

GLOSSARY OF FIGURE SKATING TERMS

ABBREVIATION — See the definition for “Code.”

ACCOUNTANT — An official at a figure skating competition who compiles and computes marks awarded by judges and the technical panel to determine the placement of competitors.

AXEL JUMP (A) — One of the most difficult jumps, which takes off from the forward outside edge and is landed on the back outside edge of the opposite foot. A single Axel consists of 1.5 revolutions, a double is 2.5 revolutions and a triple is 3.5 revolutions. The jump is named for its creator, Axel Paulsen. It is easily recognizable as it is the only jump that takes off from a forward position.

BIELLMANN POSITION — Named after Denise Biellmann, this is a difficult variation in which the skater’s free leg is pulled from behind to a position higher than and toward the top of the head.

BRACKET — A turn from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge that is executed on one foot in the direction opposite the curve from an outside edge to an inside edge or vice versa with the exit curve continuing on the same lobe as the entry curve. The pattern the turn creates on the ice looks like a “{”.

C STEP — A turn from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge, from one foot to the other, each edge forming parts of the same curve. (Internationally, this is known as a mohawk.)

CAMEL SPIN (CSp) — A spin done on one leg with the non-skating leg, or free leg, extended backward with knee higher than hip level. The body remains in this “spiral” position while spinning.

CHOREOGRAPHIC ASSISTED JUMP/LIFTING MOVEMENT (ChAJ) — At least three assisted jump/lifting movements performed continuously in a row with no more than three steps in between each assisted jump/lifting movement. In each assisted jump/lifting movement, the assisting partner cannot rotate more than one rotation, and the assisted partner must be off the ice for less than three seconds.

CHOREOGRAPHIC CHARACTER STEP SEQUENCE (ChSt) — A step sequence performed from barrier to barrier diagonally, along the short axis, along the long axis or in a circle anywhere in a free dance.

CHOREOGRAPHIC LIFT (ChLi) — Dance lift of up to 10 seconds performed in a free dance after all of the other required dance lifts.

CHOREOGRAPHIC HYDROBLADING MOVEMENT (ChHy) — A low movement with the upper body almost parallel to the ice. The core of the body must be clearly positioned away from the vertical axis. No other part of the body other than the boot of the free leg is allowed to touch the ice. At least one blade of each partner must be on the ice.

CHOREOGRAPHIC RHYTHM SEQUENCE (ChRS) — A step sequence performed in the senior rhythm dance around the short axis from barrier to barrier.

CHOREOGRAPHIC SEQUENCE (ChSq) — A sequence consisting of at least two different movements such as spirals, arabesques, spread eagles, Ina Bauers, hydroblading, any jumps with a maximum of two revolutions, spins, etc. Steps and turns may be used to link the two or more different movements together. The pattern is not restricted, but the sequence must be clearly visible.

CHOREOGRAPHIC SLIDING MOVEMENT (ChSI) — A movement in ice dance during which both partners perform controlled sliding movements on the ice at the same time on any part of the body for at least two seconds.

CHOREOGRAPHIC SPINNING MOVEMENT (ChSp) — A movement in ice dance during which both partners perform at least two continuous rotations, in any hold, on a common axis which may be moving. The movement can be on one foot and/or two feet, and/or one partner may be elevated without being sustained.

CHOREOGRAPHIC TWIZZLING MOVEMENT (ChTw) — A movement in ice dance composed of two parts. Both parts may be performed on one foot or two feet or a combination of both. For the first part, at least two continuous rotations must be performed simultaneously and both partners must travel. For the second part, at least one of the partners has to perform at least one continuous rotation and one or both partners can be on the spot or traveling or a combination of both.

CODE — With the inception of the international judging system, every element listed in the scale of values was given a shorthand set of letters and numbers to designate the element and its level of difficulty. These codes are used on skater protocols to identify the elements attempted. Any element listed in this glossary that has a code is listed with the code provided in parentheses after the name of the element.

COMBINATION LIFT — Dance lift with a maximum duration of 13 seconds that combines two rotational lifts in different directions, two curve lifts on two different curves forming a serpentine pattern or two different types of short lifts.

