



U.S. FIGURE SKATING  
JUDGING MANUAL  
FOR  
ICE DANCE JUDGES' TRAINING

Prepared by  
U.S. FIGURE SKATING  
JUDGES EDUCATION AND TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE

This manual is designed for use as a teaching and learning aid for trial judges and current judges at judges' schools and as a refresher for judges of all levels between schools. It may be copied in part or in whole only with the permission of the United States Figure Skating Judges Education and Training Subcommittee (JETS) Chair.

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Robert Ouellette, Vice Chair, Schools, JETS Committee

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\* The primary sources for this manual are:

- U.S. Figure Skating rulebook, 2008-2009 edition
- ISU Handbook – Ice Dancing, 2003 edition
- PSA Dance Booklet, 2008 edition

Judges should check U.S. Figure Skating and ISU websites for updates.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This manual considers moves in the field, compulsory dances, and free dance tests as governed by U.S. Figure Skating. Competition judging of ice dance is another realm of figure skating and is governed by national and international standards and rules known as the International Judging System (IJS). In both test judging and competition judging, it is important to stay informed about rule changes. The IJS system is not considered in this manual.

### **A. Why Become a Judge?**

The personal reasons for becoming a judge are as varied and individual as the people who judge. For former skaters, a common motivation is the wish to continue to be an active participant in the sport, even after they have stopped testing and/or competing. For adult skaters who did not skate as children, but for whom the sport is now part of their lives, becoming a judge increases the sense of involvement in the sport which may last for many years. For parents whose children are skating or have stopped skating, becoming a judge allows continued involvement in a sport in which they have spent a lot of time.

Judges feel that judging is a way to make a contribution to the sport they love.

Judging can be an important part of their lives for many years but still be subordinate to the demands of education, career, and family.

Not all skaters, even those of championship caliber, automatically become good judges. There is much more to being a good judge than just being able to identify the elements of skating. Understanding the level of quality and being able to award appropriate marks to skaters of all levels, not just top-level skaters, is important. Moreover, an element of maturity and a willingness to serve in a variety of venues are important characteristics of good judges as well.

Adult skaters, parents, and others interested in skating may develop into excellent judges if they spend sufficient time studying the sport. These individuals, who because of age, maturity, and an innate sense of values and judgement, may have the qualities to evaluate skating tests and even competition skating.

Before deciding to become a judge, examine the characteristics described in the next section and ask yourself how well you fulfill the criteria. If you are interested in pursuing a judging appointment, you will have to attend a judges' school. The purpose of a judges' school is to improve and to help advance figure skating by developing well-trained judges who will maintain the standards of judging tests of U.S. Figure Skating and who will uphold the integrity of the sport. Schools provide the opportunity for trial judges to interact with official judges and for official judges to share knowledge and experiences with one another in the developing and evolving sport of figure skating. Schools provide both classroom instruction and demonstrations on ice, and open discussions are encouraged. The U.S. Figure Skating web site has updates on schools in your area. Select "Events/Results" to obtain "Event Search." Use the pull-down menu of "Event Type" and select "Judges/Officials Schools." Then select "Search."

### **B. The Qualities Requisite for a Judge**

There are many qualities—from ethical and dedicated to objective and decisive—that good figure skating judges must have. Although it is impossible to identify and describe all of them here, the following are the most basic qualities required to serve as a judge with U.S. Figure Skating.

### **1. A desire to serve the sport**

Judges must take the time to study the sport, not only when working toward an appointment, but throughout their judging careers. After receiving an appointment, a judge must be willing to devote time, often at personal inconvenience, to judge tests and competitions where and when they are needed. U.S. Figure Skating consists of a wide range of clubs with skaters of varying levels of skill and needs, and they all must be served. A judge should not choose only the prime and prestigious sites.

### **2. A sense of ethics**

A judge must be willing to uphold the U.S. Figure Skating standards for judging and integrity. This philosophy is summarized in the JUDGE'S CREED. While the text may seem dated, the ideas are not. All judges must adhere to the ideals expressed by the creed.

- I consider it an honor and a privilege to be a judge of figure skating.
- I shall make my judgment to the best of my ability with all humility and then shall keep my own counsel unless questioned officially.
- I shall free my mind of all former impressions, be cooperative and punctual, and do my best always to improve my knowledge and to uphold the dignity of the sport.

### **3. Proper temperament**

Judges should display tact and confidence when judging and when interacting with people in the ice arena. They should also be objective, which means that they can be free from influence by persons or personalities both on and off the ice. Judges must appraise the skating of a test or competition accurately and mark it accordingly. It is also important that a judge be able to explain succinctly and with confidence why he or she gave a particular score or arrived at a certain outcome on a test.

**Tact** is an important part of good overall temperament, for a judge may be faced with an unhappy or disappointed parent, or a coach vocally dissatisfied with a result. A judge must be able to take questioning and criticism calmly, even when circumstances are trying. Note that a discussion should not degenerate into an argument. It is a good policy to listen to all of the issues raised without interruption. Wait until the individual has voiced all of his/her concerns and then calmly address the more important issues. Responding immediately to each and every issue can develop into an argument.

Quiet **confidence** in one's ability to judge is another important component of temperament. A judge, who has done his/her conscientious best to mark fairly, should not worry unduly if the resulting mark differs from those of the rest of the panel. Judging skating is not an exact science, which is why three judges are used for tests and five or more for competitions. Concern over results can make a judge more anxious which may disrupt the concentration required to evaluate other skaters.

### **4. Knowledge of figure skating**

Obviously, a thorough knowledge of the sport is essential. However, the knowledge required for judging goes beyond that obtained only through skating. A judge must study the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook and other related texts, observe and participate in judges' schools and seminars, and maintain an open and continuous relationship with coaches and skaters. No judge, however seasoned, should stop studying and observing and thereby evolving as a judge. It is important to stay up to date on the rules and developments in this dynamic sport and to keep an open mind toward new skating trends.

A judge's skating ability is not in itself a measure of judging ability. Vital to the mix of what it takes to be a good judge are dedication and a willingness to develop the skills necessary

to serve the sport. Granted that, all other elements being equal, an individual who has years of skating experience has a distinct advantage as a judge.

### **5. Ability to communicate**

A judge must be able to communicate with skaters, coaches, parents, monitors, and other judges. As a judge you will likely be asked to interpret the comments you make on test papers, which often will include more in-depth questions by coaches on what needs to be improved to pass a test. You must be able to convey to them why you arrived at a particular outcome for a test, explaining accurately and concisely the errors in the elements in the test. If a judge cannot explain these things well, then the credibility of that judge and the judging community as a whole are jeopardized.

### **C. Judges' Regulations**

The following regulations, combined with the elements of the Judge's Creed, govern the behavior of judges of U.S. Figure Skating. For a more complete understanding of the requirements and regulations for judges, refer to the Judges Rules (JR) section of the most recent U.S. Figure Skating rulebook. A careful reading of the section on Judges' Ethics (subsection E) is also recommended.

- Judges shall stand or sit as far apart as is practicable and shall not converse with one another or with spectators while judging.
- Judges shall not compare notes with one another and must judge independently.
- Judges shall stand or sit at locations where they can see the complete program and can hear the music.
- Judges shall not publish any statements concerning tests which they have judged. This restriction includes electronic media such as e-mails and on-line chat rooms.

Violations of these rules may be grounds for action by the U.S. Figure Skating Judges Committee as specified in the most recent U. S. Figure Skating rulebook.

### **D. Suggestions for Judges**

The following suggestions are not necessarily covered by rules given in the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook but constitute good policy. In addition, read the following section on ethics in judging.

1. Be on time. Arrive at the rink at least 15 minutes, and preferably 30 minutes, ahead of the time that you are expected to judge. Check with the test chair about the actual start of tests as compared to the start of the warm-up.
2. Check with the test chair about the tests you are scheduled to judge to determine if there are tests that you may see infrequently. Review in advance all current and applicable rules prior to those tests. Inform the test chair if you are not eligible to judge some of the tests assigned.
3. Check the test schedule to determine that you have a test sheet for each listed skater. Note whether the test sheet is the most current version!
4. A visiting judge owes the first duty to the host club that is paying the judge's expenses, not to organizations or personal friends in the area.

5. Judges should conduct themselves properly at all times as representatives of U.S. Figure Skating. Talking during tests or during a competition event may give the perception to spectators that something inappropriate is being discussed, when in fact a comment may be completely innocent. Perception is important! Note that, with current technology, judges' actions can be recorded on audio as well as video during test sessions and competitions.
6. Judges and trial judges should not talk to each other during a test. If you have any questions, ask the Judge-In-Charge (JIC).
7. Judges must judge independently. Judges should not look at other judges' papers during tests (or during competitions) or let the results of other judges influence their judging decisions. They should also not let the results of previous tests in a test session influence how they evaluate tests during the remainder of that particular test session.
8. Judges should act in a dignified manner. However, their body language and demeanor should also convey an openness to skaters, parents, and coaches so that communication is possible.
9. A judge should not assume the role of teacher, even if asked by a parent how to improve a test, for example. It is best to leave teaching to the coaches. Comment only on what you see and don't suggest specific methods to correct an error.
10. When judging, concentrate on the skater. Forget the audience, surroundings and other judges except for the demands of courtesy.
11. Judge what you see at the time of the test or event, not what you think the skater is capable of doing, and give marks appropriate to the test or performance that day. Even if you have seen a skater complete an element day after day for a long period of time, you must judge only how that element is skated on that particular day.
12. Use a range of marks both high and low so that a distinction is shown between the various skaters. Skaters, parents, and coaches are not educated by results that are equal for skaters with obviously different levels of quality. Looking for "plus" qualities will help.
13. Remember to sign **legibly** all judging sheets and to include your U.S. Figure Skating number.
14. Write your comments legibly and concisely for the benefit of the skater and coach as well as yourself so that a discussion of the test is possible.
15. At the completion of a test, total your marks and circle PASS or RETRY before handing your sheet to the JIC or test chair. Your paper should be checked for the accuracy of the marks by the test chair before the paper is given to the skater. However, it is best not to assume that this will be done, so double check the math before handing it in. This will avoid returning your papers to you for corrections, which can disrupt subsequent tests.

16. The JIC should make sure that **all trial papers** of trial judges are handed in after each test. Either during a warm-up period or in the judges' room, sign the papers and ink in the marks and the results of the tests. If there is sufficient time, discuss the tests with the trial judge while the test is still in mind. Trial judges should discuss their marks only with official panel members, and only for the purpose of evaluating their assessment of the test or event. They should not discuss tests with skaters, coaches, or parents. If approached to do so, they should refer that person to the judge-in-charge or the test chair who can ask a judge to address the question.
17. Be prepared to talk to the candidates, especially if the test has been marked as retry, and be prepared to explain the reason for your marks. If possible, the coach should also be present. Suggestions for improvement should be offered privately and only when requested. Arguments should be avoided. Praise may be given after a test or event. However, be sensitive to the possibility of showing a bias by appearing friendly to some skaters or coaches but not others.
18. Remember, our involvement as judges in this sport is for the skaters. As judges, our job is to act as "facilitators" and to aid the skater's development. We can do this by providing fair and objective appraisals of their performances.

In summary, judges must remember to judge the tests and events independently and as they occur. We must give every skater a chance to pass a test. However, only the performance and presentation that day determine whether a test is marked pass or retry.

Judges should enjoy the experience of judging. When it becomes a chore or an unpleasant situation, we need to step away and assess our position. Why are we judging? Is it for prestige or vicarious reasons? Is it to give back to the sport we so love because we truly want to help skaters along the way?

Once you become a judge, there are many reasons for continuing to judge. Foremost, is a feeling of accomplishment when you have judged fairly and exactly the way you wanted regardless of your agreement with the rest of the panel? However, if you are consistently in disagreement over a period of time it may be beneficial to reassess your standards or attend a school or seminar to update your skills.

## **E. Ethics in Judging**

JR 1.01 gives a very general statement concerning ethics in judging. This section describes specific ethical issues as they apply to judging tests. As mentioned previously, a judge must give a fair assessment of the skater's performance on the day of the test. Other factors past or future should not intervene in the evaluation that day. Bias in judging - in either a positive or negative sense - must be avoided. To do otherwise is unfair and is evident to skaters, coaches, and parents. Most skaters and experienced coaches know how the test was skated and what marks might be expected. Honest, fair treatment by the judges will be respected, even if they had hope for a better outcome. It is vital that the reputation of a judge not be compromised because the effects can be long lasting and future marks the judge gives may well be viewed in that context.

### **Ethical Considerations**

1. The skater may be a member of the judge's home club and the judge may even skate with that individual. The marks for friends and home club skaters should be no

different from those that would be given to skaters at any other rink. Giving the benefit of the doubt to a skater just because you know him or her is not acceptable. On the other hand, marking down a skater to avoid the appearance of a favorable bias is also unfair and must not occur.

2. The skater may be the child of family friends, who may live in your neighborhood, attend the same house of worship, or belong to an organization of which you are a member. This situation requires not only unbiased judging but also the development of a separation of the judging of skating from other facets of a judge's life in social settings. In social settings, a judge should avoid commenting on tests that she or he has judged as well as tests not judged. Remarks made to one person may be changed, misunderstood, or taken out of context when repeated to others. Being aware of the line between skating circles and social circles is important and not crossing that line is a part of your responsibility to the sport and to skaters.
3. The reputation of the skater is not relevant on test day. Even if the skater has not been notably successful in previous tests, a judge's attitude should be that the skater may pass the test if the standard is met. Look for good qualities that may outweigh poor qualities among all skaters. Similarly, a skater with a reputation for quality skating should not be rewarded with inappropriate high marks for a substandard performance on that day. To do so can discourage other skaters and coaches and they can lose respect for judges and the sport that allows such positive bias.
4. The style or technique of skating in a test must be evaluated independently of your personal preferences. A judge should not say "I like ...." or "I prefer..."
5. The judge should never compare a test with other tests in written notes on the test sheet or in personal communication with skaters or coaches.
6. Although a skater should be put at ease at the start of the test, a judge must avoid making personal remarks such as how nice the skating dress is. A skater could conclude that the test was passed because of the dress and that the dress actually played a role in the outcome of the test. If another skater whose dress was not mentioned does not pass a test, we want to make sure that she does not draw an unwarranted conclusion about what is being evaluated and why the test did not pass.
7. Avoid circumstances where another judge, in violation of judging ethics, talks to you about a skater in either a negative or positive manner in the judges' room prior to the test. This is a violation of general judging ethics. You should ignore comments during the test as well. These circumstances and any other more serious attempts to influence your judging are among the most difficult situations to handle in judging. Just remember - you must make independent and unbiased evaluations and come to your own final decision regarding a skater's performance.
8. Do not make remarks about a skater or coach to other judges or discuss personal information about them. These types of comments may inadvertently influence the evaluation of a skater or at least be perceived as having done so.
9. The personal circumstances of the skater are not relevant to the evaluation of a test. Common among these are that a skater may be taking a test for the last time before

leaving for college or that the test is being taken right before the deadline for a qualifying competition. Although the judge can be sympathetic, the standard for passing a test cannot change. Although the skater may be disappointed, especially due to these types of personal circumstances, the judges will be respected for the honest and fair treatment of skaters.

