



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

NEWS RELEASE

Composition, Standardized Fall Time Focus of High School Girls Gymnastics Rules Changes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Cochran

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (May 18, 2020) — Changes introduced for the 2020-21 high school girls gymnastics season again explore composition thanks to efforts to streamline the category for efficient evaluation.

The clean-up work to composition, in addition to standardizing fall time throughout the rules, were among 14 rules changes recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Girls Gymnastics Rules Committee. All rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors and cover the 2020-21 and 2021-22 seasons.

“The rules committee, which is made up of coaches, judges, and state administrators, worked as a team to make these changes to the rules book in an effort to enhance the sport of gymnastics,” said Stephanie Hauser, Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) assistant director and chair of the NFHS Girls Gymnastics Rules Committee. “The insight from each of the committee members added perspective to the group discussion with the focus centered on the value of education-based gymnastics.”

As it had two years ago, the rules committee placed an emphasis on composition, thereby, impacting Rules 7-3-3, 8-3-3 and 9-3-3. This year’s tweaks eliminate redundant language and streamline the composition category for ease of use.

“The intent of the composition category is to evaluate the structure of the routine,” said Julie Cochran, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Girls Gymnastics Rules Committee. “By reducing the

number of deductions and combining similar deductions, the revised composition category will provide a more efficient method of evaluation.”

Balance beam and floor exercise composition requirements had redundant categories eliminated, while the choice of elements category in composition was redefined and increased to 0.30 on uneven bars. Cochran said the committee believes its guidelines for composition deductions will better assist judges in identifying composition deficiencies and, consequently, result in appropriate deductions.

The standardization of a 45-second fall time was among other significant changes addressed by the rules committee. As part of Rule 8-2-1, dealing with balance beam, the committee made modifications allowing gymnasts 45 seconds to remount after a fall as opposed to the previous 30-second time limit.

The newly adopted 45-second fall time also affects Rule 2-2-1b(13). The rule now indicates a gymnast’s exercise will be terminated if the gymnast exceeds the 45-second fall time limit on the uneven bars and beam. According to Cochran, the implementation of a 45-second fall time strengthens the rules committee’s emphasis on athlete safety.

Other new rules for 2020-21 focus on vault equipment and deductions, as well as clarification for the awarding of Advanced High Superior (AHS) credit to an element.

Rule 6-1-1e now specifies that tape, chalk or other substances may not be used on the Vault Table. Changes to the vault category also include Rule 6-4-2a, which specifies gymnasts can receive up to a 0.30 deduction for failure to pass through the vertical.

The committee also introduced new language clarifying the amount of twist needed for an element to be awarded AHS credit in Difficulty and Bonus.

Both Rules 8-5c and 9-5c now state that AHS elements listed in the rules book with a 1/1, 1½ or 2/1 twist or more must add a ½ to the listed AHS to be considered different. Adding a ¼ may still be awarded an AHS in difficulty but will not make the element different when awarding AHS's in the Bonus category. Balance Beam leap and jump elements listed in the rules book with a ½ or ¾ twist may be considered different when an additional ¼ twist is added.

Cochran emphasized that “the rules committee continues to focus on implementing rules that feature an objective approach to evaluating routines as well as supporting efforts toward risk minimization.”

A complete listing of the gymnastics rules changes, including edited definitions, will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Gymnastics-Girls.”

Girls gymnastics featured 18,658 participants throughout 1,578 schools, according to the 2018-19 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50-member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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