



GYMNASTICS

INTRODUCTION

The development of competitive gymnastics always depended on the level of evaluation of general culture, level of material production and upon forms of production. We may take, for instance, preliminary forms of competitive gymnastics on obstacles and apparatus carried out by men in primitive society. Here men were forced to fight for their existence. With the help of climbing men tried to improve their food-supply and to be safe from wild animals. Gymnastic exercises were carried out to a large extent in a way that was unrestrained, full of life, joy and free from formal requirements. It was basically a pure form of performance, overcoming obstacles which were placed on the ground.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Gymnastics, as a sport, has had a long dark history. Its history can be put down from many ancient civilizations: those of the Chinese, Persians, Indians, Greeks and Romans. It was essentially the Greeks and Romans in particular who followed a strict code of exercise and developed physical exercises to a level never known before or since. The ancient history revealed that the Chinese were the first nation to establish a culture which included physical exercise. They believed that health-gaining qualities of physical exercise combined with some form of mental rituals had a good organic effect. They practiced gymnastics exercises which they called 'Kong Fu' for medical purposes and health points of view in ancient periods. The Chinese strongly believed that bodily inactivity caused illness. Following the Chinese came the Persians and Indians. In the process of civilization each flourished in turn so they sought forms of physical play to entertain their upper class citizens. It is believed that the present-day gymnastics horse might have descended from those times when warriors needed an immobile steed, a dummy horse on which to practice for the tournament and learn war-like gyrations. With the advent of Greek and Roman civilizations, gymnastics and all forms of physical exercise found a prominent place in the educational system. A place where the gymnastics was practiced is called "gymnasia". All Greek cities had 'gymnasia' where boys and men could perform their exercises which were an essential part of Greek education. A Greek gymnasium usually consisted of a court surrounded by columns with space for running and jumping. There was also a hall provided for wrestling and baths. The King's bodyguard did their practice in them.

MEASUREMENT OF THE GYMNASIUM

FLOOR EXERCISE

The

Mat

The performance area has surface elasticity to allow for power during take-off and softness for landing. The cover material is foam covered with heat-absorbing felt carpet, designed to not cause skin burns.

Dimensions: 12x12 meters (40x40 feet)

VAULT

The Vaulting Table

The vaulting apparatus used in international competition was officially replaced in 2001. Instead of the traditional rectangular vaulting "horse," the apparatus is now a larger vaulting "table."

Vault height (men): 1.35 meters (4 feet, 5 inches)

Vault height (women): 1.25 meters (4 feet, 3 inches)

Vault length: 1.20 meters (3 feet, 11 inches)

Vault width: 95 centimeters (3 feet, 1 inch)

Approach run: 25 meters (82 feet)

Apparatus used by just women are the balance beam and uneven bars.

Balance beam

The balance beam is made of aluminum and covered with vinyl, with foam padding on the top.

Height from floor: 1.25 meters (about 4 feet)

Length: 5 meters (16 feet, 5 inches)

Width: 10 centimeters (4 inches)

Uneven Bars

The

Bars

The two uneven bars are oval and are made of a fiberglass core covered with a birch wood laminate. The bars are parallel to each other, but the distance between them can be adjusted depending on the size of the gymnast.

Height of upper bar from floor: 2.46 meters (8 feet)

Height of lower bar from floor: 1.66 meters (5 feet, 5 inches)

Length of bars: 2.4 meters (7 feet, 10 inches)

Distance between bars: 1.3 to 1.8 meters (4 feet, 3 inches to 5 feet, 11 inches)

Apparatus used by just men are the high bar, parallel bars, rings and pommel horse.

High Bar

The Bar

The high bar, also called the horizontal bar, is made of extremely high-tension stainless steel. It is supported and stabilized by columns and a dual cable tension system.

Height: 2.8 meters (9 feet, 2 inches)

Length: 2.4 meters (7 feet, 9 inches)

Bar diameter: 2.8 centimeters (1 1/8 inches)

Parallel Bars

Height: 2 meters (6 feet, 6 inches)

Length: 3.5 meters each (11 feet, 6 inches)

Distance between bars: 42 to 52 centimeters (16 1/2 to 20 1/2 inches)

Still Rings

The Rings

The rings are made from multiple layers of wood and are attached to long, non-twisting, pre-stressed, plastic-covered, stainless steel cables with a shock absorption system.

Height: 2.8 meters above the floor (9 feet, 2 inches)

Distance between rings: 50 centimeters (1 foot, 8 inches)

Diameter of rings: 18 centimeters (7 inches)

Length of cables: 3 meters (9 feet, 9 inches)

Pommel Horse

The Horse

The pommel horse is a rigid wood body covered with foam and high-quality chrome leather. The pommels are mounted on an alloy base and are covered with a rubber compound designed for a good grip.