COMBINATION SPIN (CoSp) — A spin in which the skater changes feet and/or positions.

COUNTER — A turn made on one foot from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge maintaining the same character, i.e. outside to outside or inside to inside, where the body rotation is counter to the natural direction of progress.

CROSSOVERS — A method of gaining speed and turning corners in which skaters cross one foot over

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the other. There are both forward and backward crossovers.

DANCE LIFTS (Li) — A movement in which one of the partners is elevated with active and/or passive assistance of the other partner to any permitted height, sustained there and set down on the ice. Lifts should enhance the music and be performed in an elegant manner.

DANCE SPIN (DSp) — A spin skated by the couple together in any hold. It should be performed on the spot around a common axis on one foot with or without changes of foot by both partners simultaneously.

DEATH SPIRAL (Ds) — A pairs move in which the man rotates in a pivot position while holding one hand of his partner, who is rotating in a horizontal position around him with her body low and parallel to the ice.

DIFFICULT VARIATION — A movement of a body part that requires physical strength or flexibility and has an effect on the balance of the main body core. Only these variations can increase the level of an element.

DOWNGRADED (<<) — A jump, throw jump or twist lift that is missing a half revolution or more. A downgraded jump is indicated on a skater protocol with a "<<" symbol and receives the value for the jump of one rotation less (i.e. a downgraded triple loop will receive the value of a double loop).

DRAW — The process to determine the skating order for each event. Either the referee or chair of the competition conducts the process in the presence of other judges (closed draw) or in an open setting where the athletes participate and actually draw a number from a pouch (open draw).

EDGES — The two sides of the skate blade on either side of the grooved center. There is an inside edge — the edge on the inner side of the blade and an outside edge — that on the outer side of the blade. There is a forward and backward for each edge and each side, equaling a total of eight edges.

EDGE JUMP — A jump where the skater takes off from the entry edge of the skating foot without bringing the free foot in contact with the ice to assist the take off. The Axel, loop and Salchow are edge jumps.

ELIGIBLE — The term used to define skaters or competitions that meet the requirements and follow the rules of U.S. Figure Skating and/or the ISU. All eligible skaters, judges and officials are members of U.S. Figure Skating and have not participated in any activities, competitions or events that are not sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating or the ISU.

ENVELOPE SYSTEM — The envelope system is a part of the U.S. National Team and separates skaters for the Athlete Support Fund (ASUPP) levels. Based on prescribed criteria, U.S. athletes can be placed in Team A, B, C, D or the reserve team. The ASUPP financially supports the U.S. Team envelope athletes by assisting them with their skating expenses.

EULER (Eu) — Also known as a half-loop jump, this is an edge jump, taken off from a back outside edge and landed on the opposite back inside edge. It can be used between two listed jumps to create a three-jump combination, or it can be performed on its own as a transition.

FEATURES — Additions that make elements more difficult and increase the base value.

FLIP JUMP (F) — A toe-pick-assisted jump taken off from the back inside edge of one foot and landed on the back outside edge of the opposite foot.

FLYING SPIN — A spin in which the entrance is a jump. No rotation on the ice is permitted before the take off.

FOOTWORK — A series of steps and turns that immediately follow one another, executed in time to the music and choreographically related to each other. Also referred to as a step sequence, footwork is intended to show the precision and dexterity of the skater's movements.

FREE DANCE — The free dance is relatively unrestricted, and skaters select the mood and tempo as long as it is danceable. Couples (for senior level) are allowed four minutes to display their full range of technical skills, interpretation and inventiveness. The free dance is preceded by the rhythm dance.

FREE SKATE — The free skate does not have required elements, so skaters select their own music and theme, and choreograph the many difficult jumps, spins and step sequences that best display their technical and artistic skills. The free skate (for senior level) has a length of four minutes for women, men and pairs. It is preceded by the short program.

HAND-TO-HAND LOOP LIFT (4Li) — A press lift in which the man raises his partner, who is in front of him and facing the same direction, above his head. She remains facing the same direction, in the sitting position with her hands behind her, while her partner supports her by the hands.

