



**CER**

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

# Understanding IJS Grade of Execution (GOE) Scores Criteria

**CER Topic Area: Rules of Sport (ROS)**

**CER Course ID: CER ROS-301**

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**PROFESSIONAL SKATERS ASSOCIATION**

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By signing on to take the exam, you certify that you are the person signing on and personally completing this exam. False statements made by anyone taking this exam may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, expulsion from the PSA both for the person taking the exam and the person listed as the taker of the exam. This course is worth 1 credit towards U.S. Figure Skating Continuing Education Requirement (CERs) for the successful completion of this exam.

**Course Objective**

The purpose of this course is to build on the understanding of the International Judging System (IJS). This course is designed to help coaches to understand the recent changes made to the GOE Guidelines implemented by the ISU at the 2018 Congress. The GOE (Grades of Execution) criteria have been expanded to 11 grades ranging from +5 to -5.

This course will give coaches an in-depth understanding of how positive GOEs are achieved as well as how errors can impact the overall GOE. Understanding and applying rules correctly is necessary for skaters to be properly prepared for competitions which results in more success and positive experiences.

**Course Resources**

Prior to taking the exam, we recommend that you review and have on hand the following materials:

- ROS 301 Course Content
- ISU Communication #2168- Single & Pair Skating
- U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook
- ISU Regulations for Singles, Pairs & Ice Dance

**Course Outline**

Section 1 – Introduction

Section 2 – Overview of GOE Criteria

Section 3 – Guidelines for +GOE (positive aspects)

Section 4 – Guidelines for Establishing GOE for Errors

Section 5 – GOE Short vs Free Skating Program

Section 6 – Scale of Values and Impact of GOE on Overall Scores

Section 7 – Conclusion

About the Author

## Section 1: Introduction

Quality matters! In scoring competitive performances, marks are divided into two basic categories: The Technical Element Score for the feats of athleticism performed by the skater/s and the Program Component Score reflecting five different artistic aspects of the program. These two categories of scoring are independent of each other.

In IJS, the Technical Panel calls the technical level of elements based on the published criteria and the judging panel evaluates the quality of every element performed based on the published criteria and assigns Grades of Execution (GOE) based on the quality.

The Criteria for Technical Levels of Difficulty, Grades of Execution (GOE), and Scale of Values (SOV) is published annually in an ISU Communication prior to the start of the season.

Knowing how to use, interpret, and where to find this information is important. We recommend regularly checking the U.S. Figure Skating website ([www.figureskating.org](http://www.figureskating.org)) and the ISU website ([www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org)) on a weekly basis for clarifications and updates. Additionally, having the rules and published criteria are important tools to have on hand daily.

The most significant change that coaches need to be aware of is the GOE Guidelines. The range has been expanded from seven grades ranging from +3 to -3 up to eleven grades ranging from +5 to -5 with 0 meeting the standard.

## Section 2: Overview of GOE Criteria

ISU Communication #2168 provides the information needed for coaches and skaters on how to achieve positive Grades of Execution (+ GOEs) and clearly describes how errors impact the GOE (-GOEs).

The possible GOEs are: +5, +4, +3, +2, +1, 0, -1, -2, -3, -4, -5. Zero (0) is considered base, while +5 is the highest meeting at least five out six positive bullets criteria and -5 is the lowest and is given when there are major or multiple errors in an element.'

The Guidelines for marking GOEs are tools used by the judging panel. The positive (+) GOE chart and minus (-) GOE charts are used together to arrive at the final GOE.

### How Do Judges Arrive at the GOE?

First, judges need to establish the starting GOE. Judges first take into consideration the six bullets (positive aspects) for each element. Elements are listed by type- jumps, spins, step sequences and choreographic sequences (for senior only).

Next, the judge takes into consideration any errors and makes the necessary reduction(s) from the starting GOE using the Guidelines in establishing GOE errors Chart. The result is the final GOE.

Judges generally have an idea of where the GOE may fall in the range of positive or negative as the element is executed. However, often the GOE can change as the element is still being executed. Some examples of this are 1.) a spin that begins well but begins to slow down and/or has a weak position (usually as the skater is trying to achieve a level feature) will reduce the starting GOE or 2.) a spin could start out with a weak entry but then improve as the spin continues increasing the GOE as the spin is executed.

