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## A review on vital changes since 1996 in the evaluation system of artistic gymnastics 'code of points'

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### Abstract

The 'Code of Points' (COP), is the International Gymnastics Federation's rule book that provides the means of evaluating gymnastics exercises at all level competitions and at the same time is guiding coaches and gymnasts in the content and the structure of the training process in every Olympic cycle. The aim of this study was to assess the most emphasizing changes of the COP since 1996. A systematic examination of Artistic Gymnastics COP of before and after 1996 was thoroughly made to fulfill the purpose of the study. The outcome of this study denotes that basic preparation of artistic gymnasts is a continuous progressive process.

**Keywords:** Code of point, technique, execution, deduction, scoring, evaluation

### Introduction

Achievement in Gymnastics is the consequence of numerous years of broad arranging and planning by mentors, clubs, folks and other supporting associates. In this manner, for mentors and authorities, it is important to make visualization without bound requests of the game given by the International Federation of Gymnastics (F.I.G) rules –'Code of Points (COP).

COP is the F.I.G rules that gives the method for assessing Gymnastics elements at all level of competitions and in the meantime is directing mentors and gymnasts in the substance and the structure of the preparation procedure (COP of Women's & Men's Artistic Gymnastics; W.A.G. & M.A.G, 2013-16). Throughout the most recent decade, the COP has changed considerably coordinating new arrangement of masterful artistic gymnastics planning. For the current Olympic cycle, 2013-2016, the final score of every artistic gymnastics performance is the sum of the scores of difficulty, execution, composition and artistry given by two panels of judges. The focus of the new rules is artistry, emphasizing the need to reshape a gymnast's routine into a creative artistic performance. These demands are the consequence of long planning beginning from a youthful age and proceeding all through a gymnastic specialist's profession. The ideal fundamental planning is thought to be the establishment of Gymnastics components including competitors' future specialized improvement and general execution which is by and large altogether influencing gymnasts' essential specialized preparation because of the assessment system of Artistic Gymnastics-COP.

### Objective of the Study

Steady changes happened in 'COP' at distinctive time to meet the unfulfilled gap that existed considering the better execution by the competitor, encircling the preparation schedule and controlling the competition by the authority. The aim of the present study was to analyze the most vital changes of the rules in the 'COP' since 1996, influencing gymnasts' fundamental preparation.

### Methodology

The methodology of this paper includes a review of the progressions of Artistic Gymnastics COP since 1996 until today keeping in mind the end goal to portray the most discriminating changes of the guidelines coordinating fundamental gymnasts' plans. The following tables will depict a clear picture about the comparative status of 'COP' and considering 1996 as the fulcrum.

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## Results

**Table 1:** Presents the general modifications of 'Code of Points' before & after 1996

Sl. No.	'Code of Points' Before 1996	'Code of Points' After 1996
1.	Competition on predesigned compulsory routines existed. The Compulsory competition consisted of pre-approved routines that each gymnast performed in each event. But they were not spectacular and easy to understand for the media and the audience consequently, they were eliminated from competition after the 1996 Olympics.	Competition on compulsory predesigned routines was excluded from Olympic Games of Sydney, 2000. Gymnasts competed just in optional exercises. As a result, the stress of the competition was transferred to the optional performances. (M. R. Nelson, 2013)
2.	Highest difficulty element/exercise category was D & E. (Code of Points 1992-1996)	Gradually execution of new higher difficulty element/exercise categories E, F, G, H & I were noticed. (Code of Points of Women's & Men's Artistic Gymnastics; W.A.G & M.A.G, 2000-16)
3.	A 14 years old gymnast had the right to compete at international levels.	Currently due to the minimum age-limit of 16 years, gymnasts competing internationally are becoming "older". According to the F.I.G report (Newsletter 34, December 2013) in 2007, the average age of gymnasts was 18.27 years, and in the World Championship of 2013, it has become 19.16 years of age.
4.	No specific thought for aesthetic aspect was focused. (Code of Points 1992-1996) [2]	The goal of the new Code of Points of 2013-16 was to offer a viewpoint focusing on composition, artistry and choreography of gymnastics performance. (WAG Code of Points 2013-16)
5.	1993 to 1996 Code which allowed countries to have 7 gymnasts on a team, the FIG allowed 6 members to a team. The scores from the team competition carried over into the all-around and event finals. The gymnasts' final results, and medal placement, were determined by the combination of scores: Qualifiers for all-around and event finals: Team compulsories + team optionals Team competition: Team compulsories + team optionals All-around competition: Team results (compulsories and optionals) averaged + all-around Event finals: Team results (compulsories and optionals) averaged + event final.	Starting in 2001, the format for team preliminaries was still 6-5-4 (six gymnasts on a team, five gymnasts compete on each apparatus and the top four scores count). But for the team final, more competitive 6-3-3 format, also known as three up. However, in London Olympics, the FIG changed the rules, allowing only 5 gymnasts per team. The new team lineup will change that format as well in the preliminaries, making it a 5-4-3 format. The three up, three count format will still apply to the team final. The rule has been implemented to increase the competitiveness, much like introducing the three up, three count formats in 2001.

