***Amarillo Ice Skating School***

***“Figure Skating 101” Workshop \* September 7, 2019***

DEFINITIONS AND FUN FACTS FOR SOME OF THE DISCIPLINES IN FIGURE SKATING

***Compulsory Figures and Special Figures***

Definition (from -https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compulsory\_figures):

**Compulsory figures** or **school figures** were formerly a segment of figure skating and gave the sport its name. They are the "circular patterns which skaters trace on the ice to demonstrate skill in placing clean turns evenly on round circles.”

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special\_figures:

\***Special figures** were a component of figure skating in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Like compulsory figures, special figures involved tracing patterns on the ice with the blade of one ice skate. This required the skater to display significant balance and control while skating on one foot.

While compulsory figures were standard patterns derived from the figure 8, the special figures were elaborate patterns of the skaters' own invention. These designs included rosettes, stars, crosses, and other elaborate curlicues. The building blocks for special figures included not only the elements of the standard compulsory figures, but shapes known as beaks, spectacles, and cross-cuts.

Fun Figure Facts and Websites:

\*The axel jump (the most difficult single jump) was created as a special figure! (by Axel Paulsen, in 1882.)

\*Forty-one school figures were adopted in 1897 and used until 1990 in proficiency testing and competitions.

\*The ISU (International Skating Union—the governing body for international competitions in figure skating) voted to eliminate compulsory figures from competition beginning in 1990.

\*A figure skating session known as “Patch” was where skaters practiced their figures (because each skater was given their own “patch” of ice for that practice session).

\*In 2015 the World Figure Sport Society was created to preserve compulsory figures by reintroducing compulsory figures as well as special figures through festivals and competitions.

\*You can watch the World Figure & Fancy Skating Championships in Vail, Colorado by live feed on September 26-29, 2019 at <https://worldfiguresport.org/about.html>.

\*The current World Figure competitions are done on black ice so it is easier to see the tracings on the ice (for the skaters and the spectators).

\*1984 Winter Olympics coverage explaining figures and special figures:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jU9Hy1upUr0>

***Moves in the Field (“MIF”)***

Definition (from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moves_in_the_field>):

Following the abolition of compulsory figures from international competition in 1990, figure skating federations in several countries developed these drills to teach the same elements as compulsory figures within a free skating format.Whereas skaters formerly learned advanced turns such as brackets, rockers and counters by doing them in compulsory figures, now those elements are taught in the context of standard step sequences with an emphasis on power, carriage, and flow, rather than on tracing precise patterns on the ice.

Notes*:*

\*Moves in the Field skills follow specific patterns as detailed in the US Figure Skating rule book.

\*The “field” is the entire ice rink rather than a “patch” of ice used for figures.

***Ice Dance***

Definition (fromhttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice\_dance):

"Ice dancing derives from the turn-of-the-century Viennese and English attempts to translate the waltz and other ballroom dances to the ice and to devise ballroom-style performances suitable for skates".

Notes:

Compulsory ice dances, or “set pattern dances,” are specific step sequences completed in a specific pattern on the ice. Ice Dance requires skaters to have good quality edges, power, speed, flow and grace across the ice, proper posture and rhythm, while skating steps in time to the music.

Ice dancing events we see on television are not “set pattern dances” as described above, they are considered “free dances.” Free dances include choreography and music chosen by the skaters and do not follow any specific pattern although they must include specific elements such as dance spins, dance lifts, twizzles, etc.

Fun Facts:

\*Set pattern dances only go counter clockwise around the rink.

\*Ice Dance became an event in the World Championships in 1952.

\*Ice Dance became a Winter Olympic event in 1976.

\*The 2009-10 season was the last time compulsory dances were skated as the first phase of ice dancing competitions.

***Freeskating (or “Freestyle”)***

Definition (from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free\_skating):

According to the ISU, a free skating program for men and women single skaters "consists of a well balanced program of Free Skating elements, such as jumps, spins, steps and other linking movements executed with a minimum of two footed skating in harmony with music of the Competitor’s choice".

Fun Facts:

\*Sonja Henie (1928, 32 and 36 Olympic Champion/10 time World Champ from Norway) introduced white skates and shorter skating skirts (rather than street length skirts) for female skaters.

\*American ballet dancer and figure skater, Jackson Haines, is considered the Father of Modern Figure Skating. (He introduced: graceful programs rather than a more rigid, formal style skated in Europe; skating to music; and screwing blades into the skating boot. Also, he invented the sit spin.)

\*Ulrich Salchow, ten-time world champion from Sweden, first performed the salchow jump in competition in 1909.

\*Figure skating was originally part of the Summer Olympic Games in 1908 (in London), 16 years before the first Winter Olympics.

***Stroking***

Definition: (from <https://skateamherstburg.ca/sp_faq/what-is-stroking/>): The term “stroke” refers to a push of the blade so stroking basically just means skating. During stroking lessons, skaters work on blade pushes, posture, speed, technique, and knee bend.

Notes:

\*Stroking exercises are a great way to improve efficiency of each stroke on the ice; there is no set curriculum for stroking exercises…the possibilities are endless!

\*“Stroking” is a great way to warm up muscles before jumping and spinning; skaters should do several laps of stroking before each freestyle or dance workout to avoid injury.

***Skating Beyond the Basic Skills Curriculum***

\*There is more to skating than just the basic skills program! The basic skills curriculum is designed for an easy transition into freestyle, MIF, and/or dance. *(MIF and Dance patterns are available from the instructors…if you would like to use a book, just ask!)*

\*Each discipline has a progressively difficult curriculum:

-Freeskating and Moves in the Field levels are: pre-preliminary, preliminary, pre-juvenile, juvenile, intermediate, novice, junior, and senior.

-Dance levels are: preliminary, pre-bronze, bronze, pre-silver, silver, pre-gold, and gold; there are at least 3 dances in each level.

\*Once a skater successfully completes all levels in a discipline, he/she is recognized by the USFSA (United States Figure Skating Association—our sport’s governing body) as a Gold Medalist.

\*Skating clubs such as Dallas and Oklahoma City have test sessions for USFSA members to test in MIF, freestyle, and ice dance.

***IMPORTANT Skating Tips***

\*When skating, never “cut in front of” another skater…if you are the one to cross paths, go behind the other person just as you would if driving a car or riding a bike or scooter. The other skater may not notice you cutting in front of them, so go behind them to avoid a collision.

\*Most skating clubs have separate skating sessions for freeskate, MIF, and dance and may even offer stroking sessions. During a freeskate session, jumps are done at the ends of the rink and spins are done in the middle.

\*Off-ice warm up is crucial in avoiding on-ice injuries. Warming up off ice prepares muscles for a workout in a colder environment.

\*Spins are a great way to warm up muscles and get a feel for the ice. Never go out on a freestyle session and immediately start jumping without proper warm ups through stroking and spinning!

\*Never skate with gum or food in your mouth.

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**Come skate with us as we have fun exploring**

**some of the figure skating disciplines!**

**Saturday, September 7, 2019**

**3:15-4:15 (after group lessons)**

***Planned itinerary***:

3:15-3:30 Introduction to Figures

3:30-3:45 Introduction to Stroking and Moves in the Field

3:45-4:00 Introduction to Ice Dance

4:00-4:15 Introduction to Freeskating