

# **Theatre on Ice**



## **Part 1: 2005 Guidelines**

## **Part 2: Suggestions for Starting a Theatre on Ice Team**

# **PART 1: RULES**

## **1. DEFINITION**

A Theatre on Ice (TOI, a/k/a/, Ballet on Ice in Europe) is a creation using all aspects of figure skating, incorporating a theme, emotion or story, enhanced by music. It is a PACKAGE that includes five dimensions: choreography, skating movements and the rapport between the skaters and/or sub-groups of skaters, props or scenery, sound, and theme.

The quality of the TOI performance requires that the music, theme and choreography be consistent with one another and that they give the feeling of harmony and balance. Additionally no one aspect on the performance should be redundant. The goal is to transcend the literal and to create emotion.

The ballet has to be adapted to the specific dynamic of figure skating: quality of gliding and edges, speed, ease, and amplitude of movements. It must also look for the proper treatment of groups, and for a good variety in the use of the different elements of skating. The quality of edge, speed, ease and flow of movement should enhance the performance and there should be a balanced incorporation of groups.

There is no limit to the number of free skating, ice dancing, pair or synchronized skating elements used in the routine, however, judges will have to evaluate the congruity of all elements used to the chosen theme and music. Any imbalance of any one element will be reflected in the marking. Likewise, any over-use of highlighting (soloing or spot-lighting of a skater/skaters) that detracts from the overall concept will be reflected in the marking.

In addition to the free TOI performance, a new optional category to U.S. competitions is being added for 2005: the choreographic exercise. It too incorporates the axes of choreography, skating movements and the rapport between skaters and/or sub-groups of skaters, as well as sound and prescribed theme. No props or scenery are used for the choreographic exercise. The choreographic exercise will be described in greater detail later in this document.

## **2. COMPETITIONS**

At present, all TOI competitions held under the jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating are nonqualifying competitions. The Program Development Committee, whose oversight currently covers TOI in U.S. Figure Skating, will assist a member club in sponsoring an “International Theatre on Ice Competition” that will be open to TOI (a/k/a Ballet on Ice in Europe) teams from other skating Federations. By agreement of coaches active in TOI as of June 2004, the “International Theatre on Ice” competition will be held the last weekend of June of each year. Other competitions are encouraged to host TOI events, and to invite foreign teams, but may not use the name “International Theater on Ice Competition.”

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

All members of a TOI team must be members of U.S. Figure Skating either through an existing Member Club or as an Individual Member of the Association. In addition, each team must be registered as a TOI team (see U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook MR 12.00). Teams without a TOI membership and/or who have any members who are not USFSA members in their own right, will not be permitted to compete in U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned TOI events or events hosted by foreign federations. Applications to register your team with U.S. Figure Skating are available from U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters, Membership Department.

### 4. NUMBER OF SKATERS ON A TEAM

A TOI team may have no fewer than 8 members (all of whom must skate at some point during the number) and may have no more than 30 members on the team roster and on the ice at any one time.

### 5. CATEGORIES

There are four levels of TOI teams, senior, junior, novice, and adult. For U.S. Figure Skating teams (competing both domestically and internationally) these are based on U.S. Figure Skating moves in the field tests. A team may not skate in more than one division at the same competition (i.e., an adult team may not also skate in the novice, junior or senior division at the same competition), however, teams whose percentage of skaters at given test levels changes throughout the season may enter different competitions at different levels as long as they meet the level requirement for that competition as defined by the competition's announcement cut-off date. **For the "International Theatre on Ice" competition, teams may not "skate up" a level but must enter the division that reflects their member's test level as of the cut-off date for entries. For other U.S. competitions, the ability to "skate up" is the decision of the chief referee in consult with the local organizing committee and must be stated in the announcement.**

Senior – 100% of the team must have passed the pre-preliminary MIF test (or pre-bronze adult MIF test) and 50% or more of the team members must have passed the intermediate MIF test. No age restrictions.

Junior - 100% of the team must have passed the pre-preliminary MIF test (or pre-bronze adult MIF test) and 50% or more of the team must have passed the juvenile MIF. No age restrictions.