- 10.** A judge should not allow the reputation of a coach to affect the marking of the test either in a negative or positive manner. Even if the coach is not known to put out high quality tests, the skater may meet or even exceed the test standard. Similarly a coach with an excellent reputation may well have students who cannot meet the test standard on the test day. Judges should avoid the appearance of showing favoritism toward a skater based on who the coach is. Remember, the coach is not testing - the skater is.
- 11.** Prior to a dance test, opinions about the choice of a partner or the ability of that partner are not relevant. Judges are not in a position to know the circumstances of the choice of a partner by the skater. In addition, same-sex partners who are the coaches of the skater must be regarded with the same respect as for other partners. Consideration of the partner is allowed when discussing a reskate with the JIC.
- 12.** Do not discuss coaches or make comparisons between coaches with skaters and parents of skaters. This may be very tempting under some circumstances but your opinion could be passed on and be regarded as a positive or negative bias. A simple statement that you are not allowed by the ethical codes for judges to comment is appropriate.
- 13.** A judge should not fear being “out of line” as compared to the rest of the panel and should not alter his or her developed standard during the course of a test session for the purpose of preserving a good judging record. Although it is human nature to feel good about being “right” as shown by agreement with others, each judge has to have the confidence that the test has been judged fairly and exactly the way the judge wants regardless of agreement with the results. Only if you are constantly in disagreement with a variety of judges at a number of locales should you reassess your standard of values.
- 14.** Never discuss another judge’s marks for a test with a skater, coach or parent of the skater and do not try to discern what another judge has written on a test paper if asked to do so. Only discuss your own marks with the skater, coach, or parent and then only when asked. Do not seek out the skater or coach to comment on the test.
- 15.** Judges may discuss tests with one another or with a trial judge for the purposes of education. However, the discussions should be guarded in the judges’ room. Individuals such as hospitality volunteers or assistants for the test chair should not hear your opinions about the tests.
- 16.** JR 1.05 specifically states that judges should refrain from publishing or e-mailing remarks or commenting in on-line chat rooms about tests which they have judged. Although not specifically stated, it is not advisable to comment about the results of tests or events that you did not judge.

## **Avoiding Bias or Appearance of Bias**

1. Remember that you are a volunteer and do not have to accept invitations to judge at a test session if there are past or current circumstances that may affect your ability to judge without bias or the appearance of bias. A judge should be comfortable while evaluating the test of a skater. It is not necessary to explain why you cannot do a particular test session. In fact, explanations may be passed on and misinterpreted and cause an even greater problem for you as a judge.
2. If during the review of your assignment list at a test session you find yourself assigned to judge a skater whom you prefer not to judge, seek a replacement judge. It may be best to have the judge serve as a replacement for several tests including the one of concern to you. By reassigning several tests, the test of concern will not be evident. The best course of action is to inform the test chair that you would prefer that another judge replace you. An explanation is not necessary.
3. If replacement judges are not available, ask another judge to serve as the JIC. If the judges rotate in this responsibility then your concern will not be evident.

## **F. Suggested Study Materials**

1. You should have a current U.S. Figure Skating rulebook and the associated Tests book. Changes in skating requirements occur every year and are reflected in the updated rulebook. Recent changes deemed urgent or changes clarifying a rule appear on the U.S. Figure Skating web site ([www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org)) and should be checked each week.
2. An ice dance manual is available from the PSA. This publication provides a list of expectations for each compulsory dance and common errors that may occur.
3. Videos of the Pre-Silver through the International dances are available from the I.S.U. These are very instructive as they show the dances, portions of each dance, and highlight details of the turns and edges.

## **II. TEST JUDGING**

### **A. Officials Requirements**

In order to officiate, judges must be registered members of U.S. Figure Skating for the current year and have their appointments renewed annually. If you have a judging appointment and are still actively trial judging to obtain a promotion, you may officiate and trial judge at the same test session. However, your top priority during that test session should be judging tests that you are assigned so that the skaters receive your best effort and your focus.

Three qualified U.S. Figure Skating judges usually form a test panel. However, effective 2008-2009, Bronze dance judges may act as a single panel for: preliminary dance tests; pre-preliminary and adult pre-bronze MIF tests. Silver and higher dance judges may also act as a single panel for: preliminary MIF, pre-bronze and masters pre-bronze dance tests; juvenile, intermediate, and masters intermediate free dance tests; preliminary through pre-gold solo dance tests; Special Olympics MIF and dance tests.

The test chair is in charge of the test session, and trial judges should apply to him/her for permission to trial judge. Feel free to ask test chairs in your area to let you know if they will be having tests at the level you need to trial judge. Also, please keep the test chairs in your area aware of your judging status. If you receive a promotion, please let them know, but do not start judging at that new level until you receive official notification of your appointment. All the judges and trial judges should report to the test chair at least 15 minutes but preferably one half hour prior to the start of the actual tests. Note that there is often a short warm-up period scheduled as well. This is a good time to review and sign the test papers and make sure you have all of the test papers for the skaters you are scheduled to judge.

For every test, one of the three official judges is chosen by the panel to be the judge-in-charge (JIC). The JIC need not be the highest ranking or most experienced judge, or the local judge. It is useful to share this responsibility among the judges on an agreed rotational basis. The JIC should collect the trial judge's sheets at the end of the test or after a group of tests. The JIC has complete authority over the conduct of the test, assuming the duties of a referee.

## **B. The Numbers and Their Meaning**

The preliminary dance tests, the pre-preliminary and adult pre-bronze moves in the field tests, the pre-preliminary and adult pre-bronze free skate tests, and the preliminary pair tests are marked on a pass or retry basis. All other tests are judged using numerical values.

A scale of zero to six is used in judging all figure skating tests and some competitions. The integer values and their associated adjectives originate from the earliest days of figure skating. They are listed below. Decimals to one place are permitted to show more detailed differentiation, i.e., 3.1 or 3.3, etc. The adjectives are seldom used and if used should be done cautiously.

0 = Not Skated	
1 = Very Poor	4 = Good
2 = Poor	5 = Very Good
3 = Mediocre	6 = Perfect and Faultless

All U.S. Figure Skating tests have a standardized passing average and a passing total mark. The skater must attain at least the passing total from two or more of the official panel in order to pass the test. If the criteria are not met then the test is deemed "retry." (See the next section for a discussion of retry and reskate.) Judges must be aware of the passing average for a particular test. They must understand the numbers and use them well so that the marks have meaning to the skaters. The numbers must reflect your intentions. While judging, note what has been achieved in each element as well as the errors. For the final decision of pass or retry, know what is most important for that particular test level. Weigh the items done well against the errors, keeping in mind what abilities the skater is asked to demonstrate for the level being tested. Always ask yourself at the end of the test: "Is this a passing test?" If the answer is "yes," then pass the test. If the answer is "no," then mark the test as a "retry."

As a judge, consider your scores. If the numbers do not bear out your intentions, either for a pass or retry, change the numbers where possible to make them support your intentions. It is an unwritten rule that you should not "retry" a test because your score is short by 0.1 points. If you feel that the overall test has met the requirements and is passing, examine the test sheet to determine which mark could be marked 0.1 higher to reflect the right overall outcome. If you are confident that the test is not passing, decrease a mark for some facet of the test to reach a total deficiency of 0.2 points. When you are in doubt, ask for a reskate for a particular element or give the benefit of the doubt to the skater.

The marks given must reflect your comments on the test sheet, and the comments should elaborate the meaning of the marks. Each must support and justify the other. Do not write “good test” and give marks below the passing average. If the performance is indeed good, then the mark should be above average. If your comments show many errors, your mark should be below the passing average.

### **C. Retry and Reskates**

The original term for a test not passed was “fail” but the terminology has been changed to retry. This term means that the test does not meet generally accepted standards. If two or more judges mark the test as retry then the test does not pass. A test when marked “retry” may not be retaken prior to the twenty seventh (27<sup>th</sup>) day following the date of the original test.

The term reskate refers to a repeat of element(s) of a test to achieve a better score. In essence it is a “second chance” to pass the test. The reskate cannot be requested by the skater or the coach but only by the judges of the panel. A reskate is not required even if the test has not passed by only 0.2 points. The reskate is the result of a conscious decision by a judge that there is a chance that the test can pass if the skater can correct some element of the test. The reskate, if performed well, could then bring the total score for the test up to the required passing average, and constitute a passing test.

If a reskate is requested, the JIC or a designated judge should explain to the skater what is required in the reskate and the reason for this selection. No instruction as to how to fix the error should be given - that should be done by the coach. The judge should tell the skater to consult with his or her coach before repeating the element.

A brief rest and warm-up is permitted before the reskate is performed. Note that the rule does not specify the amount of practice or type of practice allowed within that time but there is an obvious time limit that should be considered.

The reskate rules as applied to moves in the field tests, compulsory dances and the free dance are given in each of those respective sections of the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook. You may find it helpful to review these rules prior to the test session so that you are prepared to handle them efficiently.

## **III. MOVES IN THE FIELD TESTS**

Moves in the field (MIF) tests are basic skating on edges and curves with required features such as turns. They are skated without music and the skater has one foot on the ice at all times.

There are eight standard MIF tests from Pre-preliminary through Senior. Adult MIF tests are Pre-Bronze, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. In each discipline the tests may be taken only in consecutive order.

MIF tests may be passed independently of free skate, dance, or pair tests. However, the corresponding MIF test must be passed before taking a free skate or a pair test at the same level. There is no MIF test requirement for compulsory dance tests but there is for free dance tests. Skaters may pass MIF tests higher than their corresponding free skate, dance, or pair test level and skate in qualifying competitions at the highest level defined by their free skate, dance, or pair test level.

### **A. Preparing to Judge MIF Tests**

Some judges have not had the experience of actually doing MIF elements and as a consequence this aspect of figure skating may require more study than for free skate. It is helpful to watch skaters at club sessions or get the MIF videos available from the PSA. These videos are very useful because the elements may be played and replayed as well in slow

motion. It takes a keen eye to pick up some unusual step or incorrect turn in elements skated in an actual test.

The Tests booklet provided by U.S. Figure Skating is convenient to have during a test. It can be opened to the correct page and placed on the barrier for ready reference. The PSA booklet may be more useful because it highlights the expected qualities for each element as well as a lists of errors that if observed should be noted on the test sheet for the skater.

## **B. Standards for MIF Tests and Marks**

The marks for all elements within a test level are identical. Those marks, the number of elements and the passing average appear in Table 1 at the end of this section. These marks must be mentally paired with a standard developed by the judge by watching many tests. The marks awarded to a skater must reflect what the skater does on test day. Although the marks for the elements in many tests do not have a wide deviation, a judge must be prepared to indicate the quality or lack thereof on a specific element by the assigned mark.

Going above the passing average is a reward for the skater who has worked diligently on a test and performed it well on test day. That skater should be distinguished from another skater who has not skated as well or has not performed the test at the same quality level. There are times when a highly qualified dancer may have delayed taking the Senior MIF test to move up to the next level. The skating could be significantly above the test standard and the mark should reflect that performance. You may find varying levels of skating quality in any given test session. For example, there may be two passing senior MIF tests, but they may be performed at very different levels. You should reflect that difference in skill level in the scores given. One skater may pass with the total score required to pass the test, whereas another may pass it with a score 0.8 points above the passing average.

Judges must avoid a positive bias based on the reputation of a free skater. For example, a skater may well have several triple jumps and need to pass the Novice MIF test in order to take the Novice free skate test. But remember, the two tests are unrelated. U.S. Figure Skating has decided that skating on edges with strong curves with prescribed features such as turns is important. Indeed MIF elements can provide for the development of spiral sequences and step sequences. In addition, MIF elements can contribute significantly to several of the component marks of the IJS system. Judges must maintain the standard of MIF tests to ensure the development of quality skating consists of more than just multi-revolution jumps.

Going significantly below the passing average may also be required. It is not fair to give the same mark to a skater who is only slightly below the standard and for one who struggles throughout the test and is not adequately trained. The marks should indicate that considerably more work is required. Otherwise, the skater, coach, and parents may conclude that it is merely a matter of waiting 27 days and it is likely that the test will pass.

Judges must avoid a negative bias based on the fact that a skater has only passed a much lower free skate test but is testing a higher MIF test. For example, an Intermediate free skater may take the Senior MIF test. The required skills are very different - the skater may not be able to do double jumps but can skate with power and control, and do the required turns for the MIF test. If so, the skater should be rewarded with the gold medal in that discipline of the sport.

Judges must also avoid a negative bias on the basis of age. There is no age requirement to take a MIF test. A very young skater could well develop the necessary power, cover the ice and do all of the required turns for the Senior MIF test. What is important is the performance on test day - not how young (or old) the skater is.

**Table 1: Marks for Standard MIF Tests (2008-2009)**

<b>MIF Test</b>	<b>Passing Average</b>	<b>Number of Elements</b>	<b>Total Passing Mark</b>
Pre-preliminary	none	Four (4)	Pass/Retry
Preliminary	2.5	Five (5)	12.5
Pre-Juvenile	2.7	Six (6)	16.2
Juvenile	3.0	Four (4)	12.0
Intermediate	3.2	Six (6)	19.2
Novice	3.5	Seven (7)	24.5
Junior	4.0	Six (6)	24.0
Senior	4.5	Five (5)	22.5

### **C. Basic Rules for MIF Tests**

1. The elements of each test must be skated in the order listed on the test sheet. If the skater starts a move other than prescribed, the JIC must immediately tell the skater to stop. The consequences of this are described in section G.
2. Moves in the field must start from a standing, stationary position with a maximum of seven (7) introductory steps.
3. A skater may stop briefly to consult with his/her coach between elements **but not between components** where a change of direction or change of foot occurs.
4. Coaches should not be coaching during the actual skating of the element.

### **D. Focus of Elements in MIF Tests**

Each element of a MIF test has a primary focus and in some cases a secondary focus, which is listed next to the elements on the test sheet. These are:

- Power
- Edge quality
- Extension
- Quickness
- Continuous flow and strength (Adult MIF only)

Each element should be evaluated on how the primary focus and secondary focus are achieved. However, a judge may consider features other than the listed focuses when assigning a mark. For example good edges should be expected even if edges are not listed as a focus. In addition, the skater should achieve an effortless, flowing, and graceful execution of each element. The skater should be controlled and have his/her body balanced over the skating foot.

Although there is no music, there should be a sense of rhythm and cadence throughout the elements. For some elements such as the counters of the Novice test, rockers of the Junior test, or quick edge step of the Senior test an even cadence should be maintained. Skaters who

accomplish this should be rewarded in the assigned mark. For power circles in several tests there should be an increase in the rhythm of the crossovers. For elements such as the power pulls of the Junior test the rhythm should be slow, slow, and slow on the pulls followed by quick, quick on the rockers.

