

WORLD SKATE THE NEW REGULATION AND ITS CONCEPTION

The value and usefulness of the regulation
for the evolution of artistic roller skating.

Nicola Genchi

(Chairman of Artistic Technical
Commission of World Skate)

Adaptation and literary revision:

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Abstract

This article presents the background, the conceptual foundation, the developmental process and the scope of the new Judging System that governs competitive artistic roller skating. The previous version left the judges with a high percentage of subjective decision regarding the skaters' performances, an issue that has been modified with the contribution of technology and generates, as an effect, greater objectivity, so that the athletes and their technical teams. They can plan their presentations, training and competitive participation with greater security in the justice of evaluations and qualifications, allowing other participants in the field to have a precise and universal framework to develop their roles.

Keywords

Artistic skating; Regulation; Conception; Generation; Participants of the Sport.

Author's foreword

The presentation of this article was possible after approximately fifteen years of work in an International Technical Committee that included, among various tasks, the one with the greatest responsibility: to draw up technical regulations for artistic skating.

Before this work, I was first a skater, then a national judge and an international judge to finally become part of the International Committee and become, today, its director. All this time in the world of sports has allowed me to have a fairly complete perspective and to witness the various changes, evolutions and regressions of the last forty years.

My personal experience with the Italian Federation, at the beginning of the 1990s, was fundamental in this process and very timely with respect to the analysis we are dealing with. In that period, the regulations became very demanding and the correct preparation of the judges led to an immediate technical improvement –back then, the regulations penalties had great impact–. In the course of the work, this interesting topic of penalties will be explored and how the way in which they are applied affects the sport and, consequently, the athlete.

That historic moment, which coincided with my commitment at the international level, represented an opportunity to understand the importance of the regulation as a tool that could help improve skating around the world and not just in one nation. At the international level, the judges were completely devoid of references: the scores were completely different, since the national regulations of origin of those judges were different and, therefore, also the analysis parameters. Total

chaos. Obviously, when it came time to work with colleagues, differences emerged with scores that sometimes differed by too many points. At first, I thought it was due to lack of knowledge, but then I realized that each judge judged by following the rules of their nation with full conscience.

How could this great problem be solved to a large extent? The first important and difficult task was to study the situation in each country. In this case, South America was the first place where I could make my ideas concrete. There I found fertile ground, to understand and a desire to change. But it was not easy to have a clearer perspective so that we could move from a current theory and practice to others that are more pragmatic and decisive in the evolution of sport.

The objective of this work is to clarify the dynamics behind the drafting of a regulation, the technical and management decisions that are taken, the motivations that drive them, and not least, to highlight how and how much a regulation can affect all the participants involved in a given sport.

Introduction

Artistic skating is a predominantly technical sport, classified within physical sports and competitive art. For this reason, technical skills, transitions of movement and technical elements, performance and choreography, configure the skater's performance.

The result of his long and complex fundamental process as an athlete is expressed on a rink where he is observed and his performance evaluated externally, by judges and technical panels. Therefore, the quality of the regulations by which they are governed is a variable of high value and necessity, because it enables them to make fairer decisions. Paradoxically, the evolution and freedom of the creation that a skater and his collaborators must adhere to depends on the clarity and precision of the rules that they must use to prepare for the competition.

It is common for the regulations of a sporting discipline to be seen as an obstacle, as an impediment, which leads to a negative reaction against it. Many experts within sports federations, deal long and deeply with training in its physical, technical, tactical and strategic aspects and the sports management of competitions. They do not deal with the same intensity with the letter of the regulation and its significance, the history of its configuration and the reason for its actuality. Sometimes they are blasted on comments, anecdotes and information from social networks or misleading rumors from colleagues who belong to non-federated associations or work abroad and not on rigorous information.

Consequently, we will try to establish the importance of the regulation and the deep and systematic work on its nature, structure, writing and

application. With this work it becomes an indispensable ally to successfully go through a sports season and, in a perspective of greater scope, that the desired sporting development occurs.

Knowledge about any human activity is based on the interaction of three basic disciplines: biology, economics and philology, which are presented on the basis of three pairs of constituent elements: the biological pair, *function-norm*; the economic pair, *conflict-rule* and the linguistic pair, *signification-system*. According to the moment of analysis, one element may prevail over the others, but at no time are they no longer present, configuring a complex relationship.