Using one of the spin examples above, a judge may start at a +2 GOE (for a spin that starts with good speed and acceleration and is well centered = two bullets). However, as the spin continues, during the change of foot, the skater has a poor change of foot and re-centers the spin (a reduction of -1 to -3). In addition, during the final position it begins the spin begins to slow down and lose speed (also a reduction of -1 to -3). The reduction for both errors can be anywhere from -2 to -6 depending on the severity. Consequently, the final GOE could possibly have range from 0 to -4. The calculation process would be: +2 (starting), reduction of -2 to -6, = result of final GOE range of 0 to -4.

The Scale of Values Chart lists all elements and the values associated with each GOE. New this year is the percentage of increased or decreased values for each element. For most elements, the values may increase or decrease in 10% increments from the base value when the final GOE is applied.

## Section 3: Guidelines for +GOE (positive aspects)

The ISU Communication #2168 lists a chart with the bullets, (positive aspects), a skater can achieve for each type of technical element. As mentioned earlier, to establish the starting GOE, judges must take into consideration the bullets for each element. The elements are divided up by category: jumps, spins, step sequences for all levels, and choreographic sequences for senior level only.

Judges use the General Recommendations below to establish the starting GOE:

For +1: 1 bullet

For +2: 2 bullets

For +3: 3 bullets

For +4: 4 bullets

For +5: 5 or more bullets

Since the 2018-19 season, the ISU has made a significant change on how the highest GOEs of +4 and +5 can be awarded. **To obtain +4 and +5 THE FIRST THREE bullets highlighted in bold must be present.**

The guidelines for marking +GOE chart breaks apart each type of element and lists the necessary bullets needed. **The first three bullets list mandatory criteria.** Without the first three “mandatory bullets” a skater is only able to achieve a maximum of a +3 in the final GOE, so it is important to work on the overall quality of each element.

### For Jump Elements

Very good height, distance, and flow are the most important factors. Jumps must have a good take-off and landing and be effortless throughout. Without this, the GOE will be limited. Skaters also need to have a very good air position from take-off to landing and the element should match the music.

If a skater performs a jump with one or both arms over head or in a varied position, no longer will a skater receive a positive bullet since it is not in the criteria. However, there is nothing in the rules or language stating it is prohibited, and the judge will take this into account as they evaluate the overall jump quality.

It is recommended to consider building choreography that matches the music into and out of each jump that is creative and has a nice variety. Depending on the skater’s level and ability, this can range from simple to very intricate and should include a variety of steps (such as rockers, counters, brackets, etc.) or free skating moves (such as spread eagles, Ina Bauers, spirals, etc.).

If these creative moves are too difficult and not appropriate for the skater's level, this may impede the overall GOE, so it is important for coaches to be mindful of this.

### For Spin Elements

Speed and acceleration during the spin are the most important factors. Spins must also have good control, clear positions and be effortless throughout. Without this, the GOE will be limited. Three other bullets a skater can achieve include: maintaining a good center during the spin, having a creative and original spin, and the spin matching the music.

It is important to make sure that enough time is allotted for the skater to achieve a good GOE. Spins need to be given the proper amount of time in the choreography to properly execute the spin and maximize the GOE. Too often skaters cut short spins which can also impact the level of a spin if the skater is feeling rushed.

### For Step Sequences

Deep edges & clean steps and turns are the most important factors. They are mandatory for the level and for the GOE. Two other bullets are required for a GOE of +4 or +5 are the element matches the music and effortless throughout with good energy, flow, and execution. Additionally, the remaining three bullets are: creativity and originality, excellent commitment and control of the whole body and good acceleration and deceleration.

This element offers the opportunity to showcase skating skills. When properly done, this element can be a highlight of the program and engage the audience and at the same time allows the judging panel the ability to fully evaluate the skater's turn quality as well as their ability to maintain and control speed, flow, and balance, as well as one foot and multi-directional skating.

