

2022 – 2024 NGJA / JDP Newsletter #4

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In an effort to further standardize rules interpretations and judging evaluations across the country the Men's Development Program Committee ("MDPC") has authorized a rules interpretation committee to collect community questions and to provide rules clarifications via this document.

Changes from a previous version of this document will show "***" in front of the interpretation. This document may be updated frequently, depending on the frequency of repeated queries. Please be sure to monitor the [NGJA website](#) for the most up to date version of this document.

General Information

1. Spotters are **REQUIRED** on **SR, VT, and HB** at **ALL LEVELS** in the Junior Program. (JDP Manual, Dec.22; pg. 47). Spotters must be in a position to assist the athlete, if necessary, and must be present throughout the entirety of the exercise.
2. Coaches are also reminded that there are professional behavior standards outlined in both the [FIG Code of Points](#) (pg.11, Art. 3.2 – 3.3) and the [USAG Men's Rules and Policies](#) (pg. 15). Abusive and / or undisciplined behavior, including the use of profanity, will not be tolerated. Penalties can include: behavioral deductions from an athlete's score, ejection from the competition floor, and further discipline from USA Gymnastics.
3. Jewelry of any kind is not permitted and will result in a -0.3 behavior deduction, along with a verbal warning that the deduction is being applied, on each event at which the violation occurs. (USAG R&P, pg. 32; JDP Manual, Dec.22; pg. 20). It is strongly encouraged that long hair that covers the eyes and / or face be pulled back and secured to not obstruct the athlete's vision during the performance of their exercise, though there is no deduction for not doing so.
4. **D – score:** Only the top 7 highest difficulty elements (regardless of Element Group), plus the dismount, will comprise the D – score. Connection bonus will only be awarded for elements that contribute towards the D – score calculation.
5. **Matting Requirements:**
The table on pg. 66 of the JDP Manual lists the MINIMUM requirements for matting on each apparatus. Additional matting is permissible at all levels to ensure athlete safety. On SR/ VT/ HB, any combination of supplemental mats may be used on top of the base 20 cm mat, so long as the final height meets or exceeds the specified minimum height of 30 cm.

6. *** LV 3 -6: Stick Bonus clarification:

Dismount stick bonus will not be awarded if the athlete is touching or supported by the apparatus upon landing. (Floor exercise would be the exception unless, of course, the athlete puts their hands down on the dismount.) Stick Bonus can, and should, be awarded when an athlete successfully lands and does not move their feet. This holds true even in instances where a dismount may have a large error in the execution of the dismount. An example of this would be the LV4 PB dismount. An athlete who sticks the dismount should receive the Stick Bonus as long as the criteria for a successful stick are met, even if there is a large error for angular deviation on the handstand.

7. *** Video review is allowed for D – score and Neutral deductions at CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL (STATE & HIGHER) competitions only. [MDPC Minutes \(May 2023\)](#)

Floor Exercise

1. Only one supplemental landing mat (Sting mat, 10 cm, or 8" skill cushion) is allowed on the FX during a competitive exercise. Any skill is allowable onto the mat, as are multiple passes, but the mat may not be moved once the exercise has commenced.
2. Performance criteria for the Endo jump (EG1, #68) has been clarified by the FIG. Please refer to [FIG Newsletter #2](#) (Dec '22) for more information.
3. **LV 8** – The exception listed in the Level 8 Competition Table on pg. 53 is incorrect. The MDPC voted to follow FIG rules regarding connection bonus on FX for all levels.
4. **LV 7 -10** - Any skill initiated on ("punching from") a supplemental landing mat will not be recognized for difficulty credit.
5. *** **LV 3 – 4** - No Stick Bonus will be awarded if the athlete does not show a rebound after the round – off or back handspring dismount.
6. *** **LV 3 – 6** – The deduction for lowering the feet down to the floor on an unsuccessful attempted press HS is -0.5, plus any other execution errors. The 50% rule is applicable in these instances, so credit for the skill should be given so long as an attempt is made. Also, the Specified Bonus can still be awarded if a second attempt is successful.

Pommel Horse

1. In light of the recent FIG clarification on awarding difficulty credit for the circle HS dismounts, the Junior Development program will continue to recognize dismounts even with a -0.5 deduction for hitting the apparatus with the foot and/or leg. This falls in line with the FIG exception for awarding skill values with large errors. (JDP Manual, Dec. 22; pg. 49) Difficulty credit will not be awarded in the case of multiple large errors. Examples of this would be: hitting the horse and excessive use of strength, hitting the horse and extreme bending of the arms, etc.
2. The Junior Program will also recognize traveling scissor elements even with a large error for showing support on the leg. A full sit on the horse will be evaluated as a fall (-1.0) and non – recognition of the element.
3. The exception to the FIG requirement of a listed element following an EG II /III is for **Level 7 ONLY**. This includes the 'Jr A' flair as this exception is an actual listed FIG element.

4. **LV 6 / 8 - Magyar Interpretation:**

A Magyar travel will be considered completed and recognized for Difficulty credit once the athlete has traveled across the horse and both hands are in a front support position past the line where the pommels would be inserted in the horse. Any subsequent cross support loops facing out (back loops) can be recognized and awarded as an 'A' value skill. Naturally, basic repetition rules still apply.

5. **LV 8** – The same skill performed with and without flairs may not be counted twice for difficulty credit. Example: 1/1 spindle from side circle and in flairs will only be counted one time. The exception to this rule is basic circles and cross support loops (ie. An athlete may count both a loop and flaired loop for difficulty credit).

6. **LV 8** – All travels with spindles (including the Eichorn) not already listed in the Pommel-less Horse Code of Points will be recognized elements and will receive their equivalent FIG values.

