

N A W G J N A T I O N A L N E W S L E T T E R

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Collegiate Update

Debbie Yohman

NCAA Representative to the WTC

The NCAA Women's Gymnastics Committee has defined the term "open scoring" to mean that each judge comes up with his/her score and start value independently and then puts the score up on the flasher before speaking with or observing the other judge's score or start value. After each judge has flashed a score and start value, the score may be turned so that the other judge and coach can see them. At this time, the head judge decides whether the scores are in range or whether there is any reason to call a conference. In addition to NCAA championships, the start value will be flashed at each judge's table during regular-season competition.

The Committee also determined that it is acceptable to put a chalk arc line on the corners of the floor exercise mat and that a single chalk mark may be placed on the balance beam. A skill cushion may be placed on top of two 4" mats or on top of an 18 cm. mat. For vaulting in collegiate competitions, an 18 cm. mat will be used as an allowable landing mat.

Page 73 of the USAG Rules and Policies describes specifications for collegiate competitions. One correction to the 94-95 Rules and Policies is that "stinger mats may be used at the regionals and nationals." Also, the new AAI fiberglass springboards will be allowed during NCAA regional and national meets (as per 9/8/94 NCAA memo).

The NCAA championships will be held April 20 - 22, 1995 at the University of Georgia. All officials at the championships must have a Brevet, Elite, or Level 10 rating. All chief judges and the meet referee must have at least an Elite rating. The selection of the national meet referee will rotate from region to region as follows: 1995 — Northeast; 1996 - Northeast or West; 1997 — West; 1998 — West or Midwest. All regional meet referees automatically advance to the national championships. The next three highest-ranking judges will be selected based on experience and votes from coaches. Every attempt to select only one judge per state will be made. One at-large judge will be chosen from the region hosting the championships.

The committee will attempt to assign, for both the regional and national championships, judges who have judged at least two regular-season collegiate meets during the preceding year. Each regional advisory committee will submit recommendations to the committee based on recommendations of coaches throughout the respective regions.

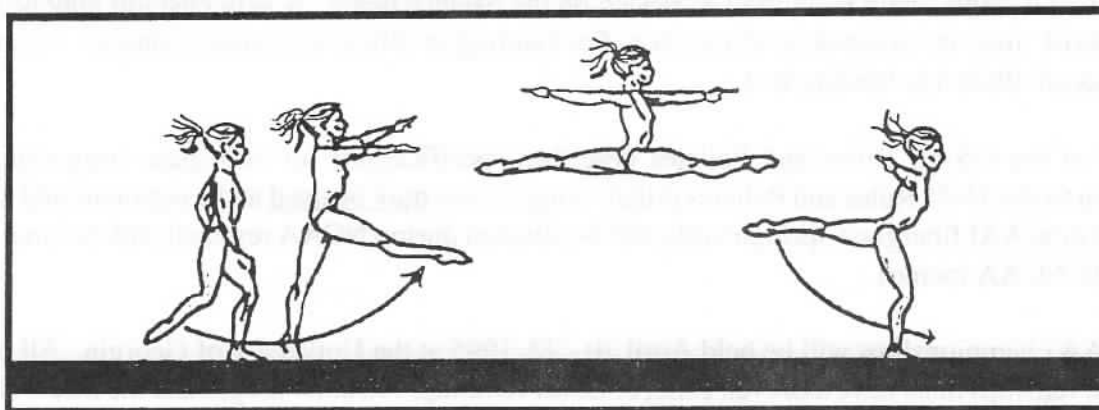
For regional competitions, the meet referee from each region will be selected first. A total of eight judges from each region will be selected based on recommendations from the coaches. Judges with the highest number of votes will be selected first. The names of the eight judges selected from each region will be placed in five selection boxes labeled for each region. Four in-region judges will be selected for each region by random draw, one region at a time. There will be no more than two judges from each state assigned to each regional (excluding the meet referee and the state of California which is divided into two regions—North and South). Four out-of-region judges also will be selected by random draw. The draw will proceed region to region, east to west on odd years, west to east on even years, until all names are drawn. Alternate judges will be selected from the remaining names in the pool, with emphasis to obtain the most qualified judge.

No judge who is employed by or has an affiliation with an NCAA member institution that sponsors women's gymnastics will be assigned to championships competition. Examples of affiliation would be, but are not limited to, coaching-staff member, relative of a gymnast or coach, and member of an athletics-related booster club.

Simplifying the Recognition and Analysis of Skills

Patty Hannan, Sharon Weber, and Peggy Liddick

Performance Science describes the three basic movement characteristics inherent in every skill. These are: external amplitude, internal amplitude, and overall performance quality. Using these movement characteristics, we can "see" a skill and apply appropriate deductions more effectively. To best illustrate this concept, evaluate the split leap below:



Look at the illustration carefully. What do you consider to be the amplitude (height) deduction for this leap?