Taking artistic skating we can explain it as a human activity using these models, which will allow us to clarify why we dedicate this work to substantiate the value of the regulation.

Biologically, skating is a *function* very specific motor, with *rules* for how it is done. This *regulation* has been developed in the cultural evolution of this sporting practice and in the process of permanent change to which human actions are subjected. It could be said that on the *function* it was structured *technique*, as a way to overcome the biological and physical limitations – anatomy and physiology of the human being, the law of gravity, principles of action and reaction, etc.– and perform the *function* effectively and according to the *rules* established by the reference sports community.

However, these considerations are not enough, because the appearance of *conflict*: not all members of the community think and interpret in the same way how to skate, how to assess each established aspect of the discipline that is trying to standardize, as we have described above. At this moment there arises a need for *rule*, the element that dialogues with the *conflict* to overcome it, to make the appreciation, the judgment, the errors of interpretation, etc. more reasonable and less exhausting. In turn, rule and norm establish a strong link where the rule establishes, prescribed boundaries and the standardizes starting points.

And the rule requires, inexorably, the third pair: it needs a *system* specific language that can make common *meanings* to all agents in the field. The rules.

Hence, the technical application system in which we are working is an expression of this conjunction of complex and interwoven elements that make up the essence of artistic skating, to put the regulations on a level of necessary understanding and evaluation.

The history of the evolution of the regulation

Understanding the importance of the regulation can be carried out in a very stimulating way by adopting a diachronic methodological approach. This can be done by investigating the regulations of the recent past and analyzing the competition programs that were carried out according to those regulations until today.

The first World Artistic Skating Championship took place in 1947 in Washington DC, just after World War II. World Championships continued to be held on an interrupted basis until the late 1960s which has continued until the present.

Although artistic skating is a “young” sport, the time sequence allows us to study its development process supported by an interesting and varied amount of data. For example, in Italy, the first competitions were held at the end of the 19th century and, precisely in 1897, a social championship of the Club Veloce took place in Milan. More than a century of permanent development of the sport has passed, which allows us to have a large amount of material to analyze and understand the evolution produced in our sport, taking as a reference the three aspects explained above.

From the analysis of the various regulations that were used over the years, it is possible to understand their technical evolution and their insertion in the sports universe, both for historical knowledge, and to improve awareness of the advances that have occurred and the possible horizons.

Two difficult and important aspects to share are: the clarity of a regulation and its effectiveness. Based on the experience gained, writing a perfect

regulation is utopian and impossible, but getting closer to it and enabling a fuller and more satisfactory sporting practice is the challenge.

Let us analyze, always considering the historical axis of time, how the dominance of nations in our sport has changed over time. Germany, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, and Spain are the nations that have alternated in supremacy during the different periods of the history of our discipline.

But why is dominance lost or gained? Many historical aspects have been analyzed and one of them is certainly seen in the regulation and how it is applied.

The process of changing the regulation

Let's see what were the steps that were leading to the "revolution".

The central concept was *standardize* and regulation to have a single international regulations. Until a few years ago, each continent or subcontinent, and even each nation, had its own regulations. This issue that generated a conflict in international events and within the federations themselves.

We present below the different instances of the complex and arduous process that led us to the current reality. The order of these aspects is not linear or successive, since *function-norm*, *conflict-rule* and *signification-system*, constitute an inseparable whole, but fluctuating in their moments of attention or prevalence.

Development of a common and shared technical vocabulary

At this point a world opened. How could the same technical element have different names? How could there be a clear dialogue between experts when the technical terminology was already different? (*meaning-system*).

It seemed like a trivial fact, but it was productive to confront various realities, nations and cultures and make decisions about the technical words to use and make everyone use the same terms. The task presented itself difficult and ambitious for many. But, in all this, there was no desire for dominant power to impose decision. Simple there was the fundamental principle of language and terminological uniformity that was really lacking.

An example of this unification process is the name of a jump that is universally called the Toe-Loop today. This jump had several names, to be exact, four, if we consider the Toe - Walley, even without going into these technical details (*conflict-rule*):

- Toe - Loop
- Metz
- Mapes.

In short, a terminology standardization work was undertaken that has allowed us to delve into some topics and definitions to study them in detail and clarify them as much as possible.

