

## **Error Minimization Suggestions for Judges**

### **Prepare for Judging**

- Review rules for each level you will before each meet/session.
- Practice judging a few routines at each level before the meet.

### **Bring a Healthy Lifestyle to the Meet**

- Get adequate sleep before you come to the meet.
- Take a nap or walk instead of eating.
- Bring your own healthy snacks.
- Learn to compartmentalize your personal/family problems during a meet.

### **Arriving at Your Judging Station**

- Adjust your chair position before the meet starts. Don't change once you've started judging.
- Organize your materials, score pad, and judging aids.
- Write gymnast name & number on your judging sheets in advance (it will be one less thing to do when the gymnast is called).
- Verbally rehearse the rules with the other judge(s) when changing levels.

### **Judging Routines**

- Learn to focus on the center and watch "outwards"
- Don't look down. If you have to look down, move paper out further away from you so you don't have to dip your head. Don't hold papers in your lap.
- Practice methods to avoid common short hand "look-alike" mistakes:

Flic flacs 1 foot, 2 feet, gainer, 1 arm  
Pak salto and short cast symbol  
Cartwheel and roundoff on beam

Cast handstand and clear-hip handstand  
Three-quarter symbol: be sure it's a backward C  
Shape of straddle jump could look like flic flac

- To avoid writing over the previous routine: use cut-out card; fold a piece of paper and use it as a tactile cue; use different color inks for alternating routines.
- Record falls as a .50 execution deduction rather than writing a circled F.

### **Score Calculation**

- Establish a standard sequence for checking for Value Parts, Special Requirements, Bonus, Composition, Dynamics/Rhythm, and Artistry.
- Use the new judging sheets to assist with checking for all components of routine.
- Use the official shorthand matrix rather than books/cards made by others. If you use unofficial books/cards, make sure you purchase updates every year and destroy the old ones.
- Use a set of small index cards with rules the unusual situations for a quick reference.
- If your score seems high or low, find out where the difference is. Don't fall back on "I'm going to be thrown out anyhow so it doesn't matter." It matters.
- Chief judge should consider delegating part of duties if too much paper to manage.

### **Verify Gymnast Order**

- Check gymnasts in when they come to your table; count them
- Write name and number on paper
- Say gymnast name out loud when you signal
- Listen to the name being called by crowd/teammates
- Keep your pages in order so you can retrace routines if gymnasts gets out of order
- Panel judges can help by double checking CJ

### **Verify Gymnast Level**

- Pay attention during the judges meeting when levels are announced.
- Ask gymnasts when they check in. "You're all Level 10 correct?"

### **Don't Miss the Routine!**

- Stop looking around the gym/looking down when warm-ups are close to completion.
- Ask the beam timer to notify all judges that warm-up is over and it's time to begin.
- Chief Judge announce "Judges Ready?" before signaling the first gymnast in each rotation. CJ can also check for eye contact with other judges if they are in line of sight.
- Inform CJ if you leave to go to the bathroom during warm ups. Report back in.
- Chief Judges: move your papers to the chair (or sit on them) or turn them sideways until judges return from bathroom break.

### **When You Make A Mistake**

- Don't attempt a make-up call with the next routine. If you do, now you'll have two mistakes.
- If you think of a mistake you made while judging a previous routine, note the mistake and put it aside to check at the end of the rotation or while the score is being calculated.
- If the panel had a different view than you during a conference, don't persevere on it. Realize that it's not about YOU – it's about the score.
- A conference is not a power struggle about who's right.
- Realize the outlier score may be the correct score.
- Your mistake could be that you had a different angle of view, e.g., it's hard to see one-arm back handsprings and whip backs from certain angles.
- Understand it happens to everyone; move on.

### **Reducing Your Errors**

- Review your judging sheets after a meet to find errors.
- Review your worksheets after each session with your panel judge.
- Put a tent card or a post-it note on the score pad to remind you to take neutral deduction.

### **Suggestions for Dealing with Tedium and Long Meets**

- Get methodical
- Write notes to stay alert during the routine: "slow" "pretty" "nice flexibility"
- Talk to yourself: say the elements out loud
- Focus on something new: a composition deduction that you hadn't paid much attention to; a new symbol; writing better shorthand
- Stand up between rotations; take a walk between sessions
- Splash water on your face during a break
- Drink coffee if it has a positive impact on your attentiveness.
- Sit up straight.
- Institute a game to help stay alert: M & Ms for bingos (or for being within .10)
- Think of the parents/coaches watching you. Look alert.
- Remember that video cameras are on; you could be being recorded.
- Think of the athlete and how hard she's worked. If it were you or your daughter, how would you want the judge to behave?

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

- Don't discuss mistakes with a judging panel or panel judge with anyone other than the judge, the SJD or the Ethics/Professional person.
- Don't relay mistakes made by judges to other judges unless they say it's ok. We all make mistakes so avoid thinking you are making yourself look better by conveying mistakes made by others.