

TRAMPOLINE-EAST RESPONSE TO COMPETITION RESTRUCTURE (DETAIL)

Having:

- consulted extensively within the East region's coaching and judging community,
- taken on board technical viewpoints from Jack Kelly and Sue Lawton (which we agree with fully), and
- reviewed responses from South East & London (which we endorse),

... it is the view of the East Region Trampoline Technical Committee (Trampoline-East) that the proposed restructure not only poses more questions than answers, but is, certainly in its current form, not one we can accept and so we have no option but to REJECT it. Whilst the objectives put forward by the proposal were laudable there has been no evidence put forward to suggest that the approach described will deliver any more success than that which we are already enjoying.

It is our view that if a case can be made for change across the board then a wider consultation exercise is necessary, taking on board the years of experience of acknowledged experts in the field (such as those aforementioned), with a view to establishing an updated structure for 2015.

In the interest of moving things forward we provide below some of what we consider to be key questions that need to be answered and some specific opinions which we hope you will find useful.

QUESTIONS

1. Why are the new proposed Club & Regional routines considered preferable to the current ones?
2. Why does the proposed grade 1 routine not have a forward somersault option given that this rotation is usually taught first?
3. Considering the absence of detail about where the previous £4m was spent it is interesting to note that it is intended to link this new approach in to the coach education process "through targeted interventions". Will these be at all levels, only at Elite or some other permutation? What format will these interventions take? Are we able to see a plan?
4. What code of points are intended to be applied to arm set? And why was the decision taken to introduce this as a counting 'element' in a routine?
5. Are ages intended to be age as at 31st December in the current year?
6. We notice that there were certain criteria which were either excluded from the document or stated as TBA, such as:
 - a. minimum execution scores at NDP 7 & 8 and Elite
 - b. minimum TOF scores at NDP 7 & 8 and Elite
 - c. required qualification score from Grade 6 up to NDP 7&8 or Elite (as appropriate).

When would we have been told what these criteria were to be? What penalties, if any, would be applied by failing to achieve (a) and (b), other than denial of a place at British Championships/NDP National Finals?

7. Who would comprise the 'Technical Panel' deciding in "exceptional circumstances" who can move between NDP grades 6 & 7 within a season?

8. Other than the need to meet qualification requirements to progress to National level was it intended that decisions about what grade to enter is entirely down to coach/performer discretion at the beginning of each year (even to Elite)? If so, how does this compare with the requirement to 'grade' in other gymnastics disciplines?
9. Would coaches/performers be allowed to downgrade at will at any level?
10. What consideration has been given to the effect of reduced numbers of competitions on judge development?
11. Why is it proposed NDP 1-8 tumblers attend Zonals and nationals but only NDP 7-8 trampoline & DMT?
12. For the sake of clarity, are we to understand that "NDP Regionals Finals", "Inter-Regional Team Finals" & "Regional Team Event" referred to at various points in the documentation are in fact all one and the same event?
13. What are the criteria for moving up grades during a season, if the performer/coach desires?
14. We notice that the requirements at NDP 8 & Elite levels are in fact more stringent than those required internationally (e.g. WAG requirements). Given that one objective is to align with international competition requirements, can you explain why it is felt adopting this approach will be beneficial? Was a simple, direct replication of WAG competition structure considered as an alternative format at these levels? If so, on what basis was the replication approach rejected?
15. We notice that the finals would be run on a cumulative basis at Zonal/Qualifying events at the Senior Elite level. As FIG only operate zero finals, what is the justification for dissenting from this approach?
16. Why is there no 'Final' during Zonal/Qualifying events, other than for Seniors?

OPINIONS

- We can see how removing tariff from most levels of regional competition, but rewarding those competing the next grade routine in the second round, makes sense in terms of focussing on form but not why the routines need to be changed so radically.
- There are many different techniques available for arm-set as advanced technical analysts of trampolining like Jack Kelly could describe at length; how could judges possibly accommodate this variation without forcing competitors to treat it as an aesthetic skill without a technical purpose?
- We can see how extensive in-bouncing should be discouraged but, considering Olympic & World Champions like He Wenna & Dong Dong can take 6 or 7 bounces to achieve full height and about 14 before they have sufficient stability to start, not enforcing a draconian rule.
- At the Regional Level the routines proposed do not reflect normal coaching priorities (i.e. Grade 1 routine Back S/S not Front S/S) and do not provide a suitable (and equitable) progressive structure. Some inter-grade moves involve a significant jump in difficulty (e.g. 3-4 & 6-7 for 13+ ages) and others involve almost none at all (e. g. 2-3, 4-5 & 6-7 for under 13). We believe that the current grade structure offers a much smoother transition between grades as difficulty is increased more steadily and progressively.
- We are disappointed to see the need to achieve a standard qualification score has been removed at regional events. We believe this was an effective motivator for competitors by providing a rewarding and objective goal. Performers were given a clear target and were rightfully proud once they achieved this. With de facto 'free movement' up the grades, we have to question the incentive for participants to compete regularly at a regional level. We fear reduced participation in region, with inevitable implications on funding of these events through decreased entry fee income.

- At the National level, the emphasis of the new structure appears to have been put on difficulty. Execution should be the main focus of any structure. With increased form it is much easier to build up technical content and difficulty. Stating a minimum tariff will have people chasing moves they are not fully prepared for and performance in terms of execution will suffer. People can only learn at a certain rate and putting in minimums will not speed up the process or improve performance. This will also have the potential to increase the problem of lost move syndrome as people are pushing too hard and too fast to fully learn the skills in the early stages. This will look good to begin with but may cause severe problems later on degrading the overall outcome. Noting also that World Class trampolinists can compete effectively well into their 3rd decade, we do not need to rush things as much as may be necessary in artistic gymnastics where few make it very far into their 2nd decade.
- Rather than encouraging wider involvement in trampolining *across performers, parents, coaches and judges*, we can see that this has the potential to cause significant frustrations and unhappiness within our community and could result in a unforeseen reduction in membership, causing our sport lasting damage.

