

MITF Historical Perspective

By Claude Sweet

All figure skating events (free skating, moves, pair, compulsory dance, and free dance) are based on a skater's ability to perform test elements to a minimum acceptable skill level:

1. Basic inside and outside edges while skating forward and backward.
2. Basic changes of edge from inside to outside and outside to inside (serpentines)
3. Basic transitions from forward to backward and backward to forward initiated from inside and outside edges:
 - a. Basic 3's
 - b. Mohawks,
 - c. Rockers
 - d. Counters
 - e. Brackets
 - f. Choctaws
 - g. Loops

Most of elements listed above were skated as two and three lobe figures in the formal figure test structure. The compulsory dance and free dance test structure also incorporates most of the above elements as steps.

When figures were dropped as a testing requirement to enter competitions, it was with the idea that the Moves-in-the-Field (MITF) would provide skaters with the same skating abilities that had previously been achieved when both figure and free skating tests were required to qualify to enter competitions.

Some USFS officials claimed that the same skill sets could be achieved, but at a lower cost while eliminating the large

amount of time required to learn to lay-out the figures on a clean strip of ice when testing (figures had already been phased out of qualifying competitions).

Skaters previously passed a figure test and then spent 6 to 18 months of additional practice to enhance their skills to skate one or two competition seasons at that level.

Some of the competition events required skaters to compete doing figure groups that combined two figure test levels. Even the starting foot was a factor and it was drawn at the competition to eliminate any possibility of an advantage by skaters who have a strong or dominate starting foot.

MITF are not part of the USFSA competitive structure for qualifying competitions. Therefore, skaters rarely spend time and energy to correct the errors that exist when MITF tests are passed at the minimum mark.

Unfortunately, after just passing a test with the minimum passing score, too many skaters immediately rush to begin practicing the elements on the next MITF test rather than taking the time to correct the errors listed on their judging sheets.