Novice - 100% of the team must have passed the pre-preliminary MIF test (or pre-bronze adult MIF test). No age restrictions.

Adult - At least 75% of the team has reached the age of 21 years as of the July 1<sup>st</sup> preceding the competition. In addition, 100% of the team must have passed **at least one U.S. Figure Skating test (other than a basic skills badge). This may include an adult or standard MIF, individual dance test (passing the entire dance category not required), freestyle, or pairs.**

Other skating federations also divide their teams into novice, junior and senior but have their own rules governing what constitutes these levels. When a foreign team enters a U.S. event, the team will determine, based on their federation's requirements, what level they will skate. U.S. teams, however, must adhere to the above requirements when entering a TOI event hosted by another federation.

## 6. LENGTH OF PERFORMANCE

Senior -	6 minutes plus or minus 30 seconds
Junior	6 minutes plus or minus 30 seconds
Novice	5 minutes plus or minus 30 seconds
Adult	6 minutes plus or minus 30 seconds

For performances that are over or under the time allotment standard time deductions will apply as per USFSA rule 3526 (former, SSR 15.00). Timing will begin with the first purposeful movement of any member of the TOI team. Timing will cease when the last skater comes to a complete stop.

Upon taking their position on the ice, a member of the team should raise and lower either their right or left arm to signify that the team is ready to begin their performance. This movement does not count as the "purposeful movement" noted above.

## 7. COMPOSITION

The performance should express a theme, emotion or story. The music, costumes, scenery, as well as the choreography should be used to enhance the theme. Jumps and other figure skating elements should contribute to the choreography and need to have meaning within the theme. There is no limit to the number of jumps that may be done, however, jumps must have a meaning in relation to the theme and should not be gratuitous. Solos, pairs, dance or synchronized elements also need to have meaning within the theme. They can not be a dominant part of the performance.

The choreography should emphasize and support gliding. Stationary positions should be limited and excessive use be reflected in the marking accordingly. Skaters are permitted to leave the visible portion of the ice such as behind a curtain or piece of scenery but must remain on the ice surface itself during the number. All participants must wear their skates on the ice at all times.

## 8. CURTAIN

A curtain must be used and **may be placed either along one end of the rink or across the middle of the ice surface. The exact placement of the curtain must be stated in the announcement with the curtain's dimensions and distance from the barriers. If placed along the end of the rink it should extend the width of the rink and if placed along the**

**middle of the rink it should extend from blue line to blue line. Curtains may either be the “hanging type” or made of moveable panels.**

## 9. COSTUMING

Costumes must be decent. Hair and ornaments must be secure. Costuming and make-up should enhance the feeling created by the performance.

## 10. SCENERY

Scenery may be used but is not essential. All scenery used cannot be more than 6 feet in height once in place on the ice. All scenery must be placed on the ice by the skaters and not by any adult/non-team members. The use of smoke fire, liquids, or live animals is not permitted.

a. Set-Up - Skaters will have two-minutes from the time the team is announced to set-up any scenery and get in position to start their number. Skaters may use any or all of this two minute period to warm-up. The ice-referee will monitor the set-up of any scenery and report any violations of the time allotment to the event referee.

After 90 seconds have elapsed an announcement will be made that 30 seconds remain in the set-up period. **After 120 seconds have elapsed, an announcement will be made and timing will begin although the music will not begin until the hand signal described earlier is given. Thus it is to the team’s benefit to be in position and ready to start by the two-minute mark.**

b. Break down - At the completion of the performance, and after the team has taken their bows, they will be permitted two-minutes to remove all scenery. The ice referee will determine if all objects have been appropriately removed and will report any violation to the event referee. Failure to remove all objects to the satisfaction of the ice or event referee by the two-minute mark will result the judges taking a 0.1 deduction from each mark.

## 11. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

a. Written description – The official competition program should contain a written description of the performance and should be provided by the team at the time of application to the competition as part of the competition announcement. The description should be no more than 100 words in length and should be provided to the competition local organizing committee in the local language.

b. Audio description - **An audio description of the program (or other verbal text) may be part of the CD/tape and precede the commencement of the program. The audio reading should not exceed 20 seconds. Since the CD/tape will not be started until after the team has taken their position and given a hand signal, and since timing (except**

**when the team has not taken their position by 120 seconds after taking the ice) does not begin until the first purposeful movement of any skater, the team must remain still during the description unless they wish for the reading to be considered part of the total time allotment for their performance.** Note: Descriptions will no longer be read by announcers, therefore, teams that wish to have an audible description read must have one recorded on the tape/CD.