Correction of technical standards

This was, perhaps, the most interesting work that led us to enter the articles and paragraphs of all the regulations, to change and/or add rules that were at the benefit of the sport and the final product, eliminating some that were obsolete.

The principle of the work has always been to have rules that are suitable for skaters and interesting and stimulating for coaches, choreographers and all experts (*norm-rule relationship*).

It was and still is important not to lose sight of the fact that the rules also have an impact on the software system and on the work of the judges and technical panels, being essential to balance all these aspects

So, we start with the analysis of the competitions, the videos, the work of the judges, the results of the competitions. During the years of work in the International Technical Committee, performing, simultaneously, the function of referee of high-level competitions, we appreciated that the regulations did not always work and began to propose small changes. When understanding that the world of skating, from the leaders down to

the grassroots, the skaters, would not have accepted major changes to the consolidated rules for approximately thirty years and it would have been a mistake to immediately alter the rules. In this sense, the objective was very clear and, therefore, we began to move forward by taking small steps. Not only the technical content had to change, but also the **image** of our sport and the products it could potentially offer; We knew that only with effective and efficient regulation could we be successful. Thus began the first changes, namely:

- Number of technical elements
- Variety of technical elements
- Distribution of technical elements
- Duration of the programs
- Relevance of the artistic part
- Presentation of the athletes on the rink
- Competition management material
- Behavior of judges/athletes/coaches
- Competition management
- Locker room
- Music

Normalization of the values and coefficients of the elements

Artistic skating allows skaters to present a number of elements. With the “old” scoring system, the *White System*, the judges, on a scale of 0 to 10, had to make a personal classification based on technical content and artistic content that strictly depended on the former. The technical execution had to be the finished expression of the elements presented by the skater; these technical elements had an absolute value, represented in the international regulations in a table guide (ref. CIPA Rule Book - International Committee for Patinage Artistique).

By deepening the study of each regulation, it was discovered, however, that each nation had its own values. For example, situations were found in which in one nation the regulation reported for the Double Axel an absolute value of 7.8 and, in others, 8.5.

Carrying out training actions

Previously, the competitions and the implementation of the judging were at certain risk, because there was:

- Dissatisfaction of athletes and coaches.
- Dissatisfaction of the parents and relatives of the skaters.
- Unexplained ratings or scores.
- Incorrect messages to athletes lacking benchmarks.
- Inconsistency of punctuation with artistic content.
- Negative image of sport as a sporting product for a technical and non-technical public

Then, seminars, congresses, conferences, documents written, etc. were developed, trying to normalize the situation but it was not enough.

These serious problems, from the point of view of the universalization of sport, were marking the need to achieve a regulation and a systematization that totally surpassed that anarchy.

During those years of research, phrases like "I interpreted it this way" were often heard, which were a real obstacle to the evolution of artistic skating and were the worst that could happen. A regulation that leaves interpretations free, especially a technical regulation that should give guidelines to those who have to put it into practice and for those who must apply it, is certainly wrong and disastrous.

On the contrary, we asked ourselves some alternative questions to the previous sentence:

Does the rule allow the situation to be really interpretable? Or is it an opportunity to find an exception to the rule itself or to modify it?

Does the regulation try to be a faithful description of the elements or should it be an instrument for understanding and evaluating their essence and meaning?

Is it just a ranking and judging tool for the judges and their determinations or a collaborator to guide the training and performance of the skaters?

These questions were developed in an interesting point of view of the problem that, in short, prompted us to comprehensively modify the regulations, both in terms of its technical content and its philosophy, its deep meaning for artistic skating, emphasized in the search for a system that ensures the skater objectivity and security in the fairness of the evaluations.

The current regulations, their genesis and application

The most relevant aspect for those who have the responsibility of working on the gestation or modification of a regulation, is the objective: to write a regulation for the sport. It should be thinking of the athletes who give it essence and real presence and in all those who contribute to its sustainability and development.

To carry out this task, it is important to listen to everyone, not only to officially recognized participants (leaders, coaches, choreographers, judges, skaters, etc.) in meetings and seminars, but also, during informal exchanges of ideas, to journalists and other athletes, family members, and spectators in the stands. Listening to everyone and everything they say is important; It is not necessary that the person who is listened to be of high level, that they have experience or that they have authority on the subject, it is necessary to know how to listen and interpret the ideas that arise spontaneously, from everyday experience.

