

LETTER from the PRESIDENT

LETTER from the PRESIDENT

N° 30

June 2005

By Professor Bruno Grandi, FIG President

Roma (ITA) / Moutier (SUI) 01.06.2005

Dear Friends,

On April 29 – 30, Symposium sessions dealing entirely with the Artistics Code of Points were held in Budapest. The meeting's primary goal was to dispel certain doubts dealing primarily with the fundamental content of the document and the issue of the text's continuity, with the aim of making the Code easier to understand for both judges and media alike.

The current Artistics Code offers a new dimension for our sport's evaluative criteria, criteria that differ from preceding criteria, are further removed from tradition but that are influenced by gymnastic tendencies today. We could outline it in this way:

The value of the exercise, its difficulty, is an integral part of the exercise. It is calculated based on the movements presented by a gymnast. Ten of these elements will count. Not one more element will count, even if the gymnast performs additional elements. The top ten elements will be counted. In this way, we are introducing a concept of limitation in the area of time and the number of elements making up an exercise. The mark begins at zero and increases as a gymnast performs his/her ten elements.

A separate jury will evaluate Execution for its technical, aesthetic and artistic content. The countdown will start at the magic 10.000 point score, from which the judges will subtract penalties in keeping with a tight scale for all kinds of errors. Major penalties will be doubled and the computer will calculate their average. There are still details to iron out.

In other words and to sum it up, the Code is opening up new frontiers. Its basic principle is now universally recognised. It recognises and attributes real values to the most talented gymnasts, those who are the most prepared both physically and psychologically. In fact, the mark will no longer be exclusively oriented towards physical content, **because gymnastics is artistic and will remain artistic!** This Code encourages Execution and aims to temper the misplaced zeal of gymnasts and coaches who lack the technical level for risky exercises that are sure to be poorly executed and heavily penalised. An athlete's "freedom" will be limited and controlled. Artistic content takes precedence. Falls, uncompleted elements, technical errors, which are by the way at the root of errors in Execution, will be particularly sanctioned. **The mascot mark of the "Perfect 10" will always express perfection in Execution and Artistic expression.** A gymnast who is technically at the height of his/her physical condition will be expressive, able to present high level difficulties. And if this gymnast performs them correctly, perfectly, he/she could win.

Until today, gymnastics has been evolving technically through a Code of Points that allowed coaches and gymnasts to present their own innovative ideas, sometimes through very precise criteria, sometimes through pure opportunity. This is why the Code had to tidy things up now and then (to avoid mentioning revolution), because the athletes were incapable of measuring the true value of their exercises. And this was verified every four years.

LETTER from the PRESIDENT

Today, the new Code will maintain an open Difficulty. In this way, we'll be able to control new movements for reasons of prevention. The Artistic aspect will take precedence once again, contrary to exercises today in which the artistic parts are either ridiculous or non-existent.

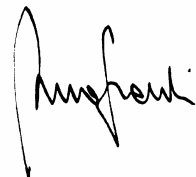
Furthermore, since the difficulty value of an exercise is open, it must be controlled with appropriate penalties in Execution, calculated to discourage the constant search for "more difficult" elements that are executed with technical errors and errors in style. Penalties that maintain their own application criteria are still to be developed.

Important: We should no longer see rankings of the top 10 athletes at the horizontal bar, 7 of which have the same score (refer to the Competition III final in Athens!). Although ties are always possible in light of the high technical level of gymnasts today and the fact that exercises are all very similar, it is improbable that a situation of this kind will happen again. For at the Olympic Games, the judges lacked the tools and material means to differentiate.

Who do you feel is responsible for this situation?

Simply, the Code of Points. If it had been able to distinguish between the technical content of the exercise and the artistic value of Execution, the Athens scenario never would have happened.

With my kind regards,



Bruno Grandi,
FIG President