FIGURES

Introduction to Loops

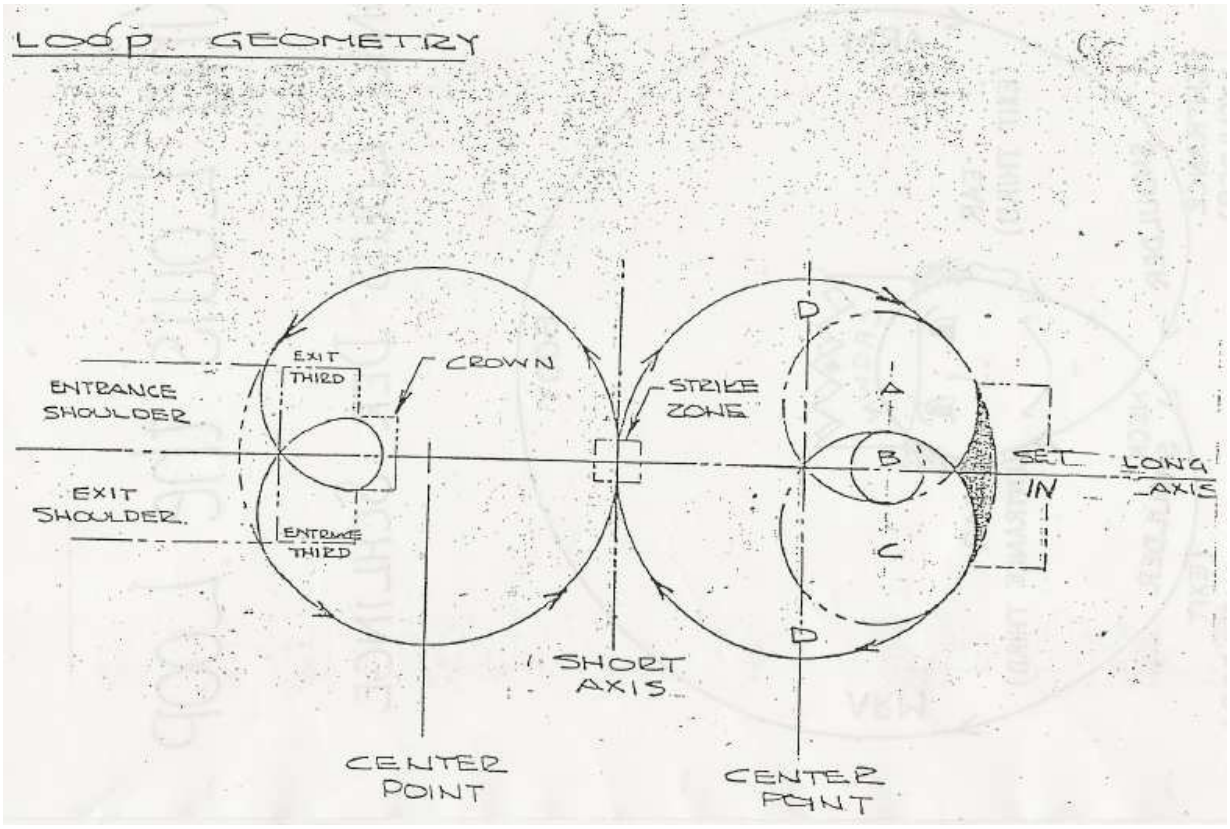
by Kylie Shirley

I thought I would write a little bit about Loops for my first article in this newsletter as it is something that I am working on with my pupils at the moment – The Introduction to Forward and Backward Loops.

I believe you can never start loops too early and I like to teach all my skaters (right from Novice) the loop circle figure. All the principles from Figure 1 should be carried into this loop circle figure – correct strike/take-off position, body position, free leg position, timing, etc. There needs to be a lot of practice on the loop circle figure before the actual loop can be taught.

Before skaters start into the figure competitions that have loops, I like to spend some ground work on the loop circle figures (114, 115, 116 and 117). These loop figures have numbers and are recognised in the NZFRS Figure and Free Manual. Usually when skaters are starting out doing loop circles they will not need to adjust their actions and skaters should be able to complete the loop circles without having to loosen actions.

When teaching the loop circle figure, I teach it as it would be done if the loop was skated. This means that for the forward loop circle, I teach it with the crossed arm position. Also I instruct my skaters to pass their leg as they skate past the exit shoulder and then change their arms. This is to make them aware that they have to hold their takeoff position until this part of the figure – which will help them when they actually do the loop. The same applies for the back loop circle – Figure 116 and 117. A lot of practice needs to happen with the back outside loop circle so the skater gets familiar with the Schaffer takeoff position, which they might not have done before. This practice will also help their confidence before starting to add in the loops. The skater should be able to confidently run the edge of the loop circle and do good takeoffs in the strike box before the trainer moves on to teach the loops.



I like to use a lot of pictures when I am teaching figures. Attached above is a picture of the geometry of a loop. I think it is important for the skater to understand what they are trying to achieve. Explaining the relationship of

the different circles that the loop is made up of is very important. It helps the skater to realise that the entry shoulder is actually the same size as the exit shoulder. It also demonstrates that the loop part of the figure is a "tear drop" shape and not a circle. The definition of a loop is "an edge which spirals in, half circles around, and spirals out across itself". This is understood much more when married up with the geometry.

Attached below is a picture of King Louis the Loop which was given to me by my figure coach – Jack Fanthorpe. I think it helps to relate the loop to everyday language and gives it a persona that the skater can identify with.