It is important to understand, for those who develop or apply a regulation, that this is a baseline, supportive document, which must be thought from the impact that it will produce on all participants and not only on the technical-sports aspect that specifically interests the athlete, coach and judge. Anyone who approaches a sport is influenced by its rules and regulations, so it is important that this participant understand what is behind it, what are the reasons that lead to a rule and its "philosophy".

Consequently, let us first analyze which are the different agents involved in the structure of a regulation, some of them very clearly and explicitly and, others, in less visible roles and locations, but no less influential in their development and application.

All of them are members of what Bourdieu (1990) defines as a *field*, a space in which all the participants play the same game, but with different functions and performances, making their existence possible. Each one exercises forms of power inherent to their position, even found, but that must interact with those of everyone else so that the *field* remains active and their *game* is sustained and developed over time.

The norms and rules established in this interaction are the regulators of the necessary and adequate balance, to save energy, avoiding most of the conflicts and that may endanger the stability of the *field* (in our case, that of artistic skating).

However, a regulation should not be thought of as an immovable object; It is an active entity that lives and must change at the same time that the sport itself, the contexts and the practice situations change, as we have appreciated in the brief history of skating presented.

Among these agents or participants, we can recognize:

- Skaters
- Trainers
- Judges / referees
- Federations, leaders and event organizers
- Families
- Public
- Media
- Sponsors

Below is an initial analysis of the participants in artistic skating and how they were and are currently involved and considered in the process of gestation of the regulation:

-Skaters. They constitute the basic sustenance of the sport and the regulation is its essential support, when defining and establishing how they should skate. For them, this new instance was a rebirth. It was difficult for the “veterans” to change their conception and situation; however, the work they did with passion and tenacity was immense and

the results were evident. Understanding the new philosophy and the dynamics of the winning system, scoring points, was a great stimulus for his performance on the rink. For them, the focus of competition became different, by understanding when it is appropriate to “improvise” and intervene with respect to what was planned, to recover technical points. With the new system, the skaters are perfectly aware of the mistakes and the score they will lose. The new regulation allows them to take home a “report card”, the famous PDF, which contains all the elements they made, their quality and how they were executed and, finally, how each artistic component was integrated. In short, information that they can study, obviously criticize, but that is of great help to understand where to improve for the next competition. This represents one of the substantial changes, compared to when their competencies represented a big question mark against a limited score that, unfortunately, could not provide them with all the information – negative and positive– that they needed to receive. Consequently, another important change with the arrival of the components was the new approach to training, which should include not only the technical gesture but also the basic concepts of skating, that is, technical skills, transitions (technical/choreographic elements that combine difficulties) and expressive abilities.

-Coaches. Their work is very strategic in deciding the composition of the programs of the skaters they guide. They have to study, research and understand the philosophy behind the new system. They are the ones who support the entire process of preparing the skater, coordinating all the figures that surround the preparation of the skaters and the overall sense of the work. In addition, there was a subtle change: the starting point, the technical and regulatory base was stabilized and specified on a higher plane, so they must exercise their creativity and sensitivity to lead their skaters to make a difference with others in the rink, as the difficulties are better defined and valued for all equally. The artistic components present a relevance that requires a more in-depth and detailed analysis of the information, if the training process is to be managed well and the athletes achieve their best performance.

-Judges. For those who were already judges with the system *White*

(the majority in this historical moment of the discipline) it was not easy to meet the new philosophy, because they had to totally change the point of view and the way of looking and judging. The rules changed completely and there was an absolute need to study again a discipline mastered in a certain way, to return to the *game* and face its task in the competitions. But for those who managed to keep up, a world opened up; "There is no going back", said colleagues and continue to say. This new regulation, this new philosophy certainly requires professionalism and knowledge, if not deeper, at least different: they can and should go into more detail about the technical gesture, its quality. They need to analyze the competition programs with more insight and analytical skills. Competition management has changed radically, the composition of the panel has totally changed, new roles, new activities, new and more challenging tasks. A challenge most have overcome with commitment, study and dedication. Some, proposing, asking, actively analyzing and others participating in a more passive way, but involved.

