

Go figure

In the world of competitive sports, figure skating has always been unique, with athletes awarded for things like originality and style.

Skating in style

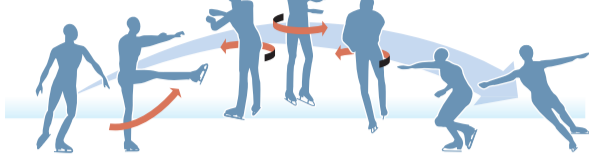
All technique elements – steps, jumps, spirals and spins – require great accuracy and concentration to appear effortless.

Death spiral



This move – in which the woman rotates parallel to the ice while holding her partner's hand – is a required element of the pairs' short program.

Double axel



The only jump with a forward takeoff, the double axel is required in the ladies' short program and the men can do either a double or triple. The jump was invented by Norwegian skater Axel Paulsen.

Boot & blade

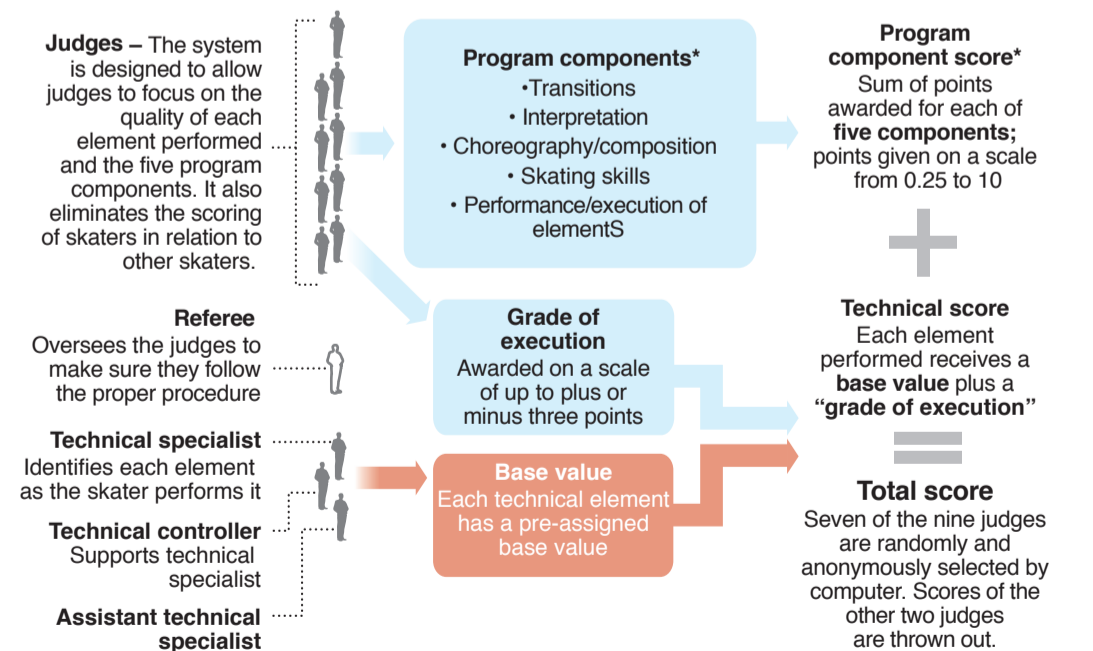


Icy performance

EVENT	COMPETITION PROGRAMS	TIME LIMIT (minutes)
Men's and women's individual Form, style, strength, technique and the ability to perform under pressure are essential for this competition.	Short – Skater must perform eight elements – three jumps, three spins and two fast step sequences – in any order to their own music. The 24 highest-scoring skaters advance.	2:50
	Free – Few restrictions or required elements. Skater selects music and theme and choreographs a program.	Women: 4:00 Men: 4:30
Pairs Performed in unison by partners comprised of overhead lifts, throw jumps and spins. The key to pair skating is exact timing and simultaneous movements.	Short – Pair must perform eight elements – one hand-to-hand lift, one throw twist (either double or triple), one throw jump (either double or triple), one solo jump, solo spins (done in unison), pair spins, death spiral and spiral step sequence – in any order.	2:50
	Free – Few restrictions or required elements; pair chooses their own instrumental music and choreographs a program that best display their team and individual strengths.	4:30
Ice dancing Performed in pairs but unlike pairs skating the emphasis is on rhythm, interpretation of the music and precise steps. No jumps or throws are done. Skaters remain in contact almost throughout the event.	Compulsory – All pairs perform the same selected dance: rhythm and specific steps must be done in an exact manner with exact placement on the ice.	Depends on selection
	Original – Pairs are given a prescribed rhythm, and they must create an original version of the dance with moves of their choice.	2:00
	Free – Few restrictions or required elements. Pairs choreograph their own routine to music of their choice.	4:00

How to figure

The International Skating Union introduced a new scoring system that took effect internationally in the 2005 season intended to shift focus away from the judges and onto the skaters.



SOURCES: International Olympic Committee; Vancouver Organizing Committee; International Skating Union; "Sports: The Complete Visual Reference," Francois Fortin

Peter Santilli, Chris Kaeser • AP



<AP> OLY 2010 FIGURE SKATING 011510: Graphic profiles the winter sport of figure skating; 3c x 14 1/14 inches; 146 mm x 361.95 mm; with any related figure skating story; SVD, CK, PCS; ETA 1:30 p.m. <AP>



Retransmission of a graphic originally posted Dec. 28.