Clearly, it is a very high leap and it would receive no deduction. But how did you determine this? In order for you to correctly assess the height of the leap, you automatically measured the distance between the gymnast's body and the apparatus. Whenever your eye takes a measurement of the relationship of the athlete to the apparatus, you are evaluating the "external amplitude" of a skill. External amplitude includes all deductions that require the observer to measure the relationship of the athlete to the apparatus to determine the accuracy of the performance requirement. External amplitude deductions include:

Height, distance, degree of turn, most landing errors
amplitude of casts, direction...

Look at the illustration again. This time evaluate the gymnast's degree of split and any body position faults. Clearly there are no body position faults. What did you eye do this time to determine this measurement? In order for you to make the determination concerning the body position of the leap, your eye measured the relationship of the gymnast's limb position to itself (i.e., bent arms or legs) or to the torso position (i.e., degree of split, poor body alignment...). Here, you are evaluating the "internal amplitude" of skill performance. Internal amplitude includes all deductions requiring the eye to measure the relationship of the athlete's body parts. This measurement can be recognized whether the apparatus is present or not; unlike the "external amplitude" measurements where the apparatus must be present to make the evaluation. Internal amplitude deductions include:

Arm bend, leg bend, degree of split, leg separation, arch or pike...

Look at the illustration one more time. What do you think about the overall quality of performance of this leap? Clearly, this is a "still" illustration and this evaluation would normally require evaluating the whole presentation from start to finish. But for the sake of this presentation, let's assume this "still" illustration is consistent with the quality of performance throughout the leap. In measuring the overall performance quality of the leap, you observed the point of the gymnast's toes, the extension of her arms and finger tips, the lift of her chest and chin...When evaluating overall performance quality, we are appreciating the clear lines and points of movement being expressed within a skill. Overall Performance Quality deductions include:

Rhythm, Timing, Dynamics

We have now taken a single picture and analyzed it three different ways. All deductions can be categorized within the three types of measurements described here. By categorizing all the deductions into three distinct groups (external amplitude, internal amplitude, and overall performance quality), officials can more effectively and deliberately assess and apply the multitude of potential deductions. This performance system of taking three measurements for each skill and applying related deductions is consistent with how we "see" and "perceive" through the associative memory capacities of the brain.

Officials using this performance system can apply judging knowledge in a more accurate and simplistic way. Instead of the brain approaching each element as possessing a potential for many deductions to many skills, judges can recognize that they will be making three measurements for each skill (regardless of the skill performed) and that all deductions are related to one of these measurements. This performance system will allow for a deductive vs. inductive reasoning approach that not only "speeds up" the evaluation but increases its accuracy.

This is the first in a series of articles designed to relay vital "cutting edge" information from the sciences to gymnastics professionals. The information has unique applications for improving judging techniques. NAWGJ expresses their appreciation to the staff of Human Performance Systems, Inc. for the preparation of the series.

Human Performance Techniques for Improving Judging Skills

Presentation by Patty Hannan and Sharon Weber

Notes by Robin Ruegg

According to Human Performance Systems, scientific principles can be applied to help judges streamline the complex demands placed on them while improving their speed and accuracy. Human Performance scientists recognize that judging, which requires accurately performing many brain functions simultaneously, is extremely difficult without streamlining the process. While many experienced judges have discovered these principles intuitively, now there is scientific evidence to help all judges perform better.

First, for good visual health when you are judging, do the following:

- Work in a well-lighted area.
- Make sure you have a comfortable viewing distance and clear, unobstructed view.
- Reduce distractions.
- Maintain updated prescriptions for corrective lenses with anti-glare lenses.
- Avoid visual fatigue that is generated when you look up and down. In other words, watch the athlete and write down her routine. When she's done, look down at your paper. Don't look up/down, up/down because it will increase your eye fatigue).
- Maintain alertness.

Next, recognize that all deductions fall within three basic movement characteristics: external amplitude, internal amplitude, and overall performance quality (see article in this newsletter). Start to group deductions into these categories.

Try doing video training at home, watching routines first only for external amplitude, i.e. the distance of the athlete from the apparatus). Next watch the videos looking only at Internal Amplitude, which includes the degree of split, position of torso, bend of legs, etc.

Finally, watch the videos looking at the overall performance quality, such as the rhythm, the smoothness, and the overall aesthetic look.