-Federations, leaders and event organizers. The new regulation or any regulatory change has an institutional, federal impact and administrative. In particular, a regulation, although technical, has the power to change the structure organizational and functional of some parts of the federations and of the institutions where the skaters first start and are developed. The management of new processes, new requirements at all levels have an impact on the organization of events, on the economy and on management. For example, who must generate the conditions for carrying out a sporting event, the organizer, must know and identify all the technical, regulatory, organizational and structural characteristics that sport presents and that imply its possibility of existence and social valuation:

- Precision in the definition of technical and technological requirements.
- Infrastructure according to the characteristics and needs of the event.
- Clear guidelines for judges, coaches and skaters on the application of the rules.
- Ease of replication in each local and national area and at each level.

- Quality of the organization for the encouragement of athletes, coaches and choreographers.
- Spectacularity of the final product (in the case of artistic skating this is essential).
- Sports objectivity.
- Ease of management in all aspects, including economic ones.

-Families. The essential and, perhaps, the longest stay in the sport, along with the skaters. From the moment that a member of a family appears in a skating center with their little one by the hand, they begin to depend on the rules and regulations, their own for each moment of the process that their children will go through. Infinite details that make up the life of sport belong to parents: purchase of clothes and skates for each age, organization of daily schedules –school, skating, friends, time with the cell phone or computer–, special food, travel planning to compete, etc., until the moment of maturity and autonomy after several years. Surely, there were several times when a family that took their son or daughter to compete with enthusiasm only to return frustrated with the judging. This situation is currently improved with a system that offers a different security and winning or losing does not fundamentally pass through the subjectivity of a judge. Parents, above all, learn and know a lot about skating, they live with it and the emotions. A regulation must be clear and fair also for them, which will support it and help its understanding at an early age. In many parts of the world, they financially and organizationally support the skating schools, their practices and events, so that thousands of boys and girls can participate, thus the ethical commitment of the federations and specialists that raise and promote the sport in all its facets must be particularly assumed and guaranteed by the rules and regulations.

-Public. The viewer Today, sports is a product of the consumer society, consolidated since the last half of the last century. The sports industry is very powerful and is constantly looking for new products or new developments from the successful ones. Artistic skating is one of the latter, which is required year after year in the search for excellence in the magnificent symbiosis of sport and art that is its essence. All

sports have been modifying their regulations to adjust to the rules of the show, particularly television. Most have incorporated the help of technology in recent decades so that arbitration decisions do not leave room for doubt; soccer, rugby, volleyball, basketball, and more film even the finest details from multiple angles to help judges decide on confusing plays. The system we have developed for judging in artistic skating considers this aspect of high-level competitions, involving the viewer, giving him information about the classification, through the scores in the videos. But, in addition, even the smallest, community event, has its spectators –usually family and friends– who will be as or more demanding with what is presented to them than a spectator only caught by the artistic beauty of the skating that he sees in television. The regulation and its application system must always be behind with an adequate application.

-Media. Simplifying the understanding of the score, regulating the organizational and technical structure of an event, giving objective and understandable feedback, has obviously also exponentially improved the image of the discipline before the media. In particular, television and the increase of videos expose sports in their most minute details. High-definition cameras show minimal gestures of a hand, a turn, the perfection or error in landing a jump, etc. The directors summarize the momentous moments and, in the case of skating, immediately showing the scoreboard, objectifying the judgment and its comparison with what is recorded on film so that the public participates directly in the process. Sports journalists have also seen their bases for making stories or comments change and they need a great understanding of sport and its rules to be able to comment or make a criticism. A clear and defined regulation provides them with an important basis for their professional work, which contributes an invaluable support for the social knowledge of a sport.

From what has been said so far, it is easy to understand that the radical change in the regulation, in the terms described, requires professional figures, not only with some knowledge, but also a different structure of training and preparation at all levels. Therefore, it was also necessary, in parallel with the development of the new system and regulations, to develop

a dendritic training structure that had the objective and the ability to:

- Train trainers and judges technically.
- Share the news, the regulation and its philosophy.
- Organize annual training courses.
- Divide the preparation of technicians into levels.
- Promote specialization by discipline.
- Organize campuses for athletes.
- Bringing important topics to the classroom for sport, such as the training of coaches in sports science applied to skating and the teaching and learning processes.

