

MEETING THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED FOR THE RECOGNITION OF ARTISTIC ELEMENTS FOR BEAM AND FLOOR EXERCISES

Diana Nicoleta LIUȘNEA¹, Gina GOGEAN GROZA²

¹*Universitatea „Ștefan cel Mare” of Suceava, Romania*
²*Universitatea de Vest " Vasile Goldiș" of Arad, Romania*

Abstract

The aim of this research is to raise the performance of beam and floor exercises, by achieving the optimum level of artistic elements provided by the FRG classification curriculum. For this study we used the following research methods: literature review; observation; tests; teaching experiment; statistical and mathematical methods of data processing and interpretation. The experimental study was conducted during September 2011 - June 2012 on a group of five gymnasts from Gymnastics CSS Focșani. This experiment consisted of using a special program of choreographic movements in the training of junior gymnasts IV, level 2. The purpose of this program was to improve the artistic elements and combinations used in beam and floor exercises. The initial and final testing of the artistic elements, at the level required by the FRG classification curriculum and the Code of Points, were made in September and May respectively, at some evaluation contests.

Key words: *artistic gymnastics, beam, floor, artistic elements, choreographic training*

INTRODUCTION

Unlike other sports, the evaluation in gymnastics is made through grades, taking into account both the content and the form of execution. Due to the variety and the momentousness of the exercises, they provoke deep emotions not only to the gymnasts, but also to the audience. Gymnastics is the sport of beauty and perfection, and provides a vivid example of the motor skills the human body possesses (Vieru, 1997:6).

The presence of choreographic elements in beam and floor exercises in artistic gymnastics, the musical accompaniment and the combinations of artistic movements, the demands regarding the originality of the exercises and the creativity required in their composition, all these transform gymnastics into a form of art (Dungaciu, 1982, Grigore, 1998).

The demands regarding the content and choreography, the originality of the artistic combinations and the virtuosity, the difficulty of the gymnastic exercises and the artistic jumping in floor and beam exercises, have increased greatly over the years, transforming, in a way, gymnastics into art (Vieru, 1997:15).

The modernization of sports training is always necessary if we look to achieve consistency between the content and the actual requirements of training (Grigore, 2001). This also applies in the case of artistic elements' requirements.

Besides the exercises using typical gymnastics equipment, we tend to introduce now in workouts also ballet elements and rhythmic

gymnastics. These types of elements prepare the athletes to implement various artistic elements (turns, pirouettes, jumps, balance exercises) and constitute an excellent tool for developing precision, ease of expressiveness etc, while contributing to the achievement of good movements (Ukran et al., 1965:185).

The artistic training is valued in competitions, as the requirements regarding gymnastics are very clear both nationally and internationally. This refers to the particular requirements of the exercises (artistic elements, gymnastic exercises and mixed exercises), their rules of composition, as well as their artistic and proper presentation in the competition - the gymnasts receiving bonus points, as stipulated by the Code of Points. The results of the artistic training are reflected in the composition of the exercises and in how they are performed at the four gymnastic equipments used in a contest (Grigore, 2001:53).

Most experts in gymnastics (Stoenescu 1978, Macovei, 2007) believe that artistic training must necessarily be carried on accompanied by music, which, due to its characteristics (rhythm, tempo, character etc.) is important when it comes to expressive movements - the music is influencing the superior emotions of the gymnasts at an aesthetic level.

According to the new code of points, which completely changed the way of assessment and scoring, the contest's exercises provide clear requirements regarding the artistic performance,

both nationally and internationally. The International Gymnastics Federation establishes clear requirements for competition's exercises, leading to a correlation of the local requirements to the changes made by the International Federation of Gymnastics (FIG Code of Points, 2009).

Referring to the difficulty of artistic requirements for beam and floor exercises, each artistic element required by the FRG classification curriculum is rated a certain score, the lack or inadequate technical execution of one of these artistic elements leading to a lowering of the grade D (classification curriculum, 2012, Liuşnea, 2012).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research was aimed at raising the performance of beam and floor exercises, by executing the artistic elements required by the FRG classification curriculum at an optimal technical level.

We used the following research methods in this study: literature review; pedagogical observation; tests; pedagogical experiments; statistical and mathematical methods of data processing and interpretation.

The experimental study was conducted during September 2011 - June 2012 on a group of five gymnasts from Gymnastics CSS Focşani. This experiment consisted of using a special program of choreographic movements in the training of junior gymnasts IV, level 2. The purpose of this program was to improve the artistic elements and combinations used in beam and floor exercises.

The hypothesis of the research. The premise at the basis of this research is that the use of a choreographic training program, containing appropriate exercises for various age categories, will determine a rise in the score given for certain beam and floor exercises, by executing at optimal parameters the artistic elements required by the FRG classification curriculum.

