



International Seminar On Theater on Ice Toulouse, September 19-21, 2003

Participants :

- **Italy** : Maurizio Margaglio
- **Spain** : Jordi Vila, Montserrat Badesa
- **The USA** : Roger Collard, Judith Edmunds, Nancy Fillebrown, Jodi Porter
(Absent : Ron Dei Cas, Paula Campos)
- **France** : Sandrine Bayard, Stéphanie Barrier, Sandy Blasquez, Thierry Bontemps, Didier Brus, Patrick Capmartin, Laurence Enard, Nadège Freichinos, Sandrine Jarry, Héloïse Martins, Eric de Mena, Francis Mouque, Nathalie de Renty, Dominique Robert, Christine Sabbatini, Philippe Sauvageon, Marcel Taberlet, Gilles Terzi, Annie-Claire Toutain
Technical BOI Committee : Edith Ballester, Jean-Christophe Berlot, Bernard Carles, Christiane Detré, Gérard Gautun (chairman, BOI and Synchronized Skating Technical Committee), Robert Miara,
(Absent : Benoît Launay, Serge Launay, Pascal d'Erceville, Joëlle Duranton, Françoise Guttin-Moine Christian Isoré, Françoise Alloin-Isoré, Rudy Luccioni)
- **Interprets** : Christian et Francette Attanasio

Synthesis of discussions, decisions made and actions taken

1. Context and objectives of the Seminar

This international Seminar was organized by the Toulouse Club of Skating, the South of France League and the French Ice Sports Federation. It gathered representatives of Italy, Spain, the USA and France. The work done with Daniel Kravchenko for Russia and Ukraine

unfortunately came to a tragic stop when Daniel was killed in a car accident at the end of August, with no time for any other representatives from these 2 countries to attend.

This Seminar had the following objectives :

- progress toward the elaboration of common rules for Ballet on Ice (BOI) / Theater on Ice (as it is called in the US, or TOI) at the international level, starting from the rules already existing in the various national federations
- progress toward a common system of judge promotion and training
- exchange upon best practices : choreography, choice of theme, music, etc.
- define a tentative international calendar of competitions and events
- identify the best ways to further develop the sport toward international recognition.

2. Outcomes of the Seminar and next steps

The results reached at the Seminar, if approved officially by each of the federations involved, provide the ground for a common international rulebook for BOI / TOI, which can be implemented rapidly. The following roadmap is proposed, in order to install the process :

3. Organize a common Rulebook from the results of the Seminar, and implement the new rules rapidly for each international competition as a test
4. Set up a second international Seminar in 2006, in order to review and revise the common rules defined in Toulouse. It could be organized in the USA.
5. In between, integrate other countries through intermediary seminars, with a few representatives of each country (e.g. 1 coach, 1 choreographer, 1 judge and 1 federation representative) :
 - in June 2004 in Paris
 - In June 2005 in Barcelona.

So far, Switzerland, Germany, Slovenia, Belgium and Poland have expressed some interest into the sport. The USFSA could check where opportunities may exist in Canada.

Organizing such international Committees in June will allow each country to organize its own national meeting in early September of the same year, prior to the start of the season, in order to deploy the decisions made internationally at the national level.

Subsequent rule review meetings should be made on a biannual basis after 2006, as is the case in other skating disciplines.

3. Proposals for BOI / TOI rules

3.1. Agreement of a common format for BOI / TOI competitions

Slight differences did exist between the various national rules in place. We have agreed to the following :