You can then watch the same videos and look for all three movement characteristics. You'll find you're seeing more than you did before you broke the movement down into the three basic movement characteristics. A technique for training our eyes to recognize the requirement that handstands be performed within 10 degrees of vertical is to draw a vertical line and a 10 degree angle line on a clear overhead. Place this overhead on top of your video in slow motion or on pause. You'll be able to see if the handstand is "in" or "out" and will be able to train your eye to catch this in regular speed.

As a judge, it is helpful to learn to look at the center of the body first and then focus outward. This enables us to see the external and internal amplitude.

Scientists say that judging is an incredibly complex and difficult task. Writing uses the right side of the brain, observing uses the left side of the brain, and analysis uses both sides of the brain. No wonder we get tired or get headaches by the end of some meets!

More information on this subject is available through Human Performance Systems, Inc., 519 I-30, Suite 103, Rockwall, TX 75087.

Level 5 Test Taking Made Easy

Janet Packwood

Here's a good article for those of you with friends getting ready to test for the first time. It's also an excellent handout for clinics.

Please do not be overwhelmed by the quantity of the study material you have collected to study for the Level 5 certification exam. Much of the material does not need to be learned to pass the test. if you organize your time and material correctly, passing the Level 5 test CAN BE EASY!

Study frequently for short periods of time. A half-hour is ideal; an hour should be the absolute maximum for any one study period. Use all the learning aids you can. SAY your study material out loud. WRITE details over and over. If being quizzed by others helps you, enlist the help of friends.

The Test Format

The test has 50 multiple choice questions. There are ten on each event and ten general questions. Look at the general deductions on pages 161-163 of the compulsory book to get some idea of the "general" questions. Remember, you can afford to miss several questions, so don't exhaust and confuse yourself. You pass at 70%. Once you have passed the test, you can create your own judging guides and practice with experienced judges to learn how to apply what you've memorized. Passing the test is just the required first step.

Study Each Event In Depth

Vault: Know the deductions. This is an easy area to get all or most of the ten questions correct. You only have to remember one page!

Bars, Beam, Floor: You must know the general deductions (pages 161-163). The majority of the test deductions come from these three pages. You must know the elements in order and the value of each. Learn the specific deductions the easy way. Note similarities. Memorize the "odd" values only. (The "odds" are usually .10, up to .30, and the "flats," i.e., .2, .3, .5. Every other specific deduction has to be the most common, i.e., "up to .2.")

Test Yourself

Save any practice tests on each event until you have studied thoroughly. These questions should be written in the same style as the qualifying test.

At the Test Site

Before you start to read any of the test questions, write down your study guides on the scratch paper the test administrator gives you. The time you spend writing these guides will save you much time and confusion as you take the test.

After You Pass

You will want to join your two professional organizations: the National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges (NAWGJ) and USA Gymnastics (USAG). Also, Level 5 judges must practice judge two times at level 6 - 7 meets before they may take the Level 6 -7 test.

Good Luck!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Uniform Report

Midway Uniform Company reports that the roof collapsed at one of their uniform suppliers buildings. As a result, they were unable to supply the straight skirt for a few weeks. The plant is in full operation again and expects to be completely caught up with orders by the end of the year. Midway regrets any inconvenience caused by this delay and will ship uniforms as soon as possible.

NAWGJ Name Tags

NAWGJ Name Tags are 1" x 3" navy blue tags with white inscription. They have the NAWGJ logo and the judge's name. These name tags are perfect to wear on your uniform; they help the coaches and gymnasts get to know you a little better. You may add your state or region to the name tag for an additional cost. The cost for the NAWGJ Name Tag is \$6.50 per name tag including postage. Orders may be sent to Dean Ratliff, SJD, 726 N. 90th St. Seattle, WA 98103-3810; (206) 783-5757.

Attention Test Administrators and Active Status Coordinators

As of January 1, 1995, René Niccollai will be the new Certification Coordinator. Exams will continue to be scheduled through Sue Ammermon. A new TA guide will be issued soon.

As of January 1, Active Status Coordinators in each state should send active status cards to:

René Niccollai
1850 Eagle Trace Blvd.
Coral Springs, FL 33701.

Varina French

Varina French is a very important person to all of you who are reading this newsletter. She is the person from Judges Certification Inc. who scores all of your tests and processes your certification cards. More importantly, she is a wonderful human being who works tirelessly at creating a positive environment for gymnasts and judges.

Varina was in a serious automobile accident in September and is undergoing a long healing process. Her husband is reading cards and letters to Varina and she is beginning to respond. If you would like to wish her well, please send a card or letter to her at Coronado Hospital, Sub-Acute Unit, 250 Prospect Place, Room 147, Coronado, CA 92118. A recovery fund is also being established. Additional information about the fund will be printed in the next newsletter.