

# ISU Synchronized Skating Media Guide

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## Contents

<b>ISU Contact</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>ISU Office Holders and ISU Members</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Rules and Regulations</b> .....	<b>4</b>
General Rules.....	4
Championships Officials.....	4
Technical Panel.....	5
Judges.....	5
Technical Score.....	5
Presentation Score/Program Component Score.....	6
Final Score.....	7
Availability of Data and Statistics .....	7
Officials Accountability .....	7
Most important changes accepted by the ISU Congress 2018.....	7
Required Elements.....	8
Short Program.....	8
Free Skating Program.....	9
<b>ISU Events and Championships Calendar for 2021/22</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Media Accreditation</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Medal Tables</b> .....	<b>11</b>
ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships.....	11
<b>Medalists</b> .....	<b>11</b>
ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships.....	11
<b>Medal Tables</b> .....	<b>12</b>
ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships .....	12
<b>Medalists</b> .....	<b>12</b>
ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships .....	12

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## Introduction

Originally called “Precision Team Skating”, Synchronized Skating was introduced in the 1950s. The ISU officially recognized the discipline in 1992 and changed the name in 1999 to what it is known as today. The first ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships took place in 2000 and were held in Minneapolis (USA). It is the only competitive Team Sport within the ISU, and a team consists of 16 skaters (plus up to 4 alternates).

It is a highly technical form of Figure Skating characterized by speed, precisions, unison, and intricate formations, synchronized skating elements, difficult footwork, spectacular lifts and exciting transitions.

The first ever ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships took place in Helsinki, Finland in March 2013. The event was initially to be held every two years but from the 2017 season on, it will be held as an annual event.

## ISU Office Holders and ISU Members

The list of [ISU Office Holders](#) and the [ISU Members](#) are updated as and when necessary.

## Rules and Regulations

### General Rules

ISU Championships are held in accordance with the International Skating Union (ISU) Regulations. The ISU Judging System used at the Figure Skating events is the one adopted by the 2004 ISU Congress. It is constructed as follows:

### Championships Officials

For all ISU Championships the following Officials are necessary:

1. A Referee
2. A panel of minimum five (5), if possible and a maximum of nine (9) Judges
3. A Technical Controller
4. A Technical Specialist
5. An Assistant Technical Specialist
6. A Data Operator
7. A Replay Operator

### Technical Panel

The Technical Panel is composed of the Technical Controller, the Technical Specialist and the Assistant Technical Specialist, each one from different ISU Members (countries). A Data Operator assists them for recording purposes. An instantaneous slow-motion video replay system operated by a Replay Operator supports the Technical Panel in the identification of the performed elements.

The Technical Specialist, assisted by the Assistant Technical Specialist, identifies and calls the performed elements and the specific Levels of Difficulty of certain performed elements (e.g. Group Lift Element, Intersection Element, Linear Element/Block or Line, Move Element, No Hold Element, Pair Element, Rotating Element/Circle or Wheel etc.). He/She also identifies illegal or additional elements and falls.

The Technical Controller authorizes and/or corrects all calls, supervises the Data Operator and can propose corrections, if necessary. In case of disagreement, the majority among the three Officials prevails.

### Judges

Under the ISU Judging System (the same as in Figure Skating and Ice Dance), the Judges focus entirely on evaluating the quality of each element performed (Technical Score) and the quality of the performance (Presentation Score).

Their scores will be based on specific quality criteria for each Element and will provide a comprehensive assessment of each Team's skills and performance, without comparing each Team in relation to all others. The Judge enters the scores through a touch screen unit. At ISU Events Judges may review, in real time, certain Elements of the Teams' performances by means of an instantaneous Video Replay System.

There will be a panel of a maximum of 9 Judges per segment. The scores of these 9 Judges will form the result. Out of these scores, the highest and lowest score of each Element and Program Component are ignored and the average will be taken from the remainder, generating the trimmed mean (average score).

### Technical Score

The score for the Element is composed of a "Base Value" of each element (Technical Panel) and the so-called "Grade of Execution - GOE" (Judges).

A group of experts, including experienced skaters and coaches, have worked out a summary list of each Element's Base Value as well as its "Level of Difficulty". The level of points of the Base Value depends on the difficulty of the Element.

