



USA GYMNASTICS®

**2016-2020
Men's Junior Olympic
Age Group Competition Program**

**Junior Elite Division
Technical Sequences**



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Junior Elite Division Technical Sequences

Foreword

Message from The Technical Sequence Writing Committee

The intention of the Technical Sequences is to help reinforce sound technical execution and exercise presentation throughout an athlete's career and development. Training the Technical Sequences can assist every athlete to sustain a solid technical foundation and achieve their highest potential. Additionally, developing a fair competitive platform in which to have these sequences properly evaluated provides for increased awareness of the importance of consistently training them.

The goal of the committee was to construct the sequences with the elements that we felt had the highest importance for sustained technical success on each event. We were faced with the challenge of maintaining the balance of keeping the sequences basic enough for training schedules and yet including key skills we felt necessary for technical reinforcement. Over the first two years of the program it is clear that this technical emphasis has resulted in improved athlete performance fundamentally.

The goal is to have our elite USA athletes perform with sound technique and as flawlessly as possible. The technical description of each element in each of the sequences should be read very carefully as it offers sound education for suggested technical development. In order to be successful internationally it is important that this program demands excellence and accountability. Technical excellence at the most basic levels is necessary for success in performing the high difficulty skills required of elite athletes. Where the Specific Technical Emphasis Elements are identified in each exercise a high degree of accountability in the evaluation process will be expected.

Asking our judging community to judge technical elements will require both coaches and judges to become committed students of proper technique and be able to astutely apply the proper evaluation of these sequences. This manual revision has created evaluation criteria and a method of application that will allow judges to do their job with greater consistency and a higher degree of accuracy. Coaches and judges must work together to create the consistent expectations demanded for this program.

Gymnastics is an artistic endeavor as well. There is a place where artistry must meet science, especially when dealing with individual talent. The well-educated coach must have a complete toolbox to help maximize the artistic potential of each individual athlete even as he refines the technical execution of his athlete. The well-educated judge should be able to recognize this intersection of technical efficiency and artistic individuality when evaluating the performance. This program implements the use of virtuosity and bonus in an expanded format that allows judges to award individual artistry.

We encourage you all to keep in mind the goals of our elite Men's Program – domestically, to maximize the potential and performance for all of our potential elite athletes, and internationally, to be the best team in the world and create a dynasty of excellence for years to come. We consider the implementation of the Technical Sequences simply one positive step in the achievement of these goals. We will all be quite proud of these efforts and the contributions of all our athletes, coaches, judges and administrators when the common goal of our entire USA men's gymnastics community is reached and we see our team standing on top of the podium at the World Championships and Olympic Games!

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Item Page	Event	2016 – 2020 AGCP Technical Sequence Clarifications Update 1/11/2018 Rules Clarifications and Interpretations
#1 1.5	General	<u>Clarification:</u> Table of Deductions – The deduction for composition error for extra circles in the 15-18 Pommel Horse sequence is (-0.3) <i>Changed from (-0.5)</i> All other composition error deductions remain (-0.5).
#2	General	<u>Clarification:</u> The deduction for a missing major element (-2.0) will be taken only if the element is omitted. In the case less than 50% of the skill or a different skill is performed the gymnast may repeat the skill and execution deductions will be taken. If the gymnast chooses to not repeat the skill it will be considered an omitted skill and 2.0 will be deducted.
#3	General	<u>Clarification:</u> Supplemental paragraphs have been added to replacement pages for Coaches Education sections reflecting skills that have been added to some sequences.
#4 2.2	FX 11-14	<u>Clarification:</u> Part #3 – A tuck open salto has been added to the end of the backward handspring pass.
#5 2.4	FX 15-18	<u>Clarification:</u> Part #3 – A layout back salto has been added to the end of the back handspring whip, whip pass.
#6 4.3	PH 11-14	<u>Clarification:</u> 11-14 Pommel Horse sequence – Language for judging has been edited to specify 8 hand placements in each section only and reference to number of circles has been deleted. The sequence has not changed. The gymnast has completed the travel in Parts #2 & #4 when the trailing hand passes or is on the line. 8 hand placements can be counted from that point.
#7 4.6	PH 15-18	<u>Clarification:</u> 15-18 Pommel Horse sequence – A single leg swing sequence has been added to the beginning of the sequence. Specific Technical Emphasis Element #1 has been changed to single leg requirements (Part #1). Part numbers have been adjusted. There are no other changes to the composition.
#8 4.12	SR 11-14	<u>Clarification:</u> 11-14 Still Rings sequence – One basic swing has been eliminated from the beginning of the sequence. Some part numbers are adjusted. The requirement for the backward swing changed to 45° above horizontal.
#9 6.12	PB 11-14	<u>Clarification:</u> 11-14 Parallel Bar sequence – The required height for the peach is changed to horizontal.
#10 6.13	PB 15-18	<u>Clarification:</u> 15-18 Parallel Bar sequence - A 'Hecht' beat tap is now required for evaluation of the back uprise to handstand. (A technical description is included in the Coaches Education section.)

Chapter 1 – General Judging Guidelines

I. General Judging Guidelines: Differences from Junior Olympic Program

Document Precedence:

This document supersedes the Junior Olympic Age Group Competition Program Manual with respect to the evaluation of the Junior Elite Technical Sequences and all previous technical sequence documents only. All document precedence described in the Junior Olympic Age Group Competition Program Manual remains valid unless superseded by a general or event-specific exception in this document.

General Sequence Description:

For each event the technical sequences are described in table form with a part number, element description and associated 'technical reference items'. Each technical reference item refers to a table with a detailed technical description of the item followed by coaching bullet-points. From both a coaching and judging perspective it will be imperative to be knowledgeable regarding each in order to properly develop and understand these technical sequences.

How the Technical Sequence will be judged

The Technical Sequence will be judged based upon the following criteria:

- Specific requirements stated in the Performance Criteria column of each sequence table
- 3 Specific Technical Emphasis Element requirements (either 'per part' or 'global') as defined and listed at the bottom of each sequence table
- All normal 'Per FIG' standard deductions
- Additional Virtuosity or Stick Bonus awarded

All judges should use the same protocol or method of evaluation to insure consistency among the panel. A sample table is provided to better explain this 3-step procedure. First, judge the routine per FIG and according to the requirements listed in the Performance Criteria column for each sequence. Second, review the routine and add evaluation of the 3 Specific Technical Emphasis Elements. Lastly, award virtuosity or stick earned. Panels following the same procedure will be able to clarify notes easily if necessary and offer necessary feedback regarding the performances.

Sample Method of Evaluation standard protocol:

Evaluation of routine parts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Performance Criteria - FIG										
2. Review 3 Specific Elements		#1				#2				#3
3. Add Virtuosity & Stick		+0.1			+0.1*	+0.1				+0.1**

**Indicates Open Virtuosity - **Indicates Stick Bonus*

II. Specific Evaluation Criteria for each Technical Sequence

Performance Criteria:

On every event there is a Performance Criteria table that describe particular requirements with regard to how the skills and/or sequences should be performed. These standards should be judged as per FIG using the table listed in Section H.

Specific Technical Sequence Emphasis:

On each event, there are 3 Specific Technical Emphasis Elements. These are the special Technical Elements that are being focused upon for improvement on each event. There will be a deduction of .1, .2, .3, where they apply per emphasis, unless otherwise noted. These 3 areas have been stated at the bottom of each exercise.

III. Rewarding athletes for exceptional performance

Virtuosity Bonus:

On each event there is a total of .4 available for virtuosity bonus (Exception: .5 on Vault and PH). There will be .2 of Virtuosity Bonus that can be awarded for any of the 3 Specific Technical Emphasis Elements. This virtuosity bonus can be awarded for these elements only if the gymnast has -.1 or less in deductions. In addition, up to .2 in Open Virtuosity may be awarded by a judge for exemplary artistry, virtuosity or amplitude displayed in any part of the sequence or the routine as a whole (including a 3rd Specific Technical Emphasis Element). On Vault and Pommel Horse additional .1 may be awarded for exceptional amplitude, height, or artistry. Some examples of exemplary artistry, virtuosity or amplitude might be:

- Extreme height and control on Floor
- Flairs with exceptional amplitude on Pommel Horse
- Back uprise to handstand, lower to straddle L on Rings
- Extreme explosiveness on Vault
- Front uprise showing extreme amplitude or Manna position on parallel bars
- Arm extending and touching the hip showing flair on a pirouette on High Bar

These are just examples of areas where the athlete goes above the scope of normal gymnastics. We are promoting individual artistry as well as technical refinement and the athletes who are doing so should and must be rewarded. Additionally, this bonus affords the judge with an additional tool to help separate athlete performance.

Stick Bonus:

Landings are a major area of improvement necessary for USA Teams to be successful in reaching their international goals. Since review has revealed that many landings are not executed proficiently even in the Technical Sequences a .1 bonus has been instituted for rewarding the athlete for a stuck dismount. This bonus will be applied per FIG and these landings similarly will be subject to FIG execution deductions. This bonus is available for landings on Floor Exercise, Rings, Parallel Bars and Horizontal Bar.

Technical Sequence Scoring Table Summary:

Sequence Scoring Component	Point Value
Base Score	9.5
Specific Technical Emphasis Virtuosity Bonus <i>(May include a 3rd Specific Technical Emphasis</i>	.2
Open Virtuosity Bonus <i>(May include a 3rd Specific Technical Emphasis</i>	.2 (FX, PH, R, PB, HB) .3 (Vault and PH)
Stick Bonus (Dismount) <i>* (Not available on Vault or Pommel Horse 10-18)</i>	.1*
Maximum Score	10.0

IV. Range of Allowable Scores:

When using two judges, or a 4 or more judge panel, the point difference between both, or the middle scores, may not be greater than:

Final Score	Allowable Deviation
9.60 – 10.00	0.10
9.40 – 9.60	0.20
9.00 – 9.40	0.30
8.50 – 9.00	0.40
8.00 – 8.50	0.50
7.50 – 8.00	0.60
< 7.50	0.70

Technical Refinement Tables:

Following the sequence tables for each event, there is a Technical Refinement Table denoting critical elements that are identified as being essential to the development of proper technique in a given element or series of elements. All the elements for both the 11-14 sequence and the 15-18 sequence are listed in these tables. In each case, a description of suggested technique and standard of execution is provided. These tables should be referred to by coaches for education and development of the skills in the routines. These tables are informational in design and not specifically used for evaluation by judges.

Technical Description of Sequence Element Tables:

These tables offer detailed descriptions of each skill in the routines for educational purposes and coaches development. These can and should be used for better understanding of suggested technique. The information in these descriptions is intended for teaching and learning purposes only.

Sequence Element Tables:

These tables offer detailed descriptions of each skill in the routines for educational purposes and coaches development. These can and should be used for better understanding of suggested technique. The information in these descriptions is intended for teaching and learning purposes only.

V. SECTION H: Adapted FIG Table of Deductions and Exceptions:

Degree of execution or presentation error:	Degree of deviation from perfect end position:	Pertinent examples:
Small error (deduction 0.1)	0°-15°	Any <i>minor or slight</i> deviation from the perfect end position Any <i>minor or slight</i> adjustments to hand, foot, head or body position/alignment Any other <i>minor or slight</i> violations against aesthetic and technical performance expectations
Medium error (deduction 0.2)	16°- 30°	Any <i>distinct or significant</i> deviation from the perfect end position Any <i>distinct or significant</i> adjustments to hand, foot, head or body position/alignment Any other <i>distinct or significant</i> violations against aesthetic and technical performance expectations
Large error (deduction 0.3)	31°- 45°	Any <i>major or severe</i> deviation from the perfect end position Any <i>major or severe</i> adjustments to hand, foot, head or body position/alignment Any other <i>major or severe</i> violations against aesthetic and technical performance expectations
Falls and spotter assistance (deduction 0.5) <i>Note: In some cases, spotter assistance is encouraged and recommended</i>	N/A	Any fall on or from the apparatus during an element without having reached an end position that permits continuation with at least a swing (i.e. a distinct hang phase on Horizontal bar or a distinct support phase on pommel horse after the element in question) or that otherwise fails to display a momentary control of the element during landing or re-grasp. Any assistance by a spotter that contributes to the completion of an element
Composition Error to include: (<i>Extra Swings (SR, PB, HB); (Extra Giants (HB); (15-18 year old Extra Circles PH) (Missing Circles PH (11-14 & 15-18); (Partially completed skill such as HB – no hecht beat uprise or no release hop ½ turn) = .5 each time</i>	N/A	All extra swings are considered <i>intermediate swings</i> (Still Rings, Parallel Bars, High Bar). All Skills performed out of order but not omitted. In all cases, deduct for execution in addition to composition error as per FIG.
11-14 year old Extra Circles = NO DEDUCTION	N/A	11-14 Pommel Horse ONLY <i>*Deduct for execution only</i>
Short hold (Per FIG)	Medium (0.2)	Any required hold position that demonstrates a complete stop but is not held for the required length of time.
No Hold (per FIG)	Large (0.3)	Any required hold position that does not achieve a complete stop.
Missing Major Element Parts = 2.0 Listed in the table for each event. (Exception: Vault – performing a Handspring Tuck Front salto or Yurchenko Tuck salto will result in a 2.0 major element deduction).	N/A	Must demonstrate completion of 50% of skill to receive value. Less than 50%, as determined by judge, may repeat skill.

VI. Event Chapter Format

Each chapter is comprised of the following parts:

1. Committee statement regarding skill selection
2. 11-14 year old Sequence Description
3. 11-14 year old Specific Judging Guidelines (pommel horse only)
4. 11-14 year old table of Technical Refinement Table
5. 15-18 year old Sequence Description
6. 15-18 year old table of Technical Refinement Table
7. Technical Description of Sequence Elements (in order of appearance)

Chapter 2 - Floor Exercise

Committee Statement Regarding Skill Selection:

The committee felt like the skill selection here was limited somewhat due to the desired duration of the sequence. Essential elements were pared down to Arabian, forward and back tumbling along with basic dance elements and presentation. The inclusion of circles and/or a press to the handstand extended the duration of the sequence beyond a desirable length.

The Arabian was selected because of its capacity to reinforce the continued development of the athlete's ability to set twisting squarely off the floor with an understanding of the 1/4 set position. In turn, this will lead to the development of more advanced twisting skills. For the back handsprings and whip passes, the goals were to reinforce good turnover and position on the round-off, consistent turnover, knees together, toes pointed, shoulder extension, upper-back extension and snap down on the back handsprings and whip-backs alike. The intention of the 3 back handspring pass in the 11-14 sequence is for the athletes to focus on performing them with sound technique, body position and form before applying the elements of acceleration and power.