### For Choreographic Sequences (senior only)

Creativity and originality and element matches the music are the two most important factors. This element must also be effortless throughout with good energy, flow, and execution to receive a +4 or +5 GOE.

The remaining three bullets include: good ice coverage, good clarity, and excellent commitment and control of whole body.

Even though this element has a fixed base value, it is important to give this element the proper attention. There is an opportunity to earn valuable points and showcase some original and creative ideas in the choreography. This element can be worth more points than the highest-level spin and even a double Axel.

Below are the detailed criteria for skaters to achieve +GOEs or "bullets" as published in ISU Communication #2168. Remember, the first three bullets (listed in bold) in each category are mandatory and without those being present the skater is limited to a starting GOE of +3 even if there four or five bullets present.

### Jump Elements

- 1 **Very good height and very good length (of all jumps in a combo or sequence)**
- 2 **Good take-off and landing**
- 3 **Effortless throughout (including rhythm in jump combination)**
- 4 Steps before the jump; unexpected or creative entry
- 5 Very good body position from take-off to landing
- 6 Element matches the music

### Spin Elements

- 1 **Good speed and/ or acceleration during spin**
- 2 **Good controlled, clear position(s) including height and air/ landing position in flying spin**
- 3 **Effortless throughout**
- 4 Maintaining a centered spin
- 5 Creativity and originality
- 6 Element matches the music

### Step Sequences

- 1 **Deep edges, clean steps and turns**
- 2 **Element matches the music**
- 3 **Effortless throughout with good energy, flow, and execution**
- 4 Creativity and originality
- 5 Excellent commitment and control of the whole body
- 6 Good acceleration and deceleration

### Choreographic Sequences

- 1 **Creativity and originality**
- 2 **Element matches the music**
- 3 **Effortless throughout with good energy, flow, and execution**
- 4 Good ice coverage
- 5 Good clarity and precision
- 6 Excellent commitment and control of the whole body

## Section 4: Guidelines for Establishing GOE for Errors

After establishing the starting GOE, the next step is to apply any reductions for errors. The **Reductions for Errors Chart** lists the most common type of errors and the appropriate reduction.

### Elements with multiple errors

If multiple errors occur in an element the corresponding reductions are added together. Elements with the multiple errors will not receive a greater reduction than the maximum GOE of -5. Any element with a fall has a reduction of -5. This includes spins and step sequences in addition to jump elements.

Let's use a jump combination as an example. A skater attempts Double Lutz/Double Toe Loop Combination (2Lz + 2T). The execution of the element is: Double Lutz with a wrong edge on the take-off, and two three turns between two jumps, followed by a Double Toe Loop with a touch-down of the hand on the exit. On the protocol, the element will be 2Lze + 2T.

Here are how the reductions would be applied:

- An edge (sign “e”) = reduction range from -3 to -4
- Two three-turns in between jumps = reduction range from -2 to -3
- Touch down with one hand= reduction range from -1 to -2

Even though the overall reductions range from -6 to -9, the maximum reduction is -5 and would be the final GOE.

On the next page is the chart of the updated Guidelines in establishing GOE errors in Short Program and Free Skating from ISU Communication #2168. Coaches should make sure they are familiar with this document. It is advised to use this document as a reference along with the + GOE Chart with the skater on a regular basis.



## REDUCTIONS FOR ERRORS

### JUMP ELEMENTS

|   |          |   |          |
|---|----------|---|----------|
| SP: Jump element not according to requirements<br>final GOE must be | GOE -5   | Downgraded (sign <<)                                      | -3 to -4 |
| Fall  | -5       | Under-rotated (sign <)                                    | -2 to -3 |
| Landing on two feet in a jump                                       | -3 to -4 | Lacking rotation (no sign) including half loop in a combo | -1 to -2 |
| Stepping out of landing in a jump                                   | -3 to -4 | Poor speed, height, distance, or air position             | -1 to -3 |
| 2 three turns in between (jump combo)                               | -2 to -3 | Touch down with both hands in a jump                      | -2 to -3 |
| Wrong edge take off F/Lz (sign “e”)                                 | -3 to -4 | Touch down with one hand or free foot                     | -1 to -2 |
| Unclear edge take off F/Lz (sign “!”)                               | -1 to -3 | Loss of flow/direction/rhythm between jumps (combo/seq.)  | -2 to -3 |
| Unclear edge take off F/Lz (no sign)                                | -1       | Weak landing (bad pos./wrong edge/scratching etc.)        | -1 to -3 |
| Poor take-off   | -2 to -3 | Long preparation  | -2 to -3 |