## 12. LIGHTING

Standard rink lighting is to be used for all events. No spotlights or special lighting is permitted.

## 13. OFFICIALS

### a. Referees

1. Event Referee – The referee should sit with the judging panel and is responsible for the overall running of the event including interpreting all rules. The referee should be either a junior, senior, or National level judge in any discipline and should have prior experience with judging TOI events.

2. Ice Referee - The ice referee stands at the ice entry area and monitors the ice conditions, monitors the set-up and breakdown of the scenery and reports any time deviations to the referee. The ice referee should be a junior, senior, or National level judge in any discipline and should have prior experience judging TOI events.

b. Judge's Qualifications - For U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned competitions in which TOI events are a part, all judges on the TOI panel must have a competition rating from U.S. Figure Skating Judges Committee. Such competition rating must be at the level of novice or higher in any discipline (e.g., singles & pairs, dance, synchronized). Foreign federations may send a judge to TOI competitions. Foreign federations have their own manner of certifying their TOI judges. Any foreign judge wishing to judge a TOI competition in the U.S. must be certified as qualified to judge the said event(s) by his/her skating federation.

c. Judging Panel - For all TOI competitions sanction by U.S. Figure Skating, the panel of officials should include no less that one event referee, one ice referee, and five judges, although seven to nine judges is recommended. If the open system of marking is used then an assistant referee is also needed.

d. Judging seats -The panel of judges, the event referee and assistant referee (if required) must be seated in the middle of the long axis of the rink. A "Judge's Zone" must be created that includes a space of 10 feet from either end of the judge's stand extending two rows in front of the stands and four rows behind. The placement of the judging stand and the judging zone must be noted in the announcement and pre-approved by the referee. In the case of unusual circumstances that prevent such spatial constructs from being used, the chief referee must approve any deviations.

e. System of Judging - For the “International Theatre on Ice” competition sponsored in part by the Program Development Committee, the open system of judging will be used for all junior and senior events while the closed system will be used for the novice events. For other U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned TOI events, either the open or closed system may be used at any level.

#### 14. MARKING

Two marks, each between 0 and 6 (given in increments of 0.1 units), will be awarded.

1<sup>st</sup> Mark – **Technique of Performance** - The following criteria must be considered by the judges when awarding this mark:

- a. utilization of the ice, utilization of space, and the organization of formations.
- b. quality of movements including body positions
- c. quality of ensembles and rapport between the skaters themselves and groups of skaters
- d. overall strength of the skaters on the team as a whole\*\*

\*\* For d (above) when marking the “overall strength of the skaters on the team as a whole” judges must consider turns, footwork, spirals, jumps, spins, lifts, and dance elements included in the performance. Such evaluation must consider the quality of edge, flow, speed and its variation, carriage, and variety of elements incorporated. An imbalance of any one type of element may be reflected in this mark.

2<sup>nd</sup> Mark - **Artistic** The following criteria must be considered by the judges when awarding this mark:

- a. Establishment of a presence by the skaters individually as well as the intensity and impact of the performance as a whole.
- b. Creation of a universe taking into account the choreography and its execution. Use of scenery is not a requirement but if scenery is used should it should enhance and not detract from the performance.
- c. Theatricality of the performance
- d. Originality and creativity of the performance as a whole as well as its ability to be interpreted by observers.

#### 15. ACCOUNTING

For all U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned TOI competitions, including those involving teams from foreign federations, the accounting system used is that described in U.S. Figure Skating rulebook, CR 16.00. It should be noted that competitions held by foreign federations may use the one-by-one system of accounting. Until this discipline is under the direct auspices of the ISU and events are sponsored by the ISU, the one-by-one system of accounting used in Europe will not be used for competitions hosted by a U.S. Figure Skating member club.