The forward pass was selected to help create turnover with an upper-back arch, with shoulder flexibility and extension throughout the handsprings, as well as a chest-up and arms overhead on take-off position for the dive roll. We chose not to put a forward salto at the end of the pass because the technical execution of the take-off position showed too much deterioration when the athlete focused on the salto. The dive-roll helps to reinforce a correct take-off position.

The pike-open back was retained for its ability to teach the athlete a technically sound vertical block position on takeoff as well as the understanding of how to create rotation with the body positions. These two aspects can facilitate higher level skill development for the future.

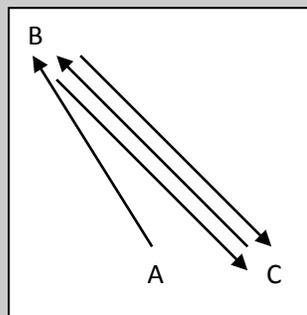
Floor Exercise 11-14 year old

**Unless otherwise specified, arm positions are optional.
Pass A to B must be a side pass starting from side mid-point.**

Stand at A facing corner B

Floor Pattern:

- A to B
- B to C
- C to B
- B to C



Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Starting at middle side 'A' tumbling toward corner 'B'; power hurdle, round-off, back handspring, tucked Arabian salto	Power-hurdle Round-off 'Power' back handspring Arabian Salto Tucked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabian performed with center of mass at shoulder height • Full extension of body prior to landing
2. Single leg prone fall, return to front support, lift hips up to stretched forward roll to jump and sissone, step through lunge, turn backwards to face corner 'C'	Single-leg prone fall (Swedish fall) Sissone Lunge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back leg at vertical on Swedish fall • 45° split on sissone
3. Power-hurdle, round-off to (3) tempo back handsprings, tuck open backward salto	Power-hurdle 'Tempo' back handspring series Tuck open backward salto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms at horizontal or below on tempo back handsprings • Open at horizontal on tuck
4. Jump ½ turn, step hitch kick, step, lunge and 180° backward turn to corner 'B'	Hitch kick Lunge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both legs at horizontal on hitch kick
5. Run or power-hurdle to front handspring, boulder,	Front handspring Boulder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front handspring turnover to vertical, fully extended
6. Dive roll	Dive Roll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dive roll with tight arch • Center of mass to be at shoulder height on dive roll
7. Step and swing leg up and jump ½ turn landing with feet together (assemble') facing corner 'C'	Step and swing ½ turn assemble'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front leg to be at horizontal on assemble'
8. Run or power hurdle to round-off, back handspring, pike-open backward salto	Round-off 'Power' back handspring Pike-open backward salto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center of mass to be at Shoulder height on pike-open • Opening of pike-open at horizontal

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

- #1. Continuous rhythm throughout routine (Deduct globally for entire sequence)*
- #2. Proper turnover with arm pull down technique on back handsprings (Global Part #3)*
- #3. Straight alignment on round off passes (Parts # 1, 3, 8 each time)*

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

- Part # 1 – Arabian
- Part # 3 – Round off 3 back handsprings
- Part # 5 – Forward handspring, boulder, dive roll
- Part # 6 – Dive roll
- Part # 8 – Pike-open somersault

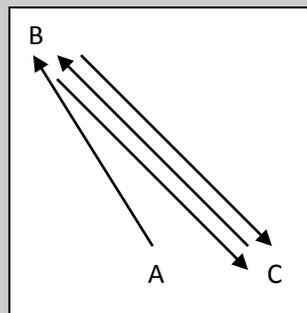
Floor Exercise 15-18 year old

**Unless otherwise specified, arm positions are optional.
Pass A to B must be a side pass starting from side mid-point.**

Stand at A facing corner B

Floor Pattern:

A to B
B to C
C to B
B to C



Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Starting at middle side 'A' tumbling toward corner 'B'; Power hurdle, round-off, back handspring, piked Arabian salto	Power-hurdle Round-off Power back handspring Arabian Salto piked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center of mass on piked Arabian head height Full extension of body prior to landing
2. Single leg prone fall, return to front support, lift hips up to stretched forward roll to jump and sissone, step through lunge, turn backwards to face corner 'C'	Single-leg prone fall (Swedish fall) Sissone Lunge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back leg at vertical on Swedish fall 45° split on sissone
3. Power-hurdle, round-off, back handspring, whip back, whip back, layout backward salto	Power-hurdle 'Tempo' Back Handspring Whip back Layout back salto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arms at horizontal or below on tempo saltos backward Direction at vertical on layout salto
4. Jump ½ turn, step hitch kick, step, lunge and 180° backward turn to corner 'B'	Hitch kick Lunge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both legs at horizontal on hitch kick
5. Run or power-hurdle to front handspring, bounder	Front handspring Bounder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front handspring turnover to vertical fully extended
6. Dive roll	Dive roll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center of mass head height on dive roll Tight arch with dive roll
7. Step and swing leg up and jump ½ turn landing with feet together (assemble') facing corner 'C'	Step and swing ½ turn assemble'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front leg at horizontal on assemble'
8. Run or power hurdle to round-off, back handspring, pike-open backward salto	Round-off 'Power back handspring Pike-open backward salto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center of mass head height on pike - open. Opening of pike-open minimum 45° above horizontal

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

#1. Continuous rhythm throughout routine (Deduct globally for entire sequence)

#2. Proper turnover with arm pull down technique - Back handspring and Whip-backs (Global Part #3)

#3. Straight alignment on round off passes (Parts # 1, 3, 8 each time)

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

Part # 1 – Arabian

Part # 3 – Round off, back handspring, 2 whips

Part # 5 – Forward handspring, bounder

Part # 6 – Dive roll

Part # 8 – Pike-open somersault

Floor Exercise Technical Refinement Table:

Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Recommended Technique	Standard of Refinement
Efficient round off turnover	Arms pulling down with chest hollow, head neutral, feet well in front of hips. Arm position should be shoulder height when feet contact floor. Upper back should draw or pull backwards to full extension with legs and body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms in front of and below head on round off • Body should be hollowed with hips turned under and contracted. • Shoulders should be above and behind hips (vertical)
Proper take-off and twisting technique of Arabian salto	Vertical take-off position and feet facing forward on take-off. Show $\frac{1}{4}$ set position. Complete $\frac{1}{2}$ turn prior to tuck position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square shoulders with feet on take off • Somersault should begin after completion of the $\frac{1}{2}$ turn set
Smooth and aesthetic transitions	Transitions must show proper extension, flexibility and posture, and continuous rhythm throughout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leg at vertical on single leg prone • Minimum 45° split on sissone • Front foot turn out lunge position of front foot • Both legs at horizontal on hitch kick • Continuous rhythm throughout
Effective turnover and extension on back handsprings and whips	Arms pulling down with chest hollow, head neutral, feet well in front of hips. Arm position should be shoulder height when feet contact floor. Upper back should draw or pull backwards to full extension with legs and body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms in front and below head on contact of feet • Knees should be moving backwards on back handsprings
Effective turnover and extension of front handspring and bounder. Vertical take-off position of dive roll	Arms overhead with shoulder, upper chest open during FHS. Hollow body extension forward on initial phase of bounder. Arms overhead with shoulders and chest open at end of bounder. Vertical direction with arms overhead, body straight, head neutral or up on take off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms and/or body alignment throughout should remain in tight arch • Maintain extension and tight arch during dive roll
Proper vertical take-off position on pike open back somersault	Body vertical with arms and chest up, head neutral on take off. Lifting hips and legs aggressively to tight pike position. Immediate opening to full extension and lifting chest to continue rotation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 90° compression in pike open • Should show vertical take off from Contact off floor

Technical Descriptions and Coaching Points for Sequence Elements (in order of appearance)

Power-hurdle
<p>The power-hurdle begins from standing position with feet together. The athlete swings the arms forward and upward to a fully extended shoulder angle, the front knee lifts aggressively with the back knee drawing toward the body as well. Upon contact with the back foot to the floor there should be a strong push through the entire back leg as the front knee bends, lunging deeply enough so that hand contact is made while the front foot is still on the floor. The back leg should kick and drive overhead as the front leg forcefully extends while pushing through the hands with a full wrist extension to create linear velocity. This technique is the same for both the front handspring and the round-off.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full arm and shoulder extension on hurdle • Aggressive lift of knees to body • Square hips and efficient deep lunge position on lunge • Strong kick of back leg and full wrist extension on push
Back to 11-14 Floor Exercise : Back to 15-18 Floor Exercise
Round-off
<p>Upon contact with the floor, the first hand should be in line with the front foot. The second hand being placed slightly outside the first hand in direction of the turn with the fingers turned inward. Shoulders remain open and extended as the turn is initiated. As the first leg drives overhead the second leg should join the first leg after vertical. During the snap down phase, there should be an aggressive push off of the hands, fingers and through the wrists while pulling the arms downward off the floor to approximately shoulder height. This will shorten the body's radius of rotation and facilitate the 'turn-over' of the round off. The body should shorten into a hollow position with the legs snapping underneath. The feet should contact the floor well in front of the hips with the hips tucked under, body hollow, head in neutral position. As the feet contact the floor the arms can begin to swing overhead and backward.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong kick and effective block from hands will provide time to properly turn-over the roundoff. • Strong push through the wrists and fingers as hands leave the floor. • Arms pull down off the floor • Finish snap-down and turnover action with a hollow body shape. • Head neutral and arms at horizontal with feet well in front of the hips upon landing.
Back to 11-14 Floor Exercise : Back to 15-18 Floor Exercise

'Power' back handspring

The 'power' style back handspring begins from a well turned-over round off, back handspring or whip back. It begins with the body in a hollow position, hips tucked under, knees bent with the feet well in front of the hips and arms at shoulder level. The 1st phase (from feet to hands) is lengthened in order to increase linear velocity across the surface of the floor. With the chest in and head neutral, the upper back should "draw or pull" backwards as the arms swing overhead while aggressively extending the legs and pushing backward and off of the floor. The gymnast should demonstrate a tight upper back arch and full shoulder extension until the handstand position is reached slightly past vertical. During snap down phase, there should be an aggressive push through the wrists while lifting the upper body up and shaping into a hollow position. In order to facilitate a powerful take-off, the 2nd phase (from hands to feet) is dramatically shortened in order to increase rotation, snap down angle, and force into the floor so that the body can leave the floor at vertical with a tight, straight body position to maximize lift and rotation of the body around its center of mass.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Aggressive arm swing to a tight arch body position during first phase of back handspring
- Tight arched handstand should be shown with slight turn over past vertical in handstand (hands in front of the shoulders) to create fast, short and aggressive snap down.
- Use wrists and push through fingers on snap down phase of back handspring
- Finish snap down and land back handspring in tight hollow body position. Chest in, head neutral, arms in front, feet behind the hips to create vertical take off.

[Back to 11-14 Floor Exercise](#) : [Back to 15-18 Floor Exercise](#)

Tucked or Piked Arabian Salto

The feet should be facing forward and body position square as the snap down to vertical take off is executed. The body alignment must be straight and tight to achieve maximum force and lift from the floor. Optimally, this should occur prior to vertical so that as the floor responds, the body leaves the floor at vertical. The body is 'set' with arms up and 90° of turn in the desired direction of twist at the peak of the arm-swing upward. As the body rotates toward the upside-down vertical position, the remaining 90° is completed then (**and only then**) the body is shortened into an aggressive tuck or pike by contracting into a hollowed, rounded, body shape and pulling the shoulders and head around toward the knees or legs. As the rotation is completed, the body should immediately extend in preparation for landing.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Take-off position at vertical, the body should be (set) turned 90°, shoulders opened, head slightly in under arm pit.
- After the vertical, complete 180° turn before tucking the salto
- Facilitate good rotation by moving shoulders aggressively toward the knees

[Back to 11-14 Floor Exercise](#) : [Back to 15-18 Floor Exercise](#)

Single-leg prone fall (Swedish Fall) and stretched forward roll

The body and head is stretched upward with arms reaching upward and legs straightening upward on toe to relevé. As the body falls forward, one leg is kicked to vertical in a tight arch. As the hands contact the floor, the arms bend absorbing the impact of the landing in prone support. The arms then straighten as the body assumes an arched prone support position with legs together. From the arched prone support position, duck the head under while lifting the body to a tight, hollow stretched position and execute a tucked forward roll.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Flexibility and extension to vertical on Swedish fall
- Continuous and fluid rhythm throughout sequence.

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Sissone

The sissone is a jump from two feet while executing a split of the legs in the air. Body position, posture, and head position should remain erect while the legs split and extend. The gymnast should show lift and amplitude during the sissone. The athlete will land on the standing leg in demi-plié and swing or brush the back leg through and forward into the subsequent lunge.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Keep good posture, leg extension and minimum of 45° split on sissone

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Lunge

In all transitional elements, the lunge should be performed with good posture; chest up, chin up, and shoulders relaxed. The arm position is optional and should compliment the athlete. The front leg is bent with the foot turned out. The back leg is straight with the foot turned out so that the heel remains in contact with the floor. The weight is equally distributed on each foot.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Front foot turned out on lunge, back leg straight with heel down

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Backward turn

The backward turn begins in the lunge position. Weight is shifted to the front leg as the athlete rises to relevé. The athlete stretches to full body extension with arms overhead and the body turns outward / backward pivoting on the demi-point of the front leg. The back leg joins the front leg as the turn is executed completing the turn with heels and legs together in relevé. Upon completion of the turn, the athlete allows the heels to lower to the floor. Arms may return to an aesthetically pleasing optional position as the heels of the feet return to the floor.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Backward turn should be executed with good posture and on toe (relevé) with heels returning to floor at completion of turn

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'Tempo' back handspring series

This series of back handsprings is to be executed with immaculate form and extension. The pass may be executed as slowly as necessary in order to focus on this technically sound execution. As the athlete perfects to correct body position and turnover technique the elements of acceleration and power can be applied to the series. A coach may spot the rebound at the completion of the third back handspring in order to mitigate an out-of-control landing by the athlete. This spot is recommended but not required.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Aggressive arm swing to a tight arch body position during first phase of back handspring
- Use wrists and push through fingers on snap down phase of back handspring
- Show turnover and finish snap down and back handspring in tight hollow body position. Chest in, head neutral, arms in front, feet well in front of the hips.
- This series of back handsprings should be deliberately slow to emphasize correct body shape, extension, legs together and toes pointed.
- Show 'power' back handspring snap down with tight body rebound on final back handspring

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Back Handspring - Whip Back series

The technique of the whip backs is very similar to the back handspring. The whip back should be initiated from a hollow body position with an arm swing to a full body extension with a tight upper back and shoulder arch (hips should be tight). After passing vertical, the arms swing down as the body shapes to a hollow position (chest rounded and hips tucked under). The landing should return to the hollow position with arms at horizontal ready to swing to the next whip back. There should be a vertical block angle to rebound created (feet behind hips on contact) after the last whip back. A spot on the rebound is optional.