### **E. Patterns in MIF Tests**

The rulebook as well as the test sheets indicate that the steps in MIF tests should be skated in general accordance with the diagrams. Although there is no penalty for novel approaches, it is clear that the best chance for success is to follow closely the diagrams and descriptions. Judges should note whether the skater fills the rink from end to end and in some elements from side to side. Failure to do so may indicate insufficient power.

Skaters who do not “set up” a move properly will invariably encounter difficulty. A common error occurs in crossover sequences down the length of the rink where the transitions between lobes are too diagonal. As a result the skater will run out of room, pull up short, and be unable to skate the end run successfully. Special note should be made when skaters have introductory steps to gain speed and start an element too far down ice. They may reach the other end of the rink at the completion of the element but not as a result of power in the element itself.

### **F. Adult MIF Tests**

The purpose of adult MIF tests is to encourage adult skaters to learn the fundamentals of figure skating. The elements provide a foundation for adult free skate tests and adult dance tests. These individuals may be part of a group of adults on which clubs depend for management. Most parents, who do not skate, may have been active in the club but leave the sport after their children stop skating. Adult skaters, if encouraged to do so by judges, may also provide a source of judges. For these reasons, judges should encourage and have a positive attitude toward adult skaters.

There are four adult MIF tests. The passing average, number of elements, and total passing average are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Marks for Adult MIF Tests (2008-2009)**

<b>MIF Test</b>	<b>Passing Average</b>	<b>Number of Elements</b>	<b>Total Passing Mark</b>
Pre-Bronze	None	Five (5)	Pass/Retry
Bronze	2.5	Five (5)	12.5
Silver	2.7	Six (6)	16.2
Gold	3.0	Six (6)	18.0

The general standards for adult MIF tests are given in the TR section of the Tests book for U.S. Figure Skating. If you are in an area with few adult skaters, these sections should be reviewed prior to judging adult MIF tests.

There are some guidelines for determining whether an element is passing or not. All of the elements are part of the standard MIF tests and these standards are well known. When judging adult MIF tests there are two adjustments that must be made compared to how standard MIF tests are judged. First the focus may be different. Power is not demanded but rather

“continuous flow and strength.” Second the passing average for the elements may not be the same as for the standard tests even though in a number of cases they are equal. Prior to a test you should review the passing average for each element for the corresponding standard test. It is that number and the associated level of expectation that should provide the basis for a mark in an Adult MIF test.

One example of an element that has a different passing average is the Eight-Step Mohawk sequence in the Silver MIF test which has a passing average of 2.7 compared to 3.0 for the Juvenile MIF test. Do not expect an adult to skate this element at the standard for a passing Juvenile test. However, if the adult skates the element like a skater of the Juvenile test, the mark should not be the passing average - 2.7 - but rather 3.0. Reflective marking is important.

It is very important that there be a correspondence between the marks of adult and standard MIF tests for the same element. Some skaters do attempt both tracks. Thus, a skater who has received a 3.2 on the power circles of the Intermediate MIF test would have trouble understanding why a similar “passing” performance on the Gold MIF test receives a 3.0 rather than a 3.2.

Adult skaters can skate above the level of the passing average. Some adults skated as children and return to the sport they love. They may have even tested figures. Don't be surprised - if you were a judge for school figures - to find an adult who can do brackets at the top of an even arc while maintaining positions that you haven't seen in a long time. The moral of this example is that adults do not always skate like “adults.”

## **G. Errors in MIF Tests**

As in free skate tests, there are serious errors in moves in the field tests. A serious error without subsequent correction in a reskate requires that a test be marked retry. Under no conditions can high marks in several other elements of the test be used to balance the low mark for the element with the serious error. For that reason, elements with serious errors should be given marks with significant reductions below that which would have been given in the absence of the error. A reduction of at least 0.3 points is not unreasonable. If that reduction does not suffice, change other marks to lower the total score. Remember that the test should be not marked as retry by only 0.1 points. Serious errors necessitating a retry for a test unless corrected in a reskate are:

- A fall;
- Touch-down of the hand or foot needed to save the skater from falling;
- Omission of a component of the element.

The second type of error is known as a mandatory error. Mandatory errors do not require a reskate of the element in order for the skater to pass the test. The errors are:

- Exceeding the seven introductory steps;
- Not starting from a standing, stationary position.

Mandatory errors require a deduction of 0.1 points below that which would have been given for the element in the absence of the error. A deduction must be given for each occurrence.

The JIC must tell the skater to stop if the element has been started on the wrong foot or if he or she starts an element out of the prescribed order. The mistake is treated as a false start and there is no penalty. However, a second false start followed by a second fresh start requires a deduction of 0.1 points below that which would have been given for the element.

## **H. Reskates in MIF Tests**

After a MIF test, only one (1) element may be reskated. The reskate may consist of the entire element or a portion of the element. A reskate is mandatory for a major error such as a touch-down or fall. A reskate may also be requested for a test slightly below the passing average. Determine which of the test elements the skater has the best chance to improve during a reskate. Thus, the selection need not be the element with the lowest score because the judges may feel that it is unlikely to be significantly improved. Give the skater the best chance to improve the total score to the passing average. The JIC makes the decision if the judges cannot decide which element to select.

Judges should carefully consider the consequence of asking for a reskate for less than a major error on a test slightly below the passing average. For example, a judge may feel that "a bit more power is needed" on the power pulls of the Junior MIF test. The reskate may result in a touch-down and then the test must be marked as retry.

## **I. Comments on Test Sheets**

The skaters need to know what has been done correctly as well as what features of specific elements are below the standard and the reasons why. Make remarks on both aspects but take special care with the adjectives used on the test sheet. "Poor edges" and "bad posture" should be avoided and probably could be more effectively replaced with "insecure edges" or "carriage not erect." Another alternative is to offer a more positive constructive note such as "more work on posture is needed."

Be aware that while you consider your remarks to be between you and the skater, the test sheets may be duplicated and have a long life and be compared with other test sheets. It is difficult to maintain a relationship between marks and remarks but a continuing effort should be made to do so.

On many elements, the comments on test sheets should give information about items such as clockwise versus counterclockwise and right versus left. For example a power circle of the Junior MIF test might be - cc/14 R - which gives information about the direction, the number of crossovers and the leg used on the exit. Similarly, comments about turns should designate the turn as right back outside or left forward inside. Use a consistent shorthand to aid you in discussions with skaters and coaches.

As you judge, you should make it a habit to count components of elements of a MIF test. First, always note the number of introductory steps and record that number with an indication of a deduction if the number is greater than seven (7). Counting the number of turns for the first two elements of the Novice MIF test - inside three turns and backward quick rockers - coupled with remarks can support a positive mark reflecting good power and controlled turns versus a lack of power and a slowing down resulting in a large number of turns. On power circles the number of crossovers may be small as the result of not developing the proper increase in circle size or may be large as the result of not developing power. If you mentally count - one, and, two, and, three, and ..... for the two strokes that constitute each crossover you will be able to record the point where a sudden unacceptable shift in speed occurs.

## **IV. DANCE MUSIC**

Each of the compulsory dances must be skated using music with a specific number of beats/minute. As a result certain features of each dance occur at a specific point in the phrasing of the music. In addition, the music must have a proper character to be acceptable for U.S. Figure Skating compulsory dances. Although a judge need not be an accomplished

musician, there is no doubt that having a well developed understanding of music is a distinct advantage. There also is an advantage for the individual who has done ballroom dances.

A judge can improve his/her ability to recognize the structure of music by actively listening to radio broadcasts that have music from several decades ago. Stop and think – could one do a foxtrot to a specific piece of music? Does it have the character of the ice dance Foxtrot? Does it have the correct tempo (measures/minute) for the Foxtrot? What about Nat King Cole's interpretation of "Rambling Rose?" The answers are yes, yes, and yes.

For the purposes of understanding music as applied to the compulsory ice dances the following terms are sufficient.

## **A. Fundamentals of Music**

**Beat:** The regular, recurring and periodic pulse or throb that constitutes the unit of measure in all measured music.

**Accent:** The stress of one tone over others.

**Measure:** A group of beats, the first of which (usually) is accented or the major beat. All measures in a given type of music contain the same number of beats.

**Meter:** The number of major (strong) and minor (weak) beats in a measure of music.

**Tempo:** The speed of the music; specifically for ice dancing, measures per minute and the number of beats per measure; beats per minute.

**Rhythm:** Regularly repeated and short as well as strong and off-beat notes (regardless of the melody) which give the music its character; e.g., March Rhythm, Tango Rhythm, etc. Meter and Tempo combine to make Rhythm.

**Melody:** A succession of simple sounds so arranged as to produce a pleasing effect on the ear; or the leading part of a harmonized composition. The melody line determines the phrasing of the musical composition and must be taken into consideration at all times.

**Phrase:** Music used for ice dancing includes melodic phrases, according to the tempo, of 2, 4, 8, 12 or 16 measures. The first beat after the introduction usually begins the skating phrase. Note that the melody sometimes begins slightly before or after the first strong beat; that is, the melody does not always start on count 1. The notes of a melody which actually start slightly before the beginning of the musical phrase are termed a "pick-up".

## **B. Dance Music Interpretation**

**Music Interpretation:** A combination of correct timing in all its aspects as it pertains to ice dancing and the individual conception of expression which brings to life the character of the music.

**Timing:** The proper relationship of the stroke and glide of the skate on the ice and other body movements to the correct beat(s) of the music.

**Expression:** The quality of dancing which interprets the character of the music that designates the type of dance—waltz, tango, march, foxtrot, etc.

### C. Timing Dance Music

There are a number of sets of standardized music for compulsory dances that have the appropriate character and correct timing. However, some clubs have non-standard sources of music which, while appropriate in character, may not be correctly timed. In addition, the music equipment may not be correctly calibrated. Therefore, listen to the music played in the warm-up session and if the music sounds too fast or slow, the timing should be checked. Judges who dance may know innately that something is wrong with the timing – it doesn't feel right. Dance judges should have a stop watch not only to check the timing of compulsory dances but also to check for the length of a free dance or, in another discipline, the length of a free skate program. Set the stopwatch to zero. Then select a strong beat to start the stopwatch. At that point say (or think) "zero." Note – do not say "one" because the first measure has not been completed. At the next strong beat say "one" and continue this process until the correct number of measures per minute is reached. For the Fourteenstep that number is 28. At "28" stop the watch and note the time, which should be one minute. The time may not be exactly one minute as a result of the action of starting and stopping the watch. However, this deviation should be no more than one-half second. Do not time the music for a smaller number of measures such as 14 for the Fourteenstep and then multiply the number of seconds by two. Errors in the start and stop action of the stopwatch are a more significant fraction of the apparent measured time.

### D. Music Issues in the Arena

The location of the speakers in an ice rink must be considered in evaluating the skaters' timing. If there are several well distributed speakers, then the dancers will hear the beat at the same time that the judges hear it. However, if the speaker is only at center ice, or worse yet, at one end of the rink, then the skaters will hear the beat at a different time than the judges. Skaters at the far end of the rink **will hear the beat later than the judges**. Thus, if the skaters appear to be slightly late they may actually be on time to the music as they hear it. **If they appear to be ahead of the music – they are definitely rushing the dance**. If the judges are near one end of the rink where the music is being played, the time lag at the other end of a 200 foot rink is about 0.25 seconds. For the American Waltz this corresponds to approximately 1 beat and the three turns could look like they are turned on count 5 rather than 4. However, this is a worst case scenario. For speakers at center ice, the three turns would appear to occur at beat 4.5. The point of this calculation is that a judge should not automatically attribute actual timing errors to the location of the speakers. This is rarely the case. Remember which way the time difference works. If a dance team turns an America Waltz three at count 3 as you hear the music, they are actually rushing the turn.

## V. DANCE TERMS

The terms used in ice dance are extensive and dance judges must know the precise meaning of each term in order to discuss ice dances and to write appropriate comments on test sheets. Moreover the distinction between apparently similar elements must be clear and it is imperative that dance judges study and effectively use the correct terminology. The difference between a closed and open turn such as a Mohawk must be understood as they relate to required turns in a dance. There is also a difference between a cross step forward and a cross stroke. In the Fiesta Tango step 5 to 6 is a cross stroke (XS) not a forward cross step (XF) – impetus results from the former but not the latter. In the Tango there are forward cross steps. Some steps in ice dances do change as in the Blues in 2007-2008 where steps 1 and 4 for the lady changed from back cross steps (XB) to cross rolls which were formally designated XR but are now listed as CR.

## A. Axes

**Longitudinal** (Midline of Rink): An imaginary line bisecting the rink longitudinally.

**Continuous:** An imaginary continuous line running around the rink, in relation to which a dance pattern is placed. Ordinarily, the continuous axis includes two straight line portions extending longitudinally on the rink, each of which is parallel to a side barrier and approximately midway between such barriers and the midline of the rink, which are connected by semicircles at both ends of the rink; such semicircles in a few cases may be somewhat flattened parallel to the end barriers of the rink. In circular dances, the continuous axis is a circle.

**Transverse:** An imaginary line bisecting the longitudinal axis and/or intersecting the continuous axis at a right angle.

## B. Lobe and Pattern

**Lobe:** The pattern traced on the ice by any step or sequence of steps which approximates an arc of a circle on one side of the continuous axis.

**Pattern:** The design of the dance on ice.

**Set:** An ice dance for which the pattern is prescribed and in which the steps are always taken in specific places on the ice surface.

**Optional:** An ice dance which lends itself to more than one set-pattern.

**Border:** A dance whose pattern is laid out progressively around the rink on a continuous axis and which does not repeat at the same place in the rink.

## C. Dance Positions

### Hand-in-Hand:

**A. Facing in the same direction:** The partners face in the same direction and skate side by side or one behind the other with their arms extended and their hands clasped. Use of this position in original dance and/or free dance is not encouraged. A variation of this position is the arm-in-arm side-by-side position, which is acceptable.

**B. Facing in the opposite direction:** The partners usually face each other while one skates backward and the other skates forward with the arms extended to the side, but sometimes the position can be skated back to back (e.g., Cha Cha Congelado). Use of this position in the original dance and/or free dance with arms fully extended toward each other is usually not permitted.

**Closed** (or Waltz): Partners face each other directly, one skating forward while the other skates backward. The man's right hand is placed firmly against his partner's back at her shoulder blade with the elbow raised and bent sufficiently to hold her close. The lady's left hand is placed against the man's right shoulder with her arm resting comfortably on his, elbow to elbow. The man's left arm and the lady's right arm are extended at average shoulder height and the hands are clasped. The partners' shoulders are parallel.

**Open** (or Foxtrot): The hand and arm positions are similar to those of closed or waltz position. The partners simply turn slightly away from each other so that they both face in the same direction.

**Outside** (or Tango): Partners face in opposite directions, one skating forward while the other skates backward. Unlike the closed position, partners skate hip-to-hip, perpendicular to the tracing, with the man to the right of the lady.