According to the FRG classification curriculum for junior gymnasts IV, level 2, the artistic elements required for beam and floor exercises are (given in the grade D):

Beam:

1. *Scale forward support leg extended (leg separation 180 grade) – 0,30 pt. (2 sec.)*
2. *Split leap – 0,50 pt.* If the opening angle is <45 degrees, than the element does not need receive the appropriate difficulty value.
3. *Split jump – wolf jump- 0,50 pt.* If the opening angle is <45 degrees, the split jump does not need receive the appropriate difficulty value. In the case of a wolf jump, the feet must be elevated at a horizontal level or above in order to receive the appropriate difficulty value.
4. *1/1 turn on one leg - free leg at passe (360 grade) – 0,50 pt.* In order to receive the appropriate difficulty value, the element must

satisfy the following:

- to be finished and to have a broad form; the degree of rotation is determined by the lowering of the heel on the ground (when the pirouette is considered finished);
- to be executed on the tip;
- to have a well-defined shape during execution.

5. *One movement close to the beam – 0,20 pt.*

Floor:

6. *Artistic passage: split leap (with binding or not; the second element may be a split leap with ¼ turn into straddle position); the order will be respected accordingly – 0,50 pt;*
7. *1/1 turn on one leg of a minimum C grade – 0,50 pt.*
8. *Swich leap – 0,50 pt.;*
9. *Forward split – 0,20 pt.*

So the grade the gymnasts should receive for the optimal execution of the artistic elements (of grade D) is 2.00 points for beam and 1.70 points for floor exercises. If the technical execution is not appropriate then the element does not receive the difficulty value (grade D) and is penalized, at the same time, for execution by the jury (grade E).

The initial and final testing regarding the execution of artistic elements, at the technical level required by the FRG classification curriculum and the Code of Points, were conducted in September and May respectively, at evaluation contests. In this way we assessed whether the elements and the artistic combinations met the technical requirements and whether each gymnast received the complete grade for beam and floor exercises.

The choreographic training program included:

- specific exercises from classical ballet performed by using the supporting barre, respectively grand battment, developpe, porte, maintaining balance in various positions - passé en avant, balance en arrière, turning of 180 degrees during a passé, jumping in forward and straddle split);
- the artistic elements required by the FRG classification curriculum for beam and floor exercises.

These two groups of means were planned for each day of training, both in the preparatory period and in the period of competitions. Grand battment, porte and developpe were executed in all directions, while the exercises performed by using the supporting barre were executed of 4x8 times on each side. The exercises were accompanied by music, which was also responsible for the rapid learning of the general bases of the movement (rhythm, tempo, direction, amplitude).

During the execution of exercises using a supporting barre, the basic position from classical ballet was permanently corrected and it was also intended that the elements are performed with proper attire, amplitude and expressiveness.

In the practice of the artistic elements and combinations required by the FRG classification curriculum for this age group, we took into consideration that they meet the technical requirements needed for an acknowledgment of their difficulty value by the referee (grade D).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the tests carried out during evaluation competitions, the only artistic elements acknowledged and graded were those that best met the technical requirements. So the results that the gymnasts have obtained during the initial and final tests are as follows (Figure 1-3):

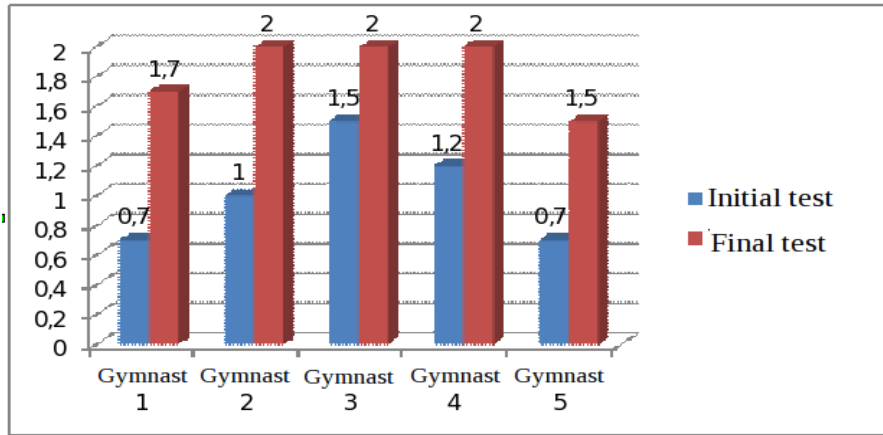


Figure 1. The results obtained by the gymnasts for performing the beam artistic elements required

After studying the results of the gymnasts at the beam exercises, we observe that at the initial testing only two or three artistic elements of all five required were acknowledged for the gymnasts. At the final testing, three gymnasts received

acknowledgment of the difficulty value for all five elements performed on the beam, while the other two received acknowledgment for four of the five artistic elements required.

