

## **Judging the new Women's Compulsory routines....**

**"Do I put a number on my paper or a letter?"**

- **Tom Koll, National Junior Olympic Committee Chair**
- **Cheryl Hamilton, National Technical Committee Chair**

This article is being written to help both coaches and judges understand some of the "in general" deductions for the compulsory routines and how to apply those deductions. These deductions are NOT listed in the gray boxes, but are listed on pages 161 and 162 in the compulsory book. These are not new deductions. However, after teaching several clinics on the 2005-2013 routines, It has been apparent the application of these deductions needs more education.

Let's start by identifying these deductions.

- **Page 161# Incorrect position of arms, head, feet or legs (text errors) (Deduct in general – not each time – according to small, medium & large errors) Up to 0.40**
- **Page 161# Incorrect body alignment, position or posture during connections (General deduction for whole exercise) Up to 0.30**
- **Page 162# Movement lacking artistry of presentation Up to 0.30**
  - ❖ **Quality of gymnast's movement to reflect the style of the choreography Up to 0.15**
  - ❖ **Quality of expression (i.e. projection, emotion, focus) Up to 0.15**

### **Incorrect position of arms, head, feet or legs (text errors) Up to 0.40**

Question: What is most important in the compulsory routines?

Answer: The major elements.

Making sure the text is followed is also important as it defines the exactness of the routines and defines the term "compulsory exercise." However, the main emphasis MUST be placed on the evaluation of the major elements listed in the routines. (These are the elements that have a value listed behind the headings. They are also all listed separately in the Penalty pages in the back of the book and the DVD produced by USA Gymnastics.)

This "deduct in general" deduction is applied when the prescribed positions are not performed exactly as specified in the text. What is important to understand is there is NO specific deduction if for instance a gymnast places her arm in the side middle when the text states crown. In this situation, a "t/T" (depending on how big the text error is) should be written on the judge's paper indicating the text was not followed correctly. The judge should NOT write a deduction (number) if this type of error occurs. When deciding how much to deduct, the judge at the end of the routine, would count up all the "T's" and decide how great in total were the errors and apply the appropriate "Up to 0.40" deduction. If the above text error was the only text error in the entire exercise, there should be NO DEDUCTION. So the next question you might have is, "How many "t/T's" should there be before there is a deduction?" The answer to that question is not simple. There is not a set number because some text errors are larger than others. A gymnast who has her arms in the wrong place during the full turn on floor has made a larger text error than the gymnast who forgets to turn her palm out on the fish pose. The judge must use common sense and determine how great the errors were.

## **Incorrect body alignment. Position or posture during connections UP to 0.30**

Question: When do I take a specific deduction (number) for posture/alignment fault and when do I just have a general deduction?

Answer: All major elements (see above for description) can be deducted up to 0.20 EACH for errors in posture/alignment. Faults in poses, connections, etc. fall under the “in general” deduction. It is very important for coaches and judges to make sure they know what the major elements are. Pay close attention, as sometimes the same element can either be a connection OR major element depending on the level.(i.e. The V sit on balance beam is a major element in Level 4, but is a connection in Level 5 and 6).

Just like above in text errors, when there is a posture error in areas other than major elements the judge should put a “P” on the paper (NOT a number). When deciding how much to deduct, the judge at the end of the routine, would count up all the “P’s” and decide how great in total were the errors and apply the appropriate “Up to 0.30” deduction. As in evaluating text errors, the judge must use common sense to determine how great the total errors were.

### **Von Braun Civic Center**

## **Movement lacking artistry of presentation UP to 0.30**

*Quality of gymnast’s movement to reflect the style of the choreography (note this is a correction in the errata page) Up to 0.15*

The choreography of the 2005-2013 routines has incorporated many different styles of choreography. The text in areas is very specific regarding the quality of movement. For example, some movements should be performed supplely, while others should show a dynamic/sharp quality. Areas not specified can reflect the gymnast’s own style.

*Quality of expression (i.e. projection, emotion, focus) Up to 0.15*

The gymnast needs to make the beam and floor routines a performance, not just a routine. She needs to perform as if she were “on stage”. Performing with emotion whether that be happiness (smiling), pride (lifting the head and chin), confidence (finishing each movement to the ultimate) are a must to develop a good sense of artistry.

Just as with text and posture errors, when there is an artistry error during the exercise, the judge should put an “A: (or “Q” for Quality and “E” for Expression) on the paper (NOT a number). When deciding how much to deduct, the judge at the end of the routine, would count up all the “A/Q/E’s” and decide how great in total were the errors and apply the appropriate “Up to 0.15” deduction for each of the two categories.

In closing, it is strongly encouraged for everyone to work together at clinics, workshops, and especially at practices at a gym. Working together to recognize all the above “in general” deductions along with all other aspects of the routines is what is needed. Only through this collaboration and “meeting of the minds” will our gymnast benefit.