**Partial Outside:** Similar to the outside position except that the bodies of both partners are rotated toward each other so that the hips are not perpendicular to, but are at an angle to the tracing and the partner skating backward is slightly ahead of the partner skating forward.

**Reversed Outside** (or reversed Tango): Partners skate hip-to-hip perpendicular to the tracing in opposite directions (as in normal outside position) with the man to the left of the lady.

**Alternating Outside:** Partners alternate from outside position to reverse outside, or vice versa, during the same step.

**Kilian:** Partners face in the same direction, lady at right of man, man's right shoulder behind lady's left. Lady's left arm is extended in front, across man's body to his left hand, while his right arm is behind her back, both right hands clasped and resting at her waist over her hipbone.

**Reversed Kilian:** Basic position is the same as the Kilian position except that the lady is at the man's left.

**Open Kilian:** Basic position is same as the Kilian Position. Man's left hand holding lady's left hand, man's right hand on lady's left hip. Lady's right hand held out in front over her right hip. This open position may also be skated in reverse.

**Crossed Kilian:** Basic position as in the Kilian Position. Lady's left arm is extended in front across man's body to his left hand, while his right arm is extended in front across her body, both right hands clasped and resting over her right hipbone. This crossed position may also be skated in reverse.

**Leading Hand;** The leading hand of the man is the right hand except in the case of "reversed" position when it is the left hand.

**Promenade:** A type of progressive skated in open hold by a couple on the same or opposite feet, derived from a similar forward walking movement in some ballroom dances.

## D. Steps

**Step:** The visible tracing on the ice of a movement that is executed on one foot. It may consist of an edge, change of edge, a turn such as a three or counter, or a flat (which is usually not acceptable).

**Introductory:** Steps that are skated to obtain speed prior to the start of the first dance pattern. All introductory steps are optional. The introductory period may be up to eight (8) measures with an unlimited number of steps. Theatrical poses are forbidden and obvious pushing should be avoided.

**Start:** The first step of the dance pattern after the introductory steps.

**Step Sequence:** The prescribed order of steps that compose one pattern of a compulsory dance or any portion thereof, or a series of prescribed or un-prescribed steps, turns and movement in original dance and free dance.

**Cross Step Forward (XF):** A step in which the free foot is placed on the ice along the outer edge side of the skating foot with the calf of the free leg crossed in front of the shin of the skating leg. No impetus is gained from this stroke.

**Cross Step Behind (XB):** A step in which the free foot is placed on the ice along the outer edge side of the skating foot with the shin of the free leg crossed behind the calf of the skating leg. No impetus is gained from this stroke.

**Open Stroke** (opS): A step started beside the skating foot and not crossed forward or behind.

**Cross Stroke** (XS): A forward or backward step started with the skating foot crossing in front or behind, respectively, the previous skating foot so that the legs cross above the knee and with the impetus being gained from the outer edge of the foot which is becoming the free foot.

**Simple Chasse** (Ch): A series of three steps (usually outside, inside, outside) in which on the second step, the free foot is placed on the ice beside the skating foot, but not ahead of it, and the free foot is lifted with the blade parallel to the ice.

**Slide Chasse** (slCH): The same as the simple chasse except that on the second step, the free foot slides off the ice in front of the skating foot when the skater is skating forward and to the back if the skater is skating backward.

**Crossed Chasse** (XCh): The same as the simple chasse, except that on the second step, the free foot crosses the skating foot (crossing behind if the skater is skating forward and crossing in front if the skater is skating backward.)

**Progressive or Run** (Pr or Run): A step or sequence of steps on the same lobe and in the same direction, in which the free foot, during the period of becoming the skating foot, strikes the ice beside and travels past the skating foot, thus bringing the new free foot off the ice trailing the new skating foot, and some impetus is gained from the edge of the foot which is becoming the free foot.

**Roll** (R): A long or short, forward or backward edge.

**Cross Roll** (formerly XR, now CR): A roll started with the action of the free foot approaching the skating foot from the side, so as to strike the ice almost at right angles to the skating foot. The impetus is gained from the outside edge of the skating foot as it becomes the new foot. In this case, the change to the curve in the opposite direction creates a rolling movement.

**Swing Roll** (SR): A roll held for several beats of music during which, when skating backward, the free leg lifts and then swings forward, then backward past the skating foot, then back beside to skate the next step. When skating forward, the free leg first swings backward, then forward, and then back beside to skate the next step. The swing of the leg gives the sense of a rolling movement.

**Scissors** (Siz): A step skated in a straight line with the blades of both skates held flat on the ice, the weight placed on the skating leg which may be well-bent or straight, while the free foot slides forward on the ice to full extension.

**Wide Step** (\*): A wide step between two edges.

## E. Turns

**Mohawk** (Mo): A turn from forward to backward (or backward to forward) from one foot to the other in which the curve of the exit edge continues the curve of the entry edge. The change of foot is from outside edge to outside edge or from inside edge to inside edge.

**Open Mohawk** (opMo): A Mohawk in which the heel of the free foot is placed on the ice at the inner side of the skating foot. The angle between the feet is a matter of personal preference. Following the weight transference, the immediate position of the new free foot is behind the heel of the skating foot. Examples: Fourteensstep, man's steps 8 and 9, lady's steps 12 and 13.

**Closed Mohawk** (clMo): A Mohawk, either in which the free foot is placed on the ice behind the heel of the skating foot, with the free foot instep to the skating foot heel. The angle between the feet

is a matter of personal preference. Following the weight transference, the position of the new free foot is in front of the skating foot. Example: Rocker Foxtrot, steps 11 and 12.

**Swing Mohawk** (swMo): A mohawk, either open or closed, in which the free foot moves forward closely past the skating foot before being brought back to the skating foot for the turn. Example: Tango, steps 20 and 21.

**Choctaw** (Cho): A turn from forward to backward (or backward to forward) from one foot to the other in which the curve of the exit edge is in the opposite direction to the curve of the entry edge. The change of foot is from outside edge to inside edge or from inside edge to outside edge. Unless otherwise specified in the description of a dance, the free foot, in becoming the skating foot, is placed on the ice close to the skating foot.

**Open Choctaw** (opCho): A choctaw in which the free foot is placed on the ice on the inner side of the skating foot. Following the weight transference, the immediate position of the new free foot is behind the heel of the skating foot. Example of the wide step specified by the description of a dance: Rhumba: steps 11 and 12.

**Crossed Open Choctaw** (XopCho): A Choctaw in which the outside of the free foot is held in front of and at right angles to the skating foot. The hip is open after the turn. It may be wide-stepped. Example: Rhumba: steps 11 and 12.

**Closed Choctaw** (clCho): A Choctaw in which the free foot is placed on the ice behind the heel of the skating foot, with the free foot instep to the skating foot heel. Following the weight transference, the position of the new free foot is in front of the skating foot. Example: Blues, steps 12 and 13. Example of the wide step specified by the description of a dance: Rhumba: steps 12 and 13.

**Swing Choctaw** (swCho): A Choctaw, either open or closed, in which the free foot moves forward closely past the skating foot before being brought back to the skating foot for the turn. Example: Quickstep, step 5 and the first part of step 6.

**Cusp**: The V-shaped portion of the tracing which occurs at the mid-point of a turn skated on one foot.

**Three** (3): A turn made on one foot from forward to backward (or backward to forward) from an edge of one character to an edge of a different character, i.e., outside to inside or inside to outside, the edge before and after the turn being on the same lobe.

**American Waltz Three**: A three turn from an outside edge in which the free leg is extended and the toe and hip are turned out and held over the tracing. The instep of the free foot is drawn close to the heel of the skating foot as the turn is made. After the turn onto an inside edge, the free foot is extended back of the tracing before being brought back beside the skating foot for the next step.

**European Waltz Type Three**: A three turn described above but after the turn, the back inside edge is held for one beat before the weight is transferred to the free foot as it becomes the skating foot.

**Ravensburger Waltz Type Three**: An inside three-turn as described for a three turn but which begins with the free leg extended over the tracing and left behind during the turn, and swings through after its completion in front of the tracing, before being brought back beside the skating foot in time for the next step.

**Touchdown Three**: A three-turn in which the weight is almost immediately transferred to the free foot as it becomes the skating foot for the next step. The turn is made from a forward outside three to the backward outside edge of the opposite foot without full weight transfer, then the skater

immediately steps forward onto the original foot. Such a sequence may be skated with forward or backward, inside or outside three-turns. May be skated alone or as a couple side by side.

**Walk-around Three:** Threes turned by a couple at the same time around a common axis. The partners skate these turns in Waltz hold or offset in partial Tango hold.

**Bracket (Br):** A turn made on one foot from forward to backward (or backward to forward) from an edge of one character to an edge of another character, i.e., outside to inside or inside to outside, where the body rotation is counter to the natural direction or progress causing the cusp to print outward from the center of the lobe curvature. The edges before and after the turn are on the same lobe.

**Rocker (Rk/Roc):** A turn made on one foot from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge maintaining the same character, i.e., inside to inside or outside to outside, where the body rotation is in the same direction as the natural progress causing the cusp to point toward the center of curvature of the first lobe. The edges before and after the turn are on different lobes having opposite directional curvature.

**Counter (Ctr):** A turn made on one foot from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge maintaining the same character, i.e., inside to inside or outside to outside, where the body rotation is counter to the natural direction of progress causing the cusp to point outward from the center of curvature of the first lobe. The edge before and after the turn are on different lobes having opposite directional curvature.

**Swing Rocker and Swing Counter (swRk/Roc; swCtr):** A rocker or counter in which the free leg is swung past the skating foot before the turn is executed, and after the turn, is either swung forward past the skating foot and held over the tracing or is held behind the skating foot in line with the tracing.

**Twizzle (Twz):** A turn on one foot of one or more complete rotations, which are executed very quickly almost on the same spot. The turn may be in either a clockwise or counter clockwise direction. The weight remains on the skating foot with the free foot close beside it ready to skate the exit edge. The free leg may be swung past the skating foot before the turn is executed, as long as it is brought back to the skating foot for the turn.

## VI. BASIC CHARACTER OF DANCES

Each compulsory dance has a unique character but they all fall into certain basic types of dances, which are also associated with ballroom dances. Some of these same characteristics are noted in original dances.

### A. Waltzes

Waltzes are elegant dances that depend upon a very stately carriage, soft knee action and controlled rotational movement for their effect. As is true for all holds, the basic posture is erect; however their shoulders may be further apart than their hips.

The man's arms create a frame for the movements of the lady. The lady's head is normally poised so that she looks upwards and often over the man's right shoulder. Their hand clasp is light. During promenade sequences, the hold opens slightly to permit them to face in the same direction.

Footwork is smooth and neat with the free foot kept as close to the ice as possible. A soft, rising knee action accentuates the rhythm of each measure. A gentle upward

swinging motion of the free leg contributes to the over-all sense of flowing movement. During the dance, the body movement tends to sway away from the free leg. An exaggeration of these movements can distort the character of the dance by making the motions too abrupt.

## **B. Foxtrots**

Foxtrots are flowing dances with a strong, yet light-hearted, rhythmic character. They sometimes have a languid appearance which may be broken by brisker movements. The basic hold is more compact and relaxed than that of the Waltz with less pronounced back arch. Movement occurs below the hips.

Some steps of this dance are smoothly gliding whereas others are "traveling" steps with a light, skipping character.

The knee action differs from that of the Waltz in that the knee bends rather than rises at the end of the bar. The free foot often brushes the side of the skating foot before moving into position for the next step. Movements must be kept soft and subtle - these dances lose their character when "over-danced."

## **C. Blues**

Although the carriage and hold are similar, the Blues differs significantly from the Foxtrot in the energy of its movements. This type of dance was originated by laborers who were often exhausted after a day of heavy physical labor. As a result, although the carriage and movement convey pride and sensuality, there is an economy of motion and an underlying sense of lethargy that is a reminder that life is a never-ending struggle. These dances exhibit both spontaneity and control combined with a sense of human vulnerability.

The knee action is deep and smooth with none of the light character of the Foxtrot. Footwork is neat, yet subtly heavy with the free foot remaining close to the ice. The free leg extensions appear to flow smoothly from the stroking action rather than appearing to be deliberately lifted. Movements are timed so that they are completed just in time for the next step to commence.

## **D. Quicksteps**

The Quickstep has an underlying similarity to the Foxtrot. The rhythm is faster and the movements are more exuberant than those of the Foxtrot, giving the dance a lively, yet smart character that conveys a lust for life.

The entire body is used to express the rhythm and character of this dance, sometimes with a rocking, back and forth motion. The free leg movements frequently have a swinging action that originates from the hip. This is accompanied by a pronounced rising and falling knee action. While this dance involves more upper body movement than does the Foxtrot, care must be taken to avoid a continuous up and down motion of the arms which is not typical of this dance.

## **E. Tangos**

The "ballroom" Tango has an arrogant, yet aristocratic, character created by highly disciplined and dramatic movements. The "street" Tango is also arrogant in nature, but has less stylized lines and a broader range of moods. Both dances are highly sensuous with the movements of each portraying a certain pride. More strongly than in other dances, the Tango is performed by two people for each other.

The carriage is erect with the back arched, the head held high and slightly tilted.

The hold is considerably closer than that of a Waltz and results in the lady being displayed slightly to the side of the man to permit ease of movement.

Movements are very deliberate and sometime stealthy. Each movement tends to be distinct and the action may become staccato. When correctly executed, this staccato action is limited and stops abruptly, creating an illusion of greater motion.

This action can be lengthened to the point of distorting the character of the dance. Upper body movement is carefully coordinated to accent the footwork. It is common for the upper body to remain still while the feet are moving and vice versa. There is a little swaying action. Footwork is close, yet fluid with the foot being placed on the ice with the knee remaining slightly flexed to provide a subtle deliberateness to the steps. There is not the rising/falling action characteristic of other dances. The action comes from the hip, but without the swinging action of other dances.

## **F. Marches**

Dances performed to march music are characterized by brisk, controlled movements with very consistent rhythm patterns. Footwork is precise and firm with a very regular knee action.

## **G. Polkas**

Polkas are exuberant dances with considerable upper body and arm movement. The rapid pace is often expressed by hopping steps, turns, and wide steps. There is a continuous rising and falling action to the steps.

## **H. Latin Dances**

This group of dances is rooted in the Caribbean islands. They vary considerably in tempo and mood, but are all characterized by somewhat similar movements that are both proud and sensuous. Carriage is erect yet relaxed. The lady's movements are graceful and feminine; the man's are cocky, expressing sheer joy in being alive. Movements start in the knees, lead to a rhythmic hip action and radiate to the rest of the body although the shoulders tend to remain quiet. Some of these dances have characteristic hand movements as well.

Steps tend to have considerable turning action. The weight transfer is carefully coordinated with a bending and straightening of the knees. The lady is often the more active partner and may move towards and away from the man.

These dances share the same types of steps, yet their execution to the specific rhythm results in each dance having a unique character.

