

Mr. Irving Brokaw Executing the Right Outside Forward Bracket Before the Turn.

Mr. Irving Brokaw,
the Foremost Figure
Skater of America

No. 6—How to Make Brackets, Rockers and Counters

By Mr. Irving Brokaw

A Champion Figure Skater of America. Author of "The Art of Figure Skating," Etc.

HAVING now covered most of the simpler ice dances, we may return to the remaining school figures—Brackets, Rockers and Counters.

Brackets, or, as they are sometimes called, counter-threes, are composed of turns identical as to edge with the three, but with the reverse, or unnatural, rotation, ROF to RIB. A bracket consists of two forced curves, a forced curve or false serpentine being one which looks like a change of edge, but contains no change and is always combined either with itself—a bracket—or with a turn—rocker or counter.

These brackets have a change of edge at the turns, but neither rockers nor counters have any change of edge at all. The important thing to remember in skating brackets is to keep the shoulders flat through the entire figure. This is one of the figures where a glance at the skating foot assists the correct turn, just as "keeping your eye on the ball" in golf facilitates the proper stroke.

It is important to bear in mind the following points in making brackets: The forward bracket turn must be skated on the front part and the backward bracket on the back part of the blade. The sharper the edge and the quicker the turn the better will be the print. The body must be leaning towards the centre, but straightening at the turn while the skate still holds the edge to make a sharp print without a change of edge. The curve may be straightened before the turn by spreading the legs, but it is doubtful whether very flat brackets are desirable.

Before turns, assume the shoulder position for the turn instead of for the curve. The body cannot be too flat to the print. In making the turn the motion of the hips is most important; in

fact, they may be said to move the shoulders and are just as important in the execution of the turn as the shoulders.

Arms and shoulders should be kept under control and the entire figure skated rapidly with the shoulders held flat before the turn and in the line of direction after it.

The official schedule of BRACKETS is as follows:

- No. 18a Starting ROF, LIB
- No. 18b Starting LOF, RIB
- No. 19a Starting RIF, LOB
- No. 19b Starting LIF, ROB

The outside forward bracket (No. 18a) is begun with the employed shoulder leading, the balance foot kept behind and the arms outstretched. The shoulders are rotated in the opposite direction slowly by keeping the unemployed shoulder back, so as to bring the body and legs more or less in a spread-eagle position for the turn on a sharp edge.

Make the turn on the toe of the skate by lifting the heel just enough to keep the balance foot before the turn crossed over behind and crossed over in front of the print after the turn. The balance foot is carried rather high after the turn and is held across the print in front and over the line, pointing down, and it is held there until the balance is obtained for a normal inside backward edge executed in the normal IB plain circle fashion. The body must be leaning toward the centre both before and after the turn. This figure should be practiced in connection with the left inside back bracket, with which it is skated in the official schedule.

The inside forward bracket (No. 19a) is started like the inside forward plain circle with the balance foot behind. The

balance foot is then moved gently forward as near to the employed foot as possible the employed knee being well bent and the balance foot shoulder being brought forward in the direction of motion in order to be held flat with the print at the turn.

To execute the turn on the front part of the blade, lift the balance foot slightly in the direction of progression and "twist" the balance foot shoulder in the new skating direction—in the direction of the outside backward edge.

Immediately after the turn, look well over the unemployed shoulder and drop the balance foot across behind the employed foot, throwing it well out and back with opened knees, as in the proper position for the outside backward plain circle. Do not carry the balance foot far from the skating foot at the moment of the turn or the quickness of the turn will be impaired. Briefly, the balance foot must be kept in front before the turn and behind after the turn. The LOB bracket must be skated in connection with this figure.

The outside backward bracket is skated as follows: After the start, let the balance leg at once pass the skating foot as in the OB circle; at the same time "sink" well on the employed knee and then bring the balance leg forward again and carry it over the print, holding it low and flattening the shoulders in order to prepare for the turn.

At the turn, the balance foot is held near the employed and the body kept a little in front of the skate to facilitate making the turn, which is made by an instantaneous flip on the heel. Both

Mr. Brokaw and Charlotte in a Pair Skating Move—a Graceful Combined Spiral Figure—the Lady on Her Left Outside Forward and the Gentleman on His Left Inside Backward.

these motions force the body over onto the inside forward edge. The weight of the body will be thrown in the direction necessary to complete the inside forward properly by looking back quickly at the turn.

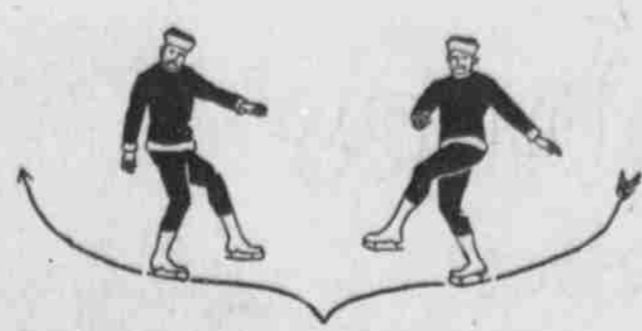
After the turn, the balance foot must be held behind and across with the leading arm stretched well out; towards the end of the curve the balance foot passes forward, near the employed, to complete the inside forward circle in normal position.