Some elements such as Pivoting Block, Traveling Wheels, Linear Elements, Move Element, etc. are further broken down depending on their "Level of Difficulty".

These element Base Values and Levels of Difficulty ensure that Teams receive the appropriate and consistent credit for every element performed. The Base Value of all

recognized elements are reviewed and published annually by the ISU in a Communication.

The name of the identified element will be listed instantaneously on the Judge's screen. The Judge then simply grades the quality of the element on a scale of +5, +4, +3, +2, +1, 0, -1, -2, -3, -4, -5. With this scale and the resulting "quality judgment", the Judge can either increase or decrease the Base Value of each performed Element.

The trimmed mean is then calculated by deleting the highest and the lowest values and calculating the average of the remaining values. In the case when there are fewer than five (5) Judges, the highest and lowest values are not deleted from the calculation. This average will become the final GOE of an individual Element. The panel's score for each Element is determined by adding the trimmed mean GOE of this Element to its Base Value. The panel's scores for all the Elements are added giving thus the Total Elements Score which is the Technical Score.

### Presentation Score/Program Component Score

In addition to the Technical Score, the Judges will award points on a scale from 0.25 to 10.00 with increments of 0.25 for the Presentation Score/Program Component Score to grade the overall presentation of the performance with five (5) Program Components: Skating Skills, Transitions, Performance, Composition, and Interpretation of the Music.

The Program Component Score for Synchronized Skating (Short Program and Free Skating) comprises of:

- **Skating Skills** is defined by the overall cleanness and sureness, edge control and flow over the ice surface demonstrated by a command of the skating vocabulary (edges, turns, steps, etc.), the clarity of technique and the use of effortless power to accelerate and vary speed.
- **Transitions** which is the varied and purposeful use of intricate footwork, positions, movements and holds that link all Elements.
- **Performance** is the involvement of the skater(s) physically, emotionally and intellectually as they deliver the intent of the music and composition e.g. projection, carriage, variety, contrasts and personality).
- **Composition** is an intentionally developed and/or original arrangement of all types of movements according to the principles of musical phrase, space, pattern and structure (e.g. idea, concept, vision, mood, pattern, multidimensional use of space, phrasing, originality, design).
- **Interpretation of the Music/Timing** is the personal, creative and genuine translation of the rhythm, character and content of music to movement on ice (e.g. timing, expression of the music, use of finesse, relationship between the skaters).

The panel's points for each Program Component are then multiplied by a factor as follows (same for Junior and Senior):

**Short Program: 0.8**

**Free Skating: 1.6**

The factored results are rounded to two (2) decimal and added. The sum is the Presentation Score/Program Component Score.

### Final Score

The Total Segment Score is obtained from the Technical Score plus the Presentation Score/Program Component Score, after having subtracted any deduction (for example 1.0 for a fall of one person). Then, the Short Program and the Free Skating scores are added together to form the final score. The Team with the highest total score wins.

### Availability of Data and Statistics

At the end of each segment, a list will be published which includes all relevant scoring data for Teams.

Under the ISU Judging System there is far more data available to analyze than before. This data can help the National Federations, athletes and coaches to improve future performances.

The media, skating fans and general public can find statistics and detailed data on the ISU website: [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org)

### Officials Accountability

The Teams performances are video recorded and can be reviewed on DVD at any time.

A computer checks and identifies possible anomalies of the Technical Panel or the Judges. If anomalies are identified action is taken. Officials who make repeated errors are subject to sanctions.

### Most important changes accepted by the ISU Congress 2018

- 1) World Ranking System will be used at all Synchronized Skating Championships starting in 2019.
- 2) Grade of Execution (GOE): increase the scoring range from 7 to 11 with the introduction of a wider Grade of Execution score from -3/+3 to -5/+5.
- 3) Illegal / Elements / Movements: in order to eliminate unnecessary restrictions, the list would consist of only dangerous movements:
  - i) Illegal lifts – All lifts where the lifted Skater(s) is in a totally vertical sustained position with the top of their head towards the ice
  - ii) Intersections incorporating back spirals
  - iii) Flying camel spin executed by the entire Team
  - iv) Split jump through the point of intersection
- 4) Two new Elements have been introduced;
  - a. Artistic Element – which will be an easily recognized shape (Block, Circle, Line, Wheel) with a variety of interesting Features
  - b. Twizzle Element – a series of at least two (2) twizzles

## Required Elements

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the [ISU Communication 2236](#) regarding Well Balanced Programs as well as [ISU Communication 2238](#) regarding the Novice category will remain valid for the 2021/22 season. All categories will keep their WBP for the 2021/22 season for both the Short Program and Free Skating.