## 16. Choreographic Exercise

Beginning in 2005, a new *optional* event will be offered: the choreographic exercise (CE). The CE has been part of the competitive structure in France for many years. The CE strives to promote the gliding and edge development of TOI teams.

The CE is centered around three axes: 1) a theme; 2) a choreographic process; and, 3) a type of gesture or movement. The duration of the CE is 2 minutes 30 seconds (plus or minus 10 seconds). No scenery or props are allowed. Music must be used and is the choice of the team (vocals are permitted as they are with the free performance). No specific warm-up period is given although the teams will have the same 120 second period from being announced until the timing begins. As with the free program, at 90 seconds an announcement will be made that 30 seconds remain. Before the music is started the team must take a stationary position on the ice and a team member must give a hand signal as for the free program.

All team members must wear the same color outfit. All female team members must wear the same design of dress and all male team members must wear the same design of shirts and trousers. No specific make-up is permitted. The idea behind this is to provide a uniform look to the team as the CE is performed. The focus must be on the three axes described above with the visual created through the team's skating and body demonstration of the axes and not through dress, scenery, or props.

The CE is evaluated by two marks. The first mark (choreographic mark) is for choreography and how it encompasses the three axes and the second mark (technical execution) is for the technical execution of that choreography. The composition of the judging panel, the event and ice referees, and the accounting are as described above for the free program. In the CE the technical execution mark breaks any tie in the accounting.

For the 2005 International Theatre on Ice competition to be held in Burlington, Vt., June 24, 25, 2005, ONE CE division will be offered and will be open to junior, senior, as well as adult teams (who will compete against each other in this CE). Novice teams are not eligible for the CE for the 2005 International TOI competition. Feedback on this event following the June competition may result in expanding the CE to all divisions.

For 2005 the axes are:

- |    |                         |         |
|----|-------------------------|---------|
| 1) | Theme –                 | Reunion |
| 2) | Choreographic Process - | Mimic   |
| 3) | Gesture or Movement -   | Slow    |

These themes should be understood from an encompassing perspective and not necessarily translated into the number literally. Creativity in the choreography is the basis if the first mark and unique angles on how to translate these axes into the skating number will be highly rewarded.

## 17. CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on this exciting new skating discipline contact Ron Dei Cas, national vice chair for TOI ([skatjudg@aol.com](mailto:skatjudg@aol.com)) or Terri Levine, chair of Program Development ([tsgl@aol.com](mailto:tsgl@aol.com)).

## **PART 2: HOW TO START A TOI TEAM**

### **Summary**

Theatre on Ice (TOI) competitions are an exciting new aspect of the sport. Clubs will benefit from an increase in membership by attracting new members and retaining current ones. Indeed, many skaters that leave the sport when they no longer have the time to devote to traditional competitions may find TOI fits their needs well. The added publicity that a TOI team generates for the club is also a benefit. Skaters, both competitive and non-competitive, can learn and grow on a theatre team. Best of all, a team can draw club skaters together and increase club spirit.

### **What is Theatre on Ice?**

Theatre on Ice (TOI) is a form of competitive figure skating that is popular in Europe, where it is known as Ballet on Ice. It combines the grace of figure skating with the excitement of theater and dance. Teams consist of between 8 and 30 skaters. Solo skating is discouraged, but is permitted in limited amounts if it enhances the overall telling of the program's story. The programs are judged on the basis of a "technique of performance" and an "artistic" mark.. There are several TOI teams and TOI competitions around the country. For a list of TOI competitions contact either contact Paula Campos, vice-chair of Theatre on Ice for U.S. Figure Skating Program Development Committee at (301) 498-5953 (e-mail - [bcma9tl@comcast.net](mailto:bcma9tl@comcast.net) ) or Ron Dei Cas, chair of Program Development, at [skatjudg@aol.com](mailto:skatjudg@aol.com) or 202-726-0211.