JUMP COMBINATION — A jump element consisting of two or three listed jumps where the landing foot of one jump is the take off foot of the next jump.

JUMP ELEMENT — An individual jump, a jump combination or a jump sequence. Singles and pairs skaters

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are limited in the number of jump elements they can attempt in a program.

JUMP SEQUENCE (+SEQ) — A jump element consisting of two or three jumps of any number of revolutions in which the second and/or third jump is an Axel-type jump with a direct step from the landing curve of the first/second jump into the take-off curve of the Axel jump.

LASSO LIFT (5Li) — A hand-to-hand overhead lift in which the man swings his partner from one side of his body, around behind his head and into a raised position. Once in the lift, the woman is in a position facing the same direction as the man. There are five different types of lasso lifts, determined by the take off: toe lasso (5TLi), step in lasso (5SLi), backward lasso (5BLi), reverse lasso (5RLi) and Axel lasso (5ALi).

LAYBACK SPIN (LSp) — Generally performed by women, the layback spin is an upright spin in which the head and shoulders are leaning backward with the back arched.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY — A measure of the complexity of an element. Skaters can achieve higher levels of difficulty through the use of features. Levels range from basic (no features) to four (four or more features). The basic level has the lowest base value; level four has the highest base value.

LISTED JUMP — A jump that is listed in the scale of values. Listed jumps are defined by their take off. There are six types of listed jumps: toe loop, Salchow, loop, flip, Lutz and Axel.

LOBE — The pattern made on the ice by an edge or steps, forming an arc of a circle that starts and finishes on an axis.

LOOP — A one-foot movement where the skater skates an oval pattern within a circle without changing direction or edge. The entry and exit of the loop must cross.

LOOP JUMP (Lo) — An edge jump, taken off from a back outside edge and landed on the same back outside edge.

LUTZ JUMP (Lz) — A toe-pick-assisted jump taken off from a back outside edge and landed on the back outside edge of the opposite foot. The skater glides backward on a wide curve, taps his toe pick into the ice, and rotates in the opposite direction of the curve. The jump is named for its creator, Alois Lutz.

MIRROR SKATING — Any movements in pairs skating or ice dance where the partners perform the same movements but in opposite directions, thus creating a mirror-image effect.

NATIONAL QUALIFYING SERIES — The National Qualifying Series is a group of competitions that meet

an established standard and are held across the country throughout the summer and fall. Singles, pairs and ice dance athletes compete in a self-determined number of these competitions with only their highest total score from a single competition counting towards the overall National Qualifying Series Rankings. Skaters compete in the series to qualify for a sectional singles final, the U.S. Ice Dance Final and the U.S. Pairs Final.

NON-BASIC SPIN POSITION — Any position that does not fit the definition of a camel, sit or upright position.

NON-LISTED JUMPS — Jumps that are not listed in the scale of values. They do not count as jump elements and can be used throughout a program to enhance the choreography. Such jumps are typically one revolution or less.

NONQUALIFYING COMPETITION — Also referred to as a club competition, nonqualifying events are those that are not part of the U.S. qualifying structure leading up to the U.S. Championships.

NOT TOUCHING STEP SEQUENCE — A step sequence in ice dance where the partners remain as close together as possible but must not touch. It must incorporate mirror and/or matching footwork. The pattern can be midline (NtMiSt), diagonal (NtDiSt), circular (NtCiSt) or serpentine (NtSeSt).

ONE FOOT TURNS SEQUENCE (OFT) — An element in ice dance where difficult turns are performed on one foot by each partner.

OVERHEAD LIFTS — Pairs lifts in which one or both of the man's arms are fully extended as he holds his partner overhead. The man does not let go of his partner during the lift, except momentarily during changes in her position or during the dismount.

PAIR SPIN (PSp or PCoSp) — A spin skated by the team together in any hold. It should be performed on the spot around a common axis on one foot by each partner simultaneously.

PAIRS LIFTS — Lifts done in pairs skating, which are classified into five groups. Group 1 = armpit hold position. Group 2 = waist hold position. Group 3 = hand-to-hip or upper part of the leg (above the knee) position. Group 4 = hand-to-hand press position. Group 5 = hand-to-hand lasso position. Senior pairs teams are most likely to perform lifts from Groups 3, 4 and 5.

