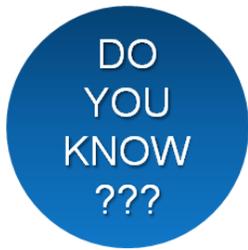


NAWGJ Canons



What they really mean.....

10/2019 BLE

What are our Canons, you ask? Canons are acceptable criteria or rules of judgment that pertain to our behavior as professional gymnastics judges. We have always had them but our National Governing Board (actually the Constitutional Committee) has reviewed and clarified them. Basically, the Canons say that we should respect the gymnasts, coaches, other judges, support staff at a meet (e.g., parents, siblings, etc.), spectators, and vendors – even aliens if they show up! Our job, as judges, is to show up prepared, judge to the best of our ability without bias or even the appearance of bias, and go home. Meets, judgments and people at the meet are not to be discussed. These Canons are the 17 rules judges should live by and most are just common sense. They tell us what we can do, when you can do it, whom you can do it to, and most importantly, what we should NOT do! Comments were primarily provided by Hilary Carlson, and Sheila Ragle, both former RJDs. Their words are, and forever will be, pertinent!

CANON 1: A judge should assist in maintaining the integrity and competence of the profession of judging women's gymnastics events.

It is SO important that we all appear, and are, as fair as possible. This is especially hard for those of who have judged for a while. We know coaches and their families and we truly like each other. But when we walk out on the floor we cannot hug them or chat with them. To the new parent in the stands it looks as if we favor one team over another. To parents who are helping at our event it looks like their team will not get a fair judgment. Remember, perception is reality!! Always be aware of where you are, what you say, to whom you say it, and most importantly, how it could be interpreted.

CANON 2: A judge should assist the Association in fulfilling its duty of making judges available for women's gymnastics events.

Assigning is probably the hardest job on the NAWGJ Board! Make sure you keep your availability and memberships up to date. If you say you are available, it is unacceptable to decline a meet because you don't like the assignment or the gym. If you do accept a contract, it is a legal document. Do not pull yourself off the meet unless you are very ill or have some other serious situation.

CANON 3: A judge should assist in improving the system of judging women's gymnastics events.

Do the best you can at every meet. If you feel you have a better idea, contact the proper person. That may mean your Meet Referee, Assignor, SJD, State Chairman, RJD, Regional Chairman, or appropriate state or regional board member. Even if you have the best idea in the world, it can't be implemented without the proper authority. It is most important to follow the chain of command.

CANON 4: A judge should avoid even the appearance of professional impropriety.

Don't advertise other gyms or schools. Don't talk about other gymnasts. Don't do or say ANYTHING that could be interpreted as improper. Always determine your score independently and avoid giving the appearance that you are looking at another judge's score or Start value before

turning in your score. Avoid discussing scores with the other judges on the panel unless there is a conference or inquiry. If there is a conference, all panel judges must participate.

CANON 5: A Judge should be well qualified in gymnastics, know the rules and be thoroughly prepared for each assignment. Each team, meet contestant and participant, as well as the spectators, are entitled to the official's best efforts to administer the rules of the sport.

Do your best to judge all 4 events early in the year. We should not be specialists at on two events! Be well prepared for a meet - you can't give your best effort if you are impaired!

CANON 6: A judge should prepare for each judging assignment and should, thoroughly study, attend clinics, and keep her/his judging knowledge current.

Look over your notes from your summer clinics, the updates, compulsory text and all rules. Practice judge each level you will judge before the meet (either on video or in a gym). Chief Judges are advised to practice judge with panel judges during the Pre-Competition meeting. Don't wait until the night before the first meet of the season. Make sure that you are judging exactly the same way at the beginning of the season as you did at the end of last season. Don't be easier on gymnasts because it's the beginning of the season (or because you forgot deductions). Gymnasts' performances and scores should improve throughout the season and your judging should stay the same throughout the season and across all levels and divisions. Keep your knowledge current. Attend events related to judging especially Regional and National NAWGJ Symposiums as well as Regional and National USAG Congresses. We should spend extra time preparing to judge Xcel meets since they may very well be the hardest things you will judge all year!

CANON 7: A judge should fulfill all assignments accepted and be punctual. A judge should also attend all judging and other meetings which are intended to promote a well ordered and conducted meet or event.

The reason we have a report time a half hour before the meet starts is for a judges' meeting. Make sure you utilize it. We can catch up personally later in the day! Show up on time and do what you are supposed to do to fulfill your assignment. Call the Meet Referee if you are running late.

CANON 8: A judge should be alert at all times, quickly yet accurately produce her/his scores and have a basis for the scores derived and prepared. If a legitimate need should arise, the judge should explain and support such scores by working through conferences and dealing with inquiries in a dignified, professional manner.

Be alert, be quick, and be accurate. Make corrections when asked to do so. DON'T SIT TOGETHER! The WTC has specifically said the judges should not sit together, especially at Floor Exercise.

CANON 9: A judge should not solicit meets for herself/himself or for others.

You CANNOT ask to be put on a meet, no matter how innocently! This really puts the meet director in a bind. Some feel that if you ask to be on a meet and you aren't assigned, you will score them lower in future meets. Again, it is perception. We CANNOT request contracts for specific meets. Common courtesy such as telling the Meet Director, "Thank You" when the meet is over, is great, but we may NOT say things like, "Thanks, hope to see you next year, Sure would love to judge your meet, I'll not charge mileage if you request me to judge your meet, My friend and I can come together and You can save on mileage if you request us to judge your meet", etc. Please be aware that sometimes the Meet Director will want to please you and say, "I'd love to have you judge my meet" and then not request you. That situation makes hard feeling on all sides.

