

Brief Introduction

The topic that I am intending on writing my research paper on, is figure skating. More specifically, I aim to demonstrate why the scoring system in figure skating is flawed and why it needs to be updated or reformed in order to better reflect the current state of the sport. The scoring system currently in place is known as the Code of Points (CoP) system and it was introduced in 2004, in the wake of a major match fixing scandal in the Pairs' figure skating event at the 2002 Winter Olympics. The Code of Points system, which replaced what was known as the 6.0 system, was meant to introduce more transparency and objectivity in the sport. Yet much of the evidence suggests that the Code of Points system has not improved upon the 6.0 system but rather has proven to be a more effective way to mask the deficiencies of the 6.0 system.

As the scoring system has already undergone a significant change in the recent past, it raises the question of why figure skating needs another scoring reform this soon. Yet even under the CoP system, the results of several figure skating competitions have been contentious and perhaps controversial. One of the most high-profile incidents of such a controversy is the Ladies' event at the 2014 Winter Olympics, where many believed the silver medalist, Yuna Kim was unfairly scored. Furthermore, some skaters themselves have also been critical of the state of the scoring system, which suggests that the CoP system is far from perfect. Yet there are skaters as well as individuals involved in figure skating who are longtime benefactors of the CoP system and are unlikely to push for change. Therefore, it is this subset of individuals whom I would like to persuade in my paper.

If the need for reforms is acknowledged, the next question that arises is what shape these reforms would take. One of the many pitfalls of judged sports (including figure skating), is that the nature of a judged sport automatically subjects it to the whims of human subjectivity. Despite

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Once you introduce the abbreviation – keep to it
Don't go back and forth – confuses the reader 😞

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the availability of video replays, inconsistencies can persist. For example, one judge may classify a jump as underrotated, while another does not, or one judge may interpret a skater's skating skills differently than another. The human component of the current judging system makes it so, that scores can fluctuate based on *who* is doing the judging. Taking this into account, my paper will propose the use of alternate means of judging such as AI technology that can help eliminate some of the discrepancies that come with human judges.

Lastly, I believe that this topic is important to address as figure skating is a sport that does not enjoy widespread popularity; it is a sport that is most often watched by the general public, every four years during the Winter Olympics. Therefore, having a scoring system that is unfair and benefits only a select few, may serve to drive away potential fans from an already niche sport, as it can be disillusioning to watch a sport that is far from fair. On a more personal note, this is a subject that greatly interests me as I have been following figure skating closely for many years now and I also share the belief that the scoring system is flawed and skewed to benefit a certain few. Furthermore, there have been several conversations in figure skating circles regarding the implementation of AI technology and I would like to contribute to the discussion in some way.

References

Looney, M. A. (2012). Judging anomalies at the 2010 Olympics in men's figure skating.

Measurement in Physical Education and Exercise Science, 16(1), 55–68.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1091367x.2012.639602>

This article studies the results of the Men's figure skating event at the 2010 Winter Olympics. The author uses quantitative research methods to determine whether the scores awarded to the silver and gold medalists respectively warrants further investigation. The author concludes that the scores awarded by two judges were anomalous and briefly discusses the possible factors that may have contributed to it. This source will be useful to demonstrate the inadequacies of the CoP system and the biases that can affect scores in figure skating.

Bruening, D. A., Reynolds, R. E., Adair, C. W., Zapalo, P., & Ridge, S. T. (2018). A sport-specific wearable jump monitor for figure skating. *PLOS ONE*, 13(11).
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0206162>

This article describes the creation of a wearable monitor that can measure certain elements of a jump in figure skating such as the speed of rotations and type of jump. According to the findings, the monitor cannot accurately measure every aspect of a jump, yet it shows promise. Despite the limitations, this article will be helpful in demonstrating how the use of new technology that can reduce human biases is essential for the future of figure skating.

Planning

Week 4 (Feb 6th-12th)

I have two quizzes (INS 322 and SOC 370) this week but otherwise, there are no other assignments due. Therefore, I will use this week to collect, read through and annotate the bulk of the sources I hope to use in my paper.

Week 5 (Feb 13th-19th)

I have a midterm in my HIS 222 class and a blog post submission for my SOC 370 class this week. So, for this week I plan on just writing the research proposal.

Week 6 (Feb 20th-26th)

I have no assignments or exams due this week, so I want to focus on developing my arguments for the paper. This is probably the meatiest part of the paper, so I want to get a head start on it as early as possible. Since this week is relatively empty for me, I plan on writing rough drafts for each argument as well.

Week 7 (Feb 27th-Mar 5th)

I have an annotated bibliography due for my INS 307 and 322 class so I am just going to carry over my work from the previous week and focus on my arguments for the paper.

Week 8 (Mar 6th-12th)

Another week with no submissions or exams, so I can focus on writing my introduction and conclusion for the paper. By the end of this week, I hope to have completed writing them both.

Week 9 (Mar 13th-19th)

I have two midterms this week (INS 322 & 307), so I do not think I will have time to get much writing done, which is why I hope to have completed my first draft by the previous week.

Therefore, I will book an appointment with the writing center this week to refine my first draft.

Week 10 (Mar 20th-26th)

I have a HIS 222 midterm this week as well as the submission of the working draft so depending on when I get the corrected working draft back, I will focus on improving my draft based on the feedback.

Week 11 (Mar 27th-Apr 2nd)

Spring break. I plan on using this time to continue to edit my paper and include any information I might have missed.

Week 12 (Apr 3rd- 9th)

I have nothing due this week so I can focus on improving my paper, depending on where I have reached after spring break.

Week 13 (Apr 10th-16th)

I plan on booking my second appointment with the writing center this week.

Week 14 (Apr 17th-23rd)

By this time, I expect to have completed the bulk of my paper so I will use this last week to make minor edits, double check my spelling, formatting, grammar, and citations.

Week 15 (Apr 24th-30th)

Final paper due.

Checklist

Before submitting, write “YES” for each of the items below **if it is true!** If this section has not been completed in full then your paper will need to be resubmitted as LATE (incurring the usual 10% late penalties).

1/ I have read the relevant book chapters and included all the information required in the pages above.

- YES

2/ I have completed all the work required for the “Correct This Document” assignment and I have used all the right formatting in this submission.

- YES

3/ I have pressed spellcheck/grammar check and corrected any text as appropriate.

- YES

4/ I have carefully read **out loud** my entire paper and corrected issues where appropriate.

- YES

5/ I have named the file for submission as follows: Research Plan [my iLearn name]

- YES

For example: Research Plan Philip Michael McCarthy

6/ The file I am submitting is a Microsoft Word document.

- YES

