



President's Update – February, 2021

To All NGJA Members,

The 2021 season is well underway with the NCAA and Jr Development programs gaining momentum in many areas. In addition, Winter Cup is scheduled for the end of February so we are slowly coming back.

As stated last month, I will address several aspects of the current gymnastics season amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the virus on various men's gymnastics programs is changing daily. Each program will make changes they deem necessary and I will do my best to communicate them out to you.

1. **NCAA program** – the NCAA program has been conducting live and virtual competitions and is now in its 4th week.
 - a. **Competition Schedules** - COVID is having an impact on NCAA programs and schedules. Some programs have had limited time in their gyms while others have had to quarantine. The result is there will be more virtual competitions than anticipated.
2. **Virtius Update** - At the end of this newsletter I am including a message from Virtius summarizing their work with the NCAA programs through Feb 4.
3. **USAG Men's program** – COVID continues to affect the USAG program as well.
 - a. **Winter Cup** – this competition is scheduled to occur in late February. Communications from the USAG office have started in preparation for this event.
 - b. **Jr. Development** - many states are conducting live and virtual competitions. Stay in touch with your local association for any updates to your local competitions.
 - c. **International Competitions** - All individual and All Around World Cup competitions have been cancelled through March at this time. There is a good chance further International competitions will be cancelled as well.
4. **Correction from December Newsletter** – in last month's newsletter, I shared the unfortunate news of the passing of Peter Bacon.
5. **NASO Insurance** – NASO, the National Association of Sports Officials provides liability insurance for sports officials. Here is a link to their site: <https://www.naso.org/member-benefits/> Should you be interested in their services, you can contact them directly to determine if this is for you.

I continue to provide more information as I receive it to try and keep everyone informed.

I wish each of you and your families the best of health!

Mike Juszczuk

NGJA President



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Summary from Virtius through February 4, 2021

Virtius has now completed 6 virtual dual head on head competitions for the season. We have come a long way since the first event and have been focused on clean consistent execution.

Last Saturday, we delivered a triple header which was a test of our preparation and meet operations. We had 0 gap between each event finish to start and a marathon 12 hour production time for the Virtius team. 5 of 6 site locations were new to the competition. 1 site was a club facility (with marginal internet). Despite this, there were no major issues in either the meet operations, camera work, connectivity, or scoring.

Here are a few summarizing thoughts:

- Viewership has been quite satisfying with all meets > 1000+ live + on demand viewers each (possibly additional 2-400 from live streamer coverage)
- Meet operations for a dual head on head format has achieved 2:20s consistently, theoretical ideal is just over 2:00
- The Virtius production + piggyback live stream model is very compelling. Live streamers can customize their own show, and add commentary.
- Ideally, we have 2-3 live streams per Virtius competition, one being neutral, one being biased team A, one being biased team B
- We would like to compare the viewership stats from Virtius vs. those of BTN and other network coverage. Can we get these numbers?
- CGA members should review the content that both live streamers have created, we should provide feedback to help them improve
- CGA could also organize its own live stream channel with its own talent in the same manner, and have its own host / guests
- All Postgame sessions are available for review at the same original links. These we think should be shared with athletes/fans as it is a clean way to review the meet.

Forward Looking:

- There are new Virtius meets being scheduled as a result of various team needs (e.g. Michigan, Springfield, Stanford, etc.), please check latest schedule and update us with changes ASAP
- There has been a request to evaluate the traditional blast format as an option for Virtius production. This can be done technically, but first should warrant further CGA discussion so we invest effort properly for more engineering and retraining. Its run time is definitely faster by 20%, however this is far more complex for live streamers to cover as they must do live clipping and editing in order to produce a cohesive show. Also, score comparisons via coverage again becomes very difficult. In meets that are close (Cal vs ASU) head to head is more interesting. In meets that were not close to start (traditional blast would probably have gotten athletes home earlier). We do recognize that head on head is slower and the perception of participants during the event feels additionally slower since there is no opposing team nor fans in the venues.
- There has been a separate request to develop a 2x2 live/virtual hybrid configuration which involves 2x separate venues with 2x teams at each, with a dual judge panel cover 1/3/5, 2/4/6 and producing 6 effective matchups. 1v2 1v3 1v4 2v3 2v4 3v4. This is much more complicated in both operations and technical work, but we at Virtius recognize that enabling this type of meet could be part of the future of matchups and allow any live meet to be extended to have virtual participants. We will prototype this and may need to recruit a few teams to test run before we go live in a month as is proposed by Michigan vs Iowa vs Nebraska vs Ohio State.

Let me know if you have any thoughts or questions as we head to our 3rd week of competition.

Ambert Yeung