CANON 10: A judge shall be completely unbiased. A judge should not give an appearance, especially at a meet, of any particular friendship with any coach or competitor. Also, a

judge should decline any assignment in which affiliation with a team or individuals would tend to influence the judge's ability to be fair and objective.

99% of judges are fair and honest. However, every time a parent, gymnast, or coach sees a judge looking like there is a bias, that is their reality. Please remember that. Be nice to everyone!! Always be unbiased in your evaluations. If the outcome of the meet means more to you than being fair and honest, don't accept the contract to judge the meet. Don't be overly friendly with coaches and gymnasts while in uniform at a meet.

Canon 11: A judge should treat gymnasts, coaches, judges, promoters, and spectators with respect. A judge should respect their privacy, property, and feelings, and should not do anything that would embarrass or offend such person. There will be no tolerance for any discrimination related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, religion, or age. (Updated July, 2019)

Be nice to your timers and flashers. Most of the time they have not a clue what to do and are scared to death. Assure them that a mistake will not cause the fall of the world and BE PATIENT!! Do not second guess a judge at another event. If you think they missed someone spotting a vault, it is not up to you to talk with other people about it. If you feel strongly about it and were in a perfect position to see it, talk with the judge privately and then let it drop. You are paid to do your event only. Treat everyone with respect. "Don't be cruel." Don't ever put down another person, but especially at a meet or within earshot of others.

Canon 12: A judge should at all times both look and act professionally. A judge should maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance when judging. He/she should wear the uniform of the Association (except where other dress is permitted)

Look professional. That doesn't just mean a clean uniform, unwrinkled blouse, etc. It means look as if you are interested in what you are doing. Do NOT judge with your head resting on your hand. Keep your head up and smile at the gymnast when they are done – we expect them to salute us with a nice demeanor. Look and act professional. Wear the uniform requested. Be neat at all times. Take a shower, wash your hair, get the wrinkles out of your clothes, wear comfortable shoes....look as good as you can while remembering it is not a fashion show and the event is NOT all about YOU!

CANON 13: A judge should not be overly officious. She/he should not criticize other officials or attempt to explain other officials' judgements.

If a coach or anyone else comes and asks your opinion of another judge's score, do not comment. Tell them they need to speak directly to that judge. Do not sit in the bar after the meet with coaches making comments like "I was the high score on your girls." Officious means being objectively aggressive in offering unsolicited advice. Naturally this is not a trait judges should aspire to having. We can all learn something new every day...don't offer your opinion on everything or think and act like you are a know-it-all. We all make mistakes and anyone who says they don't make mistakes after judging ten plus hours a day for three days is delusional. Our job is to judge each routine to the best of our ability, explain our score when asked, and give every gymnast the benefit of our knowledge. Be responsible for yourself and your score only.

CANON 14: A judge should confine her/his duties to the purposes of judging; i.e., coaching or meet directing are not included in a judge's responsibilities.

Once you accept an assignment for a meet your only job is to judge....not to act as the Meet Director, run the Computer, be the Scorekeeper, etc. You can only wear one hat at a time. If you have an athlete in the meet (either one you coach or a relative), refrain from offering suggestions to the athlete during warm-ups and competition.

CANON 15: A judge should never consume alcoholic beverages or drugs prior to a judging assignment where such consumption is evident by odor, conduct or appearance.

It should go without saying that alcohol &/or drugs have no place at the meet site. Besides not showing up for a meet drunk or high, do not show up hung over so that your judging is affected. You must be clearheaded and not loopy when you judge. For meets where you are staying in a hotel, be mindful that you should not be in the bar in uniform. If you are going to obnoxious, understand that many parents and gymnasts recognize us even in regular clothes!

CANON 16: A judge should exercise good judgment when using social networking media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, texting, e-mail, etc.) i.e. avoid communicating with coaches or gymnasts during, before or after a competition; or refrain from making inappropriate statements about fellow judges, coaches, gymnasts, clubs or parents.

Social Networking is an extremely powerful tool. When something is put on the Internet it can go anywhere. A judge should NEVER put something on the Internet that shows disrespect to anyone or gives any appearance of bias. Watch what you say on the Internet. It is FOREVER. Messages can be copied and forwarded. Don't ever say or do anything that you would be embarrassed to have the world know you did or said. Don't ever post ANYTHING about a meet you judged, either positive or negative. Negative doesn't need any more explanation and positive could be interpreted that you were cheating for a particular team. When you say a meet was poorly run you are disrespectful. When you complain about the food, you are disrespectful. That is probably the height of rudeness. Most clubs bend over backwards to take good care of us. If you need chocolate, bring it with you! When you contact a gymnast or a coach after a meet to compliment them on a routine, you are showing bias. Use "common" sense."

CANON 17: Judges may not participate in any wagering activities involving amateur, collegiate, or professional gymnastics, nor can they provide any information to individuals involved in any type of gymnastics wagering activities.

One scandal can devastate the integrity of the sport. There should be no wagering on NCAA, amateur or professional gymnast, or institution. If you are approached, report it directly to the President. No casino nights. No bingo nights. No gambling on gyms.

Remember the old but true adage.....If you can't say something nice.....Say Nothing at All!

Use GOOD judgement - Don't do or say STUPID things!

Remember – we are good, we are strong, and, doggone it, people like us!

The more prepared we are, the more we can enjoy & do our job.



True for athletes and judges alike!