Course Name: Bachelor of Physical Education Year - IInd (Part-3) Paper Name - Skill and Prowess Topic Name - Skill and Prowess Topic No. – Part – III (C) Paper No. - B Lecture No. – 24

Lecture Title

Balance Beam-2

General information

The balance beam is strictly a feminine piece of equipment. It develops the skill of a tight-rope walker, the grace of a ballerina, and the agility of an acrobat. The girl in the physical education class is drawn immediately to this piece of equipment because of its strictly feminine qualities. Here she can be recognized as the girl she is participating in a gymnastic event limited to the female sex and one that does not develop the look of muscular strength and stamina resulting from a man's event. Even the girl who is not a sports enthusiast can find a personal satisfaction and creative opportunity here.

If taught correctly, this can develop the poise and figure envied by every girl. This event also provides an opportunity for a girl to work as an individual and yet be a part of a group. She will be a performer, a helper, a teacher, and an observer in this unit. Along with the creative opportunity presented, she will learn a great deal of self-discipline that will carry over to many other of life's activities.

The balance beam for class use need be the official height. It is advisable. However, that it be the official width and depth.

2. General Measurement

A balance beam measures:

- Length-16 feet, 4 inches
- Width-3 feet, 15/16 inches
- Depth-5.4 inches
- Height-3 feet, 9 inches

Beams may be made by your school shop by parents. There is, of course, no real substitute for an Olympic beam. These beams may be purchased from gymnastic supply companies.

The painted lines on a gym floor, or strips of masking tape, make good practice beams. This alleviates the problem of inactivity because of lack of equipment.

If you are fortunate enough to have gathered together several beams for your unit, care must be taken in choosing their location in the gym.

- 1. Make sure they are far enough apart that a girl may jump off with-out danger of falling on the next beam.
- 2. Beams set at right to the walls are easier to work than a beam set up in a haphazard manner.
- 3. Make sure the beams are perfectly straight. They should run parallel to a straight line.
- 4. There should be a mat on both sides of the beam. If not, a girl may step off and twist an ankle.
- 5. Mats should be placed at the ends, if necessary.
- 6. Keep beams away from doors, walls, bleachers, low-hanging baskets, etc.
- 7. Girls not actually working or acting as spotters should stand well back to avoid confusion and distraction.

Safety Rules for the Balance Beam

- Never get on beam until instructor is present
- Horse-play causes accidents. Do not be a victim
- Proper foot apparel is to worm (golf sock, gymnastic shoes)
- Do not try to fight balance. Step down
- Always have a mat under beam and where dismounting
- Watch where you step off. You are not finished until both feet are safely on the ground
- No gum-chipped teeth are often a result of gum chewing while working on the beam
- Always have a spotter when learning a new movement
- Stay well away from the equipment unless you are actually working or spotting

A routine of the girl's own creation the rules of the balance beam should be the goal of each in the unit. She should be able to recognize and use basic terminology and, as a spectator, understand the component parts of a balance exercise.

When composing a routine, remember it should include movements of:

- Ballet
- Leaps
- Acrobatics
- Balance

As a performer she should strive for:

- An elegant presentation
- Movements to fit her personality and body type
- Confidence in her movements
- A feminine and picturesque routine
- Creativity
- A flow routine
- Some movements of difficult
- A routine lasting between one minute and 20 seconds to one minute and 45 seconds which may be shortened for the beginner (requiring the regulation time seems to bring out the girl's creativity)

3. Teaching Hints

- 1. Emphasis should be placed on perfect from and the execution of each movements to its potential.
- 2. Movements should be learned first on the floor and then on the balance beam.
- 3. Require a firm stand on dismounts.

- 4. Emphasize the use of movements that can be performed to perfection rather than the use of movements of difficulty that may be missed.
- 5. Good posture is required at all times.
- 6. Develop an elegant delivery.
- 7. Keep on the balls of the feet often.
- 8. Flowing movements should dominate over stationary movements
- 9. The rhythm should vary. Alternate momentary holds with flowing sequences
- 10. Leaps should be high and a soft landing is necessary.
- 11. The performance should be full of life and kept moving at all times flow in and out of ballet movements.
- 12. Movements of difficulty, such as those of the acrobatic type, should flow in and out of ballet movements.
- 13. Do not look directly at feet, but pick a spot ahead of you on the beam.
- 14. Some time each day should be devoted to individual practice

Planning the First Lesson

Because many girls will not have had any contact with ballet other than what you are teaching them, it is important to stress continually good posture, toe point, turn out of the legs, and good use of the arms.

It will be natural for the girls to forget these things the first few days because of their concentration on the beam itself. Remind them, and have them remind each other; of good form.

