



OFFICIAL AGG USA TRAVEL PROTOCOL

Japan Delegation • November 2026

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1. Purpose & Fundamental Expectations

Athletes traveling as part of the USA Delegation are official representatives of the United States and AGG USA. Participation is both an honor and a privilege. All conduct must reflect the maturity, respect, and professionalism expected of a national team member.

- Athletes are expected to arrive on time and neatly dressed in uniform.
- Athletes are members of the USA Delegation, not solely their home club.
- Once athletes board the bus and thereafter at the training facility, competition arena, and hotel, they must greet all AGG community members they encounter. A friendly hello brightens the day and reflects positively on the Delegation.
- USA Judges and Athletes must maintain professional boundaries at all times and avoid all forms of personal interaction.
- Coaches are present to support and encourage athletes. Any concerns should be raised promptly with coaching staff.
- Masks are strongly recommended at the airport, while flying, and on the bus to help keep Team USA healthy.

2. Appearance Standards

Athlete appearance is a top priority. Photographers—including members of this Delegation—may be present at any time in public settings. Athletes must remain camera-ready throughout the trip.

Uniforms

- Athletes must always be in uniform and well-groomed, with clean and tidy apparel.
- Uniform is required in the following situations:
 - When leaving the United States and upon arrival in the host country
 - During and after flights and all ground transportation
 - At all official meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner each day)
 - At other group meals held at the host hotel
 - At the competition venue and while seated with the USA group in the audience
- If a photographer is looking toward you or waving, look at the camera.

Hair

- Hair must be secured in a high ponytail with no loose strands (“wispsies”) during travel and while watching competitions.
- Hair must be properly styled for practice and competitions:
 - Before breakfast whenever practice or competition follows
 - After practice when meals follow
- When no formal event is scheduled and athletes are dining at the host hotel, a high ponytail with no wispsies is required.

3. Baggage Guidelines

These rules enable the group to move quickly and efficiently and reduce the risk of items being left behind or lost. Bus and room space is limited; consideration for the full Delegation is required.

Athletes

- One large checked bag and one backpack only. **No wheeled carry-on bags are permitted.**
- A crossbody strap phone case is recommended if carrying a phone. Athletes must keep their hands free while traveling to prevent item loss.

Required Team Backpack Contents

- Leotard or unitard
- One underleo
- Two sets of toe shoes
- One set of training clothes
- One pair of white socks
- One refillable water bottle
- Personal travel items, hand sanitizer, and a mask

Coaches and Parents

- One large suitcase per person.
- Extra luggage is not permitted.

4. Delegation Movement Protocol

The Delegation travels as a cohesive unit—“like a sandwich.” This order applies to all group transfers (airport, train, and bus).

- **Front:** Head of Delegation and Officials (Coaches and Judges)
- **Middle:** Athletes in uniform
- **Rear:** Parents
- The Head of Delegation will perform regular headcounts. Safety is the priority; no one is to be left behind.

Bus Assignments

- Bus #1 — Officials and Athletes
- Bus #2 — Families
- This arrangement applies to all transportation methods (bus, train, airport transfers, and other group movements).

Individuals who have not booked room and board through the Federation are responsible for organizing their own transfers to and from the airport.

5. Host Hotel Procedures

Athlete well-being, adequate rest, nutrition, and positive experiences are the highest priorities during the stay.

- The Federation must have a copy of each individual’s passport to facilitate rapid check-in at the host hotel.
- Only designated representatives (officials or coaches) will distribute room keys to teams.
- Passports must be turned in to coaches before check-in.
- **Lights out for all athletes is 9:30 p.m. throughout the week.**

6. Athlete Supervision

Children's Category Athletes

- May not leave the hotel unattended under any circumstances.
- May roam the hotel only in groups of two or more and only with prior approval from their Coach or Club Owner. The buddy system is required for safety.

Junior and Senior Athletes

- May roam the hotel in groups of two or more with prior approval from their Coach or Club Owner.
- May leave the hotel only in groups of two or more and only with a prior written parental release.