### SPINS

|  |          |   |          |
|--|----------|---|----------|
| Fall   | -5       | Poor/awkward, unaesthetic position(s)   | -1 to -3 |
| Touch down with free foot or hand(s)           | -1 to -3 | Slow or reduction of speed  | -1 to -3 |
| Poor fly (flying spin/entry)                   | -1 to -3 | Change of foot poorly done (including curve of entry/exit except when changing direction) | -1 to -3 |
| Incorrect take-off or landing in a flying spin | -1 to -2 | Less than required revolutions  | -1 to -3 |
| Traveling                                      | -1 to -3 | Unbalanced number of revolutions in change foot spin                                      | -1       |

### STEPS

|  |          |   |          |
|--|----------|---|----------|
| SP: Listed jumps with more than half rev. included | -1       | Poor quality of steps, turns, positions | -1 to -3 |
| Fall   | -5       | Stumble                                 | -1 to -3 |
| Less than half of the pattern doing steps/turns    | -2 to -3 | Does not correspond to the music        | -1 to -3 |

### CHOREOGRAPHIC SEQUENCES

|   |          |                            |          |
|---|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| Fall  | -5       | Stumble                    | -1 to -3 |
| Inability to clearly demonstrate the sequence | -2 to -3 | Does not enhance the music | -1 to -3 |
| Loss of control while executing the sequence  | -1 to -3 | Poor quality of movements  | -1 to -2 |

## Section 5: GOE Short vs Free Skating Program

### GOE Short Program vs Free Skating Program:

Generally, elements are evaluated exactly the same for GOEs in both Short Program and Free Skate Program. However, there are some instances where the GOE will differ due to the required elements of the Short Program.

One instance in the Short Program is if a jump element(s) does not meet the requirements then the final GOE must be a -5. This is indicated in the chart by “GOE -5” and applies to any jump element that is required. However, in some cases the GOE will not be seen because the element will have “no value”. In these cases, the element is indicated with an \*. Any element with an \* means the element (or portion in the case of jump combinations) has no value.

Jumps not according to requirements in the short program are all handled the same way when it comes to the GOE. They all must have a final GOE of -5. One example of this is the double Axel. When the double Axel is a required element, the skater must execute or attempt a double Axel. If they execute a single axel the detailed protocol sheet will have a 1A\* listed for the element and - - - - (dashes) where the GOEs would be located. Same is true if a triple jump is required and the skater performs a single or double jump.

In the jump combination, if the skater falls on the first jump and no second jump is attempted, the result is Jump + combo, and the final GOE must be -5. Likewise, if the skater is successful with one of the two required jumps, the jump that doesn't meet the requirements will receive a \* and no value. In this case, the skater will receive value only for the jump that meets the requirements.

One example in a Junior Short Program would be a Double Lutz + Single Toe Loop (2Lz+1T). The double jump meets the requirements, but the single doesn't and therefore would receive an \*. The detailed protocol would list the element as 2Lz+1T\* with the GOE as -5.

### Short Program – Required Steps into the Jump

Since the 2018-19 season there is no longer a reduction for “no steps/break in steps immediately preceding the jump” in the Short Program.

Although, there is no longer a reduction for not having any steps, keep in mind a skater can achieve a higher GOE for achieving bullet #4 - steps before the jump, unexpected or creative entry.

### Required Spins

All spins regardless of Short Program or Free Skate Program, must have three revolutions. If this requirement is not met the element will receive “no value” and will be indicated by a \* on the detailed protocol.

In the short program, spins with a change of foot must have three revolutions on each foot. If this requirement is not met, the element will receive “no value”.