As you well know, tension will be high these first days on the beam. There will be much giggling and falling off the beam. Have patience but be firm in keeping the "safety rules of the balance beam." Do not permit them to try movements other than those you are teaching proceed slowly with much repetition.

The following materials can be handled by the beginner in a unit of approximately 16 days.

Beginning Mount (low beam) (figure 1)



From a stand at a side of the beam, place right foot securely on the beam. Arms should be held sideward well below shoulder height for balance. Bend knee of left leg (pushing straight leg) so as to transfer weight to straight right leg. Left leg is placed on beam in front of right. Toes of left foot are pointed on beam. This may be done on either left or right side. Movement from the floor to beam is broken.

Dismount (low beam) (figure 2)



Firm dismounts are very important and should be taught immediately. From the above mount position, lift leg up from beam, keeping knee straight and turned out from hip, toes pointed. Bend right knee. At same time, place left foot on the floor (flexing the knee) at the side of the beam. This may be done only on a beam low enough that one may safely step off it.

Beginning Mount (high beam)(figure 3)



Stand facing beam with hands on beam, hip distance apart. Jump up so as to support your body on arms. Lift a straight right leg over the beam and execute a one-quarter turn to the left so as to finish in a crotch seat, facing the length of the beam. The hands will have to change position as soon as the turn is executed to a position in front of the body with thumbs along length of beam, side by side, and the finger down the sides of the beam.

Do not let legs bend at any time. Keep them open in a small "V" when sitting on the beam.

Move hands behind the body and place right foot on the beam, close to the buttocks. Brings left hand forward and place it under the beam in front of right foot. Push off with back hand so as to rise to a squat position on right leg. Left leg remains straight and reaches for the left corner of the room. Bend left leg so as to place it on the beam in front of right foot and immediately stand, weight on left leg, right leg extended backward, toes pointed on beam. The left arm must come off the beam before left foot is placed on beam. Arms should be held sideward, slightly below shoulder level. **Basic Sit (figure 4)**





Sit on bent leg (weight on ball of left foot). Right leg is slightly bent, toes resting on beam in front of body. Left arm is stretched obliquely downward to the front. Right arm reaches obliquely upward and back. Head looks over left arm.

Beginning Dismount (high beam) (figure 5)



From a standing position, squat so as to place hand on the beam, the other arm held sideward for balance. Jump sideward so as to land with your side to the beam. Hand remains on the beam.

Basic Turn (figure 6)



The first turn taught on the balance beam should be with both feet on the beam at all times. Little arm motion should be used so that the student may concentrate on good balance.

Stand with weight on back foot, front leg stretched forward, toes on beam. Pull up on balls of feet so as to distribute weight evenly on both feet. Hold, make a one-half turn, keeping well up on toes, knees straight. Arms remain at side, well below shoulder level. Finish in starting position.

4. Low Arabesque (Scale)

(figure 7)



Start with weight on front leg. Rear leg should be stretched directly behind, toes pointed on beam. Obtain balance. Lift back leg upward until parallel to floor. At the same time arms move sideward, upward to a position slightly below shoulder level. Do not let the torso tilt forward. Torso should not move from starting position at any time. Return to starting position and repeat on opposite side.

Lunge (figure 8)





Stand with weight on front foot, back leg extended backward, toes pointed on beam. Arms should be sideward, well below shoulder level. Bend front knee and, at the same time, place arch of back foot on beam. Continue bending front knee. At the same time arms move forward, Upward to an oblique position. In order to recover to starting position, swing arms forward and upward. Straighten leg so as to assume starting position. Repeat on opposite side.

Once the movement is mastered, different arm positions, can be used.

Knee Lever (figure 9)



Assume a very low lunge position (heel of front foot will be off beam). Place hands side by side on beam (thumbs on beam, fingers down the side). Kneel on front leg. Make sure top of foot is flat on beam. Raise back into air, keeping knee straight, toes pointed.

Heron (figure 10)



Begin standing on left leg, right leg extended forward, and toes on beam. Arms are held sideward, slightly below shoulder level.

Bend right knee so as to place arch of right foot against side of left knee. (Right knee is pointed forward.) At the same time, pull up onto ball of supporting foot and move arms forward, upward to a position overhead, palms facing the beam.

High Arabesque (scale) (figure 11)



Stand with weight on front foot, back leg extended directly behind, toes pointed on beam. Keeping torso upright, lift leg as high as it will go. There torso is then dipped forward, allowing the leg to lift higher. It is most important that the arch in the back be maintained.

