

Communication No. 2795

ICE DANCE Requirements for Technical Specifications season 2026/27 (Update July 14, 2026)

It is a requirement for certain Technical Specifications to be announced annually by the Ice Dance Technical Committee **and all other rules are published in [Sports Rules Single & Pair Skating and Ice Dance 2026](#)**:

Requirements defined in the Technical Specifications to be announced annually:

1. Requirements for Rhythm Dance - Rhythms/theme, Required Elements (including Key Points and Key Point Features for Pattern Dance Elements) and guidelines for Rhythm Dance – Junior/Senior
2. Required Elements for Free Dance – Junior/Senior

All requirements related to Novice categories for the season 2026/27 will be published in ISU Ice Dance Guidelines for International Novice Competitions.

Furthermore, please refer to the following:

Communication: Requirements for Technical Specifications with ongoing validity, effective July 1, 2026 includes the:

- Criteria for Levels for all Required Elements

Communication: Marking Guides effective July 1, 2026 includes the:

- Marking Guide for GOE for Pattern Dances, Pattern Dance Elements, Rhythm Dance/Free Dance
- Components charts for Pattern Dances and Rhythm Dance/Free Dance
- Who's Responsible for Pattern Dances and Rhythm Dance/Free Dance

Any updates to the current ongoing Technical Specifications and Scale of Values, valid as of July 1st, 2026, will be republished in a subsequent Communication.

June 15, 2026

György Elek, Vice President Figure Skating

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR RHYTHM DANCE SEASON 2026/27

1.1. Rhythm/Theme

Rule 709, paragraph 1. a) provides that rhythm(s) and/or theme(s) are selected by the Ice Dance Technical Committee annually for the season. For the season 2026/27, the following has been determined:

The theme and music for the Junior and Senior Rhythm Dance for the 2026/27 season is **“Rhythm and Waltz.”**

Any style of waltz is permitted, from traditional forms to modern interpretations.

At least one (1) additional rhythm, tempo and dance style must be included to support the chosen concept or theme.

Music Requirements: Waltz Section must be in 3/4 or 6/8 time.

- Note:**
- Remixed and/or remastered music, including cover versions, is permitted.
 - Music created by AI is also permitted.
 - The couple should express the feeling, essence, and style of the selected rhythms through their movements and dance holds.
 - **The Rhythm Dance should NOT be skated in the style of a Free Dance.**
 - To comply with the ethical values of sports, any music chosen for Ice Dance competitions must not include aggressive and/or offending lyrics.

1.2 RHYTHM DANCE – Required Elements 2026/27 – Junior/Senior

Junior Rhythm Dance Pattern Dance Elements	One (1) Sequence of the Westminster Waltz evaluated as two (2) sections: skated/performed to any Waltz dance music/dance style(s) with a constant tempo: minimum 54 three-beat measures per minute; 162 beats per minute, skated in 3 / 4 time or 6 / 8 time Duration: any exact number of musical phrases 1WW (Steps #1 – 12) followed by 2WW (Steps #13– 22) Duration: The first step of the dance must be skated on beat one of a musical phrase and started to the left of the Judges Pattern/Step Requirement: Starting with Step #1 of 1WW skated at the Judges' left side. The pattern is optional. Holds: Variation of Holds throughout, except extended Hand in Hand, are permitted. Tracking: Tracking between partners is optional.
Senior Rhythm Dance Pattern Dance Element	A section of the Golden Waltz Pattern Dance, 1GW. Starting with step 33, including the restart, and concluding with step 20: Rhythm: skated/performed to any Waltz dance music/dance style(s) with a consistent tempo: minimum 62 three-beat measures per minute; 186 beats per minute, skated in 3 / 4 time or 6 / 8 time Duration: The first step of the dance must be skated on beat one. Pattern/Step Requirement: Started from Woman's step 33 (LFO) and Man's step 33 (LFO3/LBI3) on the Judge's right side, past the short axis. The pattern is optional. Hold(s): Must remain in contact at all times, even during changes of Holds Tracking: Tracking between partners is optional except during Key Points