## **VII. U.S. Figure Skating Compulsory Dance Tests**

The U.S. Figure Skating test structure includes thirty-two standard compulsory dance tests arranged into eight groups of dances. The groups are preliminary, pre-bronze, bronze, pre-silver, silver, pre-gold, gold, and international. There are adult and masters tests for all but the preliminary dances. In addition, there is the option for a skater to take a solo dance test – that is, without a partner. The MIF tests are not prerequisites for compulsory dance tests but are required for qualifying dance competitions.

All compulsory dance tests are skated to music with defined beats/minute and of a character associated with the dance. Discussions of the music for compulsory dances appear in Section IV.

## **A. Preliminary Dance Tests**

The purpose of these tests is to encourage beginning dancers to learn the fundamentals of ice dancing. No great degree of technical ability, expression, carriage, unison or flow is expected. The candidate must show knowledge of the steps, fairly good edges, ability to keep in time with the music and some evidence of good form. Unison does not apply to the solo test.

### **Dutch Waltz**

The dance is skated to slow, deliberate waltz music and consists mostly of progressive sequences and long swing rolls. This is an easy dance for beginners consisting of forward edges only, and thus allows skaters to devote their attention to the dance steps in relation to the musical rhythm of the waltz.

### **Canasta Tango**

The dance consists of forward edges only and introduces the tango rhythm to skaters at the preliminary test level. Judicious use of knee action on the slide chasses can be of great help in expressing the tango rhythm. Neat footwork, good edges, tango expression, and good carriage should be maintained through the dance.

### **Rhythm Blues**

A slow tempo and forward skating make this dance appear deceptively simple. However, correct timing, pattern, and proper expression are required to make the dance pleasing to watch. Attention to depth of edges and proper curvature of lobes is essential. Care must also be taken to fully complete lobes on the correct edge. Partners must utilize knee bends and free leg extensions for blues interpretation, as well as smooth, flowing movement.

## **B. Pre-Bronze Dance Tests**

The candidate must demonstrate knowledge of the steps and correct timing of the dance. Attention should be given to depth of edges and proper curvature of lobes, although complete accuracy is not expected. The dances should be skated with some degree of expression.

### **Swing Dance**

This dance introduces beginning dancers to a fourth basic rhythm and presents a relaxed method of changing from forward to backward skating. It requires the man to learn to lead and the lady to follow while skating backward as well as forward.

### **Cha Cha**

The dance may be skated in open or Kilian position; partners skate the same steps. It is important that skaters reflect the unusual rhythm of this dance with free leg expression as well as appropriate upper body and head positions. Accurate timing is essential to the feeling of the dance as a whole. Some edge depth should be a priority.

### **Fiesta Tango**

The tempo of the Fiesta Tango is a slow tango rhythm, and partners should strive for upright carriage, soft knee action, easy flow and smooth, uniform leg swings. The sequence of steps in this dance allows for easy rhythmical movements and partners should be able to interpret the music and skate the steps in a pleasing style.

### **C. Bronze Dance Tests**

The fundamentals of ice dancing must be demonstrated but need not necessarily be mastered. Correct steps and turns, accurate basic timing, good edges and flow on at least the easy parts of the dances, erect carriage and a reasonably well-placed pattern are required. Little expression, some difficulty with the hard parts of the dances and attention to the details of unison are expected. Unison does not apply to the solo test.

#### **Hickory Hoedown**

The music for the Hickory Hoedown should be derived from formal square dancing and convey the feeling of country-western style. The dance should reflect enjoyment and flair throughout. The prescribed free leg action, showing good control and supple knee action, will add crispness and accent to the character of this dance.

#### **Willow Waltz**

The Willow Waltz presents a variety of turns, steps, and sequence of steps for skaters at the bronze test level. Correct timing and executions throughout are necessary to express the rhythm and flow of this dance. Special attention of both partners should focus on clean, distinct, rhythmical progressive and chasse sequences executed with soft knee action and gliding movement.

#### **Ten Fox**

The Ten Fox must be danced, not stepped. There must be soft knee action and flow. The free foot must always be placed on the ice close to the skating foot. The dance is designed to be skated on deep edges with semi-circular lobes. Expression of dance rhythm in the timing of the body movements can do much to enhance the character of this dance.

### **D. Pre-Silver Dance Tests**

The candidate must dance the correct steps and turns on strong edges, in good form, in good rhythm and with some degree of expression and partner unison. It is not expected that all details will be well done, but no consistent major errors should be evident. Unison does not apply to the solo dance test.

#### **Fourteenstep**

This is a simple dance whose character is derived from alternating progressive (run) sequences and swing rolls. A good pace, deep, soft knee action, and strong lean are required to achieve the required edges at a good pace. Soft knee action with the rhythm of the music and easy graceful flow are necessary so that the Fourteenstep is danced rather than walked.

#### **Foxtrot**

The Foxtrot must be danced, not stepped. There must be soft knee action and flow. The free foot must always be placed on the ice close beside the skating foot. This dance achieves its character through the use of deep cross rolls and strong turns. It requires close footwork, deep edges, soft knee action and well controlled body rotation.

#### **European Waltz**

Erect posture, consistently powerful stroking, even leg extension, and a regular rising and falling knee action give this dance its waltz flavor. This dance appears to be

quite simple. It is based on a series of three turns by both partners skated on alternating semi-circular lobes of consistent curvature. In fact, it is very difficult to execute this dance well and fully develop its waltz character. It requires close footwork, well-controlled edges and body rotation, consistent soft knee action, good carriage and the ability of the couple to rotate as one.

## **E. Silver Dance Tests**

The candidate must give a performance that is generally good. Strong, true edges, good rhythm, smooth turns, correct carriage and effortless flow are expected. Musical interpretation and unison should be moderately good. The solo (not required in Adult or Masters Tests) at this level is required only to observe the candidates knowledge of the steps and ability to keep in time with the music. Unison does not apply to the solo dance test.

### **Rocker Foxtrot**

This dance achieves its character through the use of a variety of steps and turns executed on deep lobes. It requires close footwork, deep edges, strong soft knee action, good lean, and precise unison.

### **American Waltz**

Like the European Waltz, this dance is based on a series of three turns by both partners skated on alternating semi-circular lobes of consistent curvature. The American Waltz, however, has a quite different character due to its different free leg action on the threes, as well as the swing rolls on the end sequences. The dance requires close footwork, well-controlled edges, matching free leg extension, soft knee action, superb carriage and the ability of the couple to rotate as one. The expression of this waltz is characterized primarily by evenness of flow between points of major and minor emphasis. The points of major emphasis, count one, are marked by the change of feet and bending of the skating knee. Some of these points coincide with the start of a new lobe and are also emphasized by the change of direction of rotation and lean. The points of minor emphasis (count four) are marked by turns but are not otherwise emphasized.

### **Tango**

This is an aristocratic Spanish tango. The style is established through crisp cross steps and brisk changes of hold. A promenade into swing mohawks further develops the mood. Well-controlled edges and flow combined with superb carriage are necessary to express it. Very erect carriage must be maintained throughout this dance and the partners should skate close together. Neat footwork and good flow are essential. The pace must be maintained without obvious effort or visible pushing.

## **F. Pre-Gold Dance Tests**

The candidate must give a performance that is generally very good. Basic timing must be nearly faultless, with body motions well timed. Flow, unison and musical interpretation should be very good. No major errors and no consistent error of any kind should be evidenced, but occasional faults may be expected. In the solo (not required in Adult or Masters Tests), the candidate must not only demonstrate knowledge of the steps and ability to keep time to the music, but an ability to dance with such assurance as to give evidence of dance expression and the ability to keep to an approximate pattern. Unison does not apply to the solo test.

## **Kilian**

This dance is a light, lively march performed in Kilian hold throughout. All steps, except steps 3 and 4, are held for one beat only which results in a rapid even pacing. Strong changes of lean and the choctaw action accent the dance. Controlled edges, lively knee action, and a consistent firm lead are required if the dance to achieve the desired expression.

## **Paso Doble**

The overall pattern of the Paso Doble is approximately elliptical, distorted here and there by outward bulges. This is a powerful Spanish dance that may be expressed traditionally or in Flamenco style. The man often represents the toreador and the lady his cape. Steps 11 and 28 symbolize passes with the cape. The other steps are typical of those seen during the fight. Deep powerful edges, lively knee action, flexible body movements and very precise timing and footwork are required.

## **Starlight Waltz**

This is a Viennese style waltz in which the first side of the dance is composed largely of chasse sequences, whereas the second side consists primarily of mohawks. Thus, each side of the dance has a slightly different waltz flavor in the footwork, although the upper body movement maintains the same character. Stylish footwork, soft knee action, and very good carriage and line are required. The speed and depth of edge must be well controlled to keep the two sides of the dance balanced.

## **Blues**

This is a languorous dance whose mood is created by flowing edges with deep rising knee action. These edges are often initiated by cross rolls. The action of the turns should be smooth and seamless. Care should be taken to avoid the bouncy knee action typical of a foxtrot.

## **G. Gold Dance Tests**

The candidate must give a performance that is excellent in all respects. Absolute perfection is not expected; however, only a very limited amount of error will be acceptable. In the solo (not required in Adult or Masters Tests), the candidate must demonstrate the same degree of skill when skating solo as with a partner. Unison does not apply to the solo dance test.

## **Argentine Tango**

This tango has a lively, fluid character. The style is established throughout in deep flowing edges interspersed with rapid rotational moves. The free leg action contributes to the overall sensuousness of the dance especially during the cross rolls. Deep, apparently effortless edges and flow combined with superb carriage are necessary to express the dance.

## **Quickstep**

This is a lively dance performed in Kilian hold throughout. To ensure a really good performance, it is essential that the couple remain hip to hip. Both partners perform steps simultaneously which requires very consistent control of the depth and direction of the edges. Lively knee action, a firm lead and precise timing are required in keeping with the music that is fast and a bright character.

### **Westminster Waltz**

The Westminster Waltz is characterized by stately carriage and elegance of line. An upright stance without breaking at the waist is essential to its stately character. The character of this dance results from promenade sequences and cross rolls coupled with very precisely executed mohawks, rockers, counters and threes. The dance requires close footwork, well-controlled turns, elegant free leg extension, soft knee action, stately carriage and superbly controlled holds and transitions.

### **Viennese Waltz**

The distinctive timing of the sets of run steps and changes of edge sequences provide this dance with much of its lilting Viennese character. The change of edge and choctaw/mohawk sequences produces a stately swaying action that contributes to the waltz expression. This dance requires powerful, deep edges, elegant footwork, soft knee action, stately carriage, well matched free leg extension, and well controlled body rotation.

## **H. International Dance Tests**

The candidate must give a truly superior performance displaying accurate timing, appropriate style and expression, excellent unison and precise technique. While absolute perfection is not required, the candidate will be expected to give a performance of very high quality and only a limited amount of error is acceptable

### **Austrian Waltz**

This is a light-hearted waltz with considerable rotational movement. The frequent three turns (17 for the Lady, 12 for the man), rockers and twizzles require secure holds to control the rotation. Arm and upper body movements enhance the flowing character. Crisp elegant footwork, soft knee action, and elegant carriage and line are required. It is difficult to integrate the movements to form a unified whole.

### **Ravensburger Waltz**

This waltz alternates sweeping rolling movement with rapid rotational ones. The lady often turns under the man's arm. Chasses are inserted to give the steps a lilting character. Strong edges, elegant footwork, soft knee action, and stately carriage are required. The man must lead this dance superbly to permit the lady to execute her moves.

### **Golden Waltz**

This is a complex dance containing many unusual moves. The challenge for couples is to execute these moves with sufficient skill that the waltz character is maintained throughout. The degree of flexibility during these moves will depend upon the individual skater's build. At certain points, the two partners perform steps with different pacing. Controlled edges, elegant footwork soft knee action, and flexible, yet stately carriage are required. The man must lead this dance very precisely to permit the lady to execute her moves.

### **Yankee Polka**

This is an exuberant dance. Few steps are held for more than one beat, some are only ½ beat. This combined with a variety of turns and deliberate wide steps results in a dance that requires strong control to perform. Well controlled edges, lively knee

action, a firm lead and very precise timing are required if the dance is to be well executed.

### **Rhumba**

This Latin dance is typified by subtle power. The movements tend to be languid and sensuous. The couple remains in Kilian position throughout with movements originating in the pelvis and spreading to the knees and blades. The specified free leg movements and wide steps are essential to its character. Well-controlled edges and knee action, flexible body movements and full use of the rhythm are required.

### **Cha Cha Congelado**

The emphasis in this Latin dance is on total body experience of rhythm. The dance requires couples to express a variety of intricate steps while changing hold frequently. Care must be taken to ensure the dance is skated on clean edges, rather than on flats or two feet. Controlled edges and flow are necessary to place the dance correctly.

### **Silver Samba**

The emphasis in this Latin dance is on lively, yet sensual rhythm. The dance requires the couple to execute a variety of intricate free foot moves. While the couple is in Kilian hold, their steps are identical; when they are in closed hold their steps are complementary. The dance is skated on strong, clean edges, except during steps 43 through 47. Controlled edges and flow are necessary to place the dance correctly.

### **Tango Romantica**

This is a soft lyrical tango with varying shades of mood. The style is established through its deep flowing edges interspersed with rapid steps and rotational moves. The many changes of hold contribute to its over-all character. Deep, apparently effortless edges and flow combined with superb carriage are necessary to express it.

### **Midnight Blues**

This is a relaxed, rhythmic dance whose mood is created by flowing edges with deep knee bends. The action of the free legs, coupled with the Ina Bauer and layover-layback sections give the dance a languid look. The degree of flexibility during these moves depends upon the individual skater's build. Care must be taken to avoid the bouncy knee action more typical of a foxtrot.

## **VIII. JUDGING COMPULSORY DANCE TESTS**

Judges of compulsory dance tests must recognize and evaluate all of the required steps and turns as they occur during the test. Ideally, there should be no surprises because every skater must perform the same steps and turns for a specific dance. Nevertheless, recognizing errors in the required elements requires good focus and a trained eye. That is one reason why judges who ice dance have a distinct advantage in analyzing these tests. They have a "feel" for what looks correct. Nevertheless, judges who have not taken dance tests may become effective judges. These individuals may be parents who after years of watching their children take dance tests can identify the turns and strokes and with an investment of time can evaluate their quality. They may also have had ballroom dance background or musical training. The second, and equally important, aspect of judging ice dance tests is the ability to determine

whether or not the skater is on or off time. A judge does not have to be an accomplished musician but clearly an ability to recognize the strong and weak beats of a musical selection is an absolute requirement for a dance judge.

Whenever possible, ask the test chair to send by e-mail a copy of the test session schedule, including a list of tests you may be judging. This will allow you time to review the requirements of the tests before you go to the session. It is always a good practice to note whether you are qualified to judge the scheduled tests! Test chairs may have erred and not have arranged for judges of the level appropriate for the dance tests. It is better to check rather than to find that the tests cannot be run on test day. Finally, at the test session always check that the test sheets are the most current ones with the correct pattern as well as steps and turns. For example, in 2007-2008 the new dance patterns used by the ISU were placed in the Test manual and there were changes in some of the steps. For example, a cross roll rather than a cross step has been substituted in two places in the Blues.