This would apply to the combination spin in the short program which requires at least two positions and a change of foot; and for men, the spin in one position requires a change of foot and a basic position on each foot.

For spins in the short program, where the skater is required to execute specific revolutions on each foot, the judging panel will reduce anywhere from -1 to -3 for having less than the required revolutions.

For example, a spin in one position with a change of foot (such as a camel-change-camel spin or CCSp) requires at least six revolutions on each foot in the correct position. If the skater executes four revolutions on the first foot and three revolutions on the second foot, the judge will most likely take the maximum reduction of -3 for both feet not meeting the requirements.

Another example is if the skater executes five revolutions on the first foot and six revolutions on the second foot, the judge will most likely take a small reduction of a -1.

Keep in mind these are reductions from the starting GOE. If the starting GOE in the spin example #1 is 0 (no positive bullets), the final GOE would be -3. For spin example #2, if the starting GOE is +2 (2 bullets) the final GOE would be +1.

## Short Program Step Sequences

There is one restriction that does not apply to the Free Skate and needs to be remembered when choreographing the step sequence for the short program. Any listed jump with more than a half revolution included has a reduction of -1. Although it is a small reduction, it is a reduction, nonetheless.

## Free Skating Program

In free skating programs, certain GOEs are less restricted because the program doesn't have any required elements that must be executed. The judging panel has the freedom to judge the quality without having to keep in mind the program requirements.

Spins in Free Skating Programs have a minimum requirement of total revolutions, unlike the Short Program which are specific to each foot. So, if the skater has less than the minimum revolutions in total in the free skate, the judge can apply the reduction for "less than required revolutions" of -1 to -3.

## Section 6: Scale of Values and Impact of GOE on Overall Scores

The new Scale of Values can be found on the ISU website ([isu.org](http://isu.org)). For each element, there are generally five different levels of difficulty. These levels are: Base (B), 1, 2, 3, and 4. As mentioned earlier, the new GOE scale ranges from +5 to -5 and has eleven different grades.

It is important to not confuse level base and base value. They are different and have different meanings. “Level Base” refers to the technical level of an element while “base value” refers to the point value of an element in the Scale of Values (SOV). An element that receives a “base” GOE (or 0 GOE) will receive the base value for the element. The final GOE can be anywhere from +5 to -5 and could also include base (or 0) in the middle.

The GOE value is increased or decreased in 10% increments from the base value. The SOV chart lists all elements and possibly GOEs associated with each.

Elements with the “< sign” (under rotated) or “e” sign (wrong edge for Flip/Lutz), and “V” (value) sign for spins have a reduced base value and the percentage for GOE value of %10 increase, or decrease is taken from the reduced base value. The judging panel is aware of any elements that receive the following signs from the technical panel: “<”, “<<”, “e”, and “!”.

Elements with the “!” or attention sign means the skater executed an unclear edge on a flip or Lutz take-off. The jump will receive full value, but the judges are alerted and should reduce the GOE by -1 to -3.

### Jumps:

Jumps with the “<<” sign (downgrade) are evaluated with the value for the same jump with one less revolution. For example, a downgraded double Axel (2A<<) will receive same base value as single Axel (1A), effectively reducing the element’s base value to 1.10 from 3.30. This of course is prior to the final GOE being considered.

Staying with the double Axel (2A) as an example, this jump has a base value of 3.30. If the skater receives an average GOE of 0 then 3.30 points are applied. If the skater receives an average GOE of +3 the value of the jump would increase by 30% (or .99) to 4.29 points.

The same is true for a - GOE. If the average GOE is -4 then a 40% (or 1.32) reduction is applied to the base and the value of the jump and the final points for a double axel is worth 1.98 points.

In jump combinations/ jump sequences when applying the GOE with the numerical value of the most difficult jump, the signs “<”, “e”, “V” are considered (e.g., 3T with Base Value 4.2 is considered more difficult than 3Lz< with reduced Base Value 3.98).

The sign “+Rep” (repetition) applies 70% of the Base Value of the jump. In this case the GOE is established as a percentage of the original Base Value because the “+Rep” sign has no relation to the quality of execution.

