2010-2012 Acrobatic Gymnastics Program Plan

The program committee is pleased to announce some changes and improvements to the acrobatic gymnastics national plan. As you probably already know, the PC was tasked to look at our program from all angles to insure that we have a plan that is logical and clear, that events (whether it be clinics, competitions, etc...) encourage maximum growth of our athletes, coaches and officials and that we use our dollars effectively to support our primary initiatives as well as those athletes who are achieving at the highest level.

With this as our mission, we have made the following changes. These changes will be implemented over the next two years.

1. Nationals Championships

We believe that our National Championships is our premier event. Continuing in 2011 and future years, Nationals will be the crowning of our JO and Elite athletes. We desire to increase the excitement and participation at this event as our athletes strive to earn medals and "National Titles".

2. National Teams

In reviewing our National Teams, we have divided them into squads that advance our athletes and coaches from one level to the next, giving ever increasing training and support. We have also carefully considered the purpose and goals of the national teams as well as the international rules and age requirements.

The goals of the National Team Program are:

- 1. Raising the standard of excellence in international competition. (primary goal)
- 2. Recognition of competitive excellence through national team participation.

Senior & Junior National Teams:

The purpose of the Senior, Junior, and 11-16 Age Group National Team Programs is to identify and prepare athletes for international competition assignments, including the World Championships. The focus of the National Team Program is the continued development of elite pair/groups providing competition experience, coach education, athlete development opportunities, and incentives for long-term partnerships.

Senior National Team: Beginning in 2012, the Senior National Team will be selected at the "ACRO CUP" (details below) from senior elite pair/groups that meet the stated age requirements. The Senior National Team is selected for the purpose of representing TEAM USA at senior-level international competitions as determined by the Athlete Selection Committee. Benefits of the Senior National Team include training camp opportunities in the spring and fall, the opportunity to compete for Team USA, as well as, increased level of athlete support and

funding. National Team members will receive a "National Team" warm up when assigned to international competition. Selection procedures and age requirements to be announced.

Junior National Team: Beginning in 2012, the Junior National Team will be selected at the "ACRO CUP" (details below) from junior elite pair/groups that meet the stated age requirements. The Junior National Team is selected for the purpose of representing TEAM USA at international competitions, primarily in the 12-19 age category (however international assignments may also be made at the 11-16 age category and senior level based on the level and age of the athletes as well as the competition's age requirements). Selection to the Junior National Team, as well as international assignments, will be determined by the Athlete Selection Committee. Benefits of the Junior National Team include training camp opportunities in the spring and fall and the opportunity to compete for Team USA. Minimal athlete support and funding may be available. National Team members will receive a "National Team" warm up when assigned to international competition. Selection procedures and age requirements to be announced.

11-16 Age Group National Team:

Beginning in 2012, the 11-16 Age Group National Team will be selected at the "ACRO CUP" (details below) from pair/groups competing 11-16 age group exercises that meet the stated age requirements. The 11-16 Age Group National Team will be considered its own team, separate from the Junior National Team. The 11-16 Age Group National Team is selected for the purpose of representing TEAM USA at international competitions in the 11-16 age category. Selection to the National Team and international assignments will be determined by the Athlete Selection Committee. The team will receive a unique "11-16 Age Group National Team" warm up with international assignments, as well as training opportunities in the spring and fall. No athlete support to be provided. Note: Beginning in 2011, 11-16 rules will be combined into the Level 8 JO requirements. 11-16 age group competition at the Acro Cup will not require prior competition experience. Selection procedures and age requirements to be announced.

J.O. National Team:

The purpose of the J.O. National Team is to identify and select the top pair/groups at the Junior Olympic levels 8-10. This includes:

- 1. Identification of up and coming talent within the acrobatic gymnastics program,
- 2. Encouragement for long-term partnership development,
- 3. Involvement of the personal coaches in education and planning opportunities, and
- 4. Progress of pair/groups toward elite competition and international preparedness.

The Junior Olympic National Team is selected at National Championships to identify talent and encourage growth through recognition and training opportunities in our JO program. Our intent is to encourage and educate our athletes and coaches on advancement from Levels 8 to 10. Athletes receive a JONT warm up and are invited to the National Team Training Camp held in the fall. Beginning in 2011, JONT status will no longer be used for international competition assignments.