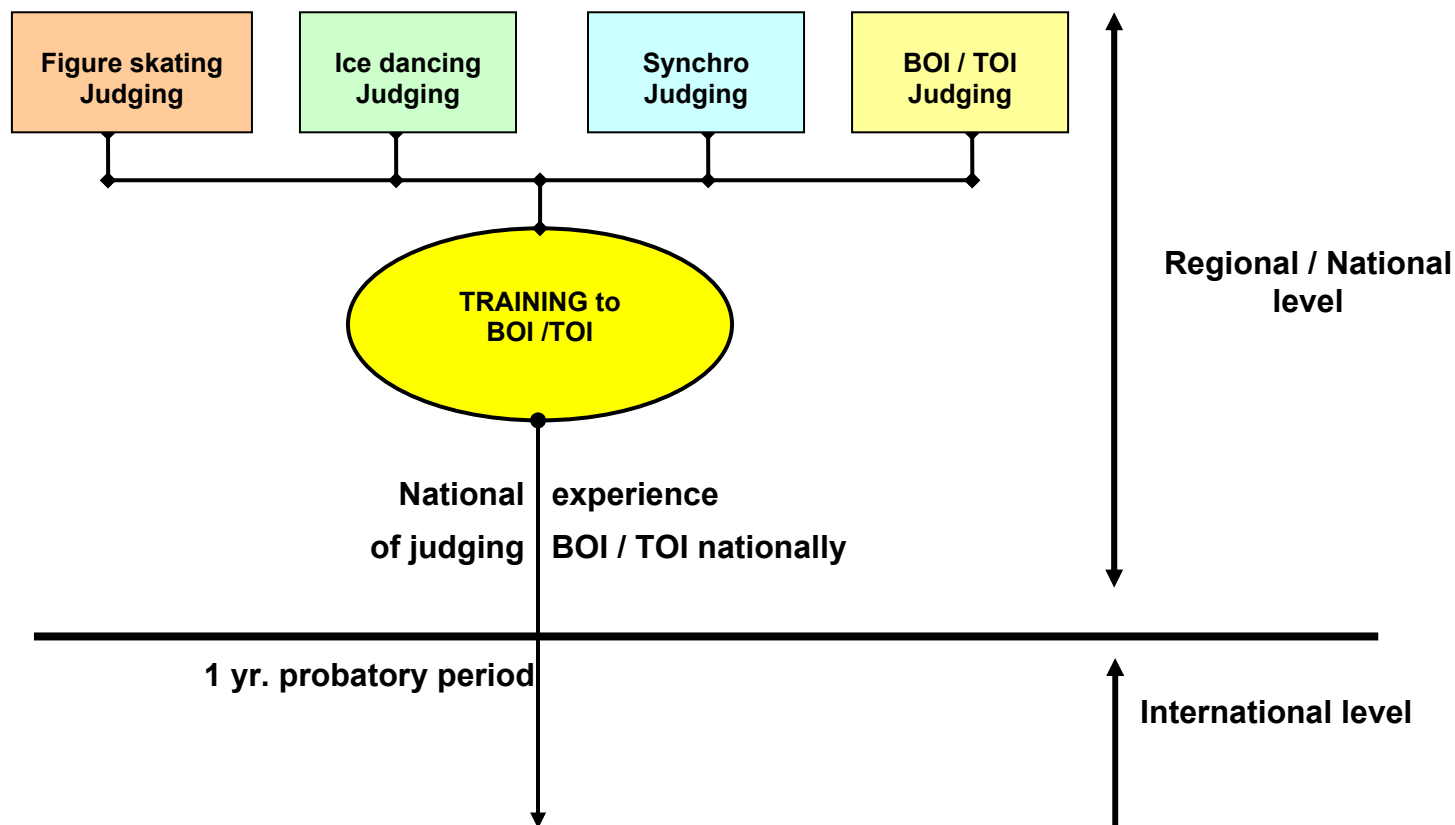
- All skaters must be eligible. Some work might however be needed to clarify the ISU rule.
- Size of the rink : 56 m * 26 m minimum for international competitions
- 3 categories : Senior (« Elite » in French), Junior (« Espoirs » in French) and Novice (« Jeunes Espoirs »). The difficulty of setting up a common system throughout skating leads us to propose that each country defines its own classification and decides in which category its teams want to compete in international championships (the governing body of the organizing club will provide some help to understand the local categories).
- Duration of a performance :
 Senior / Elite category : 6 min. + or – 30 seconds
 Junior / Espoirs category : 6 min. + or – 30 seconds
 Novice / Jeunes Espoirs category : from 5 to 6 minutes and no leeway
- Number of skaters per team : from 8 to 30 for all 3 categories. The minimum size of 8 skaters seems too small to most participants, yet that number seems appropriate if we want to encourage creation of new teams and favor development.
- There is no need for a given « setting up » time for scenery and decor (Note : the current rules for decor size is already common. BOI / TOI is going toward simpler decor in order to avoid transportation cost). Each team has a 2 min. period of time during which the skaters can set up their scenery and warm up, if time permits. Note : the nomination of an « off-ice », or « line » judge has not been discussed in the Seminar, but it was already agreed upon before the start of the Seminar
- Costuming : same as now (simplification and quality)
- Announcement should last no longer than 20 sec. and should be taped on the CD.
- In order to avoid last minute ambiguity, the duration of each program will be measured during the official training, and will be announced loud in the rink.
- The chronometer will start at the first purposeful movement of a skater.
- ➔ To be defined : a level of skating specific to BOI / TOI, in order to refine the definition of categories.