Written release requirements:

- Signed and dated by both the parent/guardian and the athlete
- Must include current phone numbers and email addresses for both athlete and parent

No one may bring any person to a hotel room who is not part of the National or International AGG community. There are no exceptions.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

Coaches

- Collect athlete passports for accreditation purposes.
- Ensure uniform and hair protocols are followed before arrival at any practice, meal, or competition.
- Ensure the entire team arrives on time to all practices and competitions.
- Place athletes on the carpet and review the following day's schedule.
- Remind athletes of the required uniform for the next day.
- Thanksgiving dinner is mandatory for coaches only.

Club Owners

- Check athlete rooms for neatness each morning.
- Ensure athletes are awake and ready on time.
- Perform a room check and a headcount for the 9:30 p.m. bedtime.

Parents / Guardians

Coaches are responsible for athletes strictly during scheduled training sessions and competitions. Once training has concluded or athletes have returned from competition, all supervision immediately reverts to parents or guardians. Coaches are not available to supervise athletes outside designated times and are not babysitters.

- All athletes must be picked up promptly at the conclusion of training or events.
- Junior and Senior athletes traveling without parents are expected to demonstrate responsibility, independence, and full compliance with team guidelines.
- Parents who choose for their athletes to travel without them must understand and accept these limitations on coach availability.
- Children's teams **must** have parent chaperones.

Parents Traveling with the Delegation

- Competitions are festive; loud, positive cheering is welcome and encouraged.
- All Team USA parents are expected to sit together in the audience and support every USA team. Your presence contributes to the athletes' energy and confidence.
- Every traveling parent should bring a USA flag to show Team USA spirit.
- Please provide bottled water for athletes and coaches, as well as dry, healthy snacks from the United States for athlete rooms.
- Once competition begins, athletes are under the sole responsibility of coaches. Parents are not permitted in the warm-up area.

Parents Remaining at Home

- Competitions will be livestreamed. The viewing link will be shared in the official WhatsApp group.

8. Meals

- Breakfast is the only meal provided.
- Breakfast is scheduled immediately before practice; athletes must have hair completed and be fully ready to depart for the training venue.
- Athletes and coaches are required to wear USA apparel at breakfast and any other official group meals.
- Hair must remain in a high ponytail for meals unless the meal is followed by practice or competition, in which case hair must be styled for competition.
- Athletes must remain camera-ready in all public spaces, including dining areas.

9. Health & Safety Expectations

The health and safety of our athletes, coaches, and team is our top priority, especially during international travel. All participants are expected to follow these guidelines to minimize risks and support the team's collective well-being.

- **Reporting Illness or Injury:** Athletes must immediately report any illness, symptoms, or injury to their coach or designated chaperone. Early communication allows for prompt care and helps protect the rest of the team.
- **Mask Usage:** If any athlete feels unwell or shows signs of illness, they must immediately wear a mask in shared spaces to prevent potential spread. Athletes are required to carry masks in their backpack.
- **Hygiene Practices:** All athletes are expected to maintain good hand hygiene by washing hands frequently with soap and water and using hand sanitizer when soap is unavailable. Hand sanitizer should be carried by each athlete at all times.
- **Medications:** Each athlete must pack a personal supply of appropriate over-the-counter medications for common issues such as colds, allergies, headaches, digestive upset, or minor injuries.
 - Children's Category Athletes: Medication must be packed in a clearly labeled bag. Chaperones will monitor and assist with administration as needed.
 - Older Athletes: Athletes may carry their own medications or, if preferred, hand them to a chaperone for safekeeping and monitoring.

Athletes (or parents/guardians) should consult a physician before the trip regarding any prescription medications or personal health needs. These expectations support a safe and successful competition and training experience for everyone.

10. Competition Information

- Short program and Children's categories will compete twice (if the team advances to Finals).
- All other athletes will compete up to four times if they advance to Finals; otherwise they will compete twice.
- The top 12 teams qualify for Finals. If no team from the American continent qualifies, the highest-scoring team from the American continent advances. The American continent consists of the USA and Canada.
- A maximum of 2 teams from the same country may qualify into the top 12.

11. Protocol for Team Gifts

It is customary for athletes to exchange small tokens from their home countries during award ceremonies or when training alongside teams from other nations.