Height: 1.15 meters (3 feet, 9 inches)

Length at the top: 1.6 meters (5 feet, 3 inches)

Width: 35 centimeters (13 1/2 inches)

Distance between pommels: 40 to 45 centimeters (15 1/2 to 17 1/2 inches)

Height of pommels: 12 centimeters (4 1/2 inches)

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS OF VARIOUS EVENTS

FLOOR EXERCISE

Women's floor routines are performed to music and last between 70 and 90 seconds. A gymnast is required to cover the entire floor area during his or her exercise. Women's routines combine dance movements and sequences with a variety of tumbling and acrobatic elements. Required elements include: two acrobatic series, one with at least two or more saltos; and a dance series with at least two elements. The various maneuvers should be blended harmoniously. Mood, tempo and direction should vary.

Men's floor routines, unaccompanied by music, must last between 50 and 70 seconds and feature three to five tumbling passes performed in at least two directions. Also included are a variety of tumbling and acrobatic elements, combined with other gymnastics elements such as strength and balance, elements of flexibility, handstands and choreographic combinations. Each routine must include at least one forward and one backward tumbling series. A static balance or strength element (held for two seconds), during which the gymnast demonstrates his ability to rest on one leg or arm, must also be incorporated. Transitional skills should be executed with proper rhythm and harmony.

The

Vaults

Vaults are quick but complicated. Gymnasts gather speed running toward the vaulting table, launch themselves off the springboard toward the vault, then propel themselves into the air with a push off the vault, then execute a combination of twists and somersaults before landing on the mat with as much control as possible. Marks are awarded for the control of the body and the landing position. The majority of women do "Yurchenko" style vaults, which involve a round-off onto the springboard and a back handspring onto the table, while men typically choose "Tsukahara" vaults -- a forward entry with a quarter or half turn onto the table.

BALANCE BEAM

Requirements for beam routines include a connection of two different dance elements, one with a split of 180 degrees, a turn on one foot, an acrobatic series of at least two flight elements, acrobatic skills in different directions (forward, sideward or backward) and a dismount. A good beam performer exhibits flexibility, rhythm, balance and elegance. A beam exercise must last no more than 90 seconds; a deduction will occur if the routine is not within that time frame. If a gymnast grasps the beam to avoid a fall, she incurs a 0.50 point penalty from her execution score. If she falls off the beam, she incurs a 1.00 point penalty and has 10 seconds to remount and continue her routine.

UNEVEN BAR

Continuous swinging movements are predominant on this apparatus. The exercise should include movements in both directions, above and below the bars. The gymnast must move from the high bar to the low bar, incorporating grip changes, releases and catches, and circle swings through the handstand position. Elements with twists and somersaults with multiple grip changes and high flight should be demonstrated for maximum scoring. If a gymnast falls, she incurs a 1.00 point penalty from her execution score and has 30 seconds to get back on the bars and resume her routine. The gymnast also incurs a full point deduction if she hits the mat with her feet during the routine.

HIGH BAR

A routine consists exclusively of swinging movements without interruption and with various grip positions. The gymnast should perform continuous clean movements and must not touch the bar with his body. Requirements include changes of grip and swinging movements both forward and backward. The gymnast also must execute at least one move in which he releases the bar and has a visible flight phase before re-grasping the bar. A good dismount is high, acrobatic and cleanly landed.

PARALLEL BAR

A parallel bars routine consists primarily of swinging and flight elements, plus intermittent holds. The gymnast should travel along and work both above and below the bars. Requirements include two swinging elements, one in support and one from a hang. The exercise may contain at most three stop or hold parts. Additional pauses equal to or greater than a second are not permitted.

STILL RING

Ring routines should include a variety of movements demonstrating strength, support and balance. The gymnast should perform a series of swings and holds with both forward and backward elements and the routine should finish with an acrobatic dismount. Gymnasts are also required to hold all strength and handstand positions for a minimum of two seconds. Deductions will be taken for unnecessary swings.

POMMEL HORSE

During the pommel horse routine, a gymnast must cover all three areas of the horse - the middle and both ends, divided by handles - while performing continuous, circular movements interrupted only by required scissors movements. The hands are the only part of the body that should touch the apparatus. The entire exercise should flow with a steady, controlled rhythm, with at least one element of value performed on both ends of the horse.

CONCLUSION

Use of proper and precise names of exercises in gymnastics is of considerable importance. Proper names of exercise will enable the teacher to evaluate training material properly and will also help to establish a correct communication channel between professional colleagues and the gymnasts. With the help of exact terms, one can facilitate the gymnasts to form a right conception of the course of movement, and thus accelerate the whole process of learning.