Hitch kick

The hitch kick begins from a simple step or lunge. The back leg of the lunge will brush (swing) through as the front leg of the lunge straightens to perform the jumping action. The height of the jump is developed by a combination of the push from the front leg of the lunge and the transfer of momentum from the kicking action of the back leg to the body as the arms swing forward and upward into extension overhead. The second leg kicks upward to horizontal or above and switches with the first leg in a dynamic scissoring action. Land with the knee bending into plié to absorb the energy of the landing. The arms will also drop to shoulder level wide on the landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Hips open, knees straight and a min of 45° leg separation on hitch kick
- Continuous rhythm through lunge and turn.
- Aggressive arm swing to a tight upper back and shoulder arch body position during first phase of whip back
- Arms swing down and body shapes to hollow to create turnover
- Create block angle on last whip to rebound

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Front Handspring

From the hurdle, the lunge should be deep enough that the hands contact the floor while the front leg is in the lunge position. There should be a strong kicking action from the back leg and a strong push of the front leg from the lunge. The general body shape during the blocking action of the front handspring should be hollow. The trajectory of the rebound off of the hands should be well beyond vertical. The kick of the back leg will help to initiate strong rotation. The shoulders and upper chest should remain open as the hands leave the floor. These actions should combine to create a strong linear velocity and maximized rotation around center of mass. The body should remain in an extended tight arch and turned over with the feet behind the hips for the take-off of the bounder. The body will then transition to an extended hollow position as the gymnast enters the bounder handspring.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Avoid diving into the block on front handspring
- Kick the back leg strongly while keeping shoulder angle open throughout.
- Landing of the front handspring should be with tight arch body position with opened chest, open hips and shoulders, head and arms back, feet behind the hips in preparation for the bounder

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Bounder (flyspring)

The general body shape of the bounder (flyspring) is similar to that of the front handspring. The body should be hollowed on the 1st phase - to hands, and then in a tight arch as the body rotates through the 2nd phase from hands to feet again. The trajectory of this rebound from the hands should be as far beyond vertical as is manageable. The body must forcibly arch down to the floor (forward snap down) to create a strong blocking action against the floor for the take-off of the dive-roll. The feet should strike the floor in front of the hips with the body in a tight arch with head up and upper chest open. The arms should be extended upward with no shoulder angle on the take off. Rebound vertically to a straight tight body position.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- First phase of the bounder should be with hollow extended body position with head neutral prior to the block from the hands. Use shoulder extension to create good blocking action
- After the block, create good turnover by blocking arms back. Upper back, chest and hips open fully extended. Keep the head back.
Finish bounder in a tight arch position bring the feet to the floor quickly for the rebound to vertical

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Dive-Roll

The dive-roll leaves the floor in a hollow or straight body position at vertical with good posture. The legs should be extending upward with sufficient heel drive, so that there is a smooth flight toward the hand placement for the roll action. There should not be any hip pike. There must be proper core and gluteal tension maintained throughout the roll out phase of the dive-roll in order to maintain pressure on the hands for a smooth rollout.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Maintain vertical position & posture at take-off for dive roll
- Extend the legs upward to create rotation
- Transition to and through candlestick position with good core tension on the roll.

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Assemble' ½ turn

The Assemble' ½ turn is executed from a simple step or a lunge. The back leg swings or brushes through with a forward lifting action. This action is coupled with a swinging action of the arms forward and upward to assist the lifting action. As the kick is completed the gymnast initiates a 180° turn on the longitudinal axis of the body. The legs join together on the landing in plié with legs together.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Show good extension and posture on leg swing to ½ turn
- Land softly and controlled.

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Pike-open backward salto

Upon take-off, the arms reach dynamically overhead with chest and shoulders open, head neutral and body stretched vertically to full extension. The gymnast should then lift the hips and draw the legs forcefully toward the chest with no knee bend, toe flexion, or backward lean. There should be a minimum of a 45° pike at the hips. As soon as maximum pike is attained, the body should open immediately to a stretched position as the chest lifts to continue the rotation with arms overhead in preparation for landing. Optimally, this stretch for landing will occur at or above horizontal.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- On takeoff, assume tight body vertical position, shoulders open, head neutral
- Lift legs to chest on pike without letting shoulders lean back
- Aggressive compression to minimum 45° pike then aggressive opening to stretched position while lifting chest at completion

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Tuck-open and Pike-open backward salto

Upon take-off, the arms reach dynamically overhead with chest and shoulders open, head neutral and body stretched vertically to full extension. The gymnast should then lift the hips and draw the legs forcefully toward the chest while lifting the hips upward with no backward lean. The desired angle of hips on the pike phase is less than 90°. As soon as maximum tuck or pike is attained, the body should open immediately to a stretched position as the chest lifts to continue the rotation with arms overhead in preparation for landing. Optimally, this stretch for landing will occur at or above horizontal.

Layout backward salto

From the snap down phase of the whip back salto the body should contact the floor in a tight body, slightly hollow position, the arms reach dynamically overhead with chest and shoulders open, head neutral and body stretched vertically to full extension. The gymnast should then lift the hips and legs forcefully upward with no backward lean. The body remains stretched as the rotation continues toward vertical turning over. As the turnover action reaches its peak the chest continues to lift adding to the rotation. The body remains tight and stretched as the gymnast prepares for landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- On takeoff, assume tight body vertical position, shoulders open, head neutral
- Lift hips upward to initiate rotation
- Lift legs to chest on tuck or pike without letting shoulders lean back
- Aggressive compression to minimum 45° pike then aggressive opening to stretched position while lifting chest at completion
- Stretched tight body throughout on layout salto with no piking on landing

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Chapter 3 - Pommel Horse

Committee Statement Regarding Skill Selection:

Pommel horse was the event that had the most discussion amongst the committee and community. There were so many things to consider; do we keep the pommels on the horse, do we include scissor work, etc... In the end it was decided the best course of action was to continue the refinement and development of a sound circle through the 11 – 14 age groups and then to transition to the pommels in the 15 – 18 age groups.

In the 11- 14 age group sequence, the emphasis is on technically comprehensive circle development; good hip extension, chest open, hands square and maintaining consistent rhythm throughout the sequence. The committee felt like the reinforcement of the circle in cross support position on a horse with no pommels would be the most beneficial to the athletes' development. Furthermore, it was decided not to use the pommels with the younger age groups, as the integrity of the circle tends to break down when circles are done on the pommels.

In the 15 – 18 age group sequence, the committee felt like a sequence that included different fundamental turning elements and handstand dismount would best reinforce the basic foundation of optional pommel horse. The combination of athletes working on a sound cross support circle for 4 years combined with the transition to basic fundamental turning elements on the pommel horse could help produce exemplary pommel horse athletes for many years.

The rhythm of the circle is a crucial element in pommel horse development. The gymnast should be able to maintain a strong, consistent rhythm throughout the sequence. The weight shift with the shoulders should be even and deliberate on both sides. An early weight shift combined with a good acceleration of the circle will help to increase speed and ultimately height above the horse. While individuals may vary slightly in circle speed a good tempo and acceleration of the circle are important for every gymnast.

Pommel Horse 11-14 year old

Routine is executed on a horse with no pommels. Tape is used to mark the sections of the horse. Tape should be placed over the pommel holes on the horse body.

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Starting at the end of the horse facing longitudinally. Jump to circles* in cross support frontways on the near end of the horse	Cross support Circles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A minimum of 8 total hand placements within first section before the travel to center section begins
2. 1/3 cross-support travel to center of horse	Cross support Travel	
3. Cross support circles* in the center of the horse	Cross support Circles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A minimum of 8 total hand placements within middle section before the travel to the third section begins
4. 1/3 cross-support travel to the far end of horse	Cross support Travel	
5. Cross support rearways circles (back loops) on the far end of the horse	Cross support Circles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A minimum of 8 total hand placements on the end of the horse in the third section prior to part #6
6. Flank off dismount in back loop position.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No required height on dismount

**Note: Gymnast may travel within each section as needed. Gymnast is deemed to have traveled to the next section when both hands have crossed the line or are touching the line indicating he has moved to the next section. There is no penalty for touching the line.*

**Note: The sequence is designed to show a minimum of four circles in each section. Deductions for Special Technical Emphasis Elements are global so there is no penalty with regard to these elements for executing more than four circles in each position.*

“Additional circles” will be judged for execution errors. No penalty for added part.
(Example: Gymnast takes more than one circle to travel across the line before both hands are in the next section in front support to begin count.)

“Missing circles” (Less than 8 hand placements in each 1/3 section) will be judged as a -0.5 Deduction per missing circle.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

Note: Virtuosity can be awarded only if execution is (-0.1) for each element for the entire sequence.

#1. The hands being “square” or evenly placed on the horse in rear support ... (No Skewing)

(Global in each 1/3 section and Part #6).

#2. Chest and hips in square alignment to the horse (0-15° counter rotation is allowed) at the ¼ and ¾ position of the circle (no rollover). (Global in each 1/3 section, Part #6, Part #7).

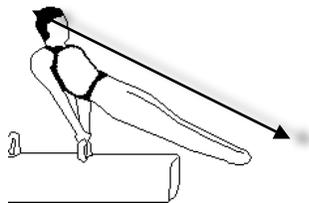
#3. Even tempo and rhythm throughout routine (Globally for entire sequence).

Technical Teaching suggestions for the 11-14 year old Pommel Horse Sequence:

1. The hands being “square” or evenly placed on the horse part in rear support.
2. A counter rotation (0-15°) of the chest and hips at the moment the first hand touches the horse at 135° in rear support is suggested to insure the open body position at the ¼ circle and square alignment of the hips to prevent the “roll-over” effect on the circle.
3. The extended straight position at the moment the 2nd hand touches the pommel or horse in front support at 315° is suggested to insure an open body position at the ¾ circle).
4. All circles in each 1/3 of the horse are measured from front support to front support. A minimum of 4 circles must be performed in each section. In the counter clockwise direction the gymnast should step over the line with the left hand of the 5th circle. The 5th circle is the travel to the saddle section and should finish with both hands over the line in front support. Count begins for the 4 circles in the saddle (middle) once both hands are in front support in the saddle (middle).

Useful definitions for the performance of the circles on the horse without pommels:

The ‘**ideal position**’ is a stretched body with chest and hips square in the rear support position. Deductions are taken when the gymnast’s chest and hips rotate or “rollover” past the square position.



“Square alignment or slight counter-turn is shown moving away from viewer”

(Note: Position is the same for hands placed square upon the leather 11-14)

“**Open**” position is defined as a straight body alignment from the shoulders through the chest, hips, and toes throughout the circle.

“**Skew**” angle is defined as the degree of the hand placement from parallel on the horse in the rear support.

“**Rollover**” of the hips is defined as the degree of hip turn from the ideal position. This is commonly seen as the hips rotating past the (0°) square alignment to the horse in the direction of the circle.

“**Additional circles**” will be judged for execution errors. No penalty for added part.

(Example: Gymnast takes more than one circle to travel across the line before both hands are in the next section in front support to begin count.)

11-14 year old Pommel Horse - Technical Refinement Table:

Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Change Desired	Standard of Refinement
Open chest & hips at ¼ & ¾ position	Eliminate piking in the chest and hips during the circle. Achieve counter rotation and full extension through front and rear support position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips and chest open at ¼ & ¾ quarter position on each circle
No skewing of circle and position of hips in alignment at the ¼ and ¾ position	Eliminate skew angle and uneven hand placement in rear support. Eliminate “rolling over” of hips (past 0°) in rear support position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips square at ¼ & ¾ position • Hands in parallel alignment in the rear support
Even tempo and acceleration	Eliminate late or uneven weight shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even tempo and rhythm in each 1/3 of horse
Form and elevation	Eliminate errors in leg form. Demonstrate sufficient clearance above horse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing elevation of circles in each 1/3 of horse.

Pommel Horse 15-18 year old

*Part #1 (Leg Cut sequence) may be reversed if starting with right leg undercut

"Additional circles" will be judged as a -0.3 Deduction per additional circle plus execution

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. From stand, jump and swing to left leg undercut forward, left leg cut back to pendulum swing, right leg cut forward to false scissor, right leg cut forward to circle pickup	Single leg cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top of hips at chest level, minimum 90° leg separation on all swings • Hips square facing front, fully extended at peak of swing
2. (3) circles in side support on the pommels to break to flair at the end of the 3 rd circle at the ¾ position.	Side support circle on pommels	
3. (3) flaired circles on two pommels (finish 3 rd flair in front support).	Flaired side support circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 135° Straddle of legs
4. One circle on two pommels to Czechkehr (finish in front support)	Side support circle Czechkehr	
5. Immediate Direct Stockli 'A' (finish in front support)	Direct Stockli 'A'	
6. One circle on two pommels to Direct Stockli 'B', travel to end finish in side front support	Direct Stockli 'B' Downhill side support circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSB finishes in cross support with two hands on the pommel • Circle with travel downhill finishes in side front support
7. Schwabenflank (circle with ½ turn forward – finish in front support) to	Schwabenflank	
8. One additional uphill circle to	Uphill side support circle	
9. One uphill circle with straddled handstand dismount (no pirouette)	Straddled handstand dismount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous acceleration and rhythm to handstand

"Missing circles" will be judged as a -.5 Deduction per missing circle.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3): Note: Virtuosity can be awarded only if execution is (-0.1) for each element for the entire sequence.