Senior Rhythm Dance Creative Dance Element (CDE)	Creative Dance Element (CDE) - Performed in contact, may include Hand in Hand with fully extended arms. Note: A brief release to change hold is not considered a separation. - Skated to any dance rhythm/dance style Requirements: - Both partners must perform steps/movements from barrier to opposite barrier. The requirement for barrier to barrier is fulfilled when at least one of the partners is not more than 2 meters from each barrier. Short axis and Long axis are accepted. - Only One (1) Dance Stop for no more than 5 seconds must be performed anywhere within the CDE. Note: Any stop performed at the beginning, during or end of the CDE, will be considered as the Dance Stop. Any stationary spinning movement is not considered as a stop. If the stop is longer the TP will not consider as a feature for the level and the judges will consider in their GOE mark. - One (1) acrobatic movement involving agility and balance must be performed by one or both, with or without partner assistance. An additional brief stop to prepare/perform the acrobatic movement is permitted and is not considered the Dance Stop. Any additional touching of the ice during the acrobatic movement is permitted and is not considered as the 5 seconds permitted to touch the ice. - The element must demonstrate presentation to all four sides of the rink. Note: Execution directed exclusively toward the judges does not fulfill this requirement. Additional Notes: - Touching the ice is permitted once for no more than five (5) seconds. One or both partners may touch the ice with any part of the body; they do not have to start and stop at the same time within the permitted five (5) seconds. If there are more touches of the ice than permitted, the Judges will take this into account in the GOE. If the conditions are met, a Fall and/or an Illegal Element will be called by TP. - Retrogressions and Loops are permitted - One (1) separation of no more than 5 seconds is permitted and may be performed within the required stop. If there is more than one separation, the Judges will take this into account when assessing the GOE.
Junior and Senior Dance Lift	1 Short Lift, up to 8 seconds Note: The Type of this Short Lift may not be performed in the FD except when performed within one part of a Combination Lift
Junior and Senior Step Sequence	1 Step Sequence Not Touching (Style B) Specifications to Style B, Rhythm Dance: skated to any dance rhythm/style - Chosen pattern may ONLY be Circular, clockwise direction (Senior) and Midline or Diagonal (Junior) - Skated no more than 2 arm lengths apart Not permitted: - Loop(s) - Retrogression(s) Note: The entry or exit edge of a Difficult Turn resulting in a temporary deviation in the direction of travel for the step sequence pattern should not be considered as a retrogression. However, if a Difficult Turn is executed during a retrogression with both entry and exit edge, it will not be considered for Level by the Technical Panel.

Junior and Senior Sequential Twizzles	One (1) Set of Sequential Twizzles At least two Twizzles for each partner and must NOT be in contact between Twizzles Up to 1 step between Twizzles (each push, including scooter push, and/or transfer of weight while on two feet between Twizzles is considered a step). Note: The C Feature(s) attempted in the RD cannot be repeated in the FD for level and will be ignored by the Technical Panel. This applies even if the Features were not given credit for level in the RD.
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1.3 Key Points and Key Points Features for Junior and Senior Pattern Dance Elements Season 2026/27

- **Key Point Features: Must include correct turns, edges, foot placement and timing.**
- Note: Push/transition to the next step: A change of edge within the last ½ a beat of the step is permitted to prepare the push/transition to the next step

Westminster Waltz:

Pattern Dance Element (1WW) Steps # 1-12	Key Point 1 (Woman) Woman Steps 5, 6, 7 (LFI OpMo, RBI, LBO)	Key Point 2 (Man) Man Steps 5, 6, 7 (LFI OpMo, RBI, LBO)	Key Point 3 (Woman) Woman Steps 9, 10a, 10b (LFO, CR-RFO3, LBO)	Key Point 4 (Man) Man Steps 9, 10 (LFO, CR-RFO-SwR)
Pattern Dance Element (2WW) Steps # 13 - 22	Key Point 1 (Woman) Woman Steps 13, 14 (RFI-SwRk, LBO)	Key Point 2 (Man) Man Steps 13, 14 (LFO-SwCtr, RBI)	Key Point 3 (Woman) Woman Steps 19, 20, 21a, 21b (RBO, Cr-LBO, RFO3, LBO)	Key Point 4 (Man) Man Steps 19, 20, 21 (LFO, CR-RFO3, LBO)

