

## Are judges influenced by past outcomes? Evidence from figure skating

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**Abstract:** In a two-stage evaluation setting, judges may rely on information from the first stage when assessing second-stage performances. In figure skating, institutional rules governing the order of skaters in the second stage make signals about first-stage performance—either coarse or fine—salient. Using a regression discontinuity design, we show that judges systematically rely on prior scores, despite explicit instructions not to do so. This reliance on priors—particularly when the signals are coarse—distorts information aggregation and leads to biased and inefficient rankings.