#1. Maintaining 90° or greater leg separation throughout Part #1

#2. Chest and hips in square alignment (0-15° counter rotation is allowed) at the ¼ and ¾ position of the circle (no rollover). (Global for each identified section) Section 1 – Part #2; Section 2 Parts #4, 5, 6; Section #3 – Parts #7, 8, 9

#3. Acceleration of swing to handstand without interruption (Part #8)

15-18 Year Old Sequence - Technical Refinement Table:

Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Change Desired	Standard of Refinement
Open Chest & Hips at $\frac{1}{4}$ & $\frac{3}{4}$ Position on each numbered part. Square alignment of hips	Eliminate piking in the chest and hips during the circle. Eliminate "rolling over" of the hips from the $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips and chest open at $\frac{1}{4}$ & $\frac{3}{4}$ quarter position on each circle • Hips square or slight counter turn in alignment during circle
Open body position on flairs Effective straddle extension	Eliminate excessive pike Show extension throughout flairs Straddle greater than 135°	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing open hips throughout flairs • Showing minimum 135° straddle throughout flaired circles
Even tempo and acceleration	Eliminate late or uneven weight shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even rhythm and tempo throughout routine
Form and elevation	Eliminate errors in leg form. Demonstrate sufficient clearance above horse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient form and elevation of the circle throughout
Continuous motion on HS dismount	Eliminate excessive pike and hesitation on HS dismount.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceleration in upward swing of handstand

Technical Descriptions and Coaching Points for Sequence Elements (in order of appearance)

Circles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The following technical points apply to every circle regardless of whether it is performed on the leather or the pommels, in cross or side support, uphill or downhill. Every named circling skill should adhere to these technical points as well.</i> • The proper technique for the circle should show: • A complete extension of the hips with an open chest at the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ circle positions. • Squeezing the hips and gluteus muscles tight will enable the gymnast to maintain a straight body position throughout the circle. • Power is generated equally through the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ positions, and these positions are present regardless of where the support is occurring; on both pommels, in loops or back loops, during turning skills or while traveling. • An opening of the hips and chest through the $\frac{1}{4}$ position as the circle travels around the front and through the rear support with the hips aligned square to the horse or slightly counter turned. • Properly executed a slight counter-turn at the $\frac{1}{4}$ position will prevent the hips from over-rotating or “rolling over” in the direction of the circle as the gymnast travels through the rear support position. • Full extension in the rear support position with the hips square or slightly counter turned will enable the gymnast to remain fully extended, ‘lead’ with his heels into the $\frac{3}{4}$ circle position, and accelerate his circle as he transfers his weight to his second arm. • The greater the shoulder lean, the greater the circle speed & extension the gymnast can achieve. • Upon transfer back to the front support through the $\frac{3}{4}$ position: • The gymnast should keep his shoulders erect and hips flat as he completes the full circle so that his body remains straight and extended. • He can effectively initiate a slight counter rotation into the next circle as he transfers his weight back to the first arm and blocks down into the support. • In the front support position the chest and hips should be leading the circle.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
Initiate early counter turn in front support. Maintain hips at square position through rear support and lead with heels to accelerate circle through $\frac{3}{4}$ position keeping hips flat in back.
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse
Longitudinal cross support travel forward
The cross support travel is performed with a left hand lead on a counter-clockwise circle and a right hand lead on a clockwise circle. All of the same attributes and judging points assigned to the cross support circle apply to the travel as well. At the completion of the travel the hand placements should be as close to parallel as possible.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate early counter turn in front support. Maintain hips at square position through rear support and lead with heels to accelerate circle through $\frac{3}{4}$ position keeping hips flat in back.
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse

Cross support flank dismount
The cross support flank dismount is performed at the end of the 4 th circle on the end (back loop) in cross stand facing in the direction of the long axis of the horse with the feet directly adjacent to the final hand placement on the horse.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain through rear support and lead with heels to accelerate circle through $\frac{3}{4}$ position keeping hips flat in back.
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse
Flaired side support circles
The flaired circle begins at the front support with legs beginning to separate immediately as the circle begins. There should be a minimum of a 135° straddle of the legs during the flaired circle.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead (TOP) leg in rear support moves to the side with counter turn of the hips, allowing the trailing leg (BOTTOM) to provide "heel drive" though the $\frac{3}{4}$ position. There should be no pulling of the lead leg towards the body in the front that accentuates a pike position.
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse
Czechkehr
Sometimes referred to as a 'Moore', the Czechkehr begins in front support with a $\frac{1}{4}$ reverse stockli action bringing both hands to one pommel in momentary cross support frontways. There is then a weight shift to the other hand as the chest lifts and hips drive around in a $\frac{1}{4}$ kehre action to side support rearways with one hand on each pommel. The Czechkehr is completed as in 2 nd half of any normal circle.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulders erect with flat hips on the $\frac{1}{4}$ turn and Czechkehr to facilitate the counter turn to the rear support position and throughout the circle.
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse
Direct stockli 'A' (DSA)
Sometimes referred to as a 'back Moore'. The DSA begins in front support with a $\frac{1}{4}$ kehre action to one pommel. One hand moves to the opposite pommel showing a momentary cross support rearways on one pommel. There is then a weight shift to the other hand as the heels drive into a $\frac{1}{4}$ reverse stockli action finishing the DSA in side support frontways with one hand on each pommel.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute Direct Stockli A as a circle on one pommel. Counter turn from Czechkehre, keep shoulders back and lead with heels through the $\frac{3}{4}$ extended position on one pommel prior to $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to two pommels. Maintain square position of hips through $\frac{3}{4}$ position on one pommel
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse

Direct stockli 'B' (DSB)
<p>Sometimes referred to as a 'back Moore travel', the DSB begins exactly like the DSA. After the ¼ kehr action both hands will be on one pommel in cross support rearways. It is very important to remember to maintain the counter turn action in the ¼ kehre to set up a good pommel loop action for the critical 'core' portion of the DSB. The grip of the hands on the pommel may be mixed or matched. At this point, the heels are driven as in the 2nd phase of a normal cross support circle to complete a cross support circle to cross support frontways. The DSB continues with an immediate ¼ kehre to side support rearways with one hand on the pommel and one hand on the leather at the end of the horse. Once again, the counter turn is critical in order to set up the proper body shape for the downhill circle. The skill is completed as the 2nd phase of any downhill circle around to side support frontways with one hand on the pommel and one hand placed on the leather on the end of the horse with the fingers facing forward.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain acute lean and weight shift with shoulders to widen circle on one pommel. • Keep shoulders back, complete pommel loop prior to turn. • Open chest and hips to counter turn at 1/4 position upon completion.
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse
Schwabenflanke
<p>The Schwabenflanke is executed as a Czechkehr on the leather at the end of the horse.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoulders erect with flat hips on the ¼ turn and schwabenflanke to facilitate the counter turn to the rear support position and throughout the circle. Finish the skill in the front support position.
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse
Straddled handstand dismount
<p>The straddled handstand dismount is performed from a single uphill circle. On the 2nd half of the circle prior to the straddled handstand dismount, the counter turn action is particularly important as it will allow an earlier extension and shifting of the weight forward to the uphill hand across the front of the horse resulting in an ability to swing to the handstand rather than to have to stop and 'press' to the handstand. The legs should straddle wide as the body approaches the handstand position and then close smoothly, without hesitation, as the handstand is achieved. The landing should be controlled and stuck in a cross stand facing in line with the long axis of the horse. The feet should be directly adjacent to the placement of the last hand on the leather.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter turn of hips in ¼ circle position allows tapping action down then up in rear support
Back to 11-14 Pommel Horse : Back to 15-18 Pommel Horse

Forward leg cut and False Scissor

A pendulum swing action should be initiated with proper lean in the shoulders in the opposite direction. From this swing the gymnast strongly shifts his weight to the opposing side while lifting the hips, legs and fully extending at the peak of the swing. The top of the hip should be approximately chest level. The swing should be powerful enough that the bottom leg reaches approximately parallel to the level of the horse while the top leg kicks upward toward vertical and the hips 'disengage' to a fully extended position remaining more or less square to the front facing position. As the top leg cuts to the front of the horse on the descending phase, the body turns slightly inward leading with the chest and hips facing the longitudinal axis and the top hand regrips the pommel behind the leg as the swing accelerates downward. The gymnast shifts his weight backward to the rear support hand on the stride swing. The gymnast accelerates his swing and kicks both legs forcefully upward while releasing the forward hand. Turning to the side support the top leg extends vertically, hips reaching chest level and facing front while the bottom leg extends and cuts to the back of the horse. At the peak of the swing the hips are fully extended and prepared for the subsequent weight shift and downward swing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Top leg vertical, bottom leg at horse level or above, hips fully extended on both sides
- Lead with hips in slightly arched position on downward stride swing
- Maintain straddle position of legs approximately 90° degrees or greater during leg cut and false scissor

Back scissor undercut

From pendulum swing behind the horse swing forcefully upward, top leg vertical, bottom leg at or above the level of horse, hips facing forward. Leaning fully sideward on the support arm cut the bottom leg to the front of the horse while maintaining the hips in a forward facing direction at the peak of the swing. On the descending phase allow the hips to turn slightly toward the longitudinal axis while keeping the legs lifted upward and delaying the downward kick. As the weight shifts forward to the opposing hand forcefully kick the legs down and back through the stride swing position. Driving the legs through a tight arch position during the stride swing release the rearward hand while the weight shifts fully to the forward hand. Allow the hips to turn back to the front facing position as the weight shifts fully sideward and the top leg continues to vertical. The bottom leg drives and extends above the horse while cutting backward over the horse. At the peak of the swing the body is facing frontward while the top leg is at vertical and the bottom leg is clear of the horse at or above horizontal.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Keep hips facing forward during undercut, delay swing downward with legs with slight turning action
- Drive both legs through a tight arch at vertical and upward during the stride swing backward
- Maintain straddle position of legs approximately 90° degrees or greater on both cuts

Chapter 4 - Still Rings

Committee statement regarding skill selection:

This is another event in which the number of skills selected were reduced quite a bit from the original list. The emphasis during our discussions was focused on sound basic swing refinement, good handstand positions, strength hold positions and good bail technique. It was the position of this committee to omit the inlocate in an effort to reduce undue stress on the anterior aspect of the shoulder.

With respect to basic swing forward and backward, height is not as much of an issue as the efficiency and turnover of the swing. The committee agreed that the position of the rings at the peak of the forward swing (candlestick position) would be a discretionary call on the part of the coach. This position may be shown with either of the following options: straight or bent arms with palms up-thumbs turned inward, Straight or bent arms with palms down – thumbs turned outward. The committee agreed that the primary focus of the forward turnover swing should be reaching prescribed body shape and angular position to create the most efficient turnover action. For this reason the athletes will be allowed the option of bending the elbows if necessary to facilitate the turnover. On the backward turnover swing the primary goal is to achieve full turnover before applying the pressing action upward toward the handstand.

For all skills in support it was the belief of the committee that the positions; straight arms and wrist, along with good body position were more important developmentally rather than the length of hold, where we start to see poor positions just to attain the time requirement.

We felt strongly that good bail technique; position through bottom and efficiency of turnover, needs to be continually reinforced. For the younger age groups the emphasis remained on the forward bail, as this direction does not stress the body (back) as much as a backwards bail. The older age group incorporates the backward bail as well as a swing to handstand hold.

The open tuck double back was added to the older age group to aid in the development of efficient turnover for both double layout and multiple flipping and twisting dismounts.

Still Rings 11-14 year old

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Pull with straight body to inverted hang		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May bend arms on straight body pull to inverted hang
2. Cast to swing backward and forward	Turnover Swing Backward Turnover Swing Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back Swing = Shoulders minimum 45° above horizontal, shoulders at bottom of rings Front Swing = Shoulders at bottom of rings
3. Swing backward to Back uprise to 'L' support	Back uprise to 'L' Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feet above rings on back uprise Straight arm back uprise 3 second 'L' hold
4. Straight arm straddled press to handstand	Straight arm straddled press to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straight arms on press handstand 3 second hold of handstand
5. Bail forward to	Bail forward	
6. Backward swing	Turnover Swing Backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulders at bottom of rings May show handstand, no hold required
7. Forward swing to high dislocate	High dislocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulders at top of rings
8. Open tuck flyaway	Open tuck flyaway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center of mass above top of rings Opening at or above horizontal

Note: There is no deduction for excessive swinging of the cables.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

#1. Feet at minimum 45° above horizontal on Backwards Swing with shoulders at bottom of rings (Parts #2, & 6 each time)

#2. Feet between the cables on Forwards Swing (Part #2)

#3. Straight body with straight shoulder angle in handstand position (Part #4)

Note: 3 second holds to be evaluated per FIG (See Table of Deductions).

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

All Parts #2 through #8

Still Rings 15-18 year old

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Pull to Inverted hang		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arms and body straight on pull to inverted hang (FIG)
2. Cast back uprise to straddle L	Back uprise to straddled 'L' support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feet above rings on back uprise 3 second hold on 'Straddle L'
3. Press to momentary Planche	Planche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 second hold Straddled Planche allowed
4. Lower to L	'L' support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 second hold on 'L'
5. Straight arm straddled press to handstand	Straight arm straddled press to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 second hold in handstand
6. Front Giant	Front Giant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 second hold in handstand
7. Back giant to HS	Back giant to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 second hold in handstand
8. Dislocate through handstand	Dislocate through handstand	
9. Open tuck double back dismount	Open tuck double back dismount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening at or above horizontal

Note: There is no deduction for excessive swinging of the cables.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

#1. Proper turnover swing to vertical (Parts #6, 7 each time).

#2. Maintaining rings turned out past parallel in all support skills (Parts #2,3,4,5 each time)

#3. Straight body with straight shoulder angle in handstand position (Parts #5,6,7 each time)

Note: 3 second holds to be evaluated per FIG (See Table of Deductions).

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

All Parts #1 through #9

Still Rings – Technical Refinement Table:

Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Change Desired	Standard of Refinement
Turnover swing forward (Candlestick Position)	Eliminate all piking in hips along with shoulder angle so that the body has a rounded position. This will allow athlete to direct body either towards vertical for HS or past vertical for rotation needed for dismounts. Keep pressure back on rings with either straight or bent arms. Hold position with tight body to downward vertical position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing rounded candlestick position in the front of the swing • Maintaining pressure on the rings throughout upward and downward phase of swing
11-14: Turnover swing backward (Reverse Candlestick) 15-18: Front Giant	11-14: Final position at top of swing should look like a reverse candlestick or a “C” position without excessive arch in lower back. Arching should occur tightly in the upper shoulder area. Rings should remain wide with hands turning out. 15-18: After this position is reached, preparation to finish in handstand is achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing rounded candlestick position in the front of the swing • Maintaining pressure on the rings throughout upward and downward phase of swing
All support positions: Arms free of straps	Rings turned to at least parallel or wider during any skill in all support positions (L, Press, HS, Planche)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rings show turnout throughout all support skills • Arms free of straps
All support and swing positions: Straight arms	“Locked” elbow position Arms straight throughout routine Exception: (Pull to Inv Hang 11-14, Cast to Swing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locked arms throughout all support skills
Handstand position: Straight body alignment	Head, shoulders, hips, feet and hands in direct alignment with the cables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical handstand • Body shows straight alignment within the rings
Turnover swing forward (Candlestick Position) for High Dislocate	Eliminate all piking in hips along with shoulder angle so that the body has a rounded position. This will allow athlete to direct body either towards vertical for HS or past vertical for rotation needed for dismounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoulders should be last to rise above rings • Body passes through candlestick on rise to vertical
Opening prior to landing	Show clear opening of knees and hips at or above horizontal in preparation for landing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening at or above horizontal • Center of mass above top of rings

Technical Descriptions and Coaching Points for Sequence Elements (in order of appearance)

Definition of terms:

Candlestick position – Similar to the common position on floor, the ‘candlestick’ is defined as a hollow straight body position with a rounded chest, open shoulder angle, the head forward or neutral and a tightening of the core and gluteus muscles to ensure a straight hip angle.

