

2025–2028 / MDP Newsletter #6

March 22, 2026

Paul Evatt

NGJA Vice President – Development Program

The Men's Development Program Committee (MDPC) has established a Rules Interpretation Committee to collect questions from the gymnastics community and provide consistent, clear guidance. This initiative is part of an ongoing effort to ensure uniform interpretation and application of rules nationwide. The clarifications outlined in this document represent the official written standards moving forward and should be implemented immediately.

- **Newsletter 6** comes after state meets were completed and we received quite a bit of feedback about tech sequences. Everything highlighted in yellow is new to newsletter 6.

General Information

1. **Level 3, 4, 5, & 6** - Specified bonus will not be awarded if there are missing portions of the SB box. ex:(PB, level 3 SB #1. If one were to do the tucked planche, but fail to do the swing forward and backward following the planche before the straddle on bars, then no bonus would be awarded)
2. **Level 3, 4, 5, 6 & TS** - The 50% rule is not applied when the intended skill is not performed at all. Ex: (TS ages 10-12 - "Run, hurdle, round-off, power back handspring, salto backward straight with full twist." If only a layout were done instead of the 1/1, this would not be 50 percent. However, if they were to attempt the twist and landed after only completing part of the twist, this would receive value because of the 50% rule.
3. **All Levels** - The MDP manual currently only addresses jewelry in the compulsory section. Jewelry is not allowed at any level of the MDP program and will receive a medium behavioral deduction for each event it is worn.
4. **Level 10** - Level 10's over the age of 18 are permitted to do all red dot skills in the FIG CoP.
5. **All levels** - FIG Newsletter 3 reads "Judges are being directed that, if in doubt, not to give recognition and to leave the opportunity for coaches to inquire". In the MDP program we only allow video review at championship meets. This has not changed, therefore judges are asked to give the benefit of doubt to athletes when video review is not allowed.

FLOOR EXERCISE

COMPULSORY

1. **Level 3,4,5, & 6** - Press handstand clarification for both required and bonus skills. In the MDP program a skill can receive credit if at least 50% of the expected skill was completed.
 - a. A small or medium push off the feet, where there is a clear press attempt, would meet that 50% threshold and should receive credit, with either a 0.1 or 0.2 deduction.
 - b. If the gymnast bends the knees and jumps into a handstand through a straddle, that is no longer showing 50% of a press handstand. In that case, the skill should not

receive credit, resulting in the 1.0 deduction for the missing element. This would receive the large error (0.3) and also the loss of the value part.

- c. When attempting a Press for bonus in the compulsory program, there is a required vertical handstand position to receive credit.
 - i. If a press were to roll past never hitting vertical, with no hold - NO BONUS
 - ii. If a bonus press goes to vertical, yet does not hold - Large deduction (-0.3) but they WILL receive bonus. If the bonus press pushed from the floor it would not receive a bonus. (This is the only instance in the MDP program where not holding will result in credit. In the optional program NO holds will NOT receive credit)

OPTIONAL

1. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10** - Two 4" mats are allowed on the competitive floor. The routine may begin with one or 2 mats that **cannot** be stacked on one another. Although mats may be removed, no mats may be added once the routine begins. The mats are for landing on; NO skill may be initiated from the mats. This includes EG I skills.
 - a. An apparatus neutral deduction of (-0.5) will be taken for punching off of a mat. The skill would still receive value in the event that this happens.
2. **Levels 7, 8, 9, & 10:** There is a FIG deduction that if one were to step their hand or tap their toe back to the ground during a press handstand then the skill will lose value. The -0.1 deduction will remain in the MDP program for the TOE TOUCH, but value will be given for press handstands. If the **HAND STEP** resulted in **NO HOLD** (No stop in vertical HS before hand step) then no credit will be given for the press. All other hold deductions apply.
3. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10 Clarification:** Per FIG, "Roundoff with 1/4 turn to land facing forward (Tinsica) is not permitted. Otherwise the next element will not be recognized." This means that a cartwheel that turns forward to a punched diveroll is considered a tinsica and therefore the diveroll will not be given credit. To receive credit for a dive roll, the gymnast must clearly jump upward off two feet and show noticeable height before contacting the floor and it may not come from a tinsica.

Tech

1. **Level 9:** Box 4 should begin with a jump ½ turn the same as Level 10. However, for the remainder of the 2026 season there is no deduction for doing it with or without the jump ½ turn.
2. **Level 9 & 10:** There is no deduction for simple steps taken to create space in corners.

