISU Olympic Qualification events for the Olympic Winter Games ("OWG") Milano Cortina 2026.

4. Will AIN be allowed to participate in interviews or press conferences during an Olympic Qualification event?

- As per the ISU rules ([ISU Communication 2680](#)), AINs will not be allowed to give any interviews to the media, nor will they be allowed to go through the Mixed Zone or participate in any Press Conferences during Olympic Qualification events.

5. Can Officials from Russia and Belarus start officiating again at ISU events?

- No, the adaptation of the [ISU Communication 2469](#) is only valid for skaters and their support personnel, but not for Judges, Referees and other Officials.

6. Have you consulted the Ukrainian federations before taking that decision?

- The ISU maintains its condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine and continues to provide financial support to Ukrainian skaters through various initiatives, including the ISU Development Program, contributions to the Ukrainian Skating Federation, and a support program for displaced skaters. At the same time, the ISU remains independent in its decision-making from all its Members.

7. Will the ISU Council review the adaptation of ISU Communication 2469 in the future?

- The ISU Council will continue to monitor the situation and reserves the right to make any changes.

AIN Nominations:

8. Has the ISU received AIN nominations for each discipline and distance?

- The Federations of Russia (Russian Skating Union and the Figure Skating Federation of Russia) and Belarus (Skating Union of Belarus) have submitted nominations for AINs and their relevant substitutes for each of the following disciplines and distances – with the only exception that Belarus did not submit any nominations for the Pairs Figure Skating category.
 - **Figure Skating:**
 - 1 x Man Single Skating (1 athlete)
 - 1 x Woman Single Skating (1 athlete)
 - 1 x Pair Skating (2 athletes)
 - 1 x Ice Dance (2 athletes)
 - **Speed Skating**
 - 1 x Man each in the following events: 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 5000m, 10000m, Mass Start per respective passport holder country
 - 1 x Woman each in the following events: 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 3000m, 5000m, Mass Start per respective passport holder country
 - **Short Track Speed Skating**
 - 1 x Man in each of the distances 500m, 1000m, 1500m;
 - 1 x Woman in each of the distances 500m, 1000m, 1500m.

9. How and when are substitutes allowed to participate?

- One substitute per AIN is allowed in case of illness or injury prior to the start of the Olympic Qualification System (“OQS”) competitions. The substitute may only participate in OQS events and cannot replace a nominated athlete injured after the conclusion of the OQS events.
- The substitutes are subject to the same Focused Olympic Anti-Doping Program and special screening as are the nominated athletes. Only those that are declared eligible after having passed the Anti-Doping program and special screening may act as substitutes.
- **Figure Skating:**
 - The AINs, or in case of injury their substitutes, are allowed to participate in the Figure Skating Olympic Qualifying Competition during the season 2025/26 to compete for Quota Places and possible qualification for the OWG 2026. In case of injury of a nominated athlete before the set deadline, and in accordance with the general rules for substitution, their substitute, if qualified, will fill the respective quota place for the OWG 2026.
- **Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating:**
 - Substitutes may step in according to the general rules for substitution - only, if a case of illness or injury happens before the set deadline for an OQS event. There is no substitution in an OQS event if an injury happens during the event. The results achieved by the substitute for AIN count for the respective Special Olympic Qualification Classification (“SOQC”). In case the AIN is able to return to competition at the next or a later OQS event, the AIN and not the substitute continues the qualification. In case the AIN cannot return to competition throughout the qualification process, the substitute, if qualified, fills the respective quota place in Speed Skating or Short Track.

AIN Special Screening Process:

10. Where can I find the names of the AINs who passed the special screening process?

- The names of the AINs who passed the special screening process are available [here](#).

11. Will the names of the athletes who failed the screening process be publicly known?

- No, the names of nominated athletes who did not pass the special screening process will not be made public.

12. Why is there no AIN in certain disciplines/categories?

- Some of the athletes nominated by the Russian Skating Union, the Figure Skating Federation of Russia and Skating Union of Belarus did not pass the special screening process. By extension, their designated substitutes were also deemed ineligible, as substitution is permitted only in case of injury or illness, not on grounds of ineligibility. In addition, there are some cases where no nominations were submitted for a certain category. Consequently, there are some disciplines or distances for which no AIN skaters will participate.

13. Can the list, process or decisions related to AINs be appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)?

- The special pathway allowing a limited number of Individual Neutral Athletes (AIN) to participate in designated Olympic Qualifying events is an exception granted by the ISU Council from the provisions outlined in [ISU Communication 2469](#). Without this exception, these athletes would remain ineligible for participation in ISU and Olympic ice-skating competitions. As a result, these decisions do not represent additional exclusions and are therefore not subject to appeal (read Decisions of the ISU Council – [ISU Communication 2708](#)).

Focused Olympic Anti-Doping Program:

14. What are the next steps for AINs who passed the special screening process?

- AINs will be subject to the Focused Olympic Anti-Doping Program implemented in consultation with the IOC and in accordance with WADA requirements by the ITA. It includes, at the ITA's discretion and where applicable, targeted testing, thorough investigations and close monitoring of their athlete biological passport and their whereabouts.

15. Are the AINs part of the ISU Registered Testing Pool?

- Yes. The AINs will now be included in the ISU Registered Testing Pool and will be part of the Focused Olympic Anti-Doping Program.

16. Are AINs and their support personnel eligible to participate in Olympic Qualification events if they have been associated with someone serving a period of ineligibility due to an Anti-Doping rule violation?

- Whilst we cannot comment on individual cases, we can confirm that under Article 4(d) of [ISU Communication 2680](#), AINs and support personnel will be deemed ineligible to participate in Olympic qualifying events if they have been (or currently are) associated with anyone serving a period of ineligibility due to an Anti-Doping rule violation. Whether AINs or their support personnel are deemed associated or not under this Article will be reviewed by the ISU on a case-by-case basis.

17. What measures are in place to minimize the risk of doping issues?

- The Focused Olympic Anti-Doping Program is in line with international and WADA requirements. In that context, sample-taking will be executed by Doping Control Officials from outside of Russia/Belarus and the samples will be analyzed by WADA-accredited laboratories outside of Russia/Belarus in accordance with the testing process and procedures defined by WADA.

Eligibility Breach:

18. What will happen if there is any breach of rules from AINs or their support personnel?

- If the ISU becomes aware of a breach of the eligibility criteria or other conditions of AIN participation, the ISU Council may revoke the eligibility of AINs and/or their Support Personnel.

19. What is the procedure for reporting evidence of a potential breach of the eligibility criteria in relation to a specific skater or member of support personnel?

- Anyone with relevant information may make a confidential submission to the ISU by email to ain@isu.org