

NAWGJ NEWSLETTER

May/June, 2003

Eastern National Championships Some Observations From Beam

Cookie Batsche was assigned to judge Balance Beam at Eastern National Championships this year. The meet was held in Springfield, Massachusetts on April 26-27. Here's some observations on the composition of the routines at the championship level.

- The Juniors generally had the most interesting and complex routines. The highest scores of the meet (with one exception) came on the first day and first session. This was the youngest age group and the two winning routines consisted of the following elements:

Routine A: Round off, layout stepout; full turn; switch leap, straddle jump, straddle jump; wolf jump, flic flac; roundoff double full (9.525)

Routine B: Wolf jump, straddle jump 1/1; flic, flic, layout step-out; cat jump, front handspring, wolf jump $\frac{3}{4}$; full turn; straddle jump, wolf 1/1; Roundoff double full (9.525)

Routine A was performed with complete artistry and fluid rhythm and dynamics. She received no deductions in any of these categories from any of the four judges. In fact, all four judges said they had rarely seen a gymnast perform on beam with such outstanding artistry and fluidity (by the way, she was a Region 8 gymnast!).

Routine B was performed with outstanding execution—high quality, elite-level technique. Perfectly straight legs in her acro elements. She received .05 deduction for artistry and .05 deduction for rhythm.

- Most of the junior gymnasts had acro connections consisting of flic flac back layout or flic flac back tuck. A few also included isolated acro elements such as a front tuck, front aerial, or side aerial. You might keep this information in mind as you consider the deduction of $>.20$ for the level of acro at Level 9.
- Two of the senior gymnasts had routines with extremely unique combinations. Read these closely—you will be amazed!

Routine C: Press handstand mount; switch leap, flic swing down; straddle jump, straddle jump, wolf jump, back tuck (4 elements all directly connected); full turn; cartwheel; flic, back layout step out, full twist dismount -- yes, this was the dismount series! (9.45 primarily because of some small balance errors; no composition deductions; outstanding artistry and dynamics so no deduction in those categories)

Routine D: Clear pike V mount; switch leap; full turn; straddle jump, straddle jump, wolf jump, back tuck, wolf jump (5 elements all directly connected); round off; flic, back layout step out; full twist

dismount--yes again, this was the dismount series! (9.525 primarily due to small execution errors, low amplitude on the dismount, and small deductions in the artistry and rhythm category).

- Remarkably, there were a few gymnasts who did not have their down-on-the-beam work or did not have front/side acro elements. Two gymnasts were missing an A. At the senior level, most of the acro series were flic, flic and these all received major composition deductions for level of acro. A couple of gymnasts really did back walkovers instead of flics and therefore did not get credit for their acro series. At the same time, several seniors had flic, layouts or flic, flic layouts. One even had a flic layout to two feet which she performed perfectly in warm-ups but piked in the meet. While the seniors as a whole seemed to struggle more with their acro series, they often had more interesting dance skills and better execution when performing their gym series.

The outcome of this meet reinforces the importance of applying the deductions for composition, rhythm, dynamics, and artistry in a consistent manner across the entire meet. It is so important to use these deductions to distinguish among gymnasts. Hopefully, these notes will help our Florida judges develop an appreciation for the level of routines performed at the national competitions and provide some insight for use of the composition deductions. Region 8 routines were some of the very best routines at the meet so we are fortunate to have the opportunity to see high level gymnastics in our own state and invitationals. Our gymnasts and coaches represent our region well and, as judges, we appreciate their hard work and dedication to preparing top quality gymnasts.

2002 World Championships Highlights

The WTC publishes a judge's analysis following major international competitions. A few highlights of the 2002 World Championship report follow:

- Concern continued to be expressed with the use of the 8.8 start value at FIG competitions. The report stated that the 8.8 basic score over taxed the gymnasts taking away from their ability to master the content of their routines as well as enhance their artistry and choreography. It was suggested that the basic value be raised to a minimum of 9.0 coupled with a greater emphasis on the evaluation of artistry and originality of the composition by judges.
- Vault continues to have the highest SV average and the highest average score. In Competition I (prelims), the average SV increased slightly on all apparatus since the 2001 World Championships but only the average vault start value increased at Competition III (finals).
- New vaults performed at World Championships included a handspring front salto layout with 1 ½ twists and a Round-off full-on, back layout full off.
- Bars saw the introduction of the triple salto dismount and routines with many stalders.
- Three performances were described as having "fantastic, unusual connections:" back handspring, back layout full; double front dismount; Onodi, front aerial, side somi all directly connected!
- Half of the gymnasts performed four acrobatic series on floor. Triple fulls were the most common E performed followed by full twisting double backs,

Arabian double fronts; and double backs
in lay out position.