Reverse candlestick position – This position, seen most commonly on rings at the inverted cross position, is defined as a an extended body position in the backward swing with a tight upper back arch, head neutral and tension in the core, abdominals and gluteus muscles to ensure a slightly arched position while maintaining a uniform one-piece body position.

Turnover Swing Backward
The technical goal of the turnover swing backward is for the athlete to be able to show a reverse candlestick position at the end of the swing. In order to accomplish this, the major technical point on the turnover swing backward is to allow the body to turn upside-down toward vertical as much as the shoulder flexibility of the individual athlete will allow before applying any deliberate pressure to the rings. Every athlete will be different in this particular capability and the primary limiting factor is shoulder flexibility. A very flexible athlete may not need to separate the rings as much. An athlete with limited shoulder flexibility may push the rings more to the side to facilitate rotation to the vertical position. Most athletes with moderate flexibility should finish in an inverted cross position at the peak of the backward swing. The end position is optimal when the shoulders are at or above ring level and between the rings with the feet pointed toward the top of the ring frame.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shoulders below body• Hands/Rings out to the side• Tight arch in upper shoulders• Head neutral in relation to the body, not arms• Reverse candlestick position at end of swing
<p style="text-align: center;">Back to 11-14 Still Rings : Back to 15-18 Still Rings</p>

Turnover Swing Forward
<p>The technical goal of the turnover swing forward is for the athlete to be able to show a candlestick position at the end of the swing. The major technical point on the turnover swing forward is rotate as close to vertical as possible. Increasing pressure can be applied backward and downward on the rings as long as the rotation is not inhibited. The end position is optimal when the shoulders are at or above ring level with the feet pointed toward the top of the ring frame. The body position should be hollow with the gluteus and core muscles tightened and the head forward in a neutral position. The arms may be bent or straight during this swing as long as all requirements for body position are met.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward Swing • Shoulders below body • No hip angle • Bent arms allowed • Candlestick position at end of swing
Back to 11-14 Still Rings : Back to 15-18 Still Rings
Back-uprise to ‘L’ support or Straddle “L” support
<p>The ultimate technical execution of this particular skill would be for the athlete to execute a back uprise to handstand and lower under control (power-down) to an ‘L’ support. That being said, it will be the rare individual who will be able to accomplish this at age 11. The compromise is for there to be no deduction for execution as long as the turnover rotation is above the shoulders before pressure is applied to the rings to begin the uprise. The body and arms should remain straight during the uprise and the body should swing forward in a controlled fashion to the “L” position.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on maximizing turnover swing before executing the uprise • Keep arms straight on the uprise • Controlled forward swing of the legs from the peak of the uprise into the ‘L’ support
Back to 11-14 Still Rings : Back to 15-18 Still Rings
‘L’ support and Straddle “L” support
<p>The ‘L’ support should be held with straight arms, rings turned outward beyond parallel, chin up, chest up and body oriented so that the hips are directly between the hands for the “L” or above the rings for the straddle “L”. Legs should be horizontal with knees locked out. In each sequence, there is a 3 second hold required.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms straight • Rings turned out • Legs horizontal • 3 second hold
Back to 11-14 Still Rings : Back to 15-18 Still Rings

Press to momentary Planche
<p>From a well-executed “L” support position, the athlete should move smoothly with a rounded pike body shape while opening continuously to the horizontal position. Ideally, the rings should be turned out past parallel, arms straight with the elbows “locked” and rotated forward, legs straight and toes pointed, head up. The gymnast should open to a straight extended body position directly at horizontal free of the straps entirely. The hold is required only for 1 second to place maximum emphasis on correct body positions.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
Arms straight Rings turned out Body at horizontal
Back to 11-14 Still Rings : Back to 15-18 Still Rings
Straight arm straddled press to handstand
<p>The straight arm straddled press to handstand should be executed from the ‘L’ support by drawing the hips upward with as much compression of the legs to the chest and extension in the shoulders as possible. The arms should be kept free of the rings and cables by maintaining a proper turn-out of the rings as the press is executed. The arms should not contact the top of the rings and the legs should not contact the cables at any time. The elbows should be “locked” throughout the press. In each sequence, there is a 3 second hold required.</p>
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elbows straight or “locked” • Rings turned out • Arms free of top of rings • Tight compression and extension in shoulders • Legs free of cables • 3 second hold
Back to 11-14 Still Rings : Back to 15-18 Still Rings

Bail to Front Giant

From a properly executed ring handstand without swing, the athlete must create an off-balance position by first initiating the leaning of the heels away from vertical and then deliberately pushing the rings out from under the still handstand. A degree of backward tension on the ring cables must be applied to keep the shoulders from dropping prematurely. This also helps to keep tension on the ring cables during the bail. A rounding of the chest in the candlestick position as well as tightening of the core and gluteus muscles will help the athlete to maintain ring pressure throughout the bail. Effectively executed the hips will remain in between the uprights through the bottom of the swing until the proper release point. Avoiding an early release will ensure a smoother transition through the bottom, provide a more powerful and efficient rotation on the backward swing, and prevent the gymnast from picking up swing. There are two acceptable arm variations allowable without deduction. The arms may be kept parallel or allowed to widen toward the inverted cross style candlestick position. Swing through fully extended hang position and execute an effective turnover swing with the feet rotating towards the ring cables. As the turnover rotation is completed apply pressure to the rings to allow the body to rise to the handstand position.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Body tension is critical
- Push rings in the opposite direction of the bail to initiate the bail
- Keep back pressure on the rings and strongly round the chest and upper back to create the proper candlestick shape
- Shoulder angle should be minimized if not completely eliminated

[Back to 11-14 Still Rings](#) : [Back to 15-18 Still Rings](#)

Dislocate through handstand

Optimally, the dislocate is performed exactly as a giant swing is performed and passes through the handstand without holding the handstand position. The body should transition from hollow candlestick shape and flatten out to straight as the dislocate reaches vertical with the straightest body shape occurring at vertical. The head should remain forward in a neutral position on the upward swing in order to maintain ring pressure and the vertical direction as well as to avoid arching too early.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Proper 'turnover swing' execution is critical on upward phase
- Maintain proper 'candlestick' body-shape as downward pressure is applied to the rings

[Back to 11-14 Still Rings](#) : [Back to 15-18 Still Rings](#)

Open tuck flyaway

The open tuck flyaway is performed without the hands making contact with the knees or legs in any way. The tuck action is executed by contraction of the abdominals and hip-flexors without 'helping hands' to pull the tuck in tighter. Developmentally, proper execution of this very important skill is critical in the development of multiple rotation somersaults with twists. The tuck should begin as an extension of the natural candlestick position through the chest and shoulders and continue with drawing the tuck as described above. The head position will be neutral, once again, in relation to the body shape. The shoulder angle will break somewhat in order to facilitate the roll-up action to a position above the rings. Backward and downward pressure is maintained on the rings to facilitate the rotation over the rings. The rings can be held until the body is well beyond vertical almost to the $\frac{3}{4}$ point in the rotation of the flyaway. On an exceptionally well-executed flyaway the rings will move outward and forward upon release of the rings. The legs and hips should extend (open) prior to horizontal in preparation for the landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Stay focused on proper turnover swing forward
- Round body-shape in tuck
- Keep backward and downward pressure on the rings riding the tucked position up and over the rings until body is well beyond vertical
- Open the tuck to straight body in preparation for landing before horizontal

[Back to 11-14 Still Rings](#) : [Back to 15-18 Still Rings](#)

Back giant to handstand

The back giant begins from a still handstand. The bail must be initiated by deliberately pushing the rings forward. Body tension on the first part of the bail is of paramount importance. Optimally, the body will remain straight for the first 90° of swing from the handstand with ample downward pressure kept on the rings in order to keep slack from developing in the cables. As the body approaches horizontal the chest and shoulders will extend into a tight arch position to lead through the lower vertical position. Strong pressure on the rings must continue to be applied in order to keep the hips between the uprights and avoid any premature release through the bottom. At the bottom of the swing there should be an extremely strong kick to the forward turnover candlestick position on the front swing. This action continues until the body turns over toward vertical. At this point backward and downward pressure should be applied to the rings to facilitate the body rising toward the handstand. The arms may be widened toward the inverted cross candlestick position in order to facilitate a body shape that will allow the athlete to engage as many primary movers in the anterior portion of the upper body to assist in the pushing action as the body approaches the handstand. Optimally, the body will stabilize in a controlled handstand with little to no deviation from vertical.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Straight arms throughout
- Body tension throughout
- Strong kick and follow through on forward turnover swing

[Back to 11-14 Still Rings](#) : [Back to 15-18 Still Rings](#)

Open tuck double flyaway

The open tuck double flyaway is also performed without the hands making contact with the knees or legs in any way. It is the next logical step in the development of twisting double somersaulting dismounts on rings. It is executed in exactly the same manner as the open tuck flyaway with an even more aggressive front swing turnover and tuck action. There is, of course an additional rotation, but otherwise the skill is performed with the same technique as the open tuck flyaway. The athlete should open to a fully extended position at or above horizontal in preparation for the landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Stay focused on proper turnover swing forward
- Round body-shape in tuck
- Keep backward and downward pressure on the rings riding the tucked position up and over the rings until body is well beyond vertical
- Open the tuck to straight body in preparation for landing before horizontal

[Back to 11-14 Still Rings](#) : [Back to 15-18 Still Rings](#)

Chapter 5 - Vault

Committee statement regarding skill selection:

The committee feels that the Yamashita is a critical tool to be used in the development of advanced vaulting, as well as the Handspring Pike Front for the older age group. With the caliber of vaults being done at the world-class level and our desire to remain competitive, it is absolutely critical that our nation continue to promote the Yamashita and Handspring Pike Front as the 'technical' vault that will facilitate continued refinement of the board and table mechanics necessary for our athletes to acquire vaults of a higher start-value.

The proper run, hurdle and board-strike techniques should create the maximum combination of linear and angular velocity from the board to the table. In turn, the table should be treated as an additional springboard to facilitate even more rotation and direct the athlete's center of mass in more of a vertical direction. Optimally the athlete should be close to, but just short of vertical so that the blocking action is applied as a downward push rather than a forward push. This downwards push creates the vertical direction of the center of mass without applying as much of a 'braking' action as a forward push. As the athlete's hands leave the table, the shoulders rotate strongly upwards and forwards. Now, the athlete has the optimal body-shape and velocity to either flip or twist. With the stacked mats behind the table, the athlete is free to create as much explosion and rotation to vertical as possible without being inhibited by the potential for an over-rotated landing. The landing of these technical vaults is deliberately de-emphasized in the evaluation.

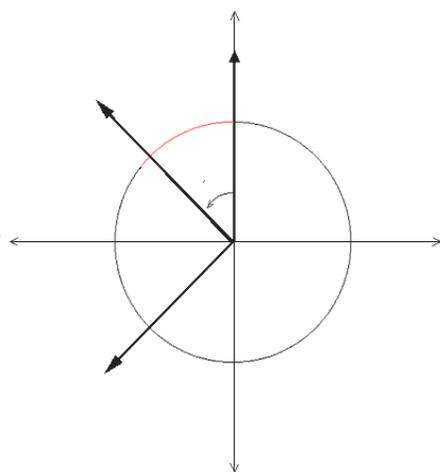
We also felt that it was important to provide the option of performing a Yurchenko vault. We recognize that some athletes are better suited for this type of vault development.

Vault 11-14 year old – Yamashita

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Run		
2. Hurdle		
3. Board strike	Hurdle and Board strike	
4. Pre-flight		
5. Block	Pre-flight and Block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight arms on contact of table
6. Post-flight	Post-flight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 135° of bend in hips • Full extension at or above horizontal
7. Landing*		

- **The landing surface is FIG matting (30cm) plus two (2) eight (8) inch skill cushions on top. *The landing will not be evaluated*

↓ 45° from top vertical / 135° from bottom vertical



↑ 135° from top vertical / 45° from bottom vertical: *Note: Pike of less than 45 degrees above bottom vertical will be treated as a composition error (-0.5) in addition to execution deductions.*

THE CHART ABOVE REFLECTS THE ANGLES FROM 180° VERTICAL : The horizontal variant is 90° in either direction. This chart may be used throughout the document for applied angles where appropriate. The vertical deviation can be used for blocking angle reference.

Note: An aborted attempt as determined by the judges will result in a 1.0 deduction (same as AGCP) and the gymnast may repeat the vault.

Specific Technical Emphasis Element (.1, .2, .3):

- #1. Continuous speed and use of arm swing or circle on hurdle (Global for Parts #1 and 2)
- #2. Body alignment at vertical position on board strike (Part #3)
- #3. Vertical block from table that results in distinct rise (Part #5)

Vault 15-18 year old – Handspring Pike Front Salto

Note: Gymnast may choose to perform either the Handspring Pike Front or the Yurchenko vault. Only one vault is to be performed.

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Run		
2. Hurdle		
3. Board strike	Hurdle and Board strike	
4. Pre-flight		
5. Block	Pre-flight and Block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight Arms
6. Post-flight	Handspring Piked Front Salto Post-Flight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 90° pike in salto
7. Landing*		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full extension prior to landing

Note: An aborted attempt as determined by the judges will result in a 1.0 deduction (same as AGCP) and the gymnast may repeat the vault.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

- #1. Continuous speed and use of arm swing or circle on hurdle (Global for Parts #1 and 2)
- #2. Body alignment at vertical position on board strike (Part #3)
- #3. Vertical block from table that results in distinct rise (Part #5)

*The landing surface is FIG matting (30cm) plus one (1) 8 inch skill cushion on top (minimum). The landing will not be evaluated. Two (2) 8 inch skill cushions are allowed.

