



GYMNASTICS

Women's Gymnastics 2024-26 Rules Cycle

Rules Newsletter #21

March 15, 2026

General

Q: We have had our judging assistants (timers for floor, bars and beam) use the timer app on their phones for timing routines and then using handheld stopwatch for timing falls, if necessary. Is it permitted to use the timer app on the timing volunteer's cell phone?

A: Yes. A host institution is required to provide timing devices (such as stopwatches) to manage event timing requirements. Host institutions cannot require volunteers to provide the timing device; however, volunteers have the option to use their phone if it has enough battery power to perform the timing duties for the competition. Volunteers may not use the device for other unallowed purposes, such as for texts or verbal conversations while on the field of play.

References: Rules Modification 8.2.g; USAG Women's Program R&P – Chapter 7 General Meet Information – X.N. page 56.

Q: If the warning and overtime sound (bell or verbal warning) is NOT audible to the gymnast, and the routine goes overtime, does it still receive the overtime deduction? This happened to us in a loud arena, and the routine timer volunteer did not stand up and could not be heard.

A: The rule that applies to the signals indicating the end of the beam routine time is in *USAG Dev Prog COP Section 4 Beam – Chapter 1 General Info – II.4., page BEAM-3*, where it states:

4. "Warning" and final "time" signal should be a special device such as a bell, whistle, or gong.
 - a. Verbal "warning" and "time" MUST be audible to gymnast if device is unavailable.

It does not specifically state, but the intention is that the signaling device or the verbal warning must be heard and identified by the athlete in order for the overtime deduction to be taken. The Chief Judge may decide not to take the deduction if there is information available that indicates the athlete did not hear the signal. Input from a coach may be given via a routine inquiry since this is a neutral deduction. It is up to the Chief Judge to instruct the timers how to perform their task to be noticed/heard by the athlete. Standing up is a technique that can be used, but it is not required.

Q: If the judges are in a conference called because of a difference in Start Value of a completed routine, and it seems to be going long, can they call it a Delayed Conference?

A: No. A Delayed Conference can be called ONLY if the routine they are discussing was incomplete (the athlete did not finish the routine). Occasionally the conference involves a complicated issue and requires more deliberation; however, the judges have the responsibility to make the conferences quick, cooperative and efficient in resolving differences.

Reference: Rules Modification 1.9.h.; USAG Women's Prog R&P – Chapter 2 – IV.6, page 14.

Balance Beam

Q: A gymnast performs a front toss salto (#8.401 D) and wobbles. She repeats the front toss and wobbles again (0 VP) while trying to connect to a back handspring (B) in an attempt at a series. No acro series was awarded. Later she performs a front toss pike salto (#8.501 E). Does she receive an UTL deduction?

A: Yes. Since the repeated front toss (#8.401) did not connect to the back handspring, the element received a zero VP (as identical) and is not eligible for UTL as an acro flight series (attempted) to fulfill UTL. Even with the additional E acro, she already lost eligibility with the lack of a flight series.

Reference: Rules Modification 1.5.b and 4.2.d.4; USAG Dev Prog COP Section 4 Balance Beam – Chapter 1 General Info – V. Recognition of Value Parts A.4, page BEAM-7; Rules Newsletter January 15, 2026.

Floor Exercise

Q: Following up the discussion from the March 1st Rules Newsletter of a forward acro pass with an accelerating forward salto, what happens if a split jump is added to the last salto element, in terms of amplitude? Using the previous example, in an acro/dance pass of a front layout salto + Rudi + split jump, is the split jump the only element expected to rise, or is there a deduction for the Rudi (last salto in this pass) if it is lacking amplitude as well?

A: The Rudi is still expected to have greater amplitude than the front layout salto, regardless of adding a split jump in the series. The split jump also requires appropriate amplitude.

Reference: Rules Newsletter March 1st 2026; USAG Dev Prog COP Section 5 FX – Chapter 1 General Info – VI.F.12, page FLOOR-12

Equipment

Q: If an equipment violation would receive a Team Neutral Deduction, is there a warning first?

A: No. The equipment deductions – such as unauthorized supplemental mats or using tape on the hand placement mats – do not require a warning. The Team Neutral Deduction should be applied when it occurs in competition.

Reference: Rules Modification 6.2.f and 1.13.

Q: In the placement of the judges' tables in a competition, may both tables be on the same side of the equipment?

A: Yes. Although table location recommendations place judges on opposing sides of all events wherever possible, there are no rules that specify where to place the judges' tables. The reason is to allow for flexibility to accommodate the different dimensions of a venue and the layout of the equipment that best fits the space. The overriding goal is to provide judges a clear view of the event area given any space limitations, and not to interfere with the space needed for an adjacent event.

Established rules that impact the set-up:

- The judges must be seated separately at different tables on the competition floor, unless impractical due to equipment placement.
- If judges must sit at the same table, they must be separated with a person (score flasher or volunteer), or with a gap between them.
- Judges are permitted to move tables to a more favorable vantage point related to their responsibilities; however, this must be requested before competition begins and with the approval

of both the Meet Referee and the Meet Director facilitating the event, to ensure electronic wiring or equipment layout factors are considered.

References: Rules Modification 1.9.b and 8.1.c; Rules Newsletter Feb 15th, 2026.

Rules Resources

The NCAA Rules Interpreter is Janette Doucette, email address: wgym.ncaa.rules@outlook.com. **Please submit any questions for rule interpretation by electronic mail only.** Coaches, please provide your name and institution. Judges, please provide your name and state.

The 2025-26 NCAA Rules Modification Document and Meet Procedures direct link: [Rules Modifications 25-26](#)

Rules Newsletters and Archive are located on the [NCAA Gymnastics Rules of the Game page](#) or on the [NAWGJ NCAA Rules page](#).

The Women's Gymnastics Supplemental Procedures and Forms document, which contains the Inquiry /Routine Summary Form, Video Review Form, and other competition-related forms, direct link: [2026 Supplemental P&F](#).

The USAG Women's Developmental Program Optional 2022-26 Code of Points (USAG Dev Prog COP) is purchased at this link: [USAG Dev Prog COP](#). This page also contains links to updated COP Appendices and Replacement Pages.

To update your current version of the USAG Dev Prog COP follow the directions: [Google Play eBook FAQ](#). The most recent COP version cover page will show "updated Jul 2025" at the bottom.

The Women's Program Rules & Policies 2025-26 direct link: [R&P 25-26](#).

The new element evaluation form can be downloaded from the USAG women's development program website under forms at [USAG New Element Eval Form](#).

FX Music approval: contact your Regional Technical Committee Chair (RTCC) ([USAG Women's Gym Directory](#)).

*Janette Doucette
NCAA Women's Gymnastics Rules Interpreter
wgym.ncaa.rules@outlook.com*