It is important that those who approach sport understand these issues because it will help them to approach the reading and understanding of the regulations in a different, constructive and proactive way until they feel they are protagonists and participants in the system.

In short, writing a new regulation and defining a new philosophy has led to the creation of a true sports academy with the support of specialized university institutions.

The new regulation and its key points

Artistic skating, unlike many others, has a technical structure with very precise rules, from which the judges and technical panels have to make decisions during the competition. Many unforeseen situations arise during a competition and most of them must find an answer in the regulations. This adds to its complexity.

The analysis and changes were carried out with a “TOP – DOWN” approach. In this sense, the regulations of the international categories were modified and, after their normalization, those of the youth categories.

At this time, the rules of the promotional and amateur categories are also being analyzed around the world, an important lung of our sport, where the high systematization of judging related to high performance and used without adequate adaptations, information and teaching, could be counterproductive, because athletes in training receive, logically, low scores.

An interesting aspect that the regulation presents is its new consideration of aesthetic components, due to its strong impact on society when it assumes the role of spectator. Although the competitive result continues to have a high valuation for the sports system and its members, a tendency is observed in the general public to watch sports due to its aesthetic trait, due to its intrinsic beauty, which is consequently necessary. to enrich. For this it became obvious, to modify the regulations and the aesthetics of its implementation.

Let's see, then, the key points of these modifications.

-The costumes. The clothing of the competition skaters, their makeup, accessories, is a matter of great importance. Again we return to the beginnings of artistic skating and, in this case, the historical videos of our discipline were used to see how skaters performed in competitions. For example, if we look at a video of the 1938¹ Italian national championships, the costumes used by women (body cut) and men's costumes, strictly with a jacket and tie, remained that way until the 1960s. Today, the costumes are certainly more pleasant and bright, they reflect a bit what is the desire to appear or show, typical of our era and the era of social networks. Freedom of expression, through clothing, has led to extremes and the need to intervene, requesting a change and control over the competition clothing. Without thinking about what is right or unfair, pleasant or unpleasant, it is important to understand that the regulations on clothing in recent years were necessarily different because society required it.

-The duration of the programs. The competition programs for the higher categories lasted up to five-six minutes, which today would be unthinkable. Leaving aside the technical question, those extra minutes of a program would be an eternity in a society marked by speed, brevity and rapid change. The culture of instant gratification has been established and it is necessary to find the appropriate proposals to the demands of the mass media so that the general public has fun and does not get bored. The repetitiveness of technical content that could have been of interest in the past would not have the same effect today, where, conversely, with a higher technical level, display times are reduced, making the competition more spectacular. For skaters it means an important change in all their training, from the physical to the technical and expressive.

-Music. After visual aesthetics, music is another element that is of great importance from a social point of view. Important changes have

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5QjnZ1mKTY>

been made to the regulations regarding the type of music allowed and the method of creating and editing music for competition programs. This last activity has almost become an art. For example, in competition programs, the regulation allows, only recently, the use of vocal music, which was absolutely prohibited in the past. Since for artistic skating, the rhythmic structure is one of the determining factors in the choreographic construction, it was not wanted to affect and distract the skater with the voice of the singer (s), which could alter his concentration on the musical rhythm. This change was necessary, firstly, to make the discipline more interesting from the point of view of the media and spectators and, secondly, to allow skaters to be able to interpret their performances with greater motivation and also have a selection broader range of songs and musical styles. Obviously, by changing the rule other problems arose: whether the language was appropriate and decent, for example; in this case, the rule was improved by trying to stimulate common sense in the choice of songs so that they contain an adequate language and social meaning. What is the problem that has arisen? That many coaches or choreographers choose music sung in a language that is not their mother tongue and therefore, by not correctly analyzing the words used in the chosen song, they sometimes risk using music with texts that contain elusive language or incoherent with respect to the meaning of the choreographic plot. What is argued, is very important to underline the difficulty that underlies the addition of a simple rule, which in the end must have restrictions and limits to be correct and applicable always and in any situation. It must be considered that until two years ago, the music of the compulsory dances was **only instrumental** and many of them had been played on the organ. Attending or judging a compulsory dance competition had become impossible. However, for two years, we have been selecting vocal music also for the compulsory dances, a choice that made the most conservative tremble, but in the end received a great response from the skaters themselves.

