

USFG 2021 Novice Cutting Notes



The 2021 Novice stone is an excellent pattern and very obtainable for first time entrants and those looking to quality in the category. I cut the sample stone in Ametrine (quartz) because I had a piece sitting around about the right size. For this category however, choice of material is up to you.

Advice on material would be to choose something you can polish very well and that is very clean. Synthetics are often good for the novice category as you don't have to deal with any internal inclusions or stress issues. Also, quartz can be notoriously difficult to get a great polish on for many (even at advanced levels) so you may want to avoid that species. You may notice that quartz is used on a regular basis for upper categories in the competition for this reason. ***(Editor's Note: Avoid using X-cube for your cutting material. X-cube is composed of four prisms glued or fused together. Wherever these fuse plains break the surface of your facets you will be charged a 1 point 100% error.)***

The cutting is pretty straight forward, but you'll notice that it's a bit off from what a standard round would be – you're not cutting on the 3-9s, but rather on 4-8s instead. Outside of that this is a pretty standard and easy stone to cut.

To qualify in the category, pay close attention to your stone width which needs to come in at 12.0mm with a +/- variance of 0.3mm and also your girdle width at 0.5mm with a +/- variance of 0.3mm. Both should be very achievable, but many applicants get points deducted for not paying close attention to these two areas.

For the pavilion, you'll start cutting to a temporary center point which will be cut away with your P2s. If your machine doesn't have the ability to cut to 43.90° , use 44° (you should be fine). Same on the crown – don't worry about 35.99° (use 36°) or 19.01° (use 19°) if you're not on a machine that easily hits those percentages.

There were no issues with the cutting sequence or any of the steps that should cause problems. I cut the sample stone in about an hour. Of course, I wasn't turning it in to be graded. So take your time, make sure your girdle is level, and meets all come together. Focus on getting all your pits and tiny scratches out on polish and you'll be receiving your qualifying certificate.

Good luck!

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