PATTERN DANCE — A dance that has prescribed rhythms and specific steps that must be done in an exact manner with exact placement on the ice.

PATTERN DANCE ELEMENT — A series of prescribed steps, turns and movements in a rhythm dance.

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PATTERN DANCE TYPE STEP SEQUENCE (PST)— A partial step sequence in a rhythm dance performed on the ice surface as prescribed for the season.

PLATTER LIFT (3Li) — A hand-to-hip lift in which the man raises his partner overhead with his hands resting on her hips. She is horizontal to the ice, facing the back of the man, in a platter position.

PRESS LIFT (4Li) — A hand-to-hand overhead lift in which the man presses the woman into the air above his head. The partners may be face to face on the take off, or they may both be traveling backward, with the woman in front of the man.

PROTOCOL — A term used to describe the individual score sheet that each skater receives after completing a program in a competition judged using the international judging system. This score sheet shows every element attempted in a program, how the element was called by the technical panel and scored by the judges in grade of execution, the points received for each element, and the program component scores received from the judges.

QUALIFYING SEASON — The U.S. Qualifying Season begins in the summer with the National Qualifying Series. It continues in November with Sectional Singles Finals, the U.S. Pairs Final and the U.S. Ice Dance Final, and ends in January with the U.S. Figure Skating Championships and the naming of the National High Performance Development Team. This series was updated prior to the 2022-23 season.

QUALIFYING STRUCTURE — The U.S. Qualifying Structure refers to both the National Qualifying Series and the U.S. Qualifying Season. The conclusion of the U.S. Qualifying Season is the U.S. Championships or being named to the National High Performance Development Team.

QUARTER (q) — A jump or throw jump that is landed on a quarter. Such a jump is indicated on a skater protocol with a “q” symbol and receives full base value.

REFEREE — The official at a competition who has full authority over all aspects of the event and is the chairperson for the panel of judges. It is the referee’s responsibility to ensure that all rules are observed, that a high standard of judging is maintained, and that all technical aspects of the competition are satisfactory.

RHYTHM DANCE — Previously called the short dance, the rhythm dance consists of required elements including dance lifts, twizzles, step sequences and sequences or sections of pattern dances. Couples choose their own music and choreography, but it must conform to the specified rhythms and requirements.

ROCKER — A turn made on one foot from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge maintaining the same character, i.e. outside to outside or inside to inside, where the body rotation is in the same direction as the natural progress.

S STEP — A turn from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge, from one foot to the other, in which the curve of the exit edge is in the opposite direction from the curve of the entry edge. The change of foot is from outside edge to inside edge or from inside edge to outside edge. (Internationally, this is known as a choctaw.)

SALCHOW (S) — An edge jump taken off from the back inside edge of one foot and landed on the back outside edge of the opposite foot. Created by Ulrich Salchow.

SANCTION — Permission or approval given by U.S. Figure Skating or the ISU to member clubs, competition organizers, individuals or national federations to conduct competitions, shows or events featuring eligible athletes. Registered U.S. Figure Skating athletes must only participate in sanctioned activities to remain eligible.

SCRATCH SPIN — An upright spin. After entering from a controlled forward outside edge, the spin begins on a back inside edge. Gradual acceleration begins by moving and placing the free foot toward the top of the skating knee and drawing the arms close to the body. The spin exits into a backward outside edge.

SECTIONAL SINGLES FINAL — The second event of the U.S. Qualifying Season for singles skaters held in all three sections. Based on placement, skaters advance from this event to either the U.S. Figure Skating Championships or the National High Performance Development Team, depending on level, minimum technical qualifying score and placement.

SET OF SEQUENTIAL TWIZZLES (SqTw) — An element performed in the rhythm dance consisting of at least two twizzles skated simultaneously by both partners with up to one step in between the twizzles.

SET OF SYNCHRONIZED TWIZZLES (SyTw) — An element performed in the free dance consisting of at least two twizzles performed simultaneously by both partners with a minimum of two and up to four steps in between the first and second twizzles.