Forward Roll (from two knees) (figures 12, 13) Figure 12



Assume a kneeling position along length of beam. Sit on heels. Both hands are placed under the beam, one on each side of the beam and close to the under, and place weight on shoulder blades. At the same time, give a small push off arch of foot so as to compete rolling motion. Legs are straightened and kept close to face (pike positions). Continue to roll forward, opening the legs into a wide "V" position. Hands move from behind the body to a front position between legs.

The "pike" position is used when doing a forward roll. Note that the elbows are held close to the ears and that the knees are brought as close as possible to face. **Squat Roll (figure 14)**



From a standing position, feet by side, facing length of beam, bend knees and assume a squat position. Reach forward and place hands on beam as above. Push off with feet and perform a forward roll as above. As you push off with feet, hands drop to a grip under the beam. Assume the tight pike as soon as possible. Back Roll (over the shoulder) (figure 15, 16)



Figure 16

Lie on back on beam. Drop head off one side so that the beam is placed in middle of shoulder. Hand closet to the face is placed on the beam. Fingers are pointed down side of beam closest to face, thumb pointed toward face. Other hand grips underside of beam. Bring straight legs backward to a position side by side on beam behind head. Hand with under-grip moves up to assume same position beside top hand. At the same

time, bend one leg and place it in a kneeling position along length of beam. Simultaneously perform a push up with arms so as to shift body position to that of a sitting position on heel of bent leg. Other leg continues backward and may finish stretched on beam or extended down side of beam.

Drag or Contraction (figure 17)





Stand with weight on back foot, front leg extended, toes pointed on beam on beam. Arms are held sideward, slightly below shoulder level. Step forward on a flexed right leg. At the same time, palms of the hands are turned forward, the chest thrusts forward, and the head drops back. The rear leg then slides along beam on toes to a position behind heel of front foot. (Knee is turned out at 45-degree angle.) At the same time, the arms continue forward to fifth position overhead, palms facing beam, and head drops forward.

Drag Lunge (figure 18)



Begin standing on left leg, right leg extended forward, and toes on beam. Arms are held sideward, slightly below shoulder level. Lift right leg and execute a giant step forward, chest leading. As right leg touches the beam once again, the arms move forward and overhead. The head drops forward. **5. Shoulder Stand**

(figure 19)



Beginning on back on beam. Drop head off to one side so that the beam is placed in middle of shoulder. Hand closest to the face is placed on the beam. Fingers point down side of beam, thumb pointed toward face. Other hand grips underside of the beam. Bring straight legs backward. When the feet are directly over the face, they change direction and reach up to the ceiling. Upward motion continues until torso is straight.

Bent Leg Balance (figure 20)





Stand with weight on left leg, right leg extended forward on beam. Arms are held sideward, slightly below shoulderlevel. Bend left leg so as to assume a sitting position on left hell. The right leg is forced forward on beam. As soon as the squat position is attained, the right leg is lifted into the air, slightly bent at the knee. At the same time the arms are moved from a sideward position to the oblique position behind the body and upward.

Inverted Split (figure 21)



This movement requires great flexibility. Assume a low arabesque position. Tilt forward so as to place hands under the beam (one on each side of beam). Do not lose the arch in the back. The rear leg is raised upward until it forms a straight line with the supporting leg.

Little Jump (figure 22)





Begin in a standing position, one foot stretched in front. Arms are held sideward. Bring front close to back foot so as to execute a small squat position. Immediately spring into the air (legs held close together). Upon landing, bend knees for balance. Arms may remain at sides or be moved to an oblique position at height of jump.

Balance Beam Check-List

Check Point

- 1. Mount
- Good balance

- Good posture
- Arms well below shoulder level
- Front foot pointed on toes
- Head up
- Hands relaxed
- 2. Step together step
 - Head up
 - Well up on toes
 - Execution correct
 - Arms well below shoulder height
 - Hands soft
- 3. Turn
- Good posture
- Head up
- Well up on toes
- Good balance
- Finish on front foot
- 4. Low arabesque
 - Head up
 - Back straight
 - Supporting leg straight
 - Free leg straight and turned out from hip
 - Toes pointed
 - Arm well below shoulder height
 - Hands soft
 - Good balance
- 5. Lunge
 - Head up
 - Torso erect
 - Back leg straight
 - Arms straight and slightly back
- 6. Dismount
 - Knees slightly bent
 - Three-second hold to indicate finish of exercise

Summary

The balance beam is an exciting event. It has elements of grace, beauty, explosive acrobatics and incredible strength. The best balance beam gymnasts attack the beam as they would the floor exercise: using speed and control to incorporate multiple flips and twists into a solid routine.

Years of practice, combined with fearless attempts of trial and error, are necessary before you can truly master this event. But with time and desire, you too can learn to love the balance beam.