**Table 2:** Presents the 'Evaluation System' as per 'Code of Points' before & after 1996

Sl. No	Evaluation System As 'Cop' Before 1996	Evaluation System As 'Cop' After 1996
1.	Repetition of elements in an exercise routine was allowed. (Code of Points 1992-1996) [2]	Prohibition of the repetition of an element (an element should be executed only once in order to receive difficulty value, bonification, and/or connection value). (Code of Points of Women's & Men's Artistic Gymnastics; W.A.G. & M.A.G, 2000-16)
2.	Maximum score for execution of an exercise routine was 10 points. (Code of Points 2001-2004)	The abolishment of 10 points as maximum score since 2005-08 COP. Evaluation of exercise routine is done on 20 points. (Code of Points 2005-2008)
3.	<p><b>Judging System</b></p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Every acrobatic and dance element was awarded a specific difficulty rating, ranging from A (easiest) to Super E (hardest) in the <i>Table of Elements</i>. Gymnast earned bonus points by performing difficult skills alone or in combination.</p> <p><b>Required Elements:</b> Routine composition was decided by the gymnast and his or her coaches, however, on every apparatus except vault there was a list of required elements that had to be performed during the routine. Examples of required elements included 360 degree turns on balance beam and a backward-salto (somersault) on floor exercise.</p> <p><b>Base Score:</b> The base score was the default Start Value of the routine, provided the gymnast fulfilled all required elements. This changed over the years and tended to lower as the codes went on but this was not adopted for a very long time.</p> <p><b>Start Value:</b> The Start Value (SV) of each routine was determined by adding the base score to the bonus points earned from performing difficult elements and combinations. Ideally, a gymnast wanted to have an SV as close to 10.0 as possible.</p> <p>On vault, every vault was assigned a specific Start Value in the <i>Code</i>.</p> <p>The score was determined by subtracting any deductions for poor form, execution, steps, falls or other infractions from the SV. (Code of Points 1992-1996). [2]</p>	<p><b>Judging System:</b> Two panels of judges score every routine, evaluating different aspects of the performance. The final mark is the combined total of these two scores.</p> <p>The D-score (or Difficulty score) evaluates the content of the exercise on three criteria: the Difficulty Value (DV- values of the eight highest value elements of the routine, including the dismount, are added together.), Composition Requirements (CR- demonstrates skills from five required Element Groups on each apparatus. A gymnast may use skills to fulfill the DV and the CR simultaneously) and Connection Value (CV- Additional points are given for connections of two or more elements of specific value).</p> <p>The E-score (or Execution score) evaluates the performance: the execution and artistry of the routine. The base score is 10.0. Judges do not add to this, but rather, take away points for errors in form, artistry, execution, technique and routine composition. There is a 1.0 mark deduction for falling off an apparatus. Errors are judged to be small, medium or large and respective 0.1, 0.3 and 0.5 deductions are applied. The D-score and E-score are added together for the gymnast's final mark.</p> <p>Vault scoring is somewhat different. Every vault has been assigned a specific points value in the <i>Code</i>. The D-score is simply this value. Every gymnast performing the same vault will receive the same number of points. The E-score is the most important score on this apparatus. The judges on this panel work from the 10.0 base mark and deduct for form, technique, execution and landing. (WAG Code of Points 2009-2012)</p>

The goal of the new COP of 2013-16 was to offer a perspective focusing on composition, artistry and choreography of gymnastics performance. Taking the position that aesthetic aspects should contribute in the final score of a gymnast, specific criteria and respective deductions were set up for the artistry of performance, the composition and the choreography on floor and balance beam (for women) as well as for the body posture, and leg position in all the apparatuses. This new direction gives the gymnasts the possibility to choose elements from other than acrobatics technical groups that fit their individual capacities. In a sport where the champion is chosen from a distinction of tenths of a point, the gymnast with the most adequate level of preparation has the greater possibility for achieving success.

The changes in the assessment system of artistic gymnastics influence the content and the construction of the training process. Some progressions enhanced difficulty in evolution of the routines, while others concentrated on execution. At the moment, the demands of the rules are high difficulty, faultless execution and at the same time aesthetic composition and choreography (for women), trying to highlight the aesthetic value of the sport.

### Discussion

The point of this study was to inspect the most essential changes in Artistic Gymnastics COP following 1996, influencing gymnasts' basic preparation. The relations between the changes of the evaluation system and the content of basic preparation of gymnasts will enable further understanding of the evolution of artistic gymnasts' preparation. Basic technical preparation is the procedure of learning and enhancing the technique of basic skills representing different structural technical groups of a specific quantity, quality of execution, and increasing difficulty according to the gymnast's age, stage and individual capacities

(<http://www.ottawagymnasticscentre.ca/#!/wag/c1k69>).

Coaches and specialists should consider that basic technical preparation should have long-term characteristics and should be planned according to the international tendencies of gymnastics evolution and the anticipation of the technical development of the sport, as also reflected in the changes of the COP (Long Term Athlete Development, 2008) [8]. However a wide range of planning, for example, physical, technical, strategic and hypothetical incorporated to accomplish maximum competitive performance. Optimal basic preparation is not restricted to young age but rather it is a progressing procedure proceeding all throughout a gymnast's career and adjusting to the demands of the game in every Olympic Cycle. It is a common knowledge that it takes years of preparation to learn a stretched salto backward on floor exercises but if correctly executed, it takes just few weeks to learn a double salto (unpublished observations).

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