## Spins:

Combination Spins, either with or without a change of foot, that have all three basic positions (camel, sit, and upright) are awarded full base value with the final GOE considered. If the same spin has only two basic positions, then the spin will receive a reduced base value and will receive a “V”.

Additionally, flying spins (spins with only one position and no change of foot, such as FSSp, FCSp, or FUSp) must have a clear visible jump. If the requirement is not filled, the element will receive a “V”.

In the Free Skate, any spin with a change of foot must have three revolutions on each foot. If this requirement is not filled, the element will also receive a “V”. It is important to mention that the judging panel does not know if a “V” has been applied to a spin. It is not seen on the judging screens. However, if the quality of the element is poor, a judge will most likely know that the requirements have not been met and the GOE will be reduced for errors.

## Choreographic Sequences:

For Choreographic Sequences, the percentage applied to the GOE scale is consistent, but it is higher than for other elements (approximately 17% for each grade). For example, a ChSq that achieved a +5 has an 85% increase from the base value of 3.0 making the element worth a total of 5.5 points.

## The Impact of GOE on Overall Scores:

All scoring is relative to the actual performance in the moment of competition. Therefore, scores for the same program by the same skater/s may differ considerably from one competition to another. GOEs from the judging panel may also differ depending on the starting GOE for each judge and any reductions a judge may consider arriving at the final GOE. Except for a few cases, most elements have a range that a judge can use and apply to indicate an error in an element.

Maximizing GOEs is an approach coaches and skaters can and should use to earn points. If a skater can consistently earn +GOEs those points can add up quickly.

## Section 7: Conclusion

The International Judging System (IJS) is a points system. Skaters earn points on technical ability and quality. Figure Skating requires competitors and coaches to be knowledgeable on how to earn points.

Every element is evaluated for quality and many points can be earned by knowing how to maximize the GOE.

Recent changes made by the ISU offer more opportunities for skaters to achieve more points in their GOEs for each element. The GOE range has increased from seven to eleven possible GOEs.

Each element has a GOE ranging from +5 to -5 and the Scale of Values (SOV) Chart had been updated to reflect a consistent percentage increase or decrease based upon the final GOE.

GOEs are calculated by a two-step process and it is important to remember that the first three bullets in bold are mandatory for a skater to achieve the highest GOE levels

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| First Step   | The judge looks for bullets or positive aspects from the +GOE Chart.<br>The starting GOE is given based on the positive aspects of an element. |
| Second step  | The judge considers and applies reductions based on errors, if necessary.  |
| Final Result | Final GOE  |

Coaches should encourage and help skaters work on the quality of all the elements equally. High quality spins, steps and choreographic sequences executed well with positive GOEs can add a lot of points to a program. When the technical elements are executed with a level of quality, the result will be a successful one especially when it is combined with strong components. After all figure skating is a sport where every point matters, and how a skater achieves each and every point is important.

## About the Author

Wendy Enzmann is a former National and International level competitor in Singles, Pairs and Synchronized Skating. Her skating background is extensive, both as skater and as an official for U.S. Figure Skating and the ISU.

Wendy holds official appointments as a World Judge for Singles, Pairs and Synchronized Skating. She is also an ISU Technical Controller in Singles and Pairs and is an International Referee. Additionally, she is a National level Technical Specialist, for singles, pairs and synchronized skating as well as a National level Data and Video Operator.

Wendy has served on numerous U.S. Figure Skating committees including: Technical Panel, Judges, JETs, Competitions, International, Selections, International Judges and Officials, Nominating, Pairs, Tests, Strategic Planning, Synchronized Skating and Membership as well as the Board of Directors for U.S. Figure Skating over the last 25 years. She is the past chair of the International Committee and Technical Panel Committee as well as past Technical Group Coordinator to the Board of Directors for U.S. Figure Skating.

Wendy currently resides in Stow, Massachusetts with her husband and former pair partner, Alexander and they have three grown children—Robb, Duncan, and Johanna. Wendy works part-time as a teacher at a private pre-school in Acton, MA, and formerly taught Kindergarten for 11 years at a private school in Stow, MA.