7. ***** LV 7 – 10** – An athlete may count both a circle / loop AND a flaired circle / loop for Difficulty credit. In this instance, the circle / loop would be a FIG 'A' and the flair would be a 'Jr A.'

Still Rings

1. Strength elements showing no hold are the only exceptions to the Junior Program's rule of awarding difficulty even with a large error. An attempted EG II /III element that shows no hold (-0.5) will not be recognized for Difficulty credit.

2. A German hang must be held to be recognized as a 'Jr A' difficulty part.

3. **LV 8, EG III** – EG III will still be fulfilled with a momentary hold of a HS from an unrecognized press or swing to HS. In this instance, the athlete will be awarded a special 'Jr A' for the HS.

4. **LV 7 – 10** - The deduction for starting a routine in a support position is -1.0. The CoP states that "an exercise must start in a hang position with arms vertical and straight."

5. ***** LV 7** – ½ empty swing allowed before any skill.

Vault

1. Please refer to Page #49 in the December '22 version of the JDP Manual for the line by line addressing of FIG Invalid vaults, their respective deductions, and if they qualify for a 2nd attempt.

2. **LV 7 – 10** - The Yamashita is a recognized vault in the Junior Program and will have a SV of 1.6.

3. **LV 8 – 10** - Stick bonus (+0.1) will now be awarded for stuck landings that meet the minimum SV threshold. (JDP Manual, Dec. '22; pg. 48)

4. **LV 7 – 10** - All Yamashita style vaults will be recognized vaults in the Junior Program. They will have the same D – score as their equivalent Front Handspring vaults.

Parallel Bars

1. Raising the PB above the FIG maximum height is **NOT ALLOWED** under any circumstances.

2. Lowering down from a HS to 'L – sit' and pressing back to HS is allowed without deduction. Execution errors will still apply.

3. The layout back ½ and the front pike / layout ½ dismounts will receive a 'B' value at Levels 7 -9. (JDP Manual, Dec. '22; pg. 50)
4. **L3 PB** – What is the deduction if the gymnast dismounts on the 2nd back swing?
-2.0 for omitting Parts 6 & 7.
5. **L5 PB, SB 3** – What is the deduction if the gymnast does the straddle L but then doesn't press to HS?
-0.5 Routine Composition Error and no bonus awarded.
6. **L6 PB, SB 3** – What is the deduction if the gymnast performs the incorrect number of swings prior to the pirouette bonus (turns on 2nd back swing following L - hold)?
-0.5 Routine Composition Error and no bonus awarded.
7. **LV 7 – 10** - There's no height requirement for the Jr. A back uprise.

High Bar

1. A reminder that any movement is considered a swing at the beginning of the exercise and will count towards the 3 or 5 swing maximum. Please see FIG Newsletter #2 for video examples.
2. **Clarification regarding the 'Jr A' back uprise:**
This element can be awarded if performed as part of the 5 forward / backward movements (3 swings for LV 10) stemme start sequence to begin an exercise with no deduction for change of direction. The deduction will apply for 'Jr A' back uprisers performed outside of the initial 5 (or 3) swing start.
3. **Clarification regarding the 'Jr A' kip:**
A kip immediate cast will receive a FIG 'A' and EG III credit (with a -0.3 deduction) even if it does not continue over the bar. ([USAG / NGJA Interpretations, Nov. '22](#)) Therefore, the 'Jr A' kip will be awarded only when there is no immediate cast performed after the kip. Appropriate execution deductions will still apply.
4. **LV 4 Kip** - The evaluation of this element follows the same criteria as in previous quadrennia. The maximum execution deduction for the performance of this element, regardless of spotting and / or any other execution errors / falls onto the apparatus is -0.5. The only time a -1.0 deduction for a fall should be taken is if the athlete jumps down from the bar to the floor.
5. **LV 4, SB 3** – The language in the Manual is clear about the coaching expectation regarding the performance of SB 3 (flyaway dismount). The coach is **REQUIRED TO FOLLOW** the athlete during the entire skill. Failure to do so is a -0.3 behavioral deduction. **Standing under the bar and watching the athlete land does not count and will be assessed the -0.3 deduction.**
6. **L5 HB, SB 2 / 3** – The manual states that “the maximum deduction for execution is -0.5, except for a fall”; does that include deductions on the cast?
Yes, the cast is included.
7. **L5 HB, SB 2 / 3** - The baby giant is included in the bonus sequence and is limited to the -0.5 execution cap. A reminder that a single large error (ie. extreme bending of the legs, falling on the bar in the baby giant), while covered under the execution maximum stipulation, will negate the awarding of the Special Bonus.
8. **L8 HB, EG1** - Does a tap swing 1/2 to horizontal fulfill this requirement?
No. This requirement must be met with listed FIG EG I elements.

9. **LV 8 EG II / III:**

In an effort to clarify these requirements, please apply the following:

EG II – Kips, Endos, Adlers, Weiler, or any FIG Flight element

EG III – Free hips, Stalders, Steineman, Koste, back toss

10. **LV 7 -10** - The deduction for the shoulders rising above the bar in the stemme start sequence will not apply in the Junior Program.
11. **LV 7 -10** - An undershoot is an allowable skill of no value and should not be deducted for change of direction or as an extra swing. Any swings following the undershoot that do not lead directly to a recognized element will be evaluated as empty swings per FIG.
12. ***** LV 7 – 10** – A half turn is only counted as a skill if it comes from a giant swing.
13. ***** LV 7 – 10** – A kip cast to any height is a FIG 'A' with a -0.3 deduction for not going over the bar. No additional deductions apply for angular deviation. (Zunich; FIG MTC, May 2022)