

WOMEN'S JUNIOR OLYMPIC COMPULSORIES

Looking Back at the First Year and Looking Ahead



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The first year of the new compulsory exercises has now come to an end. The athletes and coaches have worked hard at interpreting the text accurately and performing the major elements well. The judges are learning to use the appropriate deductions and are still working on awareness of text errors. Let's take a look at what changes have helped the athletes' scores and where the weaknesses still remain.

CHANGES THAT HELPED THE ATHLETE TO SCORE BETTER

Spotting by coach: If the coach assists/touches the gymnast during a major element, the judge may now evaluate how much of the element was performed by the gymnast herself before the coach touched her. The judge deducts "Up to the value of the element" plus 0.50 for the spot, instead of taking the entire value of the element as in the previous cycles.

Value of Major Elements: There are no longer any 0.80 elements, so if an element is incomplete or omitted, the maximum deduction is reduced.

UNEVEN BARS — The reduction of amplitude (angle) expectations for the two casts and the clear hip circle in Level 5 has allowed for higher bar scores.

Previously, the amplitude requirement was a minimum 30° above horizontal. Now, with a minimum requirement of "above horizontal," more athletes are able to meet the minimum requirement. In the past, if an athlete finished the cast or clear hip circle at horizontal, she would have received a 0.30 deduction. With three possibilities in the routine, a total of 0.90 could have been deducted. Now, a cast to horizontal only receives a 0.05 deduction; therefore, incurring a maximum deduction of 0.15 for the three elements. That's a 0.70 increase in score!

Another plus for the athletes is that many of the uneven bar routines have options for some of the major elements, giving the gymnast more opportunities to choose what's best for her. Example: At Level 3, a gymnast may choose between a Stride circle or a single leg basket swing.

BALANCE BEAM AND FLOOR EXERCISE

— The difficulty level of the major elements remained basically the same as the previous cycle; however, some choices in major elements have allowed gymnasts to select skills they can perform well. For example, on the Level 5 beam, the

gymnast who may lack shoulder and/or back flexibility can now choose a back handspring instead of the back walk-over or back roll to minimum of a ¾ handstand.

On Floor, the Level 5 gymnast may now choose either a split leap or a switch-leg leap. Because there are now fewer elements in the Level 5 routine, there are not as many opportunities for deductions.

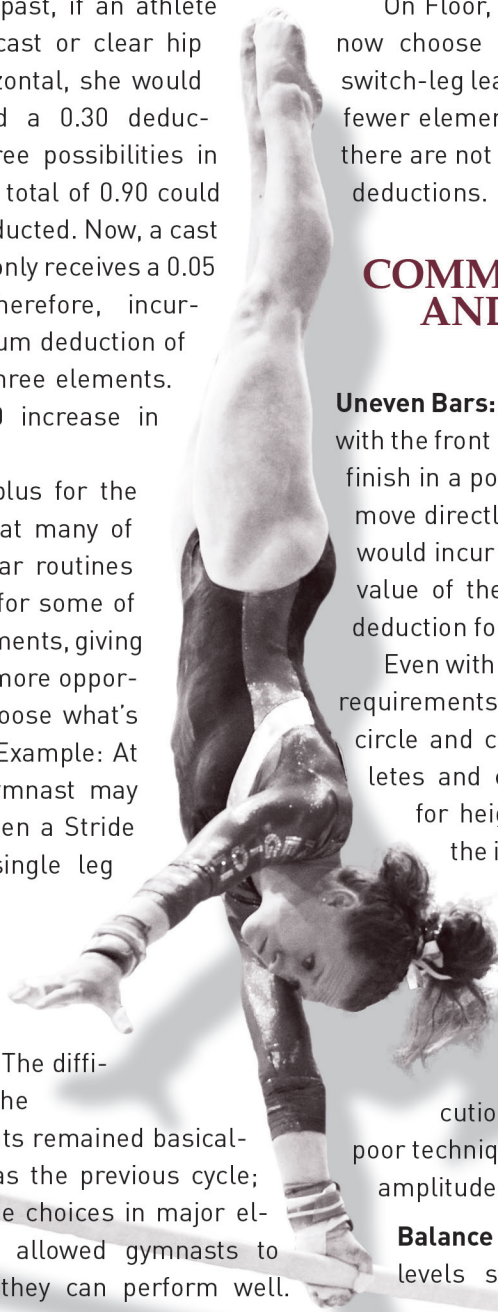
COMMON MISTAKES AND PROBLEM AREAS

Uneven Bars: Level 3s still have trouble with the front hip circle and many do not finish in a position that allows them to move directly into the small cast. This would incur a 0.20 deduction (half the value of the element) and usually a deduction for bent arms.

Even with the lessening of the angle requirements on casts, the clear hip circle and counterswings, some athletes and coaches are still striving for height rather than stressing the ideal body shape. Because there are more body position deductions than there are for insufficient amplitude, the judges must continue to deduct for poor execution to discourage the use of poor technique to attain the maximum amplitude.

Balance Beam: Gymnasts at all levels still need

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improvement in foot/ankle strength in order to demonstrate excellent footwork, showing high relevé in turns and good turnout.