SHADOW SKATING — Any movement in pairs skating performed by both partners simultaneously while skating in close proximity.

SHORT LIFTS — Dance lifts with a maximum duration of eight seconds. There are four different types: stationary (StaLi), straight line (SILi), curve (CuLi) and rotational (RoLi).

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SHORT PROGRAM — Official name for a 2:40 program in singles and pairs that consists of seven required elements and is set to music of the skater's choice. No more than seven required elements may be done. It is followed by the free skate.

SIDEWAYS LEANING SPIN (LSp) — An upright spin in which the head and shoulders are leaning sideways and the upper body is arched. The position of the free leg is optional.

SIT SPIN (SSp) — A spin that is done in a "sitting" position with the upper part of the skating leg at least parallel to the ice.

SKATING SKILLS — One of the test structures in U.S. Figure Skating, skating skills tests help develop all basic fundamental edges and turns while emphasizing edge quality, extension, quickness and power.

SPIN (Sp) — A rotating movement performed on one foot on the spot.

SPIRAL — A position with one blade on the ice and the free leg (including knee and foot) higher than hip level. Spiral positions are classified according to the skating leg (right or left), edge (outside or inside), direction (forward or backward) and position of the free leg (backward, forward or sideways).

SPIRAL SEQUENCE (ChSp) — A sequence of spirals incorporated into a pattern across the ice connected by other steps and movements.

STAR LIFT (3Li) — A hand-to-hip lift in which the man raises his partner by her hip, from his side into the air. Her legs are in a scissor position, with either one of her hands touching his shoulder, or both hands free.

STARTING ORDER — The result of the draw that lists the order in which the athletes will compete and the group in which each athlete will warm up prior to competition.

STEP SEQUENCE — A sequence of steps and turns that immediately follow one another, executed in time to the music and choreographically related to each other. In singles and pairs events, a step sequence (StSq) must fully utilize the ice surface, but has no other restrictions on the pattern. In ice dance, a step sequence may be in hold or not touching and must be midline (MiSt), diagonal (DiSt), circular (CiSt) or serpentine (SeSt), with specific requirements varying from season to season.

STROKING — Fluid movement used to gain speed in which a skater pushes off back and forth from the inside edge of one skate to the inside edge of the other skate.

TECHNICAL PROGRAM — Former term for the short program.

THREE-TURN — A turn from a forward to backward (or backward to forward) edge that is executed on

one foot in the direction of the curve, from an outside edge to an inside edge or vice versa, with the exit curve continuing on the same lobe as the entry curve. The pattern the turn creates on the ice looks like a "3".

THROW JUMP (Th) — A pairs move in which the male partner assists the female partner into the air, she then executes 1, 2, 3 or 4 revolutions and lands skating backward.

TOE LOOP (T) — A toe-pick-assisted jump that takes off and lands on the same back outside edge.

TOE PICKS — The teeth at the front of the blade used primarily for jumping.

TWIST LIFTS (Tw) — The group of pairs lifts where both partners begin skating backward, and the man lifts his partner over his head and tosses her in the air. While airborne, she will execute full revolutions. The man catches his partner and places her back on the ice.

TWIZZLE — A traveling turn on one foot with one or more rotations, which is quickly rotated with a continuous (uninterrupted) action. The weight remains on the skating foot with the free foot in any position during the turn, and then placed beside the skating foot to skate the next steps.

UNDER-ROTATED JUMP (<) — A jump or throw jump that is missing rotation of one-quarter revolution or more, but less than one-half revolution. Such a jump is indicated on a skater protocol with a "<" symbol and receives the value in column V in the scale of values.

UPRIGHT SPIN (Usp) — Any position with the skating leg extended or almost extended that is not a camel position.

U.S. ICE DANCE FINAL AND U.S. PAIRS FINAL — The second event of the U.S. Qualifying Season for ice dancers and pairs skaters. Based on placement, skaters advance from this event to either the U.S. Figure Skating Championships or the National High Performance Development Team, depending on level, minimum technical qualifying score and placement.