### **What are the Benefits to TOI?**

#### **Benefits to the Club**

- Increases membership
  - Gets beginning skaters interested more quickly
  - Keeps those who choose to not individually compete involved
- Gets parents more involved
- Provides the club more publicity and community presence
- Raises money for the club
- Provides club unity
  - All ages and abilities can be on one team
  - Older skaters inspire younger skaters

#### **Benefits to the Skater**

- Gives the skater more confidence when performing at both competitions and shows
- Gives the skater a chance to develop the dramatic side of their skating
- Gives the skater a chance to be part of a team while continuing to use their technical skills
- Gives the skater a chance to travel both locally and internationally
- Gives the skater a chance to make new friends both in and out of the club
- Gives the competitive skater a chance to relax while performing and competing

## **How Do You Start?**

The first step is to organize an enthusiastic committee to oversee the team. This committee will be responsible for selecting a coaching staff, fundraising, arranging ice time, making or obtaining costumes and sets, setting and enforcing team policies and rules, setting and collecting fees, making arrangements for team travel, exhibitions and competitions, and acting as a liaison between the parents, club, and the coaches.

The coaching staff will be the single most important aspect of starting a new team. The coaches must be enthusiastic and dedicated. Due to the involved choreography more than one coach is suggested. Coaches with experience in TOI competitions will be difficult to find, but most coaches have experience doing shows. The coaches must be willing to learn. The most important qualities to be looking for are the ability to select a theme and music, choreograph a “ballet on ice”, communicate with the skaters, and have the enthusiasm to promote the TOI concept.

Teams must be registered as a Theatre on Ice Team with U.S. Figure Skating. All members of a team must be U.S. Figure Skating members in their own right (either through a member club or as an individual member). For more information on U.S. Figure Skating membership requirements, see the rules section of this booklet.

All levels and ages of skaters can be incorporated together into one team. In addition, we now have a division specific to adults. Your committee should organize an informational meeting for any interested skaters and their parents. The coaching staff should explain the concept of Theatre on Ice and the plans for your team. Expectations and responsibilities of the team members and their parents should also be covered.

The coaching staff, with the approval of the committee, should draw up a contract of rules for attendance, conduct, dress, fundraising responsibilities, etc. which carefully outlines the expectations and responsibilities of each team member. Consequences for violating these rules should be spelled out. Both the skater and their parent should sign this contract. It is up to both the coaching staff and the committee to enforce these rules. Be firm, the team will be much happier and more successful if rules are followed.

Additional information on forming a TOI team is available from U.S. Figure Skating Program Development Committee TOI vice-chair Paula Campos at 301.498.5953.

## **Running a Team**

Once a team has been formed, it is a good idea to have a meeting of all parents. Everyone needs to volunteer time to help out on some aspect of the team. Sub-committees can be formed to work on costuming, fundraising, travel arrangements, sets, etc. Teams should strive to be self-supporting even if they exist within an existing U.S. Figure Skating member club.

Costuming and scenery is an enormous task. One or two costuming chairpersons should work with the coaching staff. The chairpersons take the ideas from the coaches and spread the work out among their committee. The scenery committee functions in much the same way. The team also needs to decide who owns and maintains the costumes and sets. Usually it is the skaters' responsibility to keep and maintain the costume throughout the season, then return them to the team at the end of the season. After several years the team will have an inventory of costumes. Frequently all or part of an old costume can be re-used for an entirely different role. The team should consider renting a storage unit for old costumes and scenery.

Fundraising is also another enormous job. The chairperson needs to make sure that there are a sufficient number of fundraisers planned, make sure they have a lead person for each event, and make certain that all team members are fulfilling their fundraising obligations.

Team policies need to be developed regarding travel. When traveling by car the team needs to decide if drivers will be reimbursed, or travel at their own expense, and whether the team will be making all the arrangements or just assisting in arranging rides for skaters that need them. When traveling to a destination that requires an overnight stay, decide whether the chaperones' expenses will be covered. Make sure that whatever arrangements are made, the skaters and their parents have them in writing. The team should obtain a parent authorization for each skater for medical or other emergencies, and medical information of each skater, including known problems and insurance information, should be kept on hand. Make sure that if you are travelling out of the country you have the appropriate documents (including parental permission to leave the country).