In the course of this figure the balance foot is brought back after starting, then crossed in front just before the turn, behind just after the turn and in front again towards the finish of the curve.

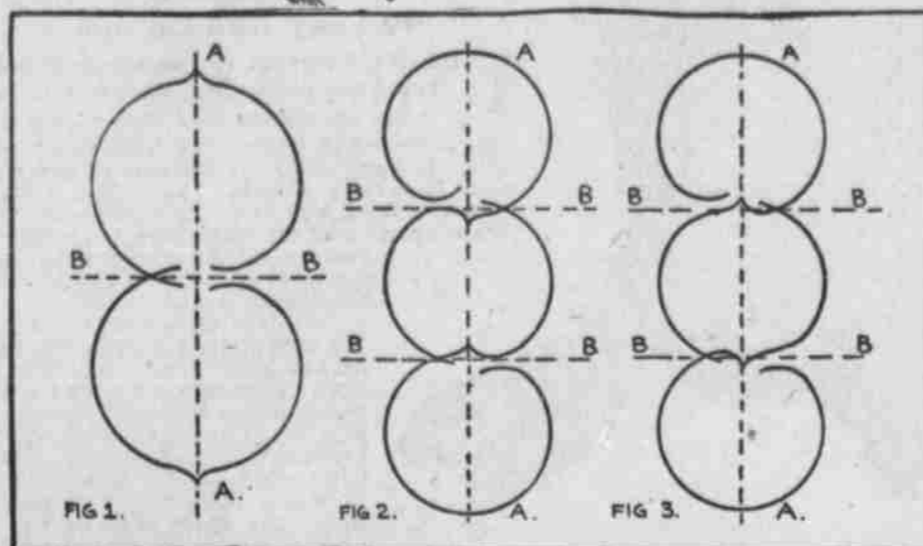
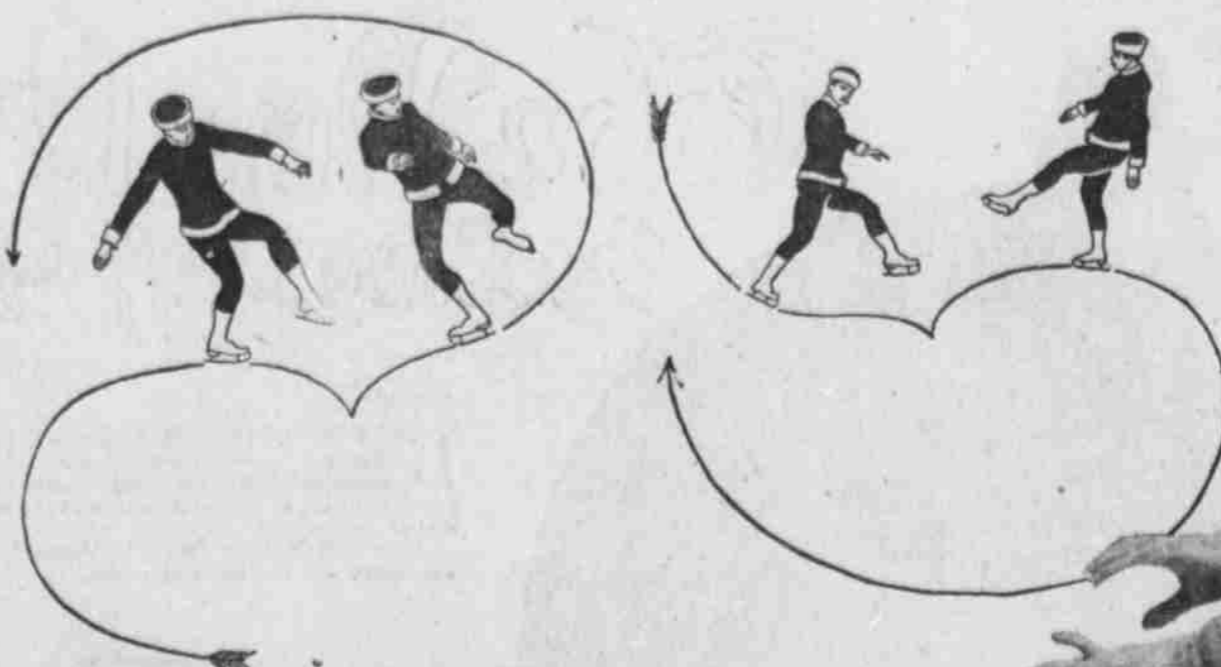
For the inside backward bracket, the balance foot is kept in front at the start and then gently passes the employed foot so that when the turn is made it is behind and outside the print. Care must be taken to hold the inside edge, because the rotation of the unemployed shoulder tends to bring skater onto the outside backward edge. The turn is made on the heel of the skate, and the unemployed shoulder is forced towards the centre after it. This changing of position allows the skater to proceed from backward inside to forward outside. The balance foot, in this figure, is kept behind up to the turn and crosses over in front after the turn, just as in forward brackets.

