Disciplines in Figure Skating

Figure skating in the Olympics is divided into the following events or disciplines:

**Individual (Singles) events for Ladies and Men**

Individual competition events for men and women ("Ladies" in the ISU rulebook), consist of performances of jumps, spins, step sequences, spirals, and other elements in programs to music of their own choosing.

**Pair Skating**

Pair skating is an event consisting of a team of a woman and a man. Pairs perform the same singles elements in unison plus specific pair - elements such as throw jumps; lifts; pair spins; death spirals, and other elements.

**Ice Dancing**

Ice dancing also is an event consisting of a team of a woman and a man skating together. The dance events consist of selected compulsory dances, plus an original dance to a selected tempo and a free dance to music of the skater’s choice.

Dancing differs from pairs in its focus on intricate footwork performed in dance holds, designed to interpret the music. Ice dance lifts must not go above the shoulder.

There are other disciplines of figure skating that are not included in the Olympics, however, they hold an annual World Championship.

**Synchronized skating**

Synchronized skating, for mixed-gender groups of 12 to 20 skaters. This discipline resembles a group form of ice dance with additional emphasis on precise formations of the group as a whole and complex transitions between formations.

The basic formations include wheels, blocks, lines, circles, and intersections. The close formations and need for the team to stay in unison add to the difficulty of the footwork performed by the skaters in these elements.

**Theatre On Ice**

Theatre On Ice is also as known as “ballet on ice” in Europe. This is a form of group skating that is less structured than synchronized skating and allows the use of props and theatrical costuming.

Other disciplines of figure skating not included in the Olympics or a World Championship include:

**Figures**

Compulsory figures, in which skaters use their blades to draw circles, figure 8s, and similar shapes in ice, and are judged on the accuracy and clarity of the figures and the cleanliness and exact placement of the various turns on the circles.

Figures were formerly included as a component of singles competitions but were eliminated from those events in 1990. Today figures are rarely taught or performed.

The United States was the last country to retain a separate test and competitive structure for compulsory figures, but the last national-level figures championship was held in 1999.

**Moves in The Field (MITF)**

Moves in The Field (known in the United Kingdom as field moves), have replaced compulsory figures as a discipline. The MITF were designed to teach the same turns and edge skills in the context of free skating movements instead of being constrained to the precise circles used to skate figures..

**Fours**

Fours, a discipline that is to pairs as pairs is to singles. A team of four skaters, consisting of two men and two women, perform singles and pairs elements in unison, as well as unique elements that involve all four skaters.

**Adagio**

Adagio skating, a form of pair skating most commonly seen in ice shows, where the skaters perform many spectacular acrobatic lifts but few or none of the singles elements which competitive pairs must perform.

**Special Figures**

In the early days of skating, Special Figures was a form of ice skating that preceded developing standard shapes and forms that became ultimately became known as "school figures".

Special Figures involved the tracing of elaborate and original designs on the ice.

**Acrobatic Skating**

Acrobatic skating, also known as "Acrobatics on ice" or "Extreme Skating", is a combination of circus arts, technical artistic gymnastics skills, and figure skating.