Generally a one-hour on-ice practice per week is sufficient. Practice is most effective if a consistent day and time can be used throughout the season. A warm-up of ensemble skating exercises is a good start. Starting at one end of the rink, skaters are placed in several lines of 4 to 6 skaters across. Simple steps such as alternating crossovers, rolls and power-threes are done while staying in formation. More advanced steps such as alternating 1/2 flips and footwork can also be incorporated into the warm-up. These exercises are very beneficial in teaching skaters to move as a group. The rest of the practice is spent on learning and perfecting the number. Once the number has been initially completed, some of the coaches should watch the number from an elevated view. The number will look very different from this vantage point and potential problem spots may be more visible. Remember this is how the judges and audience will see it. You may also want to schedule off-ice practices. These are very effective for working on certain sections of the number as well as presentation. Attendance, punctuality and attentiveness are essential during practices. Some teams also have off-ice practice sessions.

Coaching a Theatre on Ice team also involves "teaching" the team members. There must be an environment for learning, and skills that are not familiar to the skaters must be broken down and explained clearly. Don't expect every skater to instantly be able to do every step they are shown. There needs to be a team atmosphere where everyone supports and helps each other. Remember TOI is about participation and fun!

The team should have long- and short-term goals for the season. Hopefully there is a particular competition that the team is aiming for at the end of the season. There also must be

short-term goals such as smaller competitions or exhibitions. Write to the clubs in your area and ask to be a “guest skater” at their club show or to exhibit at their competition. The experience is great for your team and it gives TOI more exposure. See if your community has any festivals in which you could participate. Keeping the skaters motivated throughout the year is best accomplished by giving them goals to work towards. Try and get input from the skaters for the theme each year. If you can keep an ongoing discussion about new themes, it really gives the skaters a sense of ownership in the number. It is good idea to have a team leader or captain, whether appointed by the coaching staff or selected by the skaters. This skater (or skaters) should have the respect of the other skaters and be their spokesperson. They should also be able to run the opening drills in the absence of the coaches, and help keep the practices running smoothly. It also helps team unity to schedule several team meetings/parties throughout the season. It gives the skaters a chance to get to know each other, and helps build team spirit.

### **Creating the Number**

Creating the number is quite a challenge. First, the number must have a theme; it could be from a known story or a creation of the choreographers’ imagination. Then you need to find appropriate music to express the theme. Take the time and money to have the music done well. The choreography can be quite involved since there frequently is more than one group doing different steps on the ice at the same time. Skaters are usually divided into groups according to abilities. Occasionally there is a need for a single skater to perform a specific role, but their skating should also be incorporated with the rest of the team. These groups can skate separately or together. Usually the most effective parts of the number are when the largest number skate together. Remember the whole concept is ensemble skating. Moves in the field are easily adapted. Jumps done in unison or sequence can be very effective, but since each skater must adapt their jump to other skaters, be careful about difficulty. Spins can easily be incorporated into the number. Creativity needs to be used to incorporate right and left-handed skaters. Numbers from clubs shows are easily adapted to this form of competition.

Remember that you are creating an entire picture. The music, costumes and choreography must all be used to create a picture that expresses the theme. Care should be given to all of these aspects of the number.

### **How Do You Run A Competition?**

Theatre on Ice competitions can easily be added to existing nonqualifying competitions. You need to encourage other clubs to form teams and enter. Remember it only takes two teams to make a competition. Other clubs will be more encouraged to form teams once they have actually seen a competition. Once you know that you have at least two teams interested, talk to the chair of the non-qualifying competition about including a TOI event.

Theatre on Ice can also be run as a separate competition. You should have a minimum of four teams for a stand-alone TOI competition to be successful. Someone from your committee who has experience running a competition should be the chairman. Make sure the

announcements are sent well in advance so that the teams from a distance will have time to make the necessary arrangements. If many teams will be staying overnight, try to offer inexpensive accommodations such as a college or university. Start looking for judges as far in advance as possible. In choosing judges, look for those who are interested in the theatre on ice concept. Remember that as with any U.S. Figure Skating competition, a sanction must be obtained. Contact the Program Development Committee vice-chair of TOI and your regional vice chair of competitions for more information on the sanction process.

You should also include a half-hour practice for each team, and if possible offer more ice for teams to purchase. The final competition is actually a fantastic show, and should be marketed to the community. You will be amazed at the attendance – make certain to charge admission!