## **A. Standard Compulsory Dance Tests and Marks**

Compulsory dances are described as set pattern dances and optional pattern dances. The set pattern dances must be placed on the ice surface as diagramed in the U.S. Figure Skating Tests book. Optional pattern dances may be placed on the ice surface in any relation to the ice surface that the couple desires providing that the edges and their relationship to the continuous axis are maintained. The pattern should not be distorted and must be maintained for each repetition. The music used shall conform to the type and tempo specified in the description of the dance.

For each of the compulsory dance tests, two marks must be awarded - one for technique and one for timing/expression. The sum of these two marks must be equal to or be greater than the required passing total for the test to pass. These marks must be mentally paired with a standard developed by the judge by watching many tests. The passing average and total passing mark for the compulsory dance tests are presented in Table 3. The preliminary dance tests are marked only "Pass" or "Retry" in each division and in the final result. No numerical marks are awarded. If any one division is marked "Retry" by a judge, the final result must also be marked "Retry" by that judge. The points listed below must be considered in establishing the marks for technique and timing/expression.

### **1. Technique**

**a. Accuracy:** the steps, dance positions, timing and movement of the dances must be in accordance with the dance diagrams and descriptions. Subject to general conformity with the basic requirements, some latitude is given to allow a couple to demonstrate their own individual style. This is usually accomplished by the use of a variety of arm and/or leg movements.

Footwork must be neat and deep edges should be skated with speed and flow. Two-footed skating must be avoided. On chassés and progressives the feet should be lifted as small a distance from the ice as is consistent with the making of a clean stroke. The skater must carry the weight over the skating foot.

**b. Placement:** The steps of the dances must be skated in accordance with the dance diagrams and descriptions. Maximum utilization of the ice surface is desirable, which requires deep edges and good flow. There should be no struggle for speed. Ice coverage must not be obtained by the use of flat or shallow edges. In a regulation-sized arena (100 x 200 ft.) for compulsory dances, the couple may not cross the center line of the rink. In arenas less than regulation-size, the couple may cross the center line proportionally to the width of the ice surface.

**c. Style:** Carriage should be upright but not stiff with the head up. All actions should be easy and flowing. Speed should not be obtained at the expense of good style. The knee of the skating leg should be flexible with a rhythmic rise and fall. The free leg and foot should be turned out and extended with the knee slightly relaxed and the toe pointed downward.

**d. Unison:** The dance couple should skate as close together as possible, with their movements in unison without apparent effort. The dance holds should be firm and the fingers neither spread nor clenched. Dance positions must be in accordance with the dance descriptions. Arm and hand movements or positions which differ from those specified in the descriptions of the required dance holds are permitted provided that the leading hand of the man remains in the prescribed position. Should a couple be completely out of position, it should be reflected in the marks awarded. The man should show his ability to lead and the lady to follow. Body movements such as leg swings, knee bends and lean should be equal. All movements and changes of position of a couple must be well coordinated.

## 2. Timing/Expression

**a. Timing:** The dances must be skated in strict time to the music with the start of the dance commencing with a major accent. All movement must be coordinated with the rhythm of the music so that all steps are completed without any break in continuity.

**b. Expression:** The dance must be skated smoothly and rhythmically with the character of the music being correctly interpreted. Such interpretation shall be shown by variations in the execution of the dance movements, which reflect the patterns in the music. The overall effect should be such that each compulsory dance has a distinct flavor.

**Table 3: Standard Compulsory Dance Marks (2008-2009)**

Compulsory Dance Tests	Passing Average Technique and Timing/Expression	Passing Total
Preliminary	None	Pass/Retry
Pre-Bronze	2.5	5.0
Bronze	2.7	5.4
Pre-Silver	3.0	6.0
Silver	3.5	7.0
Pre-Gold	4.0	8.0
Gold	4.5	9.0
International	4.8	9.6

A judge must indicate the quality or lack thereof of a compulsory dance test by assigning

marks that reflect how both aspects of the dance were performed. Going above the passing average indicates that the skater has skated a quality dance. That skater should be distinguished from another skater who has not skated the dance as well. Test marks are not comparisons between skaters as are competition marks but clearly the scores should reflect how the dance was skated.

There are skaters who may have delayed dance tests while training for a competition level. This is an instance where their skating level may be significantly above the test standard and the marks should reflect that performance. If a silver dance is performed at a level comparable to the pre-gold level, then the judge should mark the silver dance test in the range for the pre-gold dance level. Judges should use their marks to reflect quality and should not feel restricted to stay close to the passing average.

In some test sessions, a skater may take the last dance of a level and be scheduled to take a dance at the next level on a contingent basis later in the session. It may well be that the skater is substantially above the test standard of the lower level. Ideally a judge should recognize the higher ability and the skater should be marked accordingly. Of course, just because a skater plans to take a test on a contingent basis does not mean that he/she is ready to perform at that higher level or even the lower level. The skater may have neglected to practice the lower dance while concentrating on the higher dance.

Unfortunately there are cases of a skater who is not ready to take dance test but for a variety of reasons, that are not the concern of the judges, decides to test. There are also cases where a skater has a bad day and everything that could go wrong in the dance does. Although it may be difficult, the marks must reflect the dance skated. Marks that are only 0.1 point lower than the passing average marks for each of the two categories may not be appropriate. If a skater taking a silver dance test is not even at the pre-silver level then the marks should be in that lower range. The mark should indicate to the skater and coach that considerably more work on the test is required. Otherwise, they may conclude that the test is close to passing and it is likely that the test will pass by a different panel of judges next month. Remember that it is an unwritten standard that tests (including dance tests) should not be marked retry based on only 0.1 total points.

Judges must avoid a positive bias based on the reputation of an ice dancer. Even if you personally know that Susie is a wonderful dancer and can do ice dances at a certain level, what is important is whether she actually does so on test day in her test. Skaters may feel better about actually doing their best and solidly passing a test as compared to getting a gift from the judges.

Judges must also avoid a negative bias on the basis of age. There is no minimum age requirement to take an ice dance test. Even if you feel that the skater is moving through the tests too quickly and really shouldn't be doing sophisticated dances, that choice is the prerogative of the skater. What is important is the performance on test day - not how young (or old) the skater is.

## **B. Adult Compulsory Dance Tests and Marks**

The purpose of adult dance tests is to encourage adult skaters to learn the fundamentals of ice dancing. These individuals may be part of a continuing group of adults on which clubs depend for management. Adult skaters, if encouraged to do so by judges, may also provide a source of ice dance judges. For these reasons, judges should encourage and have a positive attitude toward adult ice dancers.

To qualify for any adult dance test, the candidate must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older and must have completed the preceding dance test level - adult or standard. The passing of a lower adult dance test does not qualify the candidate to take the next higher level standard dance test. Adult dance tests do not require a solo at any level.

In 2007 there were 680 adult compulsory dances taken compared with 15,400 standard dance tests. If you are in an area with few adult dancers, you may need to review the standards prior to judging adult dance tests. The general standards for adult dance tests given in the following paragraph are from the TR section of the Tests book for U.S. Figure Skating.

For adult dance tests, the candidate should display the same level of achievement in expression, carriage, unison, knowledge of steps, correct edges, timing, rhythm, and musical interpretations as expected from the standard candidate. A clear understanding of the correct pattern should be demonstrated, although a pattern that is slightly smaller than the one expected at the standard level is acceptable. **Flow, speed, depth of edge, extension, and quality of turns should be at least equivalent to that of a standard candidate at one test level below.**

All adult dance tests are the same as for the standard dance tests and the level of expectation for the standard dances are well known. Two adjustments must be made when judging adult dance tests compared to how standard dance tests are judged. First, as noted above, the expectations are somewhat different. Second, the passing averages for the adult dance tests are lower than for the standard dance tests. Prior to a test, review the passing average for the corresponding standard dance tests as compared to the adult dance tests as shown in Table 4. It is that number and the associated level of expectation that should provide the basis for a mark in an adult dance test.

The test chair should have circled one of the terms – standard – adult – masters – at the top of the test sheet. Often there is no indication of the type of test because the majority of dance tests are standard. If it appears in the warm-up that an individual qualifies as a candidate for an adult test it is best to carefully inquire before the test. Ask “Will this be a standard or adult dance test?” Of course an adult can take a standard dance test – so it is best to ask.

**Table 4: Adult Dance Test Marks**

<b>Adult Dance Test</b>	<b>Passing Average</b>	<b>Closest Standard Dance Test</b>	<b>Passing Average</b>
Pre-Bronze	4.8		
Bronze	5.2	Pre-Bronze/Bronze	5.0/5.4
Pre-Silver	5.6	Bronze/Pre-Silver	5.4/6.0
Silver	6.4	Pre-Silver/Silver	6.0/7.0
Pre-Gold	7.4	Silver/Pre-Gold	7.0/8.0
Gold	8.4	Pre-Gold/Gold	8.0/9.0
International	9.0	Gold	9.0

### **C. Masters Compulsory Dance Tests and Marks**

To qualify for any masters dance test, the candidate must be fifty (50) years of age or older and must have passed the preceding dance test level - masters, adult or standard. The passing of a lower masters dance test does not qualify the candidate to take the next higher level adult or standard dance test. Masters dance tests do not require a solo at any level.

In 2007 there were about 60 Masters compulsory dance tests as compared to 680 Adult compulsory dance tests and 15,400 standard dance tests. It may be unlikely that you will have to judge a masters dance test but if you do then the standards should be reviewed prior to the

test session. The general standards for masters dance tests given in the following paragraph are from the TR section of the Tests book of U.S. Figure Skating.

For masters dance tests, knowledge of steps and basic timing must equal that required of standard candidates for the level being tested. Although a large pattern is not required, the shape of the lobes and their relation to each other should be approximately correct.

**Expression must at least meet the standard for the level below.** Strong development of extension, carriage, unison, flow/speed and depth of edge will not be demanded. However basic balance, form and skating skill must be adequate to achieve comfortable performance of the required steps and partner positions at every level.

All masters dance tests are the same as for the standard dances tests and the level of expectations for the standard dances are well known. Two adjustments must be made when judging masters dance tests compared to how standard dance tests are judged. First, as noted above, the expectations are somewhat different. Second the passing averages for the dances are lower than for the standard and adult dance tests. Prior to a test you should review the passing average for the corresponding standard tests as compared to the masters dance tests as shown in Table 5. It is that number and the associated level of expectation that should provide the basis for a mark in a masters dance test. Note that the passing mark is about the average of the next two lower dance levels.

The test chair should have circled one of the terms – standard – adult – master – at the top of the test sheet. Often there is no indication of the type of test because the majority of dance tests are standard. If it appears in the warm-up that an individual qualifies as a candidate for an adult compulsory dance test or a Masters compulsory dance test it is best to inquire before the test. Ask “What type of dance test will you be taking?” Of course an individual who qualifies by age for the Masters test can take a standard dance test – so it is best to ask.

**Table 5: Masters Dance Test Marks**

<b>Masters Dance Test</b>	<b>Passing Average</b>	<b>Closest Standard Dance Test</b>	<b>Passing Average</b>
Pre-Bronze	4.6		
Bronze	4.8		
Pre-Silver	5.2	Pre-Bronze/Bronze	5.0/5.4
Silver	5.6	Bronze/Pre-Silver	5.4/6.0
Pre-Gold	6.4	Pre-Silver/Silver	6.0/7.0
Gold	7.4	Silver/Pre-Gold	7.0/8.0
International	8.4	Pre-Gold/Gold	8.0/9.0

#### **D. Errors and Reskates in Compulsory Dance Tests**

Unlike MIF, free skate, and free dance tests, there is no list of serious and quality errors for compulsory dance tests. However, clearly, severe stumbles and falls are serious errors that are grounds for marking the test retry or asking for a reskate. In addition, a dance should not be passed if it is substantially off time in sections of the dance.

A skater may be asked to reskate a dance with the same or another partner after a suitable rest period. The reskate must consist of two (2) patterns. For standard dance tests where a solo is required (Silver through Gold dance tests) the solo must take place immediately after the candidate has skated with the **original partner**. The reskate may consist of either the

pair or the solo. A reskate may also be required for a skater taking a solo dance test.

Unlike MIF, free skate, and free dance tests there are no serious errors that mandate that a test be marked retry. It is only necessary that the two marks add up to a passing total mark. However, tests that have obvious **serious** technique problems or **severe** timing issues probably shouldn't be passed based on one mark outweighing the other. Although compulsory tests are different from competitions and judges do not make comparisons between tests of couples, comparisons are made by skaters, coaches, and parents. An appearance of bias may result if one skater passes a test with a serious error in technique or with a very evident timing problem and yet another skater doesn't pass even though no serious technique errors or timing issues are evident in the dance. It should be abundantly clear that the skater who passed the dance test skated a quality dance despite one serious error or timing problem. Comments should also be used to support the marks in these cases.

If a reskate is requested by the judges, either with the same or a different partner, time should be allowed for the skaters to work out the issues that have been raised by the judges. Within reason, judges must allow skaters the opportunity to pass the dance test.

## **E. Comments on Test Sheets**

There is a distinct time factor in writing comments about dance tests. The tests are relatively short and in a test session there is little time between dances. It may be easy to determine whether the dance should be passed or marked retry. However, comments must be quickly made on the test paper – this is especially important if the dance is marked retry. On dances marked retry, avoid making a single comment because the skater and coach may conclude from that single comment about a step or turn that it is the only reason for the mark. Even in dances with recognized focus points such as the Choctaw in the Blues, there are other edges and steps that are important.

The dance pattern located on the left side of the test sheet can be annotated during the test to aid recall of the issues seen during the test so that appropriate comments can be made. Devise a set of symbols or marks that you can use to recall the dance in discussions with a skater and coach even long after the test. Circles, arrows, checks, plus signs, minus signs, Xs, or any other unique symbols should be chosen that you understand and which correspond to a feature of the dance.

In the technical box, identify specific turns or steps of concern by the number in the dance pattern or by the name of the turn if it is the only such turn in the dance. A series of steps can be identified; such as steps 13-14 in the Foxtrot when referring to the depth of edge, or steps 13-14 in the Kilian; when referring to the unison of the partners.

Take care with the adjectives used on the test sheet. "Poor edges" and "bad pattern" probably shouldn't be written on a test sheet. Perhaps "insecure edges" or "shallow lobes" might be better choices. Another alternative is to offer a constructive note such as "work on placement and accuracy of the pattern."

Remember that the mark for timing/expression is of equal weight to the technique mark. The skater could be deficient in one or both of the features that make up the timing/expression mark. Of course, the skater could also excel in one or both of these parts. In either case, something should always be written in the timing/expression box.