15-18 year old – Yurchenko Stretched

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Run		
2. Yurchenko Hurdle	Yurchenko Hurdle and roundoff	
3. Yurchenko Round off		
4. Board strike		
5. Pre-flight	Yurchenko Pre-flight	
6. Block	Yurchenko Block	
7. Post-flight	Yurchenko Post-flight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowable Shapes: • Up to 15° Hollow • Straight Body • Up to 15° Tight Arch
8. Landing*		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain full extension to landing

Note: An aborted attempt as determined by the judges will result in a 1.0 deduction (same as AGCP) and the gymnast may repeat the vault.

Specific Technical Emphasis Element (.1,.2,.3):

#1. Continuous speed through hurdle to board with arms pulling down to head height on round-off (Global for Parts #2 and 3)

#2. Body alignment at vertical position on board strike (Part #4)

#3. Vertical block from table that results in distinct rise (Part #6)

**The landing surface is FIG matting (30cm) plus two (2) eight (8) inch skill cushions on top. *The landing will not be evaluated*

Vault – Yamashita & Pike Front – Technical Refinement Table:

- *Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.*

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Change Desired	Standard of Refinement
Arm swing on hurdle	Create an effective arm swing to facilitate power during the hurdle and to board contact. Arms should be behind body during peak phase of hurdle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms should go behind body at peak of hurdle
Knee lift on hurdle	Create a strong knee lift during the hurdle to help generate efficient power to and from the board. Front knee should lift to hip height.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both knees should show bending through the hurdle to the board
Board strike - Angle at contact with the board	Develop the ideal contact angle and position on the board with the body aligned (shoulders, hips and feet) and at vertical with the feet in front of the hips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body should be as close to vertical on board contact • Feet in front of hips on board contact
Body position (angle) on contact of table	The ideal position on contact of table is within 30 degrees of vertical.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacting table approaching vertical • Body should be close to straight at vertical contact
Vertical block from table	Show explosive downward block from table to significantly elevate the body from the table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be leaving table at vertical
Yamashita post flight.	11-14: Facilitate the ability to “sit up” to create rotation during the post flight stage 15-18: Same facilitation to the pike front	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a pike of 135 degrees from bottom vertical • Show a minimum 90° pike in Pike front
Show a full body extension prior to landing	Facilitate the opening of the body and showing full extension prior to the landing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show full extension of body at or above horizontal prior to landing

15-18 year old Vault – Yurchenko Stretched – Technical Refinement Table

Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Change Desired	Standard of Refinement
Efficient Round off	Arms pulling down with chest hollow, head neutral. Upper back should draw or pull backwards to full extension with legs and body. Arm position should be pulled down from vertical during flight phase of round-off	Arms remain forward of body during flight of round-off (no deduction)
Board strike - Angle at contact with the board	Develop the ideal contact angle and position on the board with the body aligned (shoulders, hips and feet) and at vertical	Body should be as close to vertical as possible upon contact of board
Body position on contact of table	The ideal position on contact of table is above 45°. Slight arch or hollow is allowed	Body position should be as close to straight as possible
Vertical block from table	Show explosive downward block from table to significantly elevate the body from the table	Shoulders lifting in a vertical direction directly off of table
Show hollow/straight/tight arch body position in post flight	Upon contact from table, shoulder and hips to rotate to either a hollow, tight arch or straight body	Depending upon the Vault being trained, the body should achieve either a slight hollow, up to 15°, Tight arch of up to 15°, or straight body
Show a full body extension prior to landing	Showing full extension in preparation for landing	Body should remain in the desired shape throughout rotation

Technical Descriptions and Coaching Points for Sequence Elements (in order of appearance)

Yamashita and Handspring Piked Front Pre-flight and Block

The goal is to rotate the body as quickly as possible from the board to the table (angular velocity). As the feet are leaving the board the arms should be swinging up and extending fully towards the table with the chest remaining hollow, the hips creating rotation first and then the heels being driven upwards. The body should continue to rotate with a tight arch position until just prior to hand contact to the table. When the hands contact the table, the body should be re-shaping to a straight body position (slight hollow or arch allowed) and be very tight in preparation for the block. The blocking action on the table should occur within 30° of vertical to facilitate a downward push as opposed to a forward block. The arms should be straight, and body tight in anticipation of an aggressive and explosive block. When the block occurs in this manner, the table is used as a secondary “springboard” and there should be a significant rise off the table at the vertical position.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Arms swing up and drive heels from tight hollow to tight arch
- Re-shape to a straight position on table contact
- Body and arms tight in anticipation of aggressive block
- Block as close to vertical as possible
- Block direction is downward

Hurdle and Board Strike

At the final step of the run, the chest will be open and the body will be arched as the final extension of the back leg is completed. As the front knee lifts up to hip height, the arms are swinging back behind the body. The second leg pushes aggressively off the floor and lifts up to join the first knee. The body should be rounded with the hips tucked under during the flight of the hurdle. With the arms back, knees up and body rounded, this creates a “loading” position to forcefully block the board. The feet should be in front of the hips when board contact is made and the shoulders, hips and feet should be aligned with the body at an angle of at least 15 degrees. The arms begin to swing forward as the legs are extending to the board. The core of the body should be extremely tight as contact to the board is made.

Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Front knee to hip height
- During knee lift, arms swing back and behind the body (arm circle is acceptable)
- Goal is to ‘load’ the body with knees up and arms back then to forcefully apply as much downward force to the board as possible
- On board-strike, feet should be in front of hips with shoulders, hips and feet aligned and body at an angle between 0-15 degrees

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Yamashita post-flight

As the body leaves the table at vertical it is fully extended. The feet should be held up and the body should forcefully transition into a pike as rapidly as possible with a strong rotation of the shoulders upward and forward toward the legs. The body should have a minimum of 135° of pike (*Tight pike 45° from the top vertical*) at the hip before forcefully re-extending into a fully stretched position by the time the body has rotated to horizontal in preparation for landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Rotate shoulders upward and forward toward knees on pike
- Open to fully extended prior to horizontal

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Yurchenko Hurdle and Round-off

The Yurchenko hurdle is performed as a normal hurdle for a round-off in floor exercise. The athlete swings the arms overhead and maintains an open shoulder angle, the front knee lifts aggressively with the back knee drawing toward the body as well. Upon contact with the back foot to the runway there should be a strong push through the entire back leg as the front knee bends, lunging enough so that hand contact is made while the front foot is still on the floor. The back leg should kick and drive overhead. The turning of the upper body should be initiated by the back shoulder turning axially upward as opposed to the front shoulder dropping axially downward into the turn. Upon contact with the runway, the first hand should be in line with the front foot. The second hand being placed slightly outside the first hand in direction of the turn with the fingers turned inward. As the first leg drives overhead the second leg should join the first leg after vertical. During the snap down phase, there should be an aggressive push off of the hands, fingers and through the wrists while pulling the arms downward off the runway to approximately shoulder height. This will shorten the body's radius of rotation and facilitate the 'turn-over' of the round-off. The body should shorten into a hollow position with the legs snapping underneath. The feet should contact the board in front of the hips with the hips tucked under, body hollow and head in neutral position. As the feet contact the springboard the arms can begin to swing overhead and backward.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Open shoulders on hurdle
- Aggressive lift of knees to body
- Strong kick of back leg
- Efficient lunge (bending) of front leg
- Strong push through the wrists and fingers as hands leave the floor
- Finish snap-down and land round-off in a hollow body shape
- Chest (ribs) in, head neutral and arms at horizontal upon contact of the feet with the springboard.

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Handspring Pike Front post-flight

Like the Yamashita post-flight, as the body leaves the table at vertical and it is fully extended. The upper body should lift up to the lower body and should forcefully transition into a pike as rapidly as possible with a strong rotation of the shoulders upward and forward toward the knees. The body remains tightly piked and rotates upward and around for one complete rotation before beginning to extend to full extension in preparation for the landing. The body should reach full extension prior to horizontal.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Leave table with straight body
- Shoulders up quickly into tight pike
- Extend body fully prior to horizontal in preparation for landing

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Yurchenko stretched pre-flight

From the springboard the body quickly transitions into a tight arch with shoulders fully extended and prepares for a back handspring style block as close to vertical as possible against the table. The head should remain neutral or slightly back as long as it does not result in a closing of the shoulder angle. The hips should be lifted upward forcefully and care taken to be in a slight tight arch in preparation for contact with the table.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Body tight
- Hips and toes up quickly to mitigate excessive arch in lower back
- Head remains neutral or slightly back

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Yurchenko Block

Like all other vaults, the direction of block should be as downward as possible. The hands will strike the table with the body straight (slight arch allowed). As the body transitions to full extension, backward and downward pressure is exerted on the surface of the table with the intention of having the body leave the table at vertical with full extension.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Tight body on block
- Arms as straight as possible
- Block downward and push through wrists and fingertips
- Anticipate block begin extension prior to contact with table

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Yurchenko stretched post-flight

As the body leaves the table it will continue to transition from completely extended into a tight slight hollow with the head neutral for the post flight (hollow shape is conducive to 'cruise' action twisting mechanics so important in higher level vaults). The body should return to full extension prior to horizontal in preparation for the landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Tight hollow body in post flight
- Head neutral
- Full extension prior to horizontal in preparation for landing

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Chapter 6 - Parallel Bars

Committee statement regarding skill selection:

On parallel bars, once again, the committee had to reduce the number of skills from the original selection in order to keep the length of the sequence manageable. We felt that the giant, peach and basic support swings were the key elements on which to focus.

The emphasis on the peach development should be to show an early drop technique (either free-hip or stalder) creating good rotation while maintaining straight arms throughout the opening and on re-grasp.

The giant was retained as this skill has tremendous future potential. The committee's desire for the giant is to see it performed with solid technique, maintaining straight arms throughout and releasing and re-grasping the bars in the same location on the bars. There was discussion about a taller athlete that would not be able to do a giant, we feel that the technique can be altered somewhat in order to enable a taller athlete to perform a giant as well. However, in the 15-18 age group allowance has been given for athletes who can demonstrate to the judge that his knees touch the floor when in a fully extended hang he may be allowed to substitute a Peach to handstand.

Specific support skills such as a Stutz and Diamidov were left out of the sequence to maintain the emphasis on proficient basic support swing. The ability of our athletes to maintain the appropriate position at the bottom of the support swing; chin up, chest neutral (not closed), and hips open is of paramount importance and was the reason for our continued focus on simply the basic swing.

There were numerous discussions on the dismount. Specifically, whether to do a layout, a pike open back or a tuck back. It was the committee position that the layout had a tendency to produce too much shoulder lean at take-off. The tuck open back facilitates a proper body position through the bottom of the swing and allows the athlete to block the bars back more effectively in order to increase lift off the bars. Once again, however, because of the recent emphasis on forward flipping dismounts in international competition an alternative has been given for the 15-18 age group sequence.

Parallel Bars 11-14 year old

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Glide kip, support swing backward to handstand	Glide swing forward Glide Kip Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight arms on glide kip • Hips above bars at peak of kip • Hold not required, but allowed
2. Support swing forward and backward to 45° above horizontal	Support swing forward Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips at elbow height at peak of front swing
3. Layaway to upper arm support	Layaway to upper arm support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No height requirement on layaway
4. Front uprise to support	Front uprise to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips elbow height at peak of front uprise
5. Swing backward to 45° above horizontal	Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bail from 45° or higher
6. *Giant swing to handstand	Giant swing to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight arms throughout giant • Hold not required, but allowed
7. Support swing forward and backward	Support swing forward Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips at elbow height at peak of front swing • No height requirement on backward swing
8. Peach basket (Felge) to support	Peach basket to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must drop to peach prior to swinging forward past vertical • Feet at or above horizontal on regrasp • Straight arms throughout peach
9. Support swing forward and backward to handstand	Support swing forward Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips at elbow height at peak of Front swing • Hold not required, but allowed
10. Support swing forward and backward	Support swing forward Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hips minimum elbows height on front swing
11. Early pirouette to handstand	Early pirouette to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate pirouette prior to vertical • 3 second Handstand hold
12. Back tuck-open salto dismount	Back tuck-open salto dismount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center of mass show distinct rise • Opening of tuck open at or above horizontal

* Hand on hand spot allowed on giant (Part #6)

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

#1. Extended straight body position shown on front swings (Parts # 2,7,10 each time)

#2. Giant swing showing no travel (Part #6)

#3. Peach basket showing no travel (Part #8)

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

Parts #1, 4, 6, 8, 11, & 12 – Glide kip, Front Uprise, Giant, Peach, Pirouette, Back Off

Parallel Bars 15-18 year old

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. Jump to upper arm support and swing to piked upper arm support 'cast' position	Upper arm support 'cast'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hips at or above bars on cast position
2. Cast forward and back uprise to handstand	Upper-arm support swing backward Back uprise to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must show 'hecht beat' action on back uprise to handstand
3. Support swing forward and backward to handstand	Support swing forward Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hips shoulder height on front swing No hold required, but allowed
4. Giant swing to handstand	Giant swing to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straight arms throughout Hold not required, but allowed
5. Support swing forward and backward to handstand	Support swing forward Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hips shoulder height on front swing Hold not required, but allowed
6. Peach basket (Felge) to support at 45° above horizontal or higher	Peach basket to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straight arms Minimum 45° above horizontal
7. Support swing forward and backward to handstand	Support swing forward Support swing backward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hips shoulder height on forward swing Hold not required, but allowed
8. Layaway to upper arm support	Layaway to upper arm support	
9. Front uprise	Upper arm support swing forward Front uprise to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front uprise must have hips swing at or above shoulder height
10. Support swing backward and hop to handstand	Support swing backward Hop to handstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold not required but allowed
11. Tuck-open back salto dismount or	Tuck-open back salto dismount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center of mass shows distinct rise Salto opens at or above horizontal
11. *Front uprise and backward swing to pike-open front salto dismount	Pike-open front salto dismount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center of mass shows distinct rise Salto opens at or above horizontal

Note: Refer to PB Exception document for substitution of Peach (Felge) to handstand for Giant in the 15-18 PB sequence for athletes who demonstrate they are too tall to perform the giant.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

- #1. Extended straight body position shown on front swings (Parts # 3,5,7 each time)
- #2. Giant swing showing no travel (Global for Part #4)
- #3. Peach basket showing no travel (Global for Part #6)

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

Parts #2, 4, 6, 9, 10 & 11 – Back Uprise HS, Giant, Peach, Front Uprise, Hop HS, Dismount

Parallel Bars - Technical Refinement Table:

Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Change Desired	Standard of Refinement
Extended shoulders and hips during glide. Deep compression on kip basket position.	Shoulders, hips and head in alignment with rounded lower back and full extension forward and upward. Finish above horizontal extended position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension in body at peak of glide • Body extended horizontal at peak of kip
Extended shoulders with hips open and hollow shape on layaway to front uprise. Shoulder extension in upper arm support swing. Avoid early kick through bottom.	Strengthen upper arm support position and create more powerful uprise kick. Increased potential for advanced skill progressions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoulders should be even or behind elbows on layaway • Body should extend at or above horizontal in front uprise
Refine body position on bail for Giant swing. Fully extended hang with head neutral at vertical. Strong round position on upward swing over hand support.	Shoulders completely extended during bail with toes leading, head in neutral position between arms. Fully extended hang position in shoulders. No hand movement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body should extend straight to slight hollow on bail • Body should show free hanging position through the bottom of the swing • Hands should regrasp in same place as release
Peach basket Hollow and rounded lower back to initiate early drop of peach with shoulders behind hands. Rotation around hand support with round position.	Early drop action begins before feet or hips pass below bar level. Head in neutral position with chin tuck at basket position at vertical. Arms straight and hands remain in contact with rails throughout the skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peach drop should initiate prior to body swinging forward past vertical • Hands should regrasp in same place as release
Early pirouette to handstand	Shoulders completely extended, hollow chest, rounded lower back, early weight shift during pirouette. Complete turn at or before vertical on the upward swing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pirouette should be initiated prior to vertical • Even rhythm throughout pirouette • Maintaining straight handstand throughout
Body continuing to swing upward while initiating salto action on dismount. Stretch to full extension at or above horizontal in preparation for landing	No forward or backward travel. Show distinct rise or lift. Show quick, clear opening of knees and hips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center of mass should show significant rise vertically • Should show full extension at or above horizontal on salto • Body should land in alignment with release position

Technical Descriptions and Coaching Points for Sequence Elements (in order of appearance)

Glide swing forward
The glide swing forward begins from a jump to a long-hang, hollow position on the bars. The shoulders should be fully extended throughout the glide swing forward. As the glide swings forward the hips and chest are extended as fully as possible to attain the greatest possible amplitude in the forward swing.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend shoulders and hips fully as the body swings forward • Apply backward pressure on the bars with the hands in order to facilitate full body extension at the end of the swing
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Glide kip
At the maximum forward and upward amplitude of the glide, the hips and shoulders pike to compress the body into a tightly piked 'basket' position as the swing passes through the bottom at vertical. This shortened radius produces an acceleration of the swing allowing the pike position to be maintained through the upward portion of the swing. Optimally, the kip should be executed as a 'jam' type action with the legs and hips. As the body transitions from hang to support above the bars, the gymnast may pass through the Manna position or a fully extended jam position finishing with an extended position at or above horizontal. Either technique is acceptable. This will enable the athlete to execute a robust and powerful backward support swing.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full extension forward and upward on glide • Show compressed basket position with head in between arms • Acceleration of upward swing to support
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Support swing backward
The well-executed backward support swing is performed with the arms turned outward and locked at the elbow. The shoulders should be relaxed enough to allow good freedom and consistency of swing. The body should be kept straight and extended with the head always neutral in relationship to the body. The core and hips should be properly tensioned to maintain a clean body line. Hips should be turned under with good gluteus tension to ensure that there is no arch or pike. As the body swings toward the handstand, the shoulders extend completely to a straight handstand position. Optimally, the support swing backward is completed without interruption in rhythm and in a handstand that could be held if necessary. The swing should have a look of power and aggressiveness as it is performed.
Coaching Points (To be emphasized in teaching / learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elbows turned outward and locked • Shoulders relaxed • Body fully extended and properly tensioned • Shoulders 'lock-out' to handstand at completion of swing • Show acceleration, power and rhythm in swing
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Support swing forward

The shoulders should be relaxed enough to allow good freedom and consistency of swing. The body should be kept as straight as possible with the head always neutral in relationship to the body. The core and hips should be properly tensioned to maintain a clean body line. As the forward swing begins the hips should remain open with the shoulders over the hands. The tight, open hip position and slight trailing of the extended legs as the chest passes through vertical support will facilitate a strong 'kick' and forward extension as the body swings toward the end of the front swing. The shoulders extend completely to a rear-support position at the full extent of the shoulder flexibility of the individual athlete. Optimally, the support swing forward is completed well above shoulder level with the shoulders over or slightly forward of the hands. The swing should have a look of power and aggressiveness as it is performed.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Elbows turned outward and locked
- Shoulders relaxed
- Body fully extended and properly tensioned
- Shoulders reach full rear support extension over hands at completion of swing
- Body extended above shoulders
- Show power and acceleration in swing

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Layaway to upper arm support

The properly executed layaway is dependent upon a good basic upper arm support position as well as upper arm swing technique. When the elbows are extended as much as possible beyond 90° and shoulders are in a position well-behind the elbows then leverage is enhanced and the ability of the athlete to properly control the upper arm support and develop strength in this position will be greatly enhanced as well. The early introduction and strengthening of the upper arm support swing is of paramount importance to the development of the front-uprise.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Push shoulders behind elbows upon contact with bars
- Maintain a tight extended body position

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Upper arm support swing forward

Upper arm support swing is very uncomfortable and as a result, is usually under-emphasized in training, particularly in younger athletes. The well-developed upper arm support swing depends on a good understanding of the upper arm support itself as described previously. In the swing forward the body is extended, tensioned and will swing forward with a tapping action through the chest and shoulders (tight hollow to tight arch). The acceleration of the downward swing will cause the shoulders to relax slightly allowing the body to sink through the bottom of the swing with the chest leading. As the body passes through the bottom of the swing there is a pulling action of the hands and downward pressure exerted by the arms on the bars as the legs kick and the body contracts to a hollow pike position. The shortening of the body will accelerate the upward swing toward vertical as far as the flexibility of the individual athlete will allow. Optimally, the full extent of the front swing will resemble a candlestick shape with the hands still in contact with the bars, the shoulders well behind the hand placement and the elbows as extended as they can possibly be.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Maintain extension in support
- Use 'tapping' action with upper chest
- Allow shoulders to relax through bottom
- Finish in candlestick position

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Front uprise to support

The front uprise to support depends greatly on a well-developed layaway and a well-developed upper arm support swing forward as previously described. From a well-executed 'tap' on the forward upper arm swing, downward and backward pressure is applied to the bars to accelerate the upward swing. As the body rises from the bars the elbows should lock out quickly to an extended position above horizontal. The skill is completed in an extended position that emulates as closely as possible, the end position of the fully extended support swing forward.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Well-executed support swing positions
- Delay 'tap' to generate power in forward kick
- Lock elbows out quickly

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Giant to handstand

The giant swing to handstand in this sequence begins from a support swing backwards to the required amplitude. The first action of the 'bail' is an extension of the shoulders coupled with an extension of the wrists. The extension of the wrists is extremely important as it properly sets the hands for success in the proper gripping action of the bars. Optimally, the athlete will bail with full extension and slight inward rotation of the wrists allowing the thumbs to extend forward to join the palm of the hand so that grip pressure is transferred from the palms to the fingers early in the swing. The fingers form a strong hook that provides a secure, consistent grip through the bottom of the swing. 'Setting' this grip early along with the full extension of the shoulders in the bail allows the gymnast to confidently execute a dynamic swing without fear of slipping. A hollow tight body position with the toes slightly leading through the horizontal point during the bail ensures proper tension. As the body approaches the lower vertical position the chest and shoulders open to a fully extended hang position. A taller athlete will need to bend his knees in order to keep them from hitting the surface of the mat, however a fully extended body position should be maintained as long as possible. The 'hang' must remain fully extended through the bottom at vertical with the head position neutral. After passing through the bottom, the body must close to shorten the radius and provide acceleration and power for the upward phase of the giant. To shorten the radius of rotation around the hands the gymnast must fold the hips, knees, head and shoulder angle into a hollow tuck position aggressively. Once again, this shortening of the body should be done with the most mechanically efficient timing and in the most aesthetically pleasing manner possible. Properly executed the swing will provide enough momentum to allow the gymnast's hands to remain on the bars as he approaches vertical and eliminate any forward travel. The stronger the closure toward vertical, the more distinct the hopping action and rise will be at the conclusion of the swing as the gymnast releases and regrips the bars in the same location. The hopping action is created by blocking backward against the bars as the remaining hollow and or any shoulder angle is extended forcefully and the legs are extended explosively to the handstand position at the top of the giant. The gymnast should finish in a straight, hollow rigid handstand position with the head in and the shoulders full extended.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Hollow body position, toes leading on bail
- Wrists rotated and extended, full shoulder extension
- Fully extended hang with head neutral or forward
- Pass through vertical before closing radius
- Keep head in or forward on upward swing in tuck
- Maintain grip contact with bars approaching vertical

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Upper arm support swing backward and uprise backward

The upper arm support swing backward begins from an extended candlestick position at the end of the upper-arm support swing forward. As the body begins to swing forward and downward, upward pressure is exerted on the bars by the hands to help accelerate the downswing. The body is fully extended until about 45° below horizontal and then begins to hollow in the chest and upper back to create a 'hecht-beat' tapping through the vertical bottom position. This tapping action releases from hollow to tight arch well beyond the bottom vertical position and the tight arch facilitates the rotation of the body. The shoulders should remain in an extended support position throughout the upper arm swing so that the arms can straighten quickly as the gymnast completes the tapping action and uprises toward the handstand.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Shoulders behind elbows in upper arm support
- Hold hollow position through bottom of swing before releasing to tight arch
- Arms straighten from upper arm support to uprise
- Uprise executed without use of strength or interruption of rhythm in the swing

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Felge or Peach basket to support

Note: There are many variations of the early drop position for a peach; from a free-hip to a deep compression inside Stalder technique of a hybrid thereof. Also, there are many factors to consider when choosing which drop technique to utilize for your athlete; age, size physical development and strength to name a few. Ultimately, the goal is a straight arm peach to HS; how your athlete achieves this end result is your prerogative. The description below is for an inside Stalder of deep compression technique.

The Felge or peach can be performed from a small back swing in support. As the body begins to swing forward the arms remain straight and the shoulders rotate backward behind the support point of the hands on the bars. The object of the early drop is to create as much distance between the hands and the hips as possible. This places the center of mass of the body as far away from the radius of rotation of the peach basket as possible. This will give the greatest mechanical advantage to whatever potential energy has been stored with the center of mass of the body prior to the drop. A good rule of thumb is to keep the hips directly under, or even behind, the shoulders as the shoulders push back behind the hands. The beginning of the drop should feel almost as if pushing back with the arms and sitting into a chair with the chest and hips rounded into a deep hollow position. As the swing progresses, the body should draw into a tightly piked, compressed basket swing and continue through the bottom attempting to bend the bars as much as possible with the force of the drop and the velocity of the turnover. As the body rotates at the bottom vertical position, the emphasis should be kept on the velocity of the circling action around the placement of the hands. The body will begin to extend at both the hips and the shoulders as the shoulders and hips continue to circle around the support position. The head should remain neutral or in the round position to prevent creating a shoulder angle and directing the momentum away from the support. The initial objective of the peach basket to support is to simply rotate upward and around the support without extending the hips toward the straight body position. It is important to down-play the extension of the shoulders and the height of completion until the early drop is well-refined and the velocity of the circling action of the shoulders is maximized. Similar to the giant swing, the hands can and ideally should remain in contact with the bars throughout the skill. Improving the efficiency of the circle during the basket swing is the primary goal of this sequence. As the peach continues to strengthen and become more refined, the athlete will be able to open

the shoulders earlier and more forcefully at the completion of the shoulder circle, eventually developing into the peach basket to handstand.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Body hollowed and tensioned with hips well behind hands at initiation of early drop
- Deep compression with neutral head position shown at bottom vertical position
- Body extends to hollowed candlestick shape as shoulders rotate upward

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Early pirouette to handstand

The early pirouette to handstand begins as any normal support swing backward to handstand. On the upward phase of the swing, weight is shifted to one bar on a stationary hand placement so that the free hand can move to the same bar as the body turns. The free hand is placed on the bar ahead of the stationary hand with a strong posting action of the arm. Weight is quickly shifted to the post arm and the additional ¼ turn of the body is completed with the stationary hand moving to the opposite bar to finish just prior to vertical (within 10°) in order to be able to control and finish in a straight handstand. The head should remain neutral with the shoulders extended throughout the turn.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Initiate pirouette on upward swing
- Complete pirouette 10° prior to handstand

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Support swing backward and hop to handstand

Once again, this begins as any normal support swing to handstand. As the body swings above horizontal the chest is slightly opened to provide the ability to create a 'pop' or rapid transition from tight arch to full extension. This is what creates the hopping action that finishes in the handstand. Optimally, the opening of the chest will be subtle and the extension and transition to full extension will be explosive and occur as close to vertical as is possible without going beyond the handstand.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Hop is initiated from tight arch as body approaches handstand
- Body extension to fully stretched position with strong downward push through shoulders creates the hop
- Body is fully extended and tensioned upon re-grasp (bars should bounce)

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Back tuck-open salto dismount

The back tuck-open salto dismount begins as any other support swing forward. In this case, the swing begins in the handstand. The bars are loaded by the force of the downswing. As the swing passes through the bottom, the hips should open and the legs trailing slightly as the chest leads through the vertical bottom position. Remaining open through the bottom of the swing will enable a strong forward kick and lift as the body swings through the extended front swing position above horizontal. From here, as the body swings upward and the radius of rotation is shortened by bending the knees. The body continues to swing upward and accelerates due to the shortening of the radius by the tucking action. The release of the bars should be triggered by the response of the bars. Optimally, this will coincide with the shoulders reaching maximum extension providing for a distinct lift or rise from the bars upon release. The body should extend from the tuck to full stretch at or before horizontal in preparation for the landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Good posture at the bottom of the swing
- Don't kick too early
- Execute the fully extended forward swing prior to tucking the legs to accelerate the rotation
- Fully extend body at horizontal prior to landing

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Pike-open front salto dismount

In this case, the swing begins in the handstand and swings forward then backward to the release. The bars are loaded downward swing. The front pike open dismount is a result of the force created on the swing identical to the hop handstand action earlier in the sequence. The release of the bars should be triggered by the response of the bars. Optimally, this will coincide with the heels driving upward and the shoulders reaching maximum extension providing for a distinct lift or rise from the bars upon release. A tight pike with the shoulders and torso compressing upward toward the feet quickly will follow the release. A sharp opening to a straight position will stop the forceful rotation and allow the gymnast to prepare for the controlled landing on the descent phase.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Fully extended front swing above horizontal
- Drive heels upward from bottom, fully extend in shoulders
- Compress to tight pike position at peak of salto
- Show significant lift and rise from bars
- Fully extend body to stop rotation at horizontal prior to landing

