



**Acrobatic Gymnastics Program Committee
August 29-30, 2016 * Indianapolis, IN
Minutes**

1. Role Call:

Carisa Laughon, PCC
Nicole Barrilleaux, Athlete Rep
Sarah Thomas, NJOC
Ronda Francis, NEC
Kari Duncan, NTC
Luan Peszek, VP Program Development (non-voting)
Amy White, National Teams Manager (non-voting)

2. Welcome/Opening

Ron Galimore, COO of USA Gymnastics, participated in this portion of the discussion.

The meeting opened with a brief welcome from Carisa Laughon. She thanked the program committee for traveling to Indianapolis. Carisa expressed the need to develop unity within the acrobatics program and that it starts with the program committee exhibiting strong leadership and working together for the betterment of the program.

Ron addressed the program committee. He welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for their time and dedication to acro. Ron discussed the Acro Program Director position. With Elizabeth Millard's departure, USA Gymnastics will work to create a job description and post the job, with the goal of moving swiftly to fill the position.

Ron also encouraged the program committee to think creatively and decide what is best for the acro program, especially in the following areas:

- JO Program – should serve growth & development in the USA and provide for strong competition at each level
- National teams – should be a tool to develop elite athletes and enhance growth in our elite program
- Education – continue to develop coaching education materials and tools, especially for boys events
- Growth & development – should be a big focus for our program
- National coaching staff – consider the needs in this area and make specific recommendations to USA Gymnastics

Steve Penny, President/CEO of USA Gymnastics, also welcomed the committee to Indianapolis and offered to be available if needed at any time during the meeting.

3. Strategic Planning Introduction

Carisa explained that the main purpose of these committee meetings is to develop a strong strategic plan for the acro program, which includes short-term and long-term goals and objectives. A draft plan was presented for consideration and this document will be updated with information discussed and decisions made throughout the meeting. The program committee is challenged with prioritizing initiatives and setting realistic goals for the acro program.

4. Growth & Development

For the 2016 season, membership dropped by -1% in the acro program, while all of the other disciplines experienced growth. The program committee discussed the importance of growing the program and retaining athletes. The committee brainstormed ideas and organized them into a multi-tier approach to program growth and development:

- 1) increase visibility and awareness for acro
- 2) develop resources, tools, and programs to help clubs introduce acro in their facilities, through preschool or recreational programs and/or pre-team levels
- 3) provide more hands-on training and coach development program to help coaches and clubs move into competitive acro

Recommendation to establish a standing committee, called the Growth & Development Committee, to develop and implement a strong plan for program growth.

Motion: Carisa

Second: Ronda

Passed unanimously

The program committee recommends the following individuals for the Growth and Development Committee: Marcia DeGuire, Linda Porter, Dylan Maurer, and Corey Flynn.

5. Operating Code

The Program Committee reviewed and made final changes to the Operating Code for Acrobatic Gymnastics. This is the governance document that establishes and directs the activities of the volunteer structure within the acro program.

Recommendation to approve the 2016 Operating Code for Acrobatic Gymnastics with the discussed changes.

Motion: Carisa

Second: Sarah

Passed unanimously

6. National Coaching Staff

The role of national coach/national coaching staff was discussed by the program committee. The committee considered input and recommendations from the NEC.

Recommendation to put forward the following individuals to USA Gymnastics for the role of National Coaching Staff: Youri Vorobiev, Vladimir Vladdev, and Arthur Davis.

Motion: Ronda

Second: Carisa

Passed

The committee discussed the need for an additional person to help with the coordination of the national coaching staff and Carisa Laughon's name was mentioned.

Carisa Laughon recused herself from the discussion/meeting.

Recommendation to include an additional position with the national coaching staff, called the High Performance Administrator, and put forward Carisa Laughon for this position.

Motion: Kari

Second: Nicole

Passed

Carisa rejoined the meeting.

7. International Updates

Tonya Case, FIG TC-Acro representative, joined via conference call for discussion on this agenda topic.

Tonya presented to the program committee, giving various updates and clarification related to the 2017-2020 FIG Code of Points, Tables of Difficulty, and Age Group Programs. Discussions took place regarding upcoming Intercontinental and International Judges Courses and judge's education, selection criteria, and preparation for those courses. Tonya presented information on acro's inclusion in the Youth Olympic Games.

8. Elite Pipeline

Tonya Case, FIG TC-Acro representative, joined via conference call for discussion on this agenda topic.

The program committee identified the elite development pipeline, including the retention and development of elite athletes, as a priority being addressed through the strategic plan. Discussions centered around the challenges acro faces, their causes, and strategies to address the issues.

The committee discussed the 11-16 age group program and agreed that the 11-16 age group program serves an important role as the base of our pyramid structure for the elite pipeline. The group also discussed various reward and recognition ideas to help incentive athletes to keep moving upward through the pipeline toward senior elite.

Tonya Case, left the meeting.

Ron Galimore, COO of USA Gymnastics, participated in the portion of the discussion listed below.