Timing is of paramount importance in dance – without proper timing the "performance" isn't a dance. Indicate specifically where errors in timing occur whenever possible. The timing may be off specifically on one step or turn or for a series of steps. Identify the turn if it is unique to the dance or use the number on the pattern if there are several turns of one type. For example, the Lady's three turn on step 11 in the American Waltz occurs in the corner and may be turned early due to partner unison problems. Identify the series of steps by number if several steps are involved as in the run steps of the Viennese Waltz. Note whether the timing

error occurs on the first or second pattern or both. In the case of the American Waltz, was the turn on step 11 rushed once or on both patterns?

The second part of the mark is for expression. It is not advisable to use the term “no expression” no matter how tempting that may be. The word “no” is absolute and there is always some expression even though it may not be the correct one for the dance. Find appropriate adjectives to describe the overall appearance of the dance. The Dance Manual of the PSA lists possible adjectives both pro and con. Annotate the manual with adjectives of your own so that you are never at a loss as to what to write on the test sheet.

The following representations of test sheets contain positive and negative remarks that could be made about compulsory dances at each level. These remarks are **not derived** from any official U.S. Figure Skating manual and are **not recommendations** by the Judges’ Committee. They are only examples of typical remarks that could be made. Each judge should develop his/her own method of providing information about a dance test to a skater.

The important thing to remember is that first a judge must decide whether the dance should pass or be marked retry. This decision is usually made before writing remarks but it also could be decided after examining the remarks that the dance really should pass or should be marked retry. There should be a correspondence between the remarks and the marks in each category. Remember that a passing dance may have some flaws and a dance that is marked retry may have some redeeming features.

### Dutch Waltz

<b>P</b>	1,2,3 OK progressive      6,7,8 done as stepovers      swing rolls OK
<b>P</b>	6,7,8 done about 2/2/2 - should be 2/1/3 timing hold 15 to 16 - rushing      knee action good but skater lunges on strokes
<b>P</b>	<b>Pass</b> <b>Retry</b>

### Fiesta Tango (man)

<b>2.3</b>	#2 should be outside                  #6 done as XF not XS      CE straight Mo unsteady and wide                  stroke end run - need edges lunged on 15 to 16
<b>2.4</b>	free leg not extended – needed to show expression rushing 1 to 2      also 15 to 16
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Pass</b> <b>Retry</b>

### Willow Waltz (Lady)

<b>2.8</b>	good close Ch and Pr 5 to 6 a bit open wide good three turn over skate and controlled free leg 15 good outside edge Mo – should not be swing mohawk unison fine sure edges on good lobes
<b>2.7</b>	soft knees - waltzed timing OK
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Pass</b> Retry

### Foxtrot (Lady)

<b>2.8</b>	lunge stepover on 3 to 4 - need CR                  stepover onto three turn wide step after three                  doing XB on 9 not a CR                  10 done on inside unsteady exit on Mo                  13 and 14 straight
<b>2.7</b>	rushing three turn                  also rushed Mo need soft knee action for expression - dance somewhat stepped
<b>5.5</b>	Pass <b>Retry</b>

### American Waltz (Man)

<b>3.6</b>	deep lobes and good edges                  nice unison without struggle good control on 11 through 13                  close footwork after turns and swings <b>Solo</b> steady control with edges                  three turns solid
<b>3.7</b>	consistent timing of threes and pendulum action of swings good carriage - soft graceful flowing dance - enjoyable to watch <b>Solo</b> timing fine                  good use of free leg
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Pass</b> Retry

### Blues (Lady)

<b>3.8</b>	doing XB on 1 and 4 - should be CR hold edge and leg extension on 5 6 to 8 shallow curve exit of Cho unsteady and flat edge hold position on 14 - needs CR losing flow on 15 and 16 <b>Solo</b> same issues and dance lacks power Cho very unsteady
<b>3.7</b>	rushing 5 to 6 also 6 to 7 late on Cho dance lacks body lean and extensions on soft knees needs accents on 7 and also 9,10, 11 dance a bit stiff and uneven <b>Solo</b> not holding edges long enough
<b>7.5</b>	Pass <b>Retry</b>

### Argentine Tango (Lady)

<b>4.8</b>	deep controlled edges on first side with no unison breaks strong Tw and steady exit good CR on both patterns <b>Solo</b> same flow and sureness with control throughout
<b>4.7</b>	confident dance with style throughout nice head positions and use of arms and hands timing and expression on first side exceptional good delay on 31 to 1 <b>Solo</b> good use of arms and leg extensions definitely a tango
<b>9.5</b>	<b>Pass</b> Retry

## IX. JUDGING FREE DANCE TESTS

In the 2007 calendar year 15,400 standard compulsory dance tests were taken but only 270 free dance tests. Most judges do not get much exposure to free dance except when watching it on television and as a result they are more comfortable judging the compulsory dances. However, as with all skating disciplines, common sense should be your guide to make good judgment calls in free dance tests. Whatever your experience level, your common sense will tell you whether an element was difficult or easy and if that element was performed well, passably, or poorly. Judging free dance might be regarded as easier than judging pair skaters because of the proximity of the partners in free dance. However, in free dance there ideally should be no noticeable breaks in the performance – in pair skating there are evident preparations for elements such as jumps and lifts. Nevertheless in both disciplines unison and synchronization of the couple as a unit are the primary consideration

### A. Preparing to Judge Free Dance Tests

The free dance tests taken each year are often at a limited number of sites. Thus, it takes special effort to prepare to judge a free dance test at a club not noted for this type of test.

Ideally in a free dance test there is something going on all of the time and the various elements may occur when you least expect them

There are relatively few judges who have skated free dance and have a personal feeling for what is being done. Other judges have to develop ways to observe what occurs in the free dance. Watching television may not help because the action occurs so fast, and of course the level is substantially above that seen in test situations. Recording the event and playing the program in slow motion through parts of the free dance such as the lifts and footwork sequence may be useful. Watch Ice Network skating videos which provide coverage of dance events in competitions below the Senior level. Consider purchasing videotapes or DVDs of Juvenile and Intermediate events at Junior Nationals or Novice and Junior events at Sectionals. Play the programs in slow motion or even stop action to determine the details of the elements of the free dance such as lifts and step sequences.

## **B. U.S. Figure Skating Free Dance Tests**

The five standard free dance tests require completion of a specific level of standard compulsory dance tests and the **immediately preceding free dance test**. However, candidates planning to compete in ice dancing at the novice level or higher, and who have already passed all of the compulsory dances and moves in the field tests required for that competition level, may bypass the lower level free dance tests and begin their free dance testing at the level at which they wish to compete.

Adult and masters free dance tests are not discussed in this manual. Refer to the rulebook for the requirements of these tests.

### **Juvenile Free Dance Test**

Candidates must have completed the preliminary compulsory dance tests. The purpose of this test is to encourage beginning dancers to learn the fundamentals of free dancing. The use of varied dance positions and holds to be included are Killian, Foxtrot (Open), Waltz (Closed) and Cross Arm. In addition, basic maneuvers such as layover/drape, pull-through legs, side pull, front drop, and other original dance moves may be used.

### **Intermediate Free Dance Test**

Candidates must have completed the bronze compulsory dance test level. General requirements for the bronze compulsory dance test apply equally to the intermediate free dance test. The program presented must conform to the rules for free dancing. The program should display fairly good edges and some evidence of good form.

### **Novice Free Dance Test**

Candidates must have completed the pre-silver compulsory dance tests. General requirements as outlined for the pre-silver compulsory dance test apply equally to the novice free dance test. The program presented must conform to the rules for free dancing. While technically a basic program demonstrating fundamental dance moves, it should have moderately good edges and flow, good timing, some expression, and display moderately good form and unison. A refined presentation is not expected.

### **Junior Free Dance Test**

Candidates must have completed the silver compulsory dance tests. General requirements as outlined for the silver dance test apply equally to the junior free dance test. The program presented must conform to the rules set forth for free dancing. It must

be moderately difficult, contain a good variety of movements, be well composed, and well placed on the ice surface.

### **Senior Free Dance Test**

Candidates must have completed the gold compulsory dance tests. General requirements as outlined for the gold dance test apply equally to the senior free dance test.

The program presented must conform to the rules set forth for free dancing. It must be difficult, varied and display originality. Choreography, expression and utilization of space must be excellent.

### **C. Unison in Free Dance Tests**

Unison should be the primary feature considered in evaluating a free dance skating test.

It is the basic foundation of the discipline. Synchronizing the various elements such as step sequences, twizzles and footwork is important. Maintaining a close spatial relationship, and similarity in positions and body line are critical factors to consider when evaluating unison. These factors will help you distinguish a good free dance team from a mediocre one.

Don't clutter your mind with too many details. Watch the free dance and use common sense. Most importantly, remember to evaluate how two skaters performing as one dance team do things. Remember to judge the quality of the element first and base your marks not only on its execution, but also on how the element was performed by two skaters in relation to one another.

### **D. General Requirements of a Free Dance**

Free dance is the skating by a couple of a creative program with dance steps and movements expressing the character of the music chosen by the couple. Developing a story theme is optional. The free dance must:

1. contain combinations of new or known dance movements including specified elements and step sequences composed into a program displaying the personal ideas of the couple in concept, arrangement and expression;
2. be constructed so that the technical difficulty ensures that the athletic aspect of dancing as a competitive sport is predominant;
3. display good skating technique and be developed through skating quality rather than non-skating quality actions and activities;
4. not have the character of a pair free skating program - pair skating elements (excluding spirals, spins and step sequences) are not allowed;
5. be choreographed without overly dramatic interpretation and without a tendency to introduce too many movements normally associated with pair skating rather than ice dancing;
6. have a duration of 4:00 minutes for Senior, 3:30 minutes for Junior, 3:00 minutes for Novice, 2:30 minutes for Intermediate, and 2:15 minutes for Juvenile. There is a +/- 10 second upper and lower limit for each of the stated times.

Acceptable music for free dance, which can include vocal, must have an audible rhythmic beat and a melody, or audible rhythmic beat alone, but not melody alone. The couples must skate in time to the rhythmic beat and not to the melody alone.

Specific requirements are listed in the test rules of the U.S. Figure Skating Test book and in Tables 6 through 10 at the end of this manual. There are some overarching principles for the technical content of all free dance tests. The general principles are:

1. All steps and turns are permitted. A program that relies heavily on the use of chassés and progressives (runs) is considered to be less difficult than one containing changes of edges, rockers, choctaws and other such steps. The program must be developed through skating quality rather than non-skating quality actions and activities;
2. Free skating movements, within the limitations indicated, are permitted when they are appropriate to the character of the music;
3. Deep edges and intricate footwork displaying skill, difficulty and originality must be included and performed by both partners;
4. All changes of position are permitted. Many and varied dance holds increase the difficulty of the program. Skating face-to-face is considered to be more difficult than skating side-by-side, hand-in-hand or separately, or one after the other;
5. Excessive repetition of non-skating movements such as sliding on one knee or toe steps should be avoided;
6. Typical pair skating positions such as hand-in-hand positions, one after the other or mirror skating must be avoided;
7. Short jerky movements are acceptable only when they emphasize the character of the music;
8. One skate of each partner must remain on the ice at all times except during permitted jumps and lifts;

#### **E. Restrictions of a Free Dance**

There are a number of general restrictions that apply to all U.S. Figure Skating tests. Specific restrictions concerning dance lifts and the timing of such lifts should be checked in the rules as applied to each test in addition to rules regarding separations and stops. The following are not permitted:

1. Lifting hand(s) higher than the head of the lifting partner;
2. Lying or sitting on the partner's head;
3. Sitting or standing on the partner's shoulder or back;
4. Sitting on the partner's boot;
5. Lifting partner swinging the lifted partner around by holding the skate(s), boot(s) or leg(s) only and/or by holding the hand(s) with full arm extension by both partners;

6. Lifted partner in an upside down split pose (with angle between thighs more than 45 degrees);
7. Jumps of more than one revolution or jumps of more than one revolution skated at the same time by both partners;
8. Kneeling on two knees on the ice;
9. Lying on the ice.

There are some restrictions on the distance of separation of partners as well as some associated time restrictions. These are:

1. Separations at the beginning and/or end may be up to ten (10) seconds in duration without restriction of the distance of separation.
2. The number of separations to execute intricate footwork is unlimited. The distance of separation should not exceed two (2) arm lengths. The duration of each separation must not exceed five (5) seconds.
3. Full stops with a duration of five (5) seconds, in which the couple remains stationary on the ice while performing body movements, twisting, posing, and the like are permitted.

## **F. Free Dance Elements**

U.S. Figure Skating dance tests have as required elements: lifts, spins, step sequences and twizzles. The required elements should be highlighted in the free dance but there may be additional elements in the program. It is not advisable to add similar moves that might be mistaken for the specified elements, which then could be judged as exceeding the limits.

The various steps, turns and other dance moves in the program should be suitable for the theme of the free dance. They should be selected to show the highest level of technical difficulty consistent with the couple's abilities.

### **1. Lifts**

Each free dance has a limit both as to number and type of allowed lifts. See Tables 6 through 10. A lift is an action in which the partner is elevated to any height and set down. During the action, the lifting partner must not raise the hands higher than the head. Any rotations and/or positions and changes during the lift are permitted except as indicated in subsection E. Lifts should enhance the music chosen and emphasize its character, but not be a display of sheer feats of strength.

Lifts fall into two categories – short lifts and long lifts. The short lifts shall not exceed six (6) seconds. These lifts are:

- Stationary Lift
- Straight Line Lift
- Curve Lift
- Rotational Lift

The long lifts shall not exceed twelve (12) seconds. These lifts are:

- Serpentine Lift
- Reverse Rotational Lift
- Combination Lift

The man may have two feet or one foot on the ice; he may be upright, crouched, in a spread eagle, etc. Either one hand or two hands may be used to support the lady. The lady can be in one position or multiple positions that change during the lift.

## **2. Spins**

Each free dance has a limit both as to number and type of allowed spins which may be spins or combination spins. See Tables 6 through 10. In a dance spin, the couple spins together in known dance hold position or variation thereof (except hand-in-hand). It should be performed on the spot around the same axis with one foot of each partner remaining on the ice throughout. In spin combinations there is allowed up to one-half rotation on two feet while changing to the other foot simultaneously by each partner.

## **3. Step Sequences**

Juvenile free dance through Novice free dance require one step sequence. Junior and Senior free dance require two (2) step sequences of a different nature. See Tables 6 through 10 for restrictions. The types of step sequences are:

- Circular
- Midline
- Diagonal
- Serpentine

The step sequences should be intricate but consistent with the level of the free dance. The sequence should be flowing, varied, and rhythmic reflecting that portion of the free dance.

## **4. Synchronized Twizzles**

One set of synchronized twizzles is required for Juvenile free dance through Junior free dance. Two sets are allowed for Senior free dance but the second set must be different than the first set. A minimum of one revolution is required for Juvenile free dance through Novice free dance – two revolutions are required for Junior free dance and Senior free dance.

