



KWAZULU-NATAL GYMNASTICS UNION

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Email to : Artistic Clubs and KZNGU Board Members
From: Board
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Proposed Clubs/Members Meeting

To all Artistic Clubs

The recent PMB competition started the lower to medium level season and we were pleased to see such a good turnout. The growing numbers are a compliment and testament to the fact that families love our sport. And so we find many new young gymnasts training week after week to learn and improve.

This past weekend's qualifier competition at PMB provided meaningful insight for the KZNGU Technical Committee, into one of the current problems we face in gymnastics ie; consistent judging that is a true reflection of the demonstrated routine.

Club leaders - this letter is intended for your eyes only, and we hope that you will read and understand it in the manner it is intended, that of guidance and positive growth of our judges. The idea is that you are receiving input on events (from a judging point of view in this email) and that we together address the problems. It is our hope that you will assess the recommendations below and present them to your judges in a proactive manner, so that we do not chase away the few judges we have but rather give them feedback and pointers from which they can grow and improve.

The overall feedback unfortunately seems to be that there was an unsatisfactory level of judging at the PMB event which caused some dissatisfaction and frustration. The TC would like to stress that this was not the case for all the judges as many were fair and did a great job and we are grateful for the time and effort the judges are giving as a whole. A few judges however appeared to be unprepared and inconsistent. Plus there was a sense of negativity in the scoring as opposed to positive evaluation of routines.

The TCs concluded that the inconsistent standard of judging is based primarily on the following:

- Judges do not receive their assignments at all or too late in advance.
- Judges have not judged for a long period and have not prepared.
- Judges, although qualified, have a poor technical understanding of the routines.



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- Judges meetings are not always being held before the event begins.

The problems cannot necessarily be fixed immediately, but we need to start addressing these issues as if it is left unattended and a repeat of last weekend occurs it will lead to gymnasts (through their parents) leaving the sport.

While the combined TC's are discussing a way forward, there are mechanisms that hosting clubs can use to help prepare judges in the meantime.

We would like to appeal to those clubs that are hosting events and providing judges, to consider the following suggestions and implement them prior to and in their events;

1. Where possible, notify the judges entered of their specific assignment prior to the comp. This will be a lot easier once a judges data base is established (the TC is busy with this task). Once this is done the judges can be contacted DIRECTLY about their assignments instead of only via the clubs. Some clubs might only forward the emailed judge's assignment a few days after receiving it from the organiser.
2. The grouping should be judging friendly. Same level kids in the same group. For consistency sake try have 1 set of judges per Level even if the Level has to be split over 2 sessions but with the same judges.
3. Judges should be encouraged to attend training sessions at their clubs in the form of practice comps where experienced judges and/or coaches can provide feedback and training. The kids will love the opportunity to be judged within training - its a great motivator and this idea is already working well in some clubs. (Informal Friday afternoon comps for example or come in and practice judging with kids doing 1 or 2 routines)
4. Once the data base is established judges are being offered the opportunity to express what apparatus they prefer and ideally they will be given that apparatus in the next event.
5. Club leaders please remind and encourage your judges to prepare for events. Refreshing themselves on the routines and requirements, having their manuals on hand and should all be organised in advance.
6. Clubs hosting events - please remember to allocate a Director of Judging for your events so that there is an active person available for queries to be directed to. Also during your judges meeting please remind the judges what tone your comp should take, remind them that the judging should resemble an honest yet encouraging evaluation of the routines presented. If in doubt the benefit of the doubt is always given to the gymnast.
7. We would like to make a suggestion that 1 coach from each club be allowed to attend the Judges meeting prior to the event in order to allow each club an understanding of what that comps expectations are.



The Technical Committee members would like to thank all club leaders for their assistance in addressing these points and look forward to many happy and improved future events.

For and on behalf of both KZNGU MAG and WAG TC's

Arge Nienhuser and Shaun Attlee



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