3.2. A common path for the training and promotion of judges

It is recognized that BOI / TOI judges must have several essential characteristics, in order to favor both an objective evaluation of BOI / TOI performances, but also the development of the sport. Among others :

- They must have a solid knowledge of skating, of choreography, of movement
- They must be familiar with specific BOI / TOI technique
- They must be open-minded and ready to explain their evaluation. They must have some good communication abilities.

We recognize also the necessity of an specific BOI / TOI path of training and progress for any individual willing to judge BOI / TOI. Such a path may be sketched as follows :



This path recognizes :

- the possibility for any judge of any other discipline of the skating family to become a BOI / TOI judge, provided he / she follows a specific training for judging BOI / TOI. Such a judge may then become an international judge after several years of judging BOI / TOI at his / her own national level
 - the possibility for a judge of BOI / TOI to pursue his / her progression toward an international level, provided he / she keeps training for judging BOI / TOI. Former BOI / TOI skaters may become BOI / TOI judges, provided they are specifically trained for it.
 - The need for a probatory period of 1 year at international level, prior to becoming an international judge.
- ➔ To be defined : a roadmap for each country to implement a specific BOI / TOI training for judges

3.3. Finding a common name for BOI / TOI

The word « Ballet » seems to be strongly connoted in the US and in Italy and should be discarded if we want to attract male skaters to the sport. On the other hand,

« Theater » is too restricted a concept in France (where it means mainly Molière and Shakespeare). It is proposed that a common name should be looked for. Each of us will look for different expressions that might be more appealing and universal, and propose them via the appropriate Committees (first ideas proposed : Ice Dance Theater, Art on Ice)

3.4. Set up a « choreographic exercise » to go beyond cultural diversity and nurture our common language

A BOI / TOI performance is meant to produce emotion, yet emotion is linked to local cultures. International competitions require that our sport can go beyond cultures and give access to a common language.

It is thought that such a common language can be found through the practise of a « Choreographic Exercise », with no decors, academic costuming, and the sole interpretation of :

- one common music
- one common word
- several common words (as it is done in France today).

Such a choreographic exercise would allow emotion to emerge from both the quality of skating (and gliding), and the quality of interpretation, and the quality of body movement and ensemble choreography.

It is also thought that this could attract new teams to the sport, as the investment is more limited than the Free Ballet (2 min 30, no costumes, no scenery) and yet provides the ground for competition.

The scheme proposed is the following :

- The common music or word(s) would be chosen each year by an international ad'hoc Committee, to be defined
- We would start by Free Ballet competitions (as they are today)
- Then (after 1 or 2 years), we would organize competitions with 2 different rankings, one for the Choreographic Exercise, and one for the Free Ballet
- Once it is proved that the Choreographic Exercise does not prevent teams from skating Free Ballet, organize competitions with Choreographic Exercise and Free Ballet included into one single ranking.

Note : in order to avoid that some teams are tempted by skating only choreographic exercise forever, a time limit could be set (2 years ?), after which a team needs to skate also a free ballet.

- ➔ To be defined : the evaluation method and criteria for the Choreographic exercise
- ➔ To be defined : the roadmap to implement the above scheme with maximum chance of success, given the time constraints
- ➔ To be defined : the communication / demonstration process to coaches and choreographers (Schools and seminars in the US, seminars and regional « reference » coaches and choreographers in France)

3.5. Common criteria for evaluating a BOI / TOI performance

The work done from the criteria existing in the French and the US rules has allowed to produce some common criteria. Those criteria follow the traditional skating convention of first mark for technical merit and second mark for artistic impression. It should be emphasized, however, that technical merit addresses all the aspects of the technicality of a BOI / TOI performance as we agreed to see it, in particular : the quality of skating, the quality of movement, and the quality of choreography.

The criteria defined together are the following :

1st Mark – Technique of performance

- Space, utilization of the ice, organization of formations
- Quality of movement and body possibilities
- Quality of ensembles and rapport
- Strength of skating / of program

2nd Mark – Artistic impression

- Presence, intensity, impact
- Creation of a universe, costuming and props
- Theatricality
- Readability, originality, creativity

The 2nd mark breaks ties.

Note : the mention to « solos » currently mentioned in the US criteria should be included in the rules themselves instead.

Note : a definition of the technique of skating adapted to the specifics of BOI / TOI was elaborated. It contains the following families of elements :

- turns
- footwork and spirals
- take-offs (jumps) and spins
- lifts.

These elements can be evaluated according to : edge quality, flow, speed and variation, quality of execution, carriage, diversity into the performance.