Current U.S. Figure Skating test rules do not specify the direction of entry nor the edge for the twizzles. The position of the partners is also not specified. These positions may be:

- side by side in the same direction (matching);
- side by side in opposite directions (mirror);
- following one another

## **G. Free Dance Movements**

In addition to the required elements of a free dance there are a number of characteristic dance movements that are often seen, especially in the lower level free dances. The most common ones are described below,

### **1. Pull Through**

Both partners skate on two feet, one in front of the other, facing in the same direction. The partner who is in front spreads the legs wide apart, then bends and extends his or her arms through to grasp the hands of the other partner who is crouching close to the ice. The partner in front now straightens, pulling the other person forward and upright.

### **2. Swing Through**

The partners face each other holding hand to hand. The partner moving backwards drops and swings towards the other with the legs passing between the legs of the supporting partner. The supporting partner then pulls the swinging partner back to the starting position.

### **3. Drape (Layover)**

The lady skates facing the man on a right back outside edge in waltz position. The lady is lowered by the man's right arm as she begins to turn into an open hip position and arches her back. The man joins his two hands together under the lady's arched back. The man remains upright, the lady's head is extended backward and down while her left free leg is extended straight up in the air.

### **4. Spiral Pivot**

One partner serves as an anchor point holding one hand of the partner who circles usually on one foot while maintaining an extended position.

### **5. Ina Bauer**

This movement is performed on two feet with the weight mainly on the foot traveling forward while the other foot travels backward. The two blades travel on different but parallel curves. The upper body is arched extended in a pleasing line. The spacing of the edges and the degree of the back arch will vary depending on the build of the skater.

## **H. Errors in Free Dance Tests**

In order to pass a free dance test, no serious errors following reskated elements may be present. However, if only one serious error is present after the test has been skated, judges may have the option of using the second mark, if warranted, to pass the test or of requesting a reskate.

The serious errors for a free dance arranged by element are:

1. All required elements:
  - a) Omission of a required element
  - b) A fall or stumble entering into or during a required element causing any portion of the element to be missed or the element not to be completed.
  - c) A touchdown of the free foot or hand needed to save the skater from falling

**2. Lifts:**

- a) Collapse of a lift
- b) Lift fails to go up
- c) Incorrect type of lift
- d) Same type of lift repeated

**3. Spins:**

- a) Collapse of a spin
- b) Execution on two (2) feet upon entering the spin or after the commencement of the spin
- c) Fewer than required rotations if short by one (1) or more rotations
- d) Unequal number of revolutions (greater than one (1) rotation)
- e) Re-centers spin completely (combination spin)

**4. Synchronized Twizzles:**

- a) Unequal number of rotations; Greater than one (1) or more rotations
- b) Execution of turn incorrect (junior and above)

**5. Step Sequences:**

- a) Pattern incomplete

Quality errors for free dance tests not necessitating failure are:

1. Awkward pose within lift or spin
2. Speed lacking or diminishing within element(s)
3. Little variety in dance holds (taking into consideration test level)
4. More than three (3) steps between synchronized twizzles
5. Incidental touchdown of free foot during spin or twizzle
6. Fewer than required number of rotations in spin if less than one (1) revolution
7. Unequal number of rotations within a spin if less than one (1) revolution
8. Unequal number of rotations during a twizzle if less than one (1) revolution
9. Execution of twizzle incorrect (novice and below)

**I. Marking the Free Dance**

In marking the Free Dance, two marks - Technical Merit and Presentation - must be given on a scale of 0 – 6. In marking Technical Merit, the following shall be considered:

- difficulty and variety
- cleanliness and sureness
- depth and flow of edges and ice coverage
- predominance of dance moves and holds
- inclusion of the required and specified elements

The technical merit mark reflects the overall basic skating of the couple. Strong controlled edges and a broad range of technical skills allow the development of a challenging dance. Of course, the test requirements for each element must be met. Consider the following questions about the required elements:

**Spins**

- how were the spin(s) entered/exited – off balance or smooth
- how did the spin move onto one foot – delayed and slow or quick and smooth
- were the spin(s) rotations very slow or fast and well controlled

**Spin Combination**

- was the change of foot hesitant or very fast and seamless
- was a change of pose uncoordinated or brief and smooth

**Lifts**

- were the lifts of different types
- was the entry/exit action of the lifts shaky or flowing
- were the ascent/descent struggled or done with ease
- were the lift positions unstable or confident
- was any change of position discontinuous or smooth and flowing
- was any rotation scraped and unstable or flowing and fast
- was an change of curve short and flat or equal and deep

**Step Sequence**

- were the edges and steps flat and shaky or strong and confident
- was the speed and flow labored or consistently fast
- was the partner balance unequal or were they both similar
- was the footwork on two feet and toe pushed or clean and neat
- were the turns jumped, skidded, and forced or clean and neat
- was the spacing between partners uncontrolled or consistently close

**Synchronized Twizzles**

- was the entry/completion hesitant or sure and smooth
- were the connecting steps uncontrolled or very good and stylish
- was the spacing between partners uncontrolled and variable or consistently close

In addition the following general features of the dance must also be considered:

- were the skill levels of the partners similar
- were the workloads of the partners balanced
- were the element highlights blended seamlessly into the program
- did the dance include a good variety of edge types and depths
- were transitions made on one or two feet
- did the couple do difficult steps simultaneously or alternately

The presentation mark reflects a different set of skills of the couple. It is possible for this mark to be quite different – either higher or lower – than the first mark. The following shall be considered:

- appropriate music
- rhythmic movement to the music
- expression of the music
- style and unison
- choreography reflecting the music's character

The couple ideally should present a concept or theme for the whole dance or the various sections of the dance. The questions that can be asked are:

- was the dance a unified whole
- were nuances reflected in the dance
- was the carriage and style appropriate for the concept
- did the skating and body movement develop the concept
- did the highlights enhance the character of the dance
- were both partners equally skilled in conveying the concept

## J. Comments on Test Sheets

Writing comments about a free dance is a distinct challenge because the test is so seldom seen. Take the necessary time to write comments about the unique event that you have watched. The couple has put a lot of time into developing and refining the free dance. Note that the performance may not be the “final edition.” Also remember that a free dance in competition usually has been refined over time after passing the free dance. The free dance is a **test dance** – not a competition dance. In addition, there are free dances taken by ladies who want only the experience of doing a free dance. At some sites there are male coaches who have a basic free dance that is used for these individuals.

In the technical box, identify each required element and indicate its quality. Make remarks about the revolutions and positions in the spin(s); the degree of difficulty of the step sequence; the identity and quality of the lifts; and the quality of the twizzles. These observations determine whether a reskate is required. Comment on the difficulty and variety of the steps, their cleanliness and sureness, and the depth and flow of edges and ice coverage

Remember that the mark for presentation is of equal weight to the technique mark. A free dance may be technically difficult but have little style or character. Yet, some couples of more limited skills may have considerable talent in presenting a concept that is integrated throughout the dance.

The important thing to remember is that first a judge must decide whether the free dance should pass or be marked retry. This decision is usually made before writing remarks based on the complete dance as a picture that either did or did not come across well. Overall, the big question for a free dance is “Is it skated at the test level?” Remember that a passing dance may have some flaws and a dance that is marked retry may have some redeeming features.

## K. Reskates in Free Dance Tests

After a free dance test, only two (2) different elements may be reskated at the discretion of the judges. The elements may involve either serious or quality errors. The couple may choose any element that fulfills the stated test requirement. Thus, if an optional element is involved, the couple may choose to do an element that is different from the one performed in the program. A couple that omitted a required element or substituted a required element in the test may use one of the reskates to fulfill the stated requirement. **If a serious error occurs in the reskate, the test cannot pass. The presentation mark may not be used to compensate for the low technical mark.**

If there is only one serious error in a free dance test a reskate may or may not be required depending on the overall quality of the other aspects of the program. The presentation mark may be used to balance the lower technical mark. However, if a reskate is requested and a serious error occurs during the reskate **the presentation mark cannot be used to pass the test.** For this reason, a judge should carefully consider whether or not requesting a reskate is in

the best interest of the skater. If the presentation mark is not high enough to carry the test with one serious error present then a reskate is certainly warranted.

The use of the presentation mark to pass a test with a serious error is generally a rare occurrence. Few couples are able to skate significantly above the test level and achieve a very high presentation mark

How much is a reasonable deduction from the passing standard when a serious error occurs during a test? Consider the effect of a serious error in both the 6.0 system of judging and in the IJS system. For the former, deductions such as 0.3 or 0.4 occurred - in the latter, reductions of -3 occur that, when applied to the base value, significantly affects the mark for that element. Thus marking down the technical mark in a free dance test by only 0.1 point and increasing the presentation mark by 0.1 point is not reasonable when a serious error has occurred. The quality of the free dance as graded in the presentation mark should be significantly above average to balance out the lower technical mark. Note that the decrease in the technical mark should be with respect to that which would have been given in the absence of the serious error.

There is another important reason to be cautious in the use of the presentation mark to pass a test with a serious error. An appearance of bias may result if a couple passes a test with a serious error. It should be abundantly clear that the couple has skated a high quality free dance despite the serious error. Comments should also be used to support the marks in these cases.

If the judges request a reskate, the couple has the right to perform the reskated element(s) with or without a warm-up of that element. However, after conferring with the coach, the couple must let the judge-in-charge know the intended course of action. This determination must be made before the couple begins to perform an element so that the judges know if the try is a warm-up or the official reskate. When more than one element must be reskated, the couple may choose to warm-up one element followed by the official reskate and then warm-up the second element followed by that official reskate. Alternatively, the couple may choose to warm up both elements and then perform the reskates one after the other. Either course of action is acceptable, but the situation must be clear. Since the warm-up is not to be judged, it is a good practice not to look at the warm-up.

**Table 6: Juvenile Free Dance Test Requirements (2008-2009)**

<b>Lifts</b>	<b>Spins</b>	<b>Step Sequence</b>	<b>Synchronized Twizzles</b>
<p>One (1) to two (2) different short lifts (no more than six (6) seconds) from the following: stationary, straight line, curve, or rotational lift.</p> <p>Long lifts are not allowed (reverse rotational, serpentine, or combination.)</p>	<p>No more than one (1) dance spin.</p> <p>For a spin, there must be a minimum of two (2) revolutions on one foot for each partner.</p> <p>For a spin combination spin, there must be a minimum of two (2) revolutions on one foot for both partners on each part of the spin. A one half rotation on two (2) feet is allowed for both partners while changing to the other foot</p>	<p>One (1) step sequence fully covering the ice that may be circular, midline, or diagonal.</p> <p>The sequence should include a variety of steps and turns and must include 3-turns and Mohawks executed by both partners.</p>	<p>One (1) synchronized twizzle with a minimum of one (1) revolution by both partners</p>

**Table 7: Intermediate Free Dance Test Requirements (2008-2009)**

<b>Lifts</b>	<b>Spins</b>	<b>Step Sequence</b>	<b>Synchronized Twizzles</b>
<p>Two (2) different short lifts (no more than six (6) seconds) from the following: stationary, straight line, curve, or rotational lift.</p> <p>Long lifts are not allowed (reverse rotational, serpentine, or combination).</p>	<p>No more than one (1) dance spin.</p> <p>For a spin, there must be a minimum of two (2) revolutions on one foot for each partner.</p> <p>For a combination spin, there must be a minimum of two (2) revolutions on one foot for each partner on each part of the spin. A one half rotation on two (2) feet is allowed for both partners while changing to the other foot</p>	<p>One (1) step sequence fully covering the ice that may be circular, midline, or diagonal.</p> <p>The sequence should include a variety of steps and turns and must include 3-turns, Mohawks, and brackets executed by both partners.</p>	<p>One (1) synchronized twizzle with a minimum of one (1) revolution by both partners</p>

**Table 8: Novice Free Dance Test Requirements (2008-2009)**

<b>Lifts</b>	<b>Spins</b>	<b>Step Sequence</b>	<b>Synchronized Twizzles</b>
<p>Three (3) different lifts. A maximum of one (1) long lift - reverse rotational, serpentine, or combination (not to exceed twelve (12) seconds.) The remaining lifts may be short lifts (no more than six (6) seconds) from the following: stationary, straight line, curve, or rotational lift.</p>	<p>No more than one (1) spin. For a spin, there must be a minimum of three (3) revolutions on one foot for each partner. For a combination spin, there must be a minimum of three (3) revolutions on one foot for each partner on each part of the spin. A one half rotation on two (2) feet is allowed for each partner while changing to the other foot.</p>	<p>One (1) step sequence fully covering the ice that may be circular, midline, or diagonal.  The sequence should include a variety of steps and turns and must include 3-turns, mohawks, brackets, and counters executed by both partners.</p>	<p>One (1) set of synchronized twizzles with a minimum of two (2) revolutions by both partners.</p>

**Table 9: Junior Free Dance Test Requirements (2008-2009)**

<b>Lifts</b>	<b>Spins</b>	<b>Step Sequence</b>	<b>Synchronized Twizzles</b>
<p>Three (3) different lifts. . A maximum of one (1) long lift - reverse rotational, serpentine, or combination (not to exceed twelve (12) seconds.) The remaining lifts may be short lifts (no more than six (6) seconds) from the following: stationary, straight line, curve, or rotational lift.</p>	<p>No more than one (1) dance spin. For a spin, there must be a minimum of three (3) revolutions on one foot for each partner. For a combination spin, there must be a minimum of three (3) revolutions on one foot for each partner on each part of the spin. A one half rotation on two (2) feet is allowed for each partner while changing to the other foot</p>	<p>Two (2) different step sequences fully covering the ice that may be circular, midline, diagonal, or not-touching midline (without sequential twizzles).  The sequence should include a variety of steps and turns and must include brackets, counters, rockers, and choctaws executed by both partners.</p>	<p>One (1) set of synchronized twizzles with a minimum of two (2) revolutions by both partners</p>

**Table 10: Senior Free Dance Test Requirements (2008-2009)**

<b>Lifts</b>	<b>Spins</b>	<b>Step Sequence</b>	<b>Synchronized Twizzles</b>
<p>Four (4) different lifts. A maximum of two (2) long lifts - reverse rotational, serpentine, or combination (not to exceed twelve (12) seconds.)</p> <p>The remaining lifts may be short lifts (no more than six (6) seconds) from the following: stationary, straight line, curve, or rotational lift.</p>	<p>One (1) or two (2) dance spins.</p> <p>For a spin, there must be a minimum of three ( 3) revolutions on one foot for each partner</p> <p>For a combination spin, there must be a minimum of three (3) revolutions on one foot for each partner on each part of the spin. A one half rotation on two (2) feet is allowed for both partners while changing to the other foot.</p> <p>If more than one (1) spin is executed, it must be different than the first. If the first spin is a combination spin then the second spin must be a dance spin. The same logic follows with the spins being executed in opposite order.</p>	<p>Two (2) different step sequences fully covering the ice that may be circular, midline, diagonal, or not-touching midline (without sequential twizzles).</p> <p>The sequence should include a variety of steps and turns and must include brackets, counters, rockers, Choctaws, and twizzles executed by both partners.</p>	<p>One (1) or two (2) sets of synchronized twizzles with a minimum of two (2) revolutions by each partner. If more than one (1) set is executed, the second must be different than the first.</p>