Golden Waltz:

Pattern Dance Element (1GW) Steps # 33 - 20	Key Point 1 (Woman) Woman Steps 34, 35 (RFI Sw OpCho, LBO)	Key Point 2 (Man) Man Steps 34, 35 (RFI Sw OpCho, LBO)	Key Point 3 (Woman) Woman Step 15 (XB-LFI-Br)	Key Point 4 (Man) Man Steps 15a, 15b, 15c (XB-LFI OpMo, RBI, LBO)
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1.4 RHYTHM DANCE – Specifications/Restrictions 2026/27

	Specifications/Restrictions	Violations
REFEREE Deductions		
Duration	Senior/Junior: 2 minutes 50 seconds +/- 10 seconds	Program time: Referee deduction - 1.0 up to every 5 seconds lacking or in excess
General Requirements Tempo	Rule 709, para. 1. a)	Referee deduction -1.0 per program - violation of tempo specification
REFEREE AND JUDGES Deductions		
Music	Rule 709 para 1c as stated Only dance music with a rhythmic beat may be used. The music may be without a rhythmic beat for up to 5 seconds at the beginning of the program	Music Requirements: Referee + Judges deduction -2.0 per program
Holds	According to Rule 709 1d Partners must remain in hold (recognizable and/or variation of holds) except to change hold throughout. Note: Extended/sustained basic “Hand in Hand” position is not permitted, except during the CDE	Choreography restrictions: (Pattern/ Stops/ Separations/Touching ice with hands) Referee + Judges deduction - 1.0 per program Note: When performed during a Required Element when not permitted, Judges evaluate as Negative feature(s) for the GOE
Pattern	For this season, Season 2026-2027 there is no pattern restriction.	
Stops	- After the clock starts, the couple must not remain in one place for more than 5 seconds at the beginning and/or end of the program. - During program (excluding the one (1) 5 seconds at the beginning and/or end of the program): Senior: 1 full stop of no more than 5 seconds is permitted only during the CDE Junior: 1 full stop of no more than 5 seconds is permitted - Note: Any stationary spinning movement is not considered as a Stop	
Separations	Rule 709, para. 1. g) Note: Couples skating more than two arm-lengths apart is an error, including in all Required Elements/Choreographic Elements, unless otherwise stated in this Communication. Two arm-lengths is defined as the distance between any part of the skaters’ body.	
Touching ice with hands	Rule 709, para. 1. j) Junior: Not permitted Senior: Only during the CDE	
Costume and prop	Rule 501 Skaters may wear trousers of any length	Costume and prop: Referee + Judges deduction -1.0 per program

2. FREE DANCE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 FREE DANCE – Required Elements 2026/27 for Junior/Senior

ELEMENTS	JUNIOR	SENIOR
Dance Lift - Not more than	Two (2) Different Types of Short Lifts up to 8 seconds Or One (1) Combination Lift up to 13 seconds The Lift type performed in the RD may not be repeated in FD unless performed within one part of a Combination Lift	Three (3) Different Types of Short Lifts up to 8 seconds Or One (1) Short Lift and One (1) Combination Lift up to 13 seconds (Short Lift must be a different type than in the Combination Lift) The Lift type performed in the RD may not be repeated in FD unless performed within one part of a Combination Lift
Dance Spin (DSp)	One (1) Dance Spin Dance Spin (DSp) - A spin skated by the Couple together in any hold. To be performed on the spot around a common axis on one foot with or without change(s) of foot by one or both partners For season 2026-27, Exit Feature is not considered for Level	
Step Sequence: Types: Straight line or Curve	One (1) Step Sequence in Hold (Style B) Not permitted: - Stops - Loops - Retrogression - Hand in hand hold with fully extended arms cannot be established - Separations of more than two arm lengths and/or exceeding 5 seconds - The pattern of the Step Sequence (Style B) must maintain the integrity or basic shape of the chosen pattern. - It must also be a different shape than the pattern of the Choreographic Step if chosen as a Choreographic Element. Note: The entry or exit edge of a Difficult Turn resulting in a temporary deviation in the direction of travel for the step sequence pattern should not be considered as a retrogression. However, if a Difficult Turn is executed during a retrogression with both entry and exit edge, it will not be considered for Level by the Technical Panel.	
One (1) One Foot Turns Sequence (OFT)	One (1) One Foot Turns Sequence Difficult Turns performed on one foot by each partner and must be started with the first Difficult Turn at the same time. The additional Difficult Turns do not have to be performed at the same time.	
	JUNIOR One (1) One Foot Turns Sequence Not Touching Not performing the Twizzle as the last turn will be considered as a positive feature for the GOE	SENIOR One (1) One Foot Turns Sequence with Contact/Hold A minimum of two of the turns must be performed in hold The Twizzle performed in hold is not considered for level Twizzle performed as the last turn is not considered for the level

