

GYMNASTICS STUDY GUIDE (girls)

(revised 07/05)

A. HISTORICAL FACTS

- Gymnastics as we know it began in Sweden during the beginning of the 1800's.
- Germany and Czechoslovakia developed the event apparatus around the same time.
- Friedrich L. Jahn invented parallel and horizontal bars, the rings, the horse, and the balance beam in Germany in early 1800.
- Immigrants to the United States were responsible for the growth of gymnastics in the U.S. after the Civil War.
- Gymnastics for men were included in the 1896 Olympic Games.
- Competition for women began 40 years later.

B. GYMNASTICS COMPETITION

Three segments of Competition

- **Team**—Each of six members performs a compulsory and an optional routine on each apparatus. The five highest scores on each apparatus are added together for a team total. The team with the highest number of points wins.
- **All-around**—The best gymnasts from each team perform an optional routine on each piece of apparatus. Individual scores are totaled and the gymnast with the most points is declared the winner.
- **Individual**—The gymnasts with the highest number of points on each piece of apparatus compete again on optionals. The gymnast with the most number of points on each piece of equipment is the winner.

Three areas considered by Judges when Scoring Gymnastics

- **Difficulty:** The difficulty rating of the stunt being performed.
- **Composition:** The way in which the routine is put together.
- **Execution:** How the routine is performed.

C. MEN'S AND WOMEN'S EVENTS

Men's (6 events)

Floor Exercise Pommel Horse
Horizontal Bar Rings
Parallel Bars
Vault

Women's (4 events)

Floor Exercise
Uneven Parallel Bars
Balance Beam
Vault

Uneven Parallel Bars:

1. There is **NO** music in this event.
2. The low bar is 5 feet from the ground and the high bar is 7.5 feet from the ground.
3. The distance between the bars varies from gymnast to gymnast, depending on her height and the skill being performed.
4. A routine usually consists of about 15 elements and lasts only about 20 seconds.
5. The gymnast must have strength, coordination, and agility because most skills are performed with an aggressive pulling or pushing action. This event requires more all-around strength than the other women's gymnastic events.
6. During a routine, a gymnast changes direction, uses both bars, and performs various skills, including flight elements where the gymnast completely releases and regrips the bars. The gymnast moves around, between, under, and over the bars, going from one bar to the other displaying circles, twists, somersaults (flips), ending with a difficult dismount of multiple twisting or rotating movements.
7. The routine must be free flowing with **N**) stops and each move must be done cleanly to receive full marks.

Balance Beam

1. The idea was probably based on "fence walking," a common pastime of days gone by. There is **NO** music and a beam routine must be 70 to 90 seconds long.
2. Great concentration, courage and body control (balance, poise, flexibility and strength) are demanded when the gymnast is executing her routine.
3. The balance beam is about 16.5 feet long, 4 inches wide and about 4 feet from the floor. Considering these dimensions, it can be readily understood that the margin of error is quite small.
4. A gymnast's routine must consist of difficult skills and dance movements. Today any "floor exercise" skills are being performed on this restricted, elevated surface.
5. A balance beam routine begins with a mount and ends with a dismount. Mounts are usually leaping, vaulting or jumping to various handsprings and rolls. The dismount may be any tumbling skill that ends in a 2 foot landing with feet together, such as a roundoff, handspring or somersault (flip).
6. A basic balance beam routine:
 - Mount
 - Dance
 - Leaps: perform at least two
 - Poses: the number allowed is unlimited, longer holds (3 seconds) are restricted to three.
 - Turns and Pirouettes: 4 or 5 recommended, with one being a 360 degree
 - Low Movement
 - Modern Dance
 - Tumbling: three skills for beginners, at least five for advanced
 - Dismount: a skill that is more difficult and spectacular than those of the rest of the routine
7. A gymnast is scored on: execution of the skills, elegance of the performance, and flow of the routine.

Vault

1. There is **NO** music and both men and women use the same vaults, except that the women vault sideways, and the men vault long ways.
2. For women, the vault is 4.5; for men, the vault is 5.5 feet high.
3. Women are permitted 78 feet to run; men are permitted 65 feet.
4. Gymnasts run and jump off a beatboard or springboard to perform.
5. In the finals for both men and women, the gymnasts are permitted two vaults, and their scores are averaged to form a final mark.
6. The gymnast must possess speed, power, agility, and total body awareness for the few seconds he/she must fly air, perform a complicated controlled skill and land with maximum control (stick it!).

Floor Exercise

1. Women must have music with **NO** words, and men may not use music.
2. The size of the floor is about 10 by 10 meters (40 by 40 feet).
3. There is a white line along the perimeter of the mat, and deductions are given if the gymnast steps out of that line.
4. Gymnasts must have a routine that consists of dance moves and tumbling runs.
5. A routine for women must be 70 to 90 seconds; for men, it must be 50 to 70 seconds.