The Age Group Competition Committee met by conference call on Thursday evening October 20, to consider the new *FIG Code of Points* in relation to how these rules might affect the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic Competition Program rules. Before going any further, I would like to say that this has been a trying time for artistic gymnastics throughout the world. The timing of the release of what has been billed as a “radically different” *Code of Points* has been difficult for coaches and athletes throughout the world. I believe that the Age Group Competition Committee (AGCC) has taken a prudent approach to assessing the new *Code of Points* and how the FIG rules will affect the men’s junior program here in the United States. The AGCC waited until the new *Code of Points* had been formally adopted by the FIG Executive Committee before making any policy decisions and gave themselves time to review the new code prior to the final decision making process. While this approach may be frustrating to the coach in the field, I do believe that this approach will serve us well as we move forward.

Below is a synopsis of the direction that the AGCC has adopted with regard to the Age Group Competition Program for the 2006 season. While this information is not definitive (since the committee is doing a final review of critical areas), the information does provide coaches with a firm view of the direction that the rule changes are going to take and how to begin planning for routine construction at the optional levels.

In general, the overwhelming feeling is that it would be a mistake for the U.S. Junior Program not to try to incorporate the concepts of the new *FIG Code of Points* into the age group program as quickly as possible. These rules are the new reality for gymnastics throughout the world and we must address them if we want our country to remain a leader in men’s gymnastics. In addition, there are some very positive aspects for development in this new code for athletes, regardless of their proficiency level. The AGCC would like to take advantage of those positive aspects to advance our program.

Finally, I believe that coaches should keep an open mind about the rule changes in the age group program. We will be trying to provide you with the information you need in relation to the new code and the junior rules so that you can begin to construct successful competitive routines for these new rules. As a start, you can download the *2006 FIG Code of Points* free of charge from the FIG web site at [http://bios.fig-gymnastics.com/down.htm?@_TEMPLATE=15&@_ID=9791](http://bios.fig-gymnastics.com/down.htm?@_TEMPLATE=15&@_ID=9791). If you have not already done so, I would urge you to download the new code and begin studying it right away.

The information provided here is not final. A final document from the AGCC will be forthcoming with a target of releasing a final JO Update document in mid-November. However, the age group
committee does feel strongly about the direction that this information implies so you can expect some tweaking of these areas, but no major changes.

2006 Age Group Competition Program Rules Direction

I. Compulsory Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7

The only change to the compulsory level rules will be the adoption of the new FIG Presentation deductions of Small Error -0.1, Medium Error -0.3, Large Error -0.5 and a Fall – 0.8.

II. Optional Levels

A 10.0 maximum start value will be retained for Levels 8, 9 and 10. Regardless of additional difficulty or bonus, a routine may not start above a 10.0.
A. Difficulty will be additive as per the new FIG Code of Points up to a predetermined difficulty cap.
B. Element groups will be set at the FIG value of 0.5 each.
C. Presentation will be predetermined at a level which, when combined with the difficulty value and element group value, will provide for a 10.0 maximum start value.
D. As per FIG, a skill of any difficulty value will fulfill an element group requirement with the exception of the dismount element group.
E. The dismount difficulty value for full element group credit for Level 8 and 9 will be B value dismounts. An A value dismount would earn partial element group credit of 0.3 as per FIG.
F. The dismount difficulty value for full element group credit for Level 10 will be C value dismounts. A B value dismount would earn partial element group credit of 0.3 as per FIG, an A value dismount would receive no element group credit.
G. Stick bonus of 0.1 will be given for dismounts that receive full element group credit.
H. Vault values will be FIG listed value plus 3.0 points (i.e. Kasamatsu: FIG value 5.8 + 3.0 = Junior value 8.8) It is anticipated that the current rule where only Level 10 athletes will be allowed to perform Yurchenko vaults will be retained.

III. Level 8

Level 8 will be comprised of a 14 to 18 age group and will now follow the Level 9 rules.

IV. Level 9

A. Level 9 will be comprised of a 12 to 13 age group
B. Routine requirements
   4 Element Groups worth 0.5 each 2.0
   Difficulty cap of best 8 skills (somewhere in the range of) 2.5*
   Presentation cap (somewhere in the range of) 5.5*
   10.0

V. Level 10
A. Level 10 will be comprised of two age groups as it is now: 14 to 15 and 16 to 18.

B. Routine requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Element Groups worth 0.5 each</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty cap of best 10 skills (somewhere in the range of)</td>
<td>3.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation cap (somewhere in the range of)</td>
<td>4.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The AGCC is assessing potential routine construction before making a final decision as to the exact value of the Difficulty category. The Presentation cap will depend on the final difficulty cap.

VI. Rule areas that the AGCC is still assessing

A. Current Junior Exceptions to the FIG Difficulty Tables.

   The Age Group committee is reviewing the current list of junior difficulty exceptions to the FIG Code of Points to see if any current skills need to be dropped from the list or new skills added since the FIG Difficulty tables have changed. Besides the dismount rule exception, the AGCC has already decided to retain the rule that a straight arm – pike press may be performed with legs together or straddled for B value.

B. Other bonus areas.

   Besides stick bonus, the AGCC committee is looking at how much bonus could or should be awarded at Levels 8 and 9 for performing all five element groups. The AGCC is also in a final review of the proposed vault bonus system which will reward bonus for performing two vaults from two different families. There may be no other special bonus.

C. General rules review

   The AGCC is also doing a final review of all the JO competition rules in an effort to make the application of these new scoring principles as simple and straightforward as possible for both coaches and judges.

The Age Group Competition Committee wishes to thank the men’s gymnastics community for their patience and understanding during this time of unprecedented FIG rule changes. They also wish to thank those of you who have contributed comments and suggestions concerning possible changes to the Junior Olympic Program format and rules. The committee welcomes all comments and suggestions.

Age Group Competition Committee:

   Gil Elsass – Chairman
   Steve Butcher
   Jon Culbertson
   Keith Pettit
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