It is easy to understand at this point how the transition to a totally different regulation, underlying a completely different scoring system, was almost natural and fundamental to the survival of the sport.

Many of the added or modified rules did not make sense with the *White*

System. They were rules that, although applicable, did not find an objective result in the score.

Then, we move on to the study of alternative scoring systems that already exist in the world of sport, to understand which one could satisfy our discipline, obviously adapting everything to our needs.

It was possible to give an identity to the various difficulties of skating and to give an objective value that no one can interpret and dilute with national visions anywhere in the world. The score (at least the technical one) from relative became **absolute**: an Axel has the score of 1.3 on all five continents.

And therefore, after various assumptions and analysis, we have arrived at a revolutionary system that **identifies the skater with his performance as the main and absolute subject**, with a philosophical structure very different from the *White System*. Finally, the struggle of all these years to give the correct differences between the athletes, according to what they actually did on the rink, ended with a great achievement.

Let's see the main characteristics of this new philosophy that we will then compare with the previous one.

- **Absolute value of each technical element.** Every skater, coach, choreographer is fully aware of the value of the element included in the choreography. A TARGET value.
- **Quality of the technical element.** The value of each technical item may vary from the absolute value depending on how the item is made from a qualitative point of view.
- **The four artistic components.** The true revolution of artistic roller skating is to have developed the artistic part of the programs in four components totally separated from the technical score. (Ref. Official Regulation Artistic - World Skate).
- **The penalties.** One of the objectives with the new regulation was to reduce penalties. It was sought to eliminate the penalty by the judges as much as possible, leaving the responsibility to the skater or the coach to correctly build the programs or, otherwise, receive a lower technical score, where more elements are presented than

the established limit or omitted (lower only because elements do not respect regulated limits or are omitted). Unless an element is not mandatory but optional, it is the skater's full responsibility not to execute it and not receive the score; if an element is wrong, the system will automatically ignore it (which is much more serious from a sporting point of view than the penalty).

• **Management of technical elements.** The new regulation, as just specified, has the advantage of registering all technical elements with an absolute value. This value is the same all over the world. To arrive at the definition of these values, tests and simulations were carried out. Technicians from each discipline were involved to give the correct value according to the difficulty of each element. Furthermore, for each value, it was necessary to identify the increase and decrease values (the judges' score) that could be proportional to the absolute value. An immense work that is still in constant review. Only the competencies, the results and their careful analysis can confirm if the values and proportions are correct. During this detailed work, the potential advantage of the new regulation and its philosophy was highlighted. In fact, it was understood how it is possible to change the value of an element according to its importance, but the most interesting thing is that, by increasing its value, in a short time the execution of that technical element improved significantly. This phenomenon was clearly seen, for example, with the element of spins. Finally, the new regulation has restored the dignity and importance of a spectacular element such as the spins, which has an objective value and which weighs heavily in the sum of the technical elements. The spins were immediately improved both in terms of difficulty and quality.

The differences compared to the "old" *White system* in classification were immediately apparent. As already noted, the change from the point of view of the judges' work was total. The judges are no longer called upon to draw up a classification, but to evaluate the individual performance of the skater, pair or group, without thinking of comparing the programs. With the system *White*, the most important work was to make a classification and the scores that were attributed to the performances were relative,

the absolute value did not exist. Very often, it was not the skater with the highest total score who won, but who had the most victories, something inexplicable to those who did not know the workings and logic of the sport. With the new scoring system and the new regulation, the technical part is objective and is supported by values of each technical element that are added (automatically) by software when these are carried out and confirmed by the technical panel. The exposition of the score itself is also better, more understandable, there is only one total score per skater, where the highest score wins.

The artistic components of the new regulation, unlike the B score of the old system *White*, are the real revolution.

In two years, the skating programs have completely changed. Everyone understood the true importance of the artistic components that, in addition to being incisive and decisive in the final classification, led to an improvement in the *performance* and choreography of the skaters.

In this case, it is important to underline how the system *White* established a strong dependency between the technical score and the artistic score. We started from the technical score to decide the artistic score, which in the vast majority of cases was two or three tenths away from the technical score: an absolutely unreal situation that did not coincide with what the skaters presented on the rink. Consequently, taking care of the artistic part was no longer a priority for the skaters and the programs had become boring and repetitive over time. Focusing again on this part, through the components of the new system, has led to a revolution in the artistic construction of the programs.