## Short Program

The Short Program is a program of up to 2 min 50 seconds duration that includes specific required Elements that are selected each season, by the ISU Synchronized Skating Technical Committee, from a list of Synchronized Skating Elements (similar to the required Elements in Figure Skating). The sequence of Elements is optional. Synchronized Skating Elements consists of, but are not limited to, shapes that are easily identified by the average audience member.

**For the season 2021/22 the following five required Elements were selected:**

### SENIOR Short Program

- 1. Intersection Element**
  - Angled Intersection
  - Additional Feature (Point of Intersection) is required
- 2. Move Element**
  - One (1) fm executed by the entire team
  - Must be the same fm
- 3. No Hold Element**
  - Additional Feature (Step Sequence) is required
- 4. Pivoting Element – Block**
  - Pivoting must be executed in three (3) lines
- 5. Traveling Element – Circle**

### JUNIOR Short Program

- 1. Intersection Element**
  - Whip Intersection
  - Additional Feature (Point of Intersection) is required
- 2. Move Element**
  - One (1) fm executed by the entire team
  - Must be the same fm
- 3. No Hold Element**
  - Additional Feature (Step Sequence) is required
- 4. Traveling Element – Wheel**
  - Must be in a three (3) spoke configuration
- 5. Twizzle Element**
  - A series of two (2) twizzles, one (1) in each rotational direction is required

NOTE: The No Hold Element and Twizzle Element may not be executed one after the other

## Free Skating Program

The Free Skating program contains different Elements that are also selected from a list of Synchronized Skating Elements, and are linked together by a variety of transitional elements and moves. The free skating program for Senior is 4 min +/- 10 seconds in length. The free skating program for Junior is 3 min 30 seconds +/- 10 seconds in length.

**For the season 2021/22 the following required Elements were selected:**

### **SENIOR Free Skating (Nine Elements in total)**

**MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING EIGHT REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 1. Creative Element – Lift**
- 2. Group Lift Element - gliding with rotations**
- 3&4. Two (2) Different Intersection Elements**

Additional Feature (Point of Intersection) is optional and will be counted if executed correctly

- 5. Move Element**

Up to four (4) different fm's

- 6. No Hold Element**

Additional Feature (Step Sequence) is optional and will be counted if executed correctly

- 7. Pair Element**

- 8. Twizzle Element**

A series of two (2) twizzles, one (1) in each rotational direction is required

**PLUS A Choice of one (1) Element from Group A**

- 9. GROUP A**

**Artistic Element – Circle**

**OR**

**Artistic Element – Wheel**

NOTE: The No Hold Element and Twizzle Element may not be executed one after the other JUNIOR

### **JUNIOR Free Skating Program (Eight Elements in total)**

**MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING SEVEN REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 1&2. Two (2) Different Intersection Elements**

Additional Feature (Point of Intersection) is optional and will be counted if executed correctly

- 3. Move Element**

Up to four (4) different fm's

- 4. No Hold Element**



Additional Feature (Step Sequence) is optional and will be counted if executed correctly

- 5. Pivoting Element – Block**
- 6. Synchronized Spin Element**
  
- 7. Traveling Element - Circle  
PLUS A Choice of one (1) Element from Group A**
  
- 8. GROUP A**  
**Artistic Element – Line**  
OR  
**Artistic Element – Wheel**

## ISU Events and Championships Calendar for 2021/22

The full list of Synchronized Skating events is available on [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org)

March 2022		
17 - 19	ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships	Innsbruck, AUT
April 2022		
07 - 09	ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships	Hamilton, CAN

### Media Accreditation

The ISU recently launched the ISU Online Media Accreditation System for ISU Championships. The system is to be used by all media including writing press journalists, photographers, freelancers, television/radio non-right holders and right holders. Each individual creates their personalized profile in the system that will enable them to apply for accreditation to multiple Championships.

Television and radio right holders should contact the ISU Media Team in order to obtain access to the system.

Access the [ISU Online Media Accreditation System](#) now to apply for your media accreditation.

### Medal Tables

#### ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships

Overall

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Finland	9	11	7	27
2	Sweden	6	5	1	12
3	Russia	3	0	2	5
4	Canada	3	4	6	13
5	USA	0	1	5	6

### Medalists

#### ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships

The ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships 2020 and 2021 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results of the ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships 2019 are available [here](#).

Year	Place	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2022	Hamilton (CAN)	Canada – Team Supremes	Finland – Team Marigold Ice Unity	Finland – Team Helsinki Rockettes
2021	Zagreb (CRO)	Cancelled		
2020	Lake Placid (USA)	Cancelled		
2019	Helsinki (FIN)	Russia – Team Paradise	Finland – Team Marigold Ice Unity	Finland – Team Helsinki Rockettes
2018	Stockholm (SWE)	Finland – Marigold Ice Unity	Sweden – Surprise	Russia - Paradise
2017	Colorado Springs (USA)	Russia - Paradise	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	Canada - Nexxice

Year	Place	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2016	Budapest (HUN)	Russia - Paradise	Finland - Rockettes	USA - Haydenettes
2015	Hamilton (CAN)	Canada - Nexxice	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	Russia - Paradise
2014	Coumayeur (ITA)	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	Canada - Nexxice	Finland - Rockettes
2013	Boston (USA)	Finland - Team Unique	Canada - Nexxice	USA - Haydenettes
2012	Gothenburg (SWE)	Sweden - Team Surprise	Canada - Nexxice	USA - Haydenettes
2011	Helsinki (FIN)	Finland - Rockettes	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	USA - Haydenettes
2010	Colorado Springs (USA)	Finland - Rockettes	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	USA - Haydenettes
2009	Zagreb (CRO)	Canada - Nexxice	Finland - Team Unique	Sweden - Team Surprise
2008	Budapest (HUN)	Finland - Rockettes	Sweden - Team Surprise	Canada - Nexxice
2007	London (CAN)	Sweden - Team Surprise	USA - Miami University	Canada - Nexxice
2006	Prague (CZE)	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	Sweden - Team Surprise	Finland - Rockettes
2005	Gothenburg (SWE)	Sweden - Team Surprise	Finland - Rockettes	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity
2004	Zagreb (CRO)	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	Sweden - Team Surprise	Finland - Rockettes
2003	Ottawa (CAN)	Sweden - Team Surprise	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	Canada - Les Suprêmes
2002	Rouen (FRA)	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity	Sweden - Team Surprise	Canada - black ice
2001	Helsinki (FIN)	Sweden - Team Surprise	Finland - Rockettes	Canada - black ice
2000	Minneapolis (USA)	Sweden - Team Surprise	Canada - black ice	Finland - Marigold Ice Unity

## Medal Tables

### ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships

#### Overall

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Finland	4	3	1	8
2	Russia	3	2	3	8
3	USA	0	2	2	4
4	Canada	0	0	1	1

## Medalists

### ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships

The ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships 2021 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results of the ISU World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships 2020 are available [here](#).

Year	Place	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2022	Innsbruck (AUT)	Finland - Fintastic	USA - Skyliners	USA - Elite
2021	Lyon (FRA)	Cancelled		
2020	Nottingham (GBR)	Finland - Fintastic	Russia - Junost	Russia - Crystal Ice
2019	Neuchâtel (SUI)	Russia - Junost	Russia - Crystal Ice	USA - Team Skyliners
2018	Zagreb (CRO)	Russia - Junost	USA - Skyliners	Russia - Crystal Ice
2017	Mississauga (CAN)	Russia - Junost	Finland - Fintastic	Finland - Musketeers
2015	Zagreb (CRO)	Finland - Musketeers	Finland - Fintastic	Canada - Les Supremes
2013	Helsinki (FIN)	Finland - Musketeers	Finland - Fintastic	Russia - Junost