- The USA Federation will provide one set of gifts per team. Athletes will present these to teams from other countries.
- Teams are encouraged to purchase additional small gifts (USA pins, pens, keychains, or other souvenirs that represent the United States well) to supplement the Federation set.
- Average team size is approximately eight athletes; plan gift quantities accordingly.

12. Problem-Solving Protocol

Clear communication channels help ensure a successful and enjoyable experience for everyone.

- Athletes and parents report issues first to their Coaches.
- Coaches report to the Head of Delegation.
- This chain applies to all matters involving travel, hotel, competition, and practice.

13. Cultural Etiquette in Japan

Japan places a high value on politeness, punctuality, cleanliness, and mutual respect. As ambassadors of the United States, every member of the Delegation is expected to uphold these standards.

Everyday Etiquette

- A slight bow is the appropriate greeting in place of a handshake.
- Keep voices low on public transport; phones must remain silent.
- Always line up properly—queues in Japan are orderly and respected.
- Remove shoes when entering homes, certain restaurants, traditional spaces, and fitting rooms.

Dining

- Do not stick chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice (this is associated with funeral rites).
- Slurping noodles is acceptable and often encouraged.
- Pour drinks for others rather than for yourself, especially in a group setting.
- Saying “Itadakimasu” before eating and “Gochisousama” afterward is optional but appreciated.
- Do not eat while walking; consume food only in designated areas.
- Tipping is not expected and can create awkwardness.

Public Behavior & Transportation

- Remain extremely quiet on trains and buses.
- Stand on the designated side of escalators (generally left in Tokyo, right in Osaka).
- Respect priority seating for elderly, pregnant, or disabled passengers.
- Public trash cans are scarce—carry your trash with you until you locate a proper receptacle.
- Jaywalking is frowned upon even when no vehicles are present.
- Tattoos may be restricted in some onsens (hot springs).

Money & Payments

- Cash (Japanese yen) remains widely used; carry sufficient cash.
- Place money on the payment tray rather than handing it directly to the cashier.

Phone Etiquette

- No phone conversations on trains or buses. If a call must be answered, keep it extremely brief or wait until you have exited.
- Keep phones on silent or “manner mode” at all times in public spaces.
- Use headphones for any music or video; keep volume low.
- Do not walk while looking at your phone—this is considered both unsafe and rude.
- Ask permission before photographing people. In temples, gyms, or backstage areas, always seek approval first.
- Phones must be silenced and screens dark during performances, ceremonies, team meetings, and athlete introductions.

Temples, Shrines & Cultural Sites

- Be quiet and respectful. Do not touch sacred objects.
- Follow all posted photography rules and dress appropriately.

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- Respect individuals who are praying or participating in ceremonies.

14. Japan Travel Checklist for Athletes

Before Leaving Home

- Passport is valid and packed
- Travel documents and emergency contacts saved (digital and paper copies)
- Team uniform, competition equipment, and costumes checked
- Comfortable walking shoes packed (Japan involves extensive walking)
- Small bag for personal items and for carrying trash
- Electronics adapter (Japan uses Type A plugs)
- Translation app and offline maps downloaded
- Sufficient Japanese yen in cash
- Personal OTC medications, hand sanitizer, and masks packed

Throughout the Trip – Daily Reminders

- Remain polite, quiet, and punctual at all times
- Keep rooms clean and organized; respect other hotel guests
- Follow team curfew (lights out 9:30 p.m.) and all schedules
- Represent your country and teammates with pride and positive support
- Be respectful to judges, officials, volunteers, other athletes, and the host country

15. Useful Japanese Phrases

- (Konnichiwa) — Hello
- (Arigato) — Thank you
- (Sumimasen) — Excuse me / Sorry
- (Onegaishimasu) — Please
- (Hai) — Yes
- (Itadakimasu) — Said before eating (gratitude for the meal)
- (Gochisousama) — Said after eating

Golden Rule: In Japan—be quiet, be respectful, be punctual, and be grateful.

This protocol is issued by AGG USA to ensure the safety, professionalism, and positive representation of the United States Delegation. Questions regarding any section should be directed to the Head of Delegation or Federation leadership prior to departure.