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Pike-open front salto dismount

In this case, the swing begins in the handstand and swings forward then backward to the release. The bars are loaded downward swing. The front pike open dismount is a result of the force created on the swing identical to the hop handstand action earlier in the sequence. The release of the bars should be triggered by the response of the bars. Optimally, this will coincide with the heels driving upward and the shoulders reaching maximum extension providing for a distinct lift or rise from the bars upon release. A tight pike with the shoulders and torso compressing upward toward the feet quickly will follow the release. A sharp opening to a straight position will stop the forceful rotation and allow the gymnast to prepare for the controlled landing on the descent phase.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Fully extended front swing above horizontal
- Drive heels upward from bottom, fully extend in shoulders
- Compress to tight pike position at peak of salto
- Show significant lift and rise from bars
- Fully extend body to stop rotation at horizontal prior to landing

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Upper arm support swing backward and uprise backward

The upper arm support swing backward begins from a piked cast position at the end of the upper-arm support swing forward. From the piked support position the legs cast forward at slightly above horizontal with the hips extended and the body in a 'tight hollow' position. Pressure on the bars is maintained at approximately a 90° or greater arm bend throughout the casting action. The gymnast then maintains a hollow in the chest and upper back while the hips draw backward to create a 'hecht-beat' hollow pike shape through the vertical bottom position. Delaying the hollow pike position through the bottom vertical as long as possible is essential to insure the body releases explosively to a 'tight arch' with the heels rising above the bars. The 'tight arch' kicking action accelerates the rotation of the lower body toward vertical as the shoulders maintain an extended support position throughout the upper arm swing. The arms then straighten quickly as the gymnast completes the tapping action and uprises quickly to the handstand with little or no use of strength.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Shoulders even with or behind elbows in upper arm support
- Hold tight hollow pike position though bottom vertical of swing before releasing to tight arch
- Arms straighten from upper arm support to uprise to handstand
- Uprise executed without use of strength or interruption of rhythm in the swing

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Chapter 7 - Horizontal Bar

Committee statement regarding skill selection:

The USA is the best team in the world on high bar. Our athletes are willing to take more risk and as a result we have developed and refined release elements that most countries have not attempted. With this in mind, this committee feels that we can continue to separate ourselves from our competition by continually reinforcing the ability to feel the bottom of the swing (tap and hang), and to be able to find the handstand position for entry and exit to turning and in-bar elements. It is also important to reduce the number of giant swings in our routines. The ability to 'find the handstand' will help to allow our athletes to directly connect more turning and in-bar elements without having to add giant swings.

The committee also feels the need to provide incentive to develop the 'Hecht' tap. The 'Hecht' tap has been overlooked in our junior program to this point and has great developmental importance in multiple element groups. The incorporation of the 'Hecht' tap back uprise as a mount was placed into the sequences for that reason.

The "Chinese" tap is also of vital developmental importance. The toe-on, toe-off was included as a developmental drill for the 'Chinese' tap. The properly executed toe-on, toe-off will help to create the forward push into the tap, which creates the momentum of the snap of the body over and behind the bar into the tapping of the dismount.

In addition, the thought was that too many athletes are forgetting how to feel the hanging position through the bottom of the swing and tapping action of a traditional layout dismount; either while performing a dismount or during the development of the "Chinese" tap. Therefore, we felt it necessary to keep our athletes accountable for the continued development of a well-tapped layout flyaway.

Horizontal Bar 11-14 year old

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. In overgrip, stemme to hecht-tap back uprise	Hecht-tap back uprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back Uprise finishes 45° above horizontal • Must show hecht tap
2. Swing and hop ½ turn to handstand	Hop ½ turn to handstand	
3. One backward giant to	Backward giant	
4. Swing ½ turn to handstand	Swing ½ turn to handstand	
5. One backward giant to	Backward giant	
6. Swing to blind change to handstand	Blind change	
7. Two forward giants to immediate	Forward giant	
8. Early pirouette to handstand	Early pirouette	
9. Two backward giants to immediate	Backward giant	
10. Early toe-on, toe-off	Early toe-on, toe-off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toe on toe off finishes 45° above horizontal
11. One backward giant	Backward giant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese tap allowed
12. Layout flyaway	Layout flyaway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center of mass at or above bar height

Note: On all listed parts: Incorrect grip deduction is (-0.2) a medium deduction each time.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

#1. Smooth and rhythmical swing shown throughout routine (Global for entire sequence)

#2. Straight body line on giant swings to handstand (Parts #3, 5, 7)

#3. Dismount shows vertical direction and control (Part #12).

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

Parts #1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 – Hecht beat uprise, Hop ½ turn, Swing ½ turn, Blind change, Early Pirouette, Toe on Toe off, Layout flyaway.

Horizontal Bar 15-18 year old

Description	Technical Reference Item	Performance Criteria Per FIG (.1, .2, .3)
1. In overgrip, stemme to hecht-tap back uprise to immediate pirouette to handstand	Hecht-tap back uprise and pirouette	• Must show hecht tap
2. One backward giant to free-hip handstand to	Backward giant Free-hip to nominal handstand	
3. Swing hop ½ turn to handstand	Swing hop ½ turn to nominal handstand	
4. One backward giant, Giant with Blind change to handstand, one forward giant	Backward giant Blind change Forward giant	
5. Forward giant to immediate early pirouette to double undergrip to handstand (reverse direction)	Forward giant Early pirouette to double undergrip (reverse direction)	
6. Forward giant to immediate Endo	Forward giant Endo	• Endo finishes in handstand
7. Forward giant with early pirouette to handstand to one backward giant	Forward giant Early pirouette Backward giant	
8. Backward giant with toe-on, toe-off (piked or straddled)	Backward giant Early toe-on, toe-off	• Toe on toe off finishes 45° above horizontal
9. 1 to 3 backward giants to		• Chinese tap allowed
10. Layout flyaway or	Layout flyaway	• Center of mass above bar height
10. Tuck open double back flyaway dismount or	Tuck open double back flyaway	• Center of mass above bar height • Opening of tuck salto at or above horizontal
10. Double layout flyaway	Double layout flyaway	• Center of mass above bar height

Note: On all listed parts: Incorrect grip deduction is (-0.2) a medium deduction each time.

Specific Technical Emphasis Elements (.1,.2,.3):

#1. Smooth and rhythmical swing shown throughout routine (Global for entire sequence)

#2. Loading the bar at downward vertical in the hang position (Part #10)

#3. Dismount shows vertical direction and control (Part #10)

Major Elements – 2.0 Value:

All Parts # 1 through #8, Part # 10 - Dismount

Technical Refinement Table:

Note: Techniques as recommended by the conjunction of the Technical Sequence Writing Committee and the Junior National Coaching Staff.

Attribute Identified to Effect Change	Change Desired	Standard of Refinement
Proper hecht tap	Create a hecht tap using the upper back and shoulder extension arch, then hollow thru bottom and finally a powerful heel kick to HS or pirouette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing good hang and tapping action through the bottom of the swing
Showing control coming in to and out of bar	Control the free-hip and understand how to shift weight from support on shoulders, generate turnover and finish in HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing strong turnover through shoulders • Shoulders staying down through turnover to handstand
Turnover and body position on hop ½, swing ½ turn and blind change	Understand the hang position and how to create turnover using hip extension thru bottom, toes up to candlestick position and direction of kick to hop ½, swing ½ turn or blind change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simultaneous release and regrasp on hop ½ turn • Showing control into and out of handstands • Showing square regrasping on all turns
Identifying the top of the bar and correct “hang” position on backward giants	Understand how to maintain pressure on the bar during support and descent phases. Identify how to “hang” through the bottom efficiently and where the turnover occurs and how. Identify where the top of the bar is and how to achieve a straight HS position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving handstand position at the top of every giant • Achieving a relaxed hang through the bottom of every giant
Identifying the top of the bar and correct body position on forward giants	Understand how to maintain pressure on the bar during support and descent phases. Identify how to “hang” through the bottom efficiently and create an extended lifting up action to the HS position. Identify where the top of the bar is and how to achieve a straight HS position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving handstand position at the top of every giant • Achieving a relaxed hang through the bottom of every giant
Weight shift and blocking of bar on pirouette	Understand how to shift weight and wrist to block the bar and square up the pirouette early and finish in the HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving square regrasping in and out of handstand
Proper Endo technique	Understand how to maintain an open shoulder angle for first phase of Endo, as well as compression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legs free of the bar in a deep compression • Maintaining swing into and out of Endo
Create Chinese tap technique w/ toe-on/off	The early toe-on, toe-off technique can facilitate the understanding of the Chinese tap for higher level dismounts. Exit with hollow position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar being pulled down during the bottom of the toe on toe off • Shoulders remain down throughout opening phase of toe on toe off
Correct dismount tap	Understand the pressure on the descent into the tap. The “hang” and “drag” through the bottom, then an aggressive kick upwards for an efficient tap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center of mass above bar height • Control throughout the rotation of either of the saltos performed

Technical Descriptions and Coaching Points for Sequence Elements (in order of appearance)

Hecht-tap back uprise

The hecht tap begins after the stemme and is completed to its prescribed end position. This end position may be anywhere from above horizontal to the handstand; the higher the better. The body should be fully extended until horizontal on the downswing. At horizontal on the downswing, the heels begin to lead the swing with back pressure exerted against the bar by the hands ensuring a smooth tight arch from the knuckles to the toes. The heels continue to lead until just prior to the bottom of the swing. At this point, the hips relax and the body draws backward in a hollow piking action through the bottom dragging with a lead through the upper back and shoulders and releasing into a tight arch and secondary heel drive toward the handstand. This secondary heel drive shortens the body and creates a turnover action that will accelerate the body toward the handstand. As the handstand is approached, the body flattens to a fully extended position .

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Arch through upper-back and shoulders on downswing
- Hollow body with drawn upper-back through the bottom of the swing
- Heel drive to tight arch toward the handstand
- Shoulders stay down as heels drive
- Head remains neutral as a natural extension of the upper back.

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Swing hop ½ turn to handstand

The swing hop ½ turn begins as any back giant does with the identical tapping action through the bottom of the swing. The difference begins with the tap on the up-swing. In the case of the hop ½ turn (like the swing ½ turn), the feet must kick to the side of the desired turn. The turn is initiated by this tapping action to the desired direction of turn. As the body approaches the handstand the bar is released and the body shows flight with a 180° turn. The body extends from hollowed upon release to completely extended on the turn to facilitate the turning action on the longitudinal axis of the body. As the turn is completed, the athlete re-grasps the bar with a blocking action in the handstand with a straight fully extended body. The body should be properly tensioned as in any correct handstand. When performed correctly, there will be a visible lifting flight during the turn and the bar will bounce as the blocking action of the re-grasp is executed.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Create turnover from good hip extension through the bottom of the swing
- Kick and lead toes in the direction of turn
- Maintain hollow position and open shoulder angle throughout turn

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Giant swing backward

The giant swing backward begins from an extended handstand. As the body rotates down, maximum extension and body-tension is maintained to and through the first 90° of the swing to horizontal. At horizontal, the toes begin to lead the swing a bit as the body shapes into a hollow in preparation for the tap. As the body nears the bottom vertical position, the shoulders should fully extend downward, not forward. The chest and hips open to facilitate the 'drag' action of the body through the bottom of the swing. After the body passes through the bottom vertical position, the body will kick strongly into a hollow with a distinct toe-lead once again turning over to shorten the radius of rotation of the skill and accelerate the body upward toward the handstand once again. The wrist should shift as early as possible in order to attain pressure and to facilitate the transition from hang to support. The body extends once again from hollow to full extension as the body approaches the handstand. The head position should remain neutral throughout the entire giant.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Hollow and extend away from bar on downswing
- Maintain pressure against the bar
- Create hang position at bottom with shoulders stretching downward (not forward)
- Turnover with toes leading towards vertical into candlestick position
- Shift wrists upward to maintain pressure on the bar as body approaches handstand
- Finish in straight handstand with support

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Swing ½ turn to handstand

Like the swing hop ½ turn, the swing ½ turn begins as any back giant does with the identical tapping action through the bottom of the swing; the difference is with the tap on the up-swing. In the case of the swing ½ turn, the feet must kick to the side of the desired turn. The turn is initiated by this tapping action to the desired direction of turn. The turning arm must remain straight with the wrist shifted and be positioned to apply constant pressure against the bar during the course of the turn. Optimally as the body approaches the handstand the body turns smoothly as the tap is completed and the body extends from hollow to straight once again. As the turn is completed, the athlete re-grasps the bar with a blocking action in a mixed grip exerting direct forward and downward pressure on the bar equally with both hands. Optimally, the skill will be completed in handstand with a straight fully extended body. The body should be properly tensioned as in any correct handstand. Since the turn is going to come back down on the same side of the bar, the undergrip hand will turn back to overgrip at the completion of the skill. Mastery of the swing ½ turn is critical in the development of a good blind change

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Lead with toes in direction of turn
- Maintain hollow body during turn
- Keep good pressure on bar as turn progresses
- Maintain open shoulder angle and neutral head position

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Blind Change to handstand

The well-executed blind change is technically identical to the swing ½ turn described above. The only difference is the completion to a double undergrip with both wrists shifted.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Lead with toes in direction of turn
- Maintain hollow body during turn
- Keep good pressure on bar as turn progresses
- Maintain open shoulder angle and neutral head position
- Finish in double undergrip

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Giant swing forward

The giant swing forward begins from an extended handstand. As the body rotates down, maximum extension and body-tension is maintained to and through the first 90° of the swing to horizontal. As the body nears the bottom vertical position, the shoulders should relax as much as possible to allow the deepest 'hang' possible at the bottom of the swing. After the body passes through the bottom vertical position, the body will round into an extended hollow. On the upswing, the body remains extended with pressure exerted against the bar. There should be a distinct well-extended lifting of the upper-back to continue to shorten the radius of rotation of the skill and accelerate the body forward and upward toward the handstand once again. The wrist should shift early as the body approaches the handstand, and remain as extended as possible in order to facilitate the transition from hang to support. The body extends once again from hollow to full extension as the body approaches the handstand. Optimally the shoulders will remain as extended as possible and positive pