

Transitions or Connecting Moves

In the International Judging System what was referred to as "Connecting Steps or Elements" in the 6.0 judging system are now known as transitions. Ranging from simple crossovers to complex and very difficult step sequences can be combined with spirals, spread eagles, etc to link the jumps and spins in a complete program.

It is the job of the choreographer to devise connecting moves/transitions that serve as the glue that ties everything together rather than just filling the time and space between the program's "major highlights". While many skaters place little value on the connecting moves, it is these elements that truly unify and elevate a skater's technical abilities into an artistic expression of the music.

Common free skating elements used as connecting moves include:

➤ **Spiral**

A skater glides on one foot while elevating the free to at least hip level (horizontal), ranging in some very flexible skaters to almost vertical. Extra credit is given when the skater arches their back a little bit with their head looking up rather than down.

Spirals can be performed forward or backward, on either the right or left foot, and on the inside or outside edges.

➤ **Spread Eagle**

A Spread Eagle is a beautiful move, if properly executed, that requires the skates to be pointed in opposite directions on the same curve. The legs form an "upside-down V" shape. The heels point at each other allowing a separation of 28 to 48 inches depending on the flexibility of the skater and their height. While the skater faces perpendicular to

the curve, both feet are on the same curve making a single tracing on the ice.

A Spread Eagle can be performed on outside edges with the skater leaning "backwards" into the circle or inside edges with the skater leaning "forwards" into the circle.

Skaters who have mastered Spread Eagle are able to tuck their seat in while holding their back straight and head held up. Most skaters begin to learn this move by bending at the waist, which causes their "rear to stick out" in a very unattractive position.

➤ **Ina Bauer**

The Ina Bauer is a variation of the spread eagle, except when in a Bauer, the skater's feet do not describe a single straight tracing on the ice. The blades are parallel, but are offset by 10-24 inches, creating two parallel tracings on the ice.

The Trailing or back foot is always on an inside edge. The leading or front foot may be on a flat, outside or inside edge. The tracing will go straight or curve depending on the front edge. The true Ina Bauer requires the skater to bend backwards into a layback position.

➤ **Lunge**

In a lunge, the skater bends the skating knee while extends the free leg back over the tracing with the boot of the skate dragging on the ice. The skater's body should be in an upright position, the arms are usually extended artistically, and the freeleg straight rather than bent at the knee.

Lunges can be performed on either the right or left foot while traveling either forward or backward. It is very important

not to allow the blade catch on the ice in a back lunge.

It is possible to start with a forward lunge and perform a 3-turn while maintaining the lunge position, and finishing in a back lunge.

➤ **Shoot the Duck**

The shoot the duck requires the skater to bend their skating knee while extending the free leg in front. The goal is to achieve a full sitting position while balancing on one foot and to exit gracefully. The arm positions are optional so long as they are extended in an attractive position.

The Shoot-the-Duck is a classic sit spin position in which the free leg is parallel to the ice. The major difference is that the sit spin rotates around a center, while the Shoot-the-Duck is performed on a flat, outside, or inside edge that travels forward or backward.