Synchronized Twizzles	One (1) Set of Synchronized Twizzles At least 2 Twizzles for each partner, with a minimum of 2 steps and up to 4 steps between 1st and 2nd Twizzles. Each push, including scooter push, and/or transfer of weight while on two feet between Twizzles is considered as a step. Partners may be in contact between the 1st and 2nd Twizzles. The “C” feature(s) attempted in the RD cannot be repeated in the FD for Level and will be ignored by the Technical Panel. This applies even if the features were not given credit for Level in the RD.	One (1) Set of Synchronized Twizzles At least 3 Twizzles for each partner (minimum 4 rotations per each Twizzle) with a minimum of 2 steps and up to 4 steps between 1st and 2nd Twizzles. Up to 1 step between the 2nd and 3rd Twizzles. Different entry edge and different direction of rotation for two of the Twizzles. Each push, including scooter push, and/or transfer of weight while on two feet between Twizzles is considered as a step. During the set of Synchronized Twizzles, a different skating foot on any of the three twizzles is required to be considered for Levels 3 and 4. Partners may be in contact between the 1st and 2nd Twizzles. The “C” feature(s) attempted in the RD cannot be repeated in the FD for Level and will be ignored by the Technical Panel. This applies even if the features were not given credit for Level in the RD.
Choreographic Element	Two (2) Different Choreographic Elements chosen from: Choreographic Assisted Jump/Lifting Movement Choreographic Character Step Sequence Choreographic Hydroblading Movement Choreographic Lift Choreographic Sliding Movement Choreographic Spinning Movement Choreographic Twizzling Movement	Two (2) Different Choreographic Elements chosen from: Choreographic Assisted Jump/Lifting Movement Choreographic Character Step Sequence Choreographic Hydroblading Movement Choreographic Lift Choreographic Sliding Movement Choreographic Spinning Movement Choreographic Twizzling Movement

2.2 FREE DANCE – Specifications/Restrictions 2026/27

	Specifications/Restrictions	Violations
REFEREE Deductions		
Duration	Senior: 4 minutes +/- 10 seconds Junior: 3 ½ minutes +/- 10 seconds	Program time: Referee deduction -1.0 up to every 5 seconds lacking or in excess
REFEREE + JUDGES Deductions		
Music	Rule 710, para 1e,	Music Requirements: Referee + Judges deduction -2.0 per program
Stops	- After clock started, couple must not remain on one place for more than 10 seconds - During program (excluding the 10 seconds at the beginning and/or end of the program): unlimited full stops of 5 seconds max. are allowed	Choreography restrictions: (Stops/ Separations/Touching ice with hands) Referee + Judges deduction 1.0 per program Note: When performed during a Required Element when not permitted, Judges evaluate as Negative feature(s) for the GOE
Separations	Rule 710, para 1f Note: Couples skating more than two arm-lengths apart is an error, including in all Required Elements/Choreographic Elements, unless otherwise stated in this Communication. Two arm-lengths is defined as the distance between any part of the skaters' body.	
Touching ice with hands	Touching the ice with the hand(s) is not permitted (except Choreographic Sliding Movement, Choreographic Character Step Sequence)	
Costume and prop	Rule 501, para 1 Skaters may wear trousers of any length	Costume and prop: Referee + Judges deduction -1.0 per program