The body posture during the connection between the jumps still needs work. Judges should be deducting for the gymnast who lands without tucking the buttocks under, causing a forward lean.

Handstands are still a source of major deductions for the gymnasts. The lack of vertical, lack of held position for those requiring a one or two second hold and the lack of good body alignment are the cause for the biggest deductions.

Floor Exercise: In order to separate the quality of the entire exercise, the judge needs to make better use of the General deductions for the exercise as

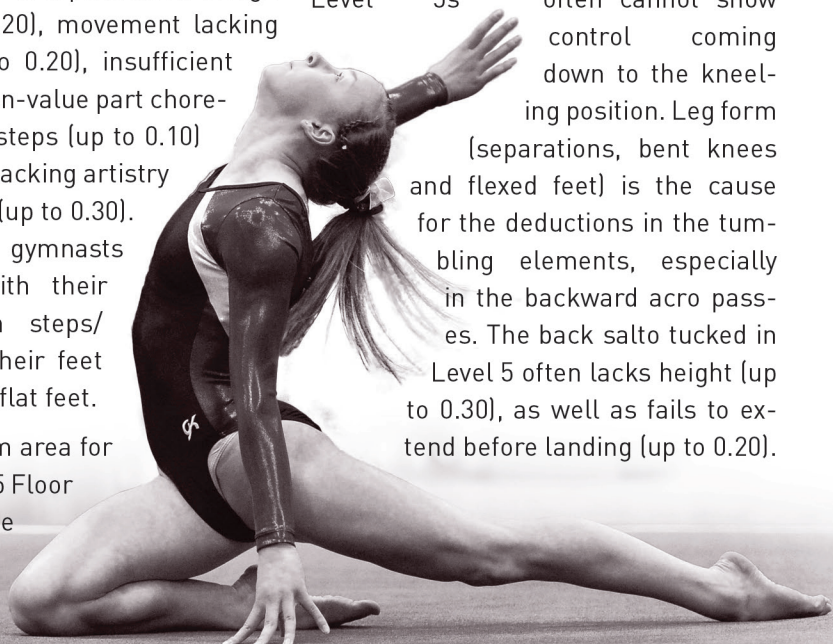
a whole. These include incorrect body posture (up to 0.30), incorrect footwork (up to 0.30), failure to perform steps—when indicated—and pivot turns in high relevé (up to 0.20), movement lacking dynamics (up to 0.20), insufficient amplitude on non-value part choreography/dance steps (up to 0.10) and movement lacking artistry of presentation (up to 0.30).

Too many gymnasts are leading with their heels first on steps/runs, sickling their feet and working on flat feet.

One problem area for the Level 4 and 5 Floor routines is the echappé section, in terms of working in

relevé, and following the floor pattern.

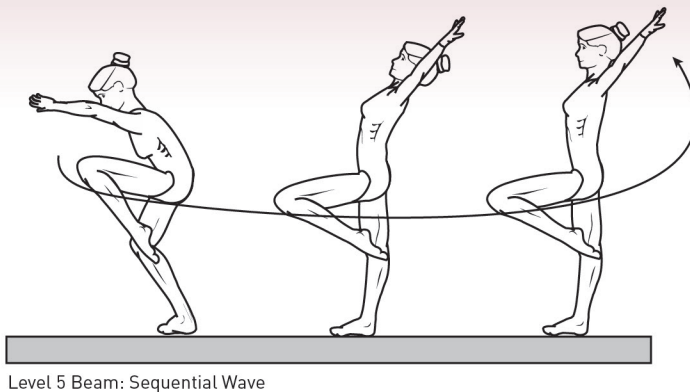
Gymnasts still have difficulty with the back rolls to handstand, and the Level 5s often cannot show control coming down to the kneeling position. Leg form (separations, bent knees and flexed feet) is the cause for the deductions in the tumbling elements, especially in the backward acro passes. The back salto tucked in Level 5 often lacks height (up to 0.30), as well as fails to extend before landing (up to 0.20).



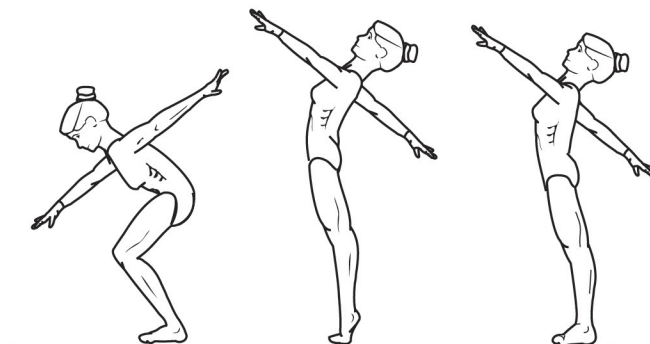
LOOKING AHEAD

A few new deductions and clarifications to start the new season are:

Balance Beam and Floor Exercise: For the Sequential Wave in Level 5 Beam and Level 4 and 5 Floor, the deduction for “Failure to contract and/or extend” is a maximum of “up to 0.10.”