POMMEL HORSE

OPTIONAL

1. **Level 8** - A loop in the middle of the horse (saddle loop) will now receive an "A" value in EG II. This will be added to the level 8 pommel horse skills list.

2. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10** - Explanation of the exception (MDP Manual page 52) on PH for No large (-0.5) deductions on all circle handstand elements.
 - a. During circle handstand elements all large (-0.5) deductions will be taken as medium (-0.3) deductions
 - b. The intent of this rule is to allow for the occurrence of multiple large errors while doing circle handstand elements and still give value for the element. The large errors would receive a medium (-0.3) deduction instead of the (-0.5)
 - c. An example of this would be hitting the foot on the horse (-0.3), lowering of legs >45°(-0.3), minor visible strength while going back to handstand (-0.1) and bending arms 30°(-0.1). While this would not receive credit in FIG, MDP athletes would still receive credit value for the element with execution deductions totaling (-0.8).
3. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10** - Clarification of "FIG circle deduction will be applied by skill, not by section" (exceptions table page 52) **This includes Form, Hip Break, Skew, and Lack of extension.** Ex:(A Magyar done with 6 circles which has a small skew on every circle and a medium leg bend on every circle will receive one deduction (-0.1) for the skew and one deduction (-0.3) for the knee bend. NOT each circle.)
4. **Level 8** - All travels with spindles (including the Eichorn) not already listed in the Pommel-less Horse Code of Points will be recognized elements and will receive their equivalent FIG values. (**Exception: Nin Reyes 2 (III.23) will not be recognized in level 8.**)
5. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10 - MDP A "Any flank off"**: There is no height requirement for the MDP A "any flank off". However to clarify this skill further, the MDP A "Any Flank" dismount must come from a circling skill and pass over the body of the horse with the stomach facing downward. Spindling action is not permitted during the flank.
6. **Level 7, 8, & 9** - The -0.3 deduction for "Non handstand dismounts, body position under 30° over shoulder horizontal line" will not be enforced at level 7, 8, & 9.

Tech

1. **Level 9**: The major elements listed at the bottom of the page includes a leg cut to a false scissor. However, box 3 is written as a scissor. Whether someone competes a scissor, a false scissor, or a false scissor to a scissor, they will only be judged for execution and they will not incur any deductions for routine composition errors or missing parts.
2. **Level 9 & 10**: There is a need to clarify dismounts in technical sequence routines. Yes, we are asked to first evaluate the routine per fig rules. But because tech sequence falls under the same rules as compulsory with giving credit when 50% of a skill is completed, we would not take away a dismount at L9 & L10 because of FIG errors. So if they hit the horse with their feet, or any other large error that could lead to non-recognition, they would still receive credit as long as 50% of the skill was completed.

STILL RINGS

COMPULSORY

1. **Level 61** - SB1 should read "**Following #3** press to handstand hold. Lower to straddle "L" hold (+0.3)"
2. **Level 61** - SB2 should read "**Following #5** swing backward to shoulder stand hold, bail forward (+0.3)"

3. **Level 61** - Box 4 "Press to shoulder stand hold" must be done in a **pike**. A straddle press will result in an atypical straddle deduction.

OPTIONAL

1. **MDP exceptions** (MDP Manual, page 52) explains that certain strength skills based on level will receive one letter upgrade and can not receive a large error (-0.5). The following wording explains this more clearly.
 - a. **Level 7, 8, & 9** - Support scale straddled, support scale & skills from EG II or III (Elements II.19, II.9, III.56, III.58, III.68, III.70, III.82) will be upgraded one letter value and can only receive small (-0.1) and medium (-0.3) deductions for execution errors. No large (-0.5) deductions will be taken. All large errors will be given (-0.3)
 - b. **Level 10** - Support scale straddled, Support scale (Planche) & Cross, **All press skills upwards from cross (ie: cross pull to L)**, Inverted Cross, Swallow, or Inverted Swallow skills from EG II or III will be upgraded one letter value and can only receive small (-0.1) and medium (-0.3) deductions for execution errors.
2. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10** - Explanation of the exception on rings for No large (-0.5) deductions.
 - a. All large (-0.5) errors will be given a medium deduction (-0.3). However, when an element is done so poorly that it resembles a different element, then the value and EG of the element it most closely resembles will be given.
 - b. Examples like not stopping during a hold or egregious angles will not receive credit for the intended skill. Final hold positions can be recognized and given credit when performed as expected.
 - c. The intent of this rule is to encourage athletes to perform skills that are not yet mastered without the concern of large deductions. It is not the intent to give credit to skills that look nothing like the attempted skill, however, a larger range of angles are acceptable for credit as compared to FIG. This includes a small allowance of angles beyond the FIG non recognition point. As a reminder if the skill resembles another skill because of the angle, the skill it resembles will be given credit.

Tech

1. **Level 10:** Box 4 reads "Bring legs together to support scale (legs together planche)." Although there is no hold required, the legs together planche is still required to be performed at horizontal. If the legs come together at >45 degrees below horizontal, the skill will not receive recognition. Angle deductions will apply from 5 degrees below horizontal to >45 degrees below horizontal.

Vault

CLUB

1. **Platinum** - There has been some confusion as to what the max score for vault in the platinum level vaults are. Both the Front Handspring and the Round Off have a max score of 10.0.

OPTIONAL

1. **Level 7, 8, & 9** - Tucked Kasamatsu will receive an MDP value of 2.8 at levels 7, 8, & 9. This is a 0.4 increase and is done to separate from the value of the tucked and pike Tsuk's.
2. **Level 9 & 10** - The E bonus example in the MDP manual on page 59 was not updated to reflect the new bonus structure. The accurate bonus values are on page 60.
3. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10** - For forward handspring vaults with layout saltos, a gymnast may use a pike to sit up following the block. Within the MDP program, this is considered acceptable technique and should not be deducted.
 - a. An MDP athlete performing a front layout vault who uses this technique cannot have the vault devalued to a pike vault based on the turnover or immediate post-block position. Determination of whether the vault is performed in a layout or pike position will be based on the second flight phase. The body position in the second flight will be applicable to angle deductions and devalued to a pike if required.
 - b. [IMAGE OF AN ACCEPTABLE PIKE FOLLOWING THE BLOCK](#)
 - c. [IMAGE OF THE POSITION OF THE LAYOUT ½ FOLLOWING THE ACCEPTABLE PIKE.](#)
 - d. [FULL VIDEO](#)

Tech

1. **Level 6-10:** As a reminder, judges are to judge the "performance criteria". The "skills descriptions" are not intended as performance criteria for judges and should not be used as criteria for technique when judging.

PARALLEL BARS

COMPULSORY

1. **Level 4** - Expectations and deductions for the handstand push off the bar dismount, box 10.
 - a. (-1.0) If the swing HS is performed below horizontal before the dismount.
 - b. (-0.5) if the swing HS is performed between horizontal and 45 degrees before the dismount.
 - c. (Per FIG) deductions if the HS is performed between 45 and 0 degrees prior to dismount.
 - d. The Momentary Hold Requirement and deduction does not apply to this skill. By definition if an athlete stops their movement from continuing upward to dismount, then they have stopped.
2. **Level 5** - Expectations and deductions for the handstand before the dismount, box 9.
 - a. (-1.0) If the swing HS is performed below horizontal before the dismount.
 - b. (-0.5) if the swing HS is performed between horizontal and 45 degrees before the dismount.
 - c. (Per FIG) deductions if the HS is performed between 45 and 0 degrees prior to dismount.

- d. There is a 2 second required hold on Box 9 before the dismount, this was left off of the performance criteria column.
3. **Level 6** - When performing SB1B (straight leg moy) if the gymnast receives a large deduction for a knee bend of greater than 90 degrees they will not receive the bonus and receive a 0.3 deduction. The bonus is still given for small and medium knee bends.

OPTIONAL

1. The handstand in the FIG CoP (II.1) does not have a required hold for value. There is no deduction for lack of hold and the MDP allows levels 7,8,9, & 10 to swing down without an empty swing deduction. Therefore any gymnast levels 7-10 can swing to handstand, show that they could have held and then swing back down with no deduction and receive an "A" fig value for the part. If an element is not performed following the swing down then the (-0.3) deduction would be taken.
2. **Level 7, 8, 9 & 10** - Per FIG, if a pirouette is performed following a handstand then the only skill recognized is the pirouette. This holds true even if the handstand is held before the pirouette.
3. **Level 7, 8, 9, & 10** - The FIG MTC has concluded that a front uprise or moy that ends in support may not immediately drop back down to upper-arm position following the support. The MDP program does not have an exception for this interpretation and thus the 0.3 change of direction deduction would be enforced.
4. **Level 7, 8, & 9** - The FIG angle deductions for the Peach Support (III.116) will **NOT** be taken at levels 7,8, & 9. **Level 10 WILL** still receive the small and medium angle deductions where applicable.