As a priority, the program committee will continue to work to find ways to 1) encourage and incentive athletes to move upward through the pipeline toward senior elite, and 2) keep senior athletes longer. Therefore, the Program Committee has agreed to continue the established "international competitive track" (see attached illustration of junior Olympic versus international competition tracks), as well as, further defining our national team program and structure (see attached). The committee will continue to explore opportunities to add to our existing programs and national team benefits through greater recognition, additional training opportunities, performance-based rewards, and greater financial support.

9. 2017-2020 JO Code of Points

The Program Committee reviewed, discussed, and amended recommended changes to the JO Code of Points submitted by the NJOC. The goals of the 2017 JO Code of Points include 1) simplifying the JO program, 2) building stronger progressions at all levels, but especially at the optional levels, 3) allowing athletes greater participation opportunities, and 4) making adjustments, when needed, to follow the 2017-2020 FIG Code of Points. Please reference the September 2016 Technical Update for a list of changes to the JO Code of Points.

Recommendation to approve the listed changes for implementation to the JO Code of Points for 2017.

Motion: Sarah

Second: Carisa

Passed unanimously

10. International Judges

The program committee discussed selection of judges for the upcoming Intercontinental Judges Course (January 9-14, 2017 in Poland) and International Judges Course (March

7-13, 2017 in Indianapolis, IN). The rules, criteria and limitations on the number of judges were reviewed. Kari, NTCC, listed the judges with current brevet ratings and their eligibility for upgrading. Per FIG regulations, each country is permitted to send up to 3 judges plus 1 category I judge to the Intercontinental Course.

The Program Committee endorses for approval the following candidates to attend the 2017 Acro Intercontinental Judges Course: Kari Duncan (Cat I), Trisha Stewart, Ronda Francis, and Carisa Laughon.

Motion: Kari

Second: Nicole

Passed

Additionally, Tonya Case, as an outgoing TC member, will be an instructor at the Intercontinental course and subsequently hold a Cat I brevet for the 2017-2020 cycle.

For the Acro International Judges Course, Kari will continue to work with the NTC to determine candidates to present to the program committee for further discussion and recommendation to USA Gymnastics. The committee discussed the need to be selective in the process, considering national superior-rated judges with strong judging experience, consistent and accurate judging work, professionalism and leadership, and if possible, foreign language skills. Brevet candidate judges would be required to fully attend the International Judges Course in Indianapolis and pass exams at the specified level (see the FIG General Judges Rules and Acro Specific Judge Rules). New brevets may be limited in the type and number of international competition assignments in the 2017-2020 quad, based on FIG regulations and priority of more experienced USA judges.

The program committee discussed and clarified that active members of the Athlete Selection Committee may serve as a Meet Referee at a selection event, but should not serve as a CJP, DJ or panel judge.

11. USA Gymnastics Championships

Jeff Smith, Managing Director of Events and Technology at USA Gymnastics, participated in this portion of the discussion.

One of the main goals of the USA Gymnastics Championships is to create an event to showcase our elite athletes, while also providing for a well-managed, competitive event for the JO program. The event schedule for the 2017 championships should remain consistent with that of 2015 and 2016, with the elite competition at the end of the week in the arena. We encourage JO competitors to stay through the end of the week and cheer on the elites.

The program committee discussed the level of participation at recent USA Gymnastics Championships events. Jeff informed us that the current level of participation, approximately 300 pair/groups (650 athletes), is a good level for the event. However, as the acro program continues to grow, our numbers of participation at USA Gymnastics Championships should remain consistent. Therefore, in the future, further discussion may be required on the age and level of gymnasts competing for the championships event. Additionally, with the recent levels of participation and need to create a general schedule well in advance of the event, finals competition is not possible.

For the 2017 USA Gymnastics Championships, the predicted participation will be similar to that of 2016, and therefore allow the acro program to maintain the same levels of participation and qualification process.

- JO Levels 6-10, 11-16 age group, junior elite, senior elite levels will participate

- Training sessions will remain similar to those of 2016. Please note, training sessions are provided to allow the athletes to practice and become comfortable in the competition venue. Training sessions will be offered, but participation is not mandatory, especially for Level 6.
- Approximately 3 designated time slots will be offered for athlete sizing throughout the week, and pair/groups MUST report during one of these times (prior to their competition).

Jeff expressed concern over the possibility of significant delays to competition and/or awards presentation due to the length of time allowed for our current appeals process. The committee discussed the need for an appeals process to correct obvious mistake in the score and considered ways to shorten the process.