This profound change has a philosophical foundation in the current human context, where postmodernity has brought an aspect of life postponed by modernity's rationalist thought and intent: sensitivity. All sports developed explosively during the last century, based on the knowledge provided by the hard sciences –physics, biology, chemistry, mathematics– and sensitivity and aesthetics were relegated, which in recent times have been reappearing. increasing value.

Hence, this regulatory amendment, without specifically intending to do so, produces a balance between highly developed technique and aesthetic expression, valuing a different and superior way to the system *White* artistic components, objectifying its judgment and improving the previous vision.

The ethical component

Another interesting aspect introduced in the new regulation, in line with what was indicated in the previous point, is that of the code of ethics.

Ethics is a transversal value to human life, to make possible civilized coexistence and the growth of individuals and societies. It is underlying knowledge and its application to all activities that involve relationships between people.

As the new rules and new roles were being elaborated and defined, the need to adjust the ethical aspect of the discipline arose, as a consequence, which is very important and fundamental to strengthen sports practice itself and that of all its participants, with a professional and correct performance and image.

With the new development, as indicated above, new roles have been created, roles that also due to sport must interact with each other. Just thinking about the importance of sharing between coaches and technical specialists, between coaches and judges, a different practice, marks the need to talk, train and, fundamentally change attitudes towards the sporting event.

But all this had to be regulated. The code of ethics has needed several revisions during its drafting, to adapt it correctly to our world and the new reality of artistic skating. By following the procedures and rules, conflict will decrease and all participants of the sport will feel protected by following the established behavioral guidelines. Therefore, it is correct to have guidelines that can be followed in case of events during a competition, during the periods before and after it, the use of social networks, etc.

In short, an ethics of sport built on firm values and based on emotionally and rationally sustainable thinking, reflected in a regulation that generates trust in the behavior of all those whose sole objective is the constant development of artistic skating.

Conclusions

Regulations will never be perfect. They will never satisfy everyone's wishes or everyone's needs, but they are a very powerful tool: sporting, didactic, educational and managerial. They must be dynamic to adapt to the times and social contexts and respond to the athletes and their spectators, simultaneously considering all the participants that make this sharing possible.

It is said that the new regulations revolutionized artistic skating, but in the end, the essence of this sport has not changed. It did change its vision, the philosophical conception that made possible a better sharing between technique and artistic expression, according to the requirement of spectators who have new demands for high-performance sport become a highly appreciated cultural and recreational fact.

We can also say that everything that surrounded and acted as a frame of reference for traditional sport has changed. New roles and a different, modern and technologically updated management structure have been created, requiring, consequently, a professionalizing academic structure that supports the inevitable changes in the discipline.

The great result, the great revolution, was to be able to lead the entire *field* of artistic skating, anywhere in the world, to speak the same language, have the same parameters, have the same rules. Being able to reach all countries, stimulate everyone, include everyone at the same level of competence and ability, as well as having given them the desire and opportunity to reinvent themselves.

To date, this difficult, long and demanding process of unification has not yet been definitively completed. If the regulations change there is no need to fear, it is not a bad thing, it means that the plurality of a specialized group has worked with full knowledge of the needs of the sport, the athletes and the federations. On the contrary, one has to fear the static and fixed rules that crystallize, since this means that there is no one who is considering or analyzing the sport at its present and its future.

Let us remember the constant desire for the discipline to be attractive in the "Olympus" of sport, bearing in mind that it is not an Olympic sport and that one of our most important tasks as non-Olympic sports leaders is to find all possible tools, taking into account everything that has been said so far, to achieve it.

In short, the final result was being able "simply" to change the regulations and have an even more spectacular and professional sport than it already was.

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This article presents the background, the conceptual foundation, the developmental process and the scope of the new Judging System that governs competitive artistic roller skating. The previous version left the judges with a high percentage of subjective decision regarding the skaters' performances, an issue that has been modified with the contribution of technology and generates, as an effect, greater objectivity, so that the athletes and their technical teams. They can plan their presentations, training and competitive participation with greater security in the justice of evaluations and qualifications, allowing other participants in the field to have a precise and universal framework to develop their roles.