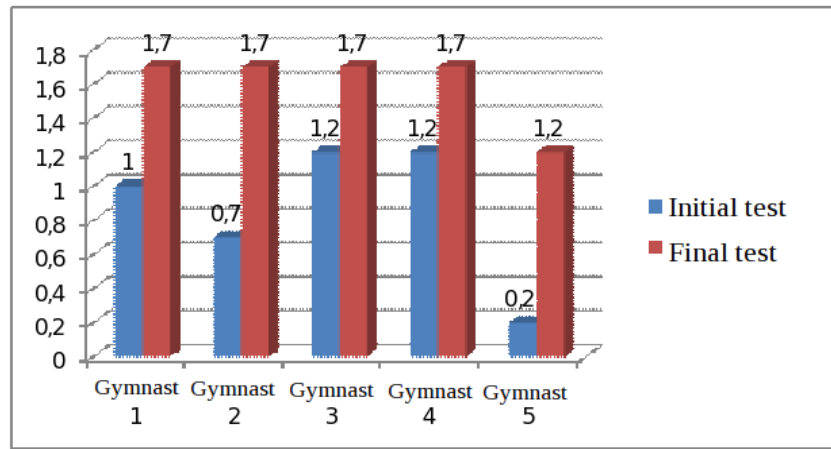


Figure 2. The results obtained by the gymnasts for performing the floor artistic elements required

The results obtained by the gymnasts for their floor exercises prove their progress, so at the final testing four gymnasts received the maximum score for the execution of the artistic elements required, while at

the initial testing not even one gymnast has completed all the required elements at an optimal technical level (Table 1).

Table 1. The analysis of the results obtained by the group for performing the artistic elements and combinations

No.	Exercises	Experiment group	
		Initial	Final
1	Beam Average score	1,02	1,84
2	Floor Average scoor	0,86	1,60

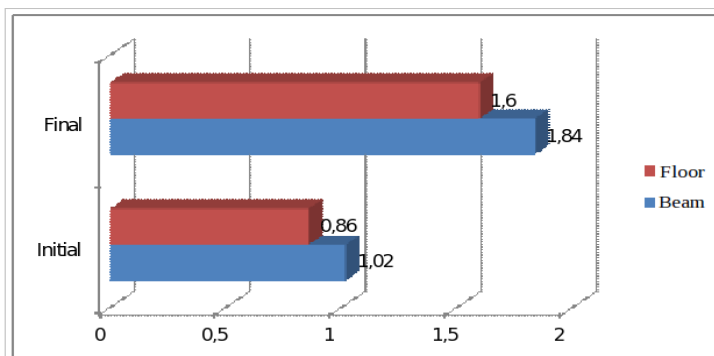


Figure 3. The average of the results obtained by the gymnasts for beam and floor exercises

For the optimal performance of the artistic elements and combinations for beam exercises, the experimental group received at the initial testing an average of 1.02 points and at the final testing an average of 1.84, the progress being of 0.82 points. The gymnasts executed correctly most artistic elements and combinations required.

When analyzing the grading for proper execution of artistic elements for floor exercises, we see that the experimental group received an average of 0.86 points at the initial testing and of 1.60 points at the final testing, the maximum grade being 1.70 points. This proves that almost all the gymnasts received the maximum score for their execution of the artistic elements and combinations required. Therefore, the grade D of the gymnasts improved considerably, both for beam and floor exercises.

CONCLUSIONS

Grade D, as part of the final grade (D + E) for this age group, comprises the difficulty value for both acrobatic and artistic elements, each having a certain score. If the technical requirements for the beam and floor exercises are not met, those elements will not be acknowledged by the jury D, which significantly lowers grade D.

Also, in pursuance of the FRG classification curriculum, by executing certain additional exercises, grade D may increase due to some bonus points offered for that particular element.

If the technical execution of the artistic elements and combinations required is inappropriate, in addition to the fact that they will not be acknowledged by the judges in jury D and will not receive the difficulty value, they will also be penalized by the jury E, lowering grade E and the final grade respectively. For example, if the opening angle of the legs during a split jump is insufficient, the element is penalized by 0.10 to 0.30 points by the jury E. The incorrect position of legs during jumps is penalized by 0.10 points per item. To these penalties we add those for mistakes in posture.

The means of artistic training used had the purpose of improving the level of execution of the artistic elements and combinations required, so that they receive the difficulty value intended. But at the same time, they helped to obtain a proper body posture, which lead to the implementation of those elements in all the exercises performed at various gymnastic equipments.

Apart from the technical and physical preparation, choreography played an important role during training. The choice of various artistic means, in accordance with the requirements for certain age groups, and the assessment of their value, duration and number of repetitions lead to a raise of the artistic execution of the exercise. This is reflected in the optimal performance of technically difficult artistic elements, leading to an acknowledgment of the elements and an appropriate scoring (grade D), and to the

elimination of penalties for improper technical execution and posture (grade E).

The choreographer, alongside the coach, must ensure the learning of the artistic elements and movements for a certain age group and pursue improvement in performance, posture, expressiveness and dynamism, in order to achieve the optimal technical execution of the artistic elements.

The choice of music also plays an important part, because its peculiarities, measure, rhythm and tempo have to be consistent with the artistic training means and their objectives. Music plays an important role in training and contributes to motivating and stimulating gymnasts to work harder, by creating a positive emotional state.

Therefore, the judicious use of the choreographic means in the training of the gymnasts should not be neglected, given their contribution in raising the level of performance of the gymnasts.

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