12. Rules & Policies Updates

- Qualification scores – the program committee asked the NJOC to review qualification scores and make a proposal to adjust scores taking into consideration the new scoring, etc.
- Age Groups – the age of the pair/group is determined by the oldest partner. Age group will be adjusted as follows in the JO program for local, state and regional competitions:
 - Levels 5-8: 2 age groups – 13 and under; 14 and over
 - Levels 9-10: no age groups
 - At USA Gymnastics Championships, at all levels (6-10) there are no stated age divisions. Large categories will be divided into smaller competition groups, determined by the age of the oldest partner, if they exceed 20 entries. For example, if Level 6 WP has 25 entries, it will be divided into two (approximately equal) competition divisions of 13 and 12. Awards are given per division.
 - This format can be followed at local, state and regional competitions if the number of entries in a given level and age division exceed 20 competitors.
- Competition Format - There will no longer be preliminary and finals competitions.
- Appeals process – make the following changes to the R&P:
 - Appeals can only be made against the difficulty score (no change)
 - Coaches may view the difficulty slip, completed by the DJ (no change)
 - Appeals may be made for the coach's own pair/group or a pair/group from another club (no change)
 - Appeals fee increased to \$40
 - Appeals must be filed within 5 minutes of the posting of the score for the exercise in question
 - Appeals are considered by the Jury of Appeals, which includes the CJP, Meet Referee, and at least one other member, and are final. Video can be used during this process (at the request of the meet referee).
 - The score may be adjusted positively or negatively.
- Skills testing - rules will be updated in the R&P according to the August 2016 Technical Update.
- Regional realignment – the program committee considered a request to address regional/state alignments and split larger regions that have multi-state participation and large geographic distances. The committee agreed to keep the regional structure as is and not make any changes to the R&P in this regard. While we are excited about the growth in several new states, the program committee feels strongly that these new clubs would gain more benefit from having greater interactions with established clubs in their regions and participating with more clubs at local, state and regional meets, versus being on their own. In larger regions with multi-state participation, the Operating Code provides an avenue for state representatives to assist with more local activities,

scheduling, meets, and communications. Additionally, petition options are available to clubs with large geographic distances to travel for state and/or regional competitions.

- National Qualifier designation – a national qualifier competition is a meet designated as a selection meet (in addition to the USA Gymnastics Championships) for the national team, age group team, and/or international club team. An application process will be available for clubs to bid/ask the program committee for this designation for their competition.

Recommendation to approve the stated amendments to the Acro Rules and Policies.

Motion: Carisa

Second: Kari

Passed unanimously

13. 2016-2018 National and International Calendar

The program committee discussed upcoming national and international events and created a 2017-2018 event calendar (see attached).

Recommendation to award the 2017 Las Vegas Acro Cup with the designation of "national qualifier," pending final approval.

Motion: Ronda

Second: Carisa

Passed unanimously

With the approval of the above recommendation, the Las Vegas Acro Cup will serve as the selection event for additions to the senior and junior national teams, age group team, and international club team. Pair/groups added to any team serve an abbreviated term commencing at the 2017 national qualifier and ending at the 2017 USA Gymnastics Championships, when all national teams will be newly selected for the next season. Additions to the national team are for pair/groups planning to travel to spring international competitions.

Recommendation to schedule the National Judges Course for the weekend of January 27-29, 2017.

Motion: Kari

Second: Carisa

Passed unanimously

14. Elections

With the approval of the Operating Code, the election process for the National Elite Committee members, Athlete Selection Committee, and Development Team Selection Committee can restart. Once the Operating Code is published, USA Gymnastics will reissue the call for nominations for these positions and then conduct the elections. The election for each committee will be done successively starting with NEC, then ASC–Elite Coach, ASC-International Expert, then Dev Team.

Because of time constraints, the program committee tabled discussions regarding upcoming elections for the USA Gymnastics Board of Directors Membership Director. The program will reconvene to put forth candidates for this position.

15. Acrobatic Gymnastics Foundation

Kristin Allen requested program committee consideration of a fundraising proposal for the AGF, which would ask for a \$2 increase to the athlete head tax. The money would be used by the AGF to sustain the grant program established in 2016. Because of time

constraints, the program committee was unable to address this proposal and tabled it for future discussion.

Respectful submitted by: Carisa Laughon, Acro Program Committee Chair

Approved by: Steve Penny, USA Gymnastics President/CEO

Acro Competitive Program Structure

JO Program

Elite Program



Acro National Teams Structure

Senior National Team

- Purpose: identify potential medal winning athletes; provide funding, support, training and competition opportunities
- Selection: senior elite pair/groups, minimum age criteria

Junior National Team 12-18 & 13-19

- Purpose: identify potential medal winning and/or future senior elite athletes; provide support, training and competition opportunities
- Selection: junior elite pair/groups, min/max age criteria

Age Group Team (AGT)

- Purpose: identify potential medal winning and/or future junior elite athletes; provide training and competition opportunities
- Selection: 11-16 age group pair/groups, min/max age criteria

International Club Team (ICT)

- Purpose: identification of talent not meeting ages for national team selection; provide training and competition opportunities
- Selection: 11-16 age group, junior elite, senior elite pair/groups; expanded age criteria

JO Development Team

- Purpose: identification of talent within the JO program; first opportunity for recognition and encouragement to the elite track
- Selection: JO levels 8, 9, 10; maximum age criteria