Tech

1. **Level 9:** The manual currently reads "Substitution of Peach to HS in place of Giant to HS is allowed if shown to the judge that gymnast's knees touch". This will now be changed to "Substitution of **Peach to Support** in place of Giant to HS is allowed if shown to the judge that gymnast's knees touch" **The performance criteria will be "Must drop peach prior to swinging forward past vertical. Feet ≥ horizontal on regrasp Straight arms throughout the peach.** This is the same performance criteria as the peach in box 5 that will still need to be performed.
 - a. Box 4 would be competed as "Swing forward, swing backward to handstand, bail to basket (peach) to support"
 - b. Box 5 will still read "Swing forward, swing backward, bail to basket (peach) to support"

HIGHBAR

OPTIONAL

- 1. Level 7, 8, & 9** - As long as the first skill is performed on or before the 5th movement, there will not be a 0.3 deduction for Reversal of Direction (CoP 15.2.1.2.d) regardless of the height of the shoulders or the swings. The gymnast will also receive a MDP 'A' for "back uprise to any height". The "MDP A" pullover will, however, receive a deduction if they cast with a change of direction to a back hip-circle, back giant, or similar reversal of direction at level 8 & 9.
- 2. Level 7, 8, 9, & 10** - Following the MDP "A" pullover to support & kip to support, if there is a stop ≥ 2 seconds there will only be a (-0.1) deduction for the stop. Other executions deductions still apply.
 - If the athlete changes hands from overgrip to undergrip or from undergrip to overgrip while stopped then a (-0.5) deduction for interruption in an exercise without a fall will be taken.
- 3. Level 8, 9, & 10 - Clarification:** A kip (Ill.1) cast to any height that reverses direction will receive the FIG A and a -0.3 deduction for change of direction. No angle deductions will be taken. **This is not an MDP exception, but rather the interpretation by the FIG MTC.**
- 4. Level 7, 8, 9, & 10 Clarification:** In the FIG and level 10 they are allowed 3 movements and the first skill must happen on the 4th motion. In levels 7 through 9, they are allowed 5 movements where the skill must happen on the "5th" movement. The big difference with all levels from 7 through 10 from FIG is that we have a back uprise to any height for an "MDP A". This means that even if a level 10 did 3 motions and then a back uprise to support (to any height) on the 4th motion then that would be ok by MDP rules because they have performed a skill on their 4th motion. They would then be allowed to do a free hip, staldler, or even a gienger because they completed a skill and then would be allowed to swing back into another skill. This would not incur a change of direction because of the "MDP A" skill.
 - If they were to do a back uprise to any height to an undershoot and then a yamawaki then that would be an extra swing because the undershoot is not a skill and therefore would be a deduction. So if they kicked forward, back, stem forward, then uprise, then undershoot then yamawaki it would be (-0.3).
 - What to do in this situation:** A level 7-9 does a back uprise to an undershoot to a vault catch and the vault catch was done within the 5 allowable motions. In this situation the benefit would go to the gymnast and they would NOT receive the MDP A, rather the uprise would be part of the 5 allowable motions and they would not receive a change of direction deduction for doing the undershoot following the uprise.
- 5. Level 7, 8, 9, & 10 Clarification:** A kip cast to any height even if they come back to support following the cast WOULD receive full credit for the kip including EG credit. The support phase would either be deducted as (-0.5) for interruption of exercise or (-1.0) for a fall if it was egregious.
- 6. Level 7, 8, 9, & 10 Clarification:** If a gymnast does a skill like a Jam (including allowable jam to horizontal) then hops in the back to a "3/4 baby giant", there is not a change of direction as this is an allowable "MDP A". For instance, someone could do Jam, hop out, gienger. This all would be OK under the MDP rules.

Tech

1. **Level 6:** Box 1 "Cast forward to handstand" is a major element even though the box is not highlighted yellow.
2. **Level 9 & 10:** Both straddled and legs together are allowed on the toe on toe off. This is listed in level 8, but it was accidentally left off of levels 9 & 10.
3. **Level 9 Clarification:** Following the early 1/2 turn through HS in box 4 there is only one giant (once through the bottom) before the endo.
4. **Level 10 Clarification:** Following the early 1/2 turn through HS in box 7 there is only one giant (once through the bottom) before the pirouette.