We now come to the two last of the school figures. They are the Rocker and the Counter. The Rocker is the most difficult of the school figures and generally requires long and continued practice. Figure 2 on this page gives the diagram for the Rocker and Figure 3 the diagram for the Counter.

The official schedule for the Rocker (Nos. 20a, 20b, 21a and 21b) and for the



The Diagrams, from Left to Right, Show, in Perspective, the Right Outside Forward Bracket, the Right Outside Forward Rocker and the Right Inside Forward Counter



The Diagrams Show the Correct Shape of the Bracket (Fig. 1), the Rocker (Fig. 2), and the Counter (Fig. 3).



Fig. 4. From Top to Bottom the Diagrams Show the Difference Between the Bracket and the Three; the Counter and the Three, and the Rocker and the Three.



Charlotte, the Famous Skater of the Hippodrome, Posing Specially for This Page, Executing the Right Inside Forward Bracket Before Turn.

Counter (Nos. 22a, 22b, 23a and 23b) is as follows:

- Rocker, Counter.
- Nos. 20a 22a Starting ROF, LOB
- Nos. 20b 22b Starting LOF, ROB
- Nos. 21a 23a Starting RIF, LIB
- Nos. 21b 23b Starting LIF, RIB

I will not be able in these articles to discuss each of these various figures in detail, but the following general remarks will perhaps prove of help to the skater in learning to master them.

A rocker is a turn in the same direction as the three, but to the same edge of the skate as before: ROF to ROB; ROB to ROF.

The important things to remember are not to make any change of edge at the turn and not to make the turn unless on a good edge.

A counter, on the other hand, is identical with the rocker as far as edges are concerned, but the body revolution is made in the reverse direction, ROF to ROB; ROB to ROF.

In both rockers and counters, as reference to Figures 2 and 3 on this page will show, there are two transverse axes. The turns must be placed at the point of intersection of the axis A-A with the transverse axis B-B. All three circles of rockers and counters must be of equal size. Most skaters make the two outer circles much smaller than the centre one. The line A-A must divide the figures into two equal parts, as in the eight. This will be found quite difficult at first in regard to the two outer circles.

The difference between the rocker and the counter is that whereas in the former the turn is comparatively easy to make and the following edge difficult to hold for a full circle, in the latter the turn is difficult to make and the following edge easy to hold.

The rocker is made by turning the

skating leg in the hip joint, while the upper part of the body does not alter its position.

In making the first curve of the rocker, the body is twisted forward in the skating direction, making the skate take a sharp edge, and it is necessary to pay special attention to the "screwing" around of the shoulders and body. The turn will be facilitated by a glance down at the moment to see it executed.

The edges should be made strong and true. The turn must be made without using the flat of the skate and without making a change of edge after it. To do this it is necessary, especially on outside rockers, to let the angle succumb to the weight just before the turn, and bend a little, but from strength, under perfect control and not from weakness.

The balance foot must never swing or jerk either forward or backward at the turns, but must move carefully and steadily at the proper time. Do not make the slightest pause in the turns, but keep up the momentum evenly throughout.

The whole movement of the figure must be continuous and regular.

The counters, too, are turned in the hip joint. Three movements of the balance foot are made, but they are made in such rapid succession that they do not show separately. Whereas in the rockers, before the turn, the unemployed shoulder presses the body in the rotating direction; in the counters it rotates backward and in inside forward counters it shoots forward.

For the outside forward counter, the shoulders are held flat with the direction of motion. The mistake is often made when skating this figure on the right foot of bringing the left shoulder forward before the turn; this ought not to be done, because it is liable to produce a change of edge. The same rule applies to the left outside forward counter.

Few Geniuses Have Red Hair?

IS there any connection between genius and the color and structure of a person's hair? This is the interesting question raised by an English student, who has taken the pains to find out what kind of hair has covered the heads of several thousand men and women of genius.

His investigations seem to establish the fact that it is exceedingly rare for a genius to have red hair. The only poet he was able to find whose locks were distinctly reddish was Swinburne. John Bunyan was the only great reformer who had red hair.

For ayes, in fact, the world has associated red hair and beards with men who, for some reason or other, hold a very low place in the world's esteem. In nearly every painting of Cain, the first murderer, and of Judas Iscariot, Christ's betrayer, the artists have given them red hair and beards.

An overwhelming majority of the world's greatest men have had hair ranging in color from dark brown to black. Savonarola, the religious reformer, had coal-black hair, but, surprisingly enough, his eyebrows and eyelashes were a brilliant red.

The structure of the hair, whether straight or curly, seems to have a definite connection with the possession of genius, or its lack, as the color. Most persons of genius had curly or wavy hair. Among the exceptions were Napoleon and Andrew Jackson, whose hair was remarkable for its wiriness. Two other notable exceptions were James Russell Lowell, the poet, and Grieg, the musician, both of whom had lank, straight hair.

This English investigator was unable to find a single instance of a genius who had mouse-colored hair, or whose hair turned prematurely gray.