3. National Team and International Competition Selection

- Beginning in 2011, the USA Gymnastics Acrobatics Program will host an annual "Acro Cup" competition (January or February). The Acro Cup competition will serve as our national team selection. Additionally, international competition assignments for the spring/summer will be made based on this competition. Formerly, national team selection was determined at national championships, requiring another team selection event for new partnerships later in the year and another event for international competition selection. Placing national team selection in January is better timing for our program, as it selects a team just prior to the primary international competition season.
- The 2011 Acro Cup will serve as a selection for spring 2011 international assignments for TEAM USA as well as approval for international club competitions. Pair/groups wishing to be considered for international assignments must compete at the 2011 Acro Cup. This includes 2010-2011 National Team pair/groups in the same partnerships, national team members in new partnerships, and non-team members. Competition will take place for senior elite, junior elite, and 11-16 age group and only those pair/groups meeting the age requirements are eligible for international assignments as part of TEAM USA. If an athlete or pair/group is selected for international competition from the 2011 Acro Cup and are not already a member of the 2010-2011 National Team, they will be added to the team at that time. Formal selection procedures to be announced.
- Qualified pair/groups meeting age or expanded age requirements wishing to compete internationally at a club meet in the 11-16, 12-19 or senior age category, may come to the Acro Cup to be approved to compete at a designated international club meet(s).
- In 2012, the Senior, Junior, and 11-16 Age Group National Teams will be selected at the Acro Cup in January or February 2012. New age requirements to go into effect. Pair/groups selected to the 2010-2011 Senior and Junior Nationals teams (in Florida) will remain on the National Team through December 2011.
- The Program Committee may add pair/groups to the Senior, Junior, and/or 11-16 Age Group
 National Teams during the season (i.e. at National Championships) on an as needed basis, for
 example to make assignments to international competition or invited to training camp in the
 fall. Criteria for additional team members would be the same as used for team selection at the
 Acro Cup.
- All members of a pair/group must be current Senior, Junior, or 11-16 Age Group National Team members in order to be assigned to an international competition as TEAM USA.

4. COMBINE FIG 11-16 AGE GROUP AND LEVEL 8 RULES

By merging the FIG 11-16 age group rules with those at Level 8 in the Junior Olympic program we are able to provide competition opportunities and a progressive structure for pair/groups with domestic and international goals.

Additional reasons and benefits of merging these two levels include:

- Increased focus on execution and artistry at this level, while minimizing focus on difficulty.
- Create a high level of competition, especially at National Championships.
- Eliminate need to train different exercises for national versus international competition.
- Provide an opportunity for pair/groups assigned to international competitions to compete their 11-16 age group exercises at local, state, regional, and national competitions.
- Eliminate jumping back and forth between Levels 9/10 and 11-16 age group, which should allow coaches to better focus on training.

Changes to the existing Level 8 rules would include:

- Keep all current Level 8 skills, which include all 11-16 skills (labeled "I").
- Change difficulty calculation for Level 8 to the following: pair/group must perform
 - o four compulsory elements, each from a different row in the compulsory tables
 - o two optional elements meeting defined minimum and maximum value
 - o three individual elements
- If all requirements are fulfilled, the difficulty score is 10.0. A -1.0 penalty is applied for each missing pair/group skill or individual element.
- Those competing in the 11-16 age division at the Acro Cup would NOT need prior Level 9
 experience.
- By combining 11-16 age group and Level 8, coaches can stay at this level throughout the year and compete Level 8 at nationals if desired.

5. 2011 CALENDAR

November 2-8, 2010 National Team Training Camp (for senior, junior, 11-16 and JONT team

members in same and new partnerships)

January 15-16, 2011/February National Judges Courses (2 courses)

February 2011 Acro Cup & Training Camp

March – May 2011 World Cup and International Meets

July 2011 Acro National Championships / Freedom Cup

September 2011 World Cup Meets

November 2011 Fall Training Camp

February 2012 Acro Cup (National Team Selection, also selection for World

Championships/WAGC if conducted in the spring)

Note: Code of Points and Rules & Policies release date. Rough draft available at fall training camp and final by December 1st.