Level 5 Beam: Sequential Wave



Level 4 & 5 Floor: Sequential Wave

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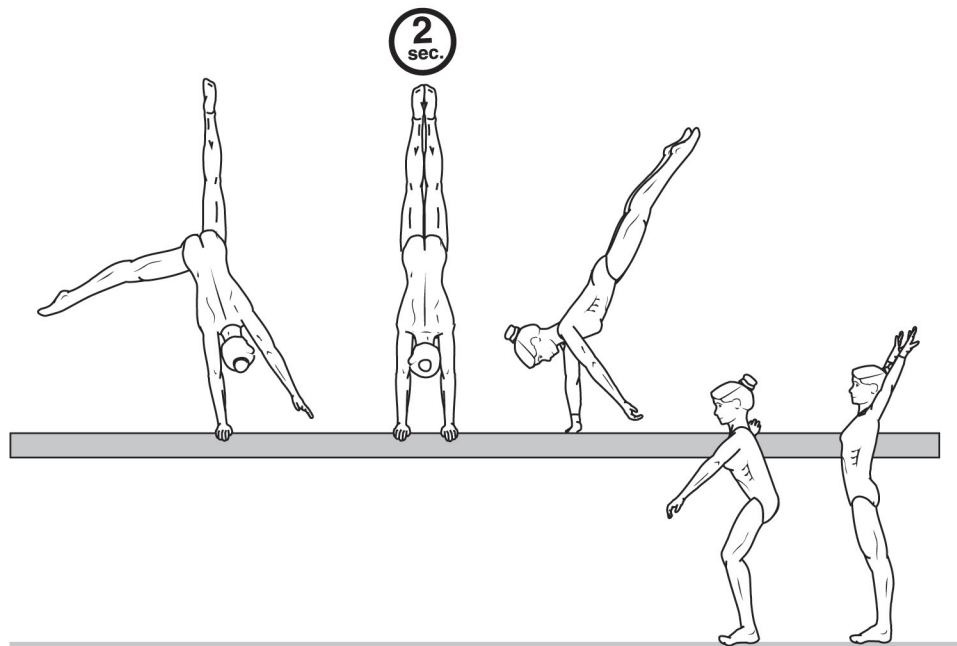
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Beam dismount for Level 3, 4 and 5 — Cartwheel to Side handstand with $\frac{1}{4}$ (90°) turn: A deduction of **0.20** has been added for **omitting the $\frac{1}{4}$ (90°) turn**. This would be applied if the gymnast attempts the cartwheel to handstand and comes down on the wrong side of the beam (counts as a fall) and does not attempt to repeat the element.

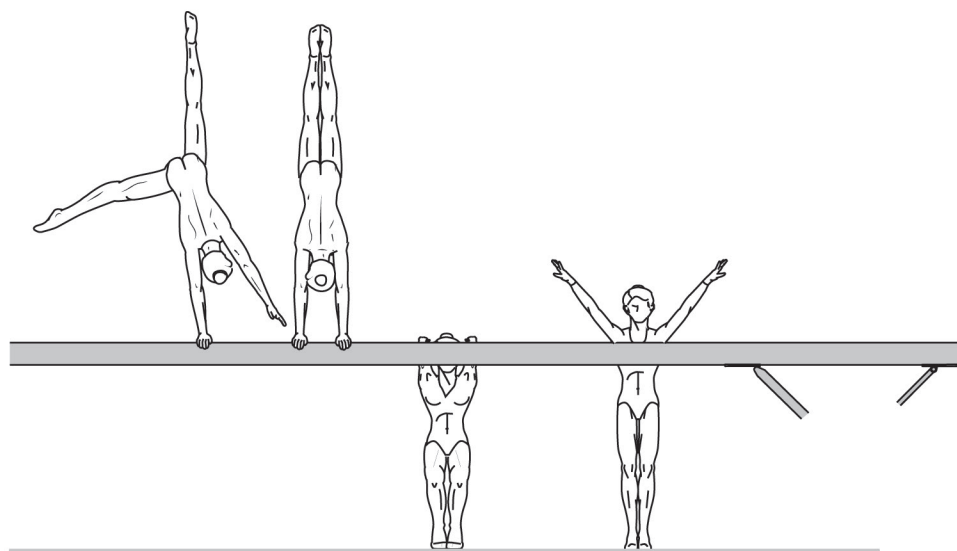
Level 5 Floor Exercise clarification: The ending poses after the sequential fall were designed to allow for creativity. There is no deduction for adding movements, which could be viewed as elements, i.e., back spin, shoulder roll, splits, etc.

As the second season with these routines approaches, judges and coaches need to keep referring to the J.O. Compulsory Program book and/or app to be sure that the athletes are not embellishing the routines to the point of making “text” errors. Coaches, judges and gymnasts will all have a better command of the exercises, and it will be exciting to see the improvements!

For a more in-depth review of the 2013–14 Compulsory season, please go to usagym.org/webinars for a webinar by Bryon Hough, Region 4 J.O. Committee Chair. ❌



Correct Level 5 Dismount



Level 5 dismount with .20 deduction for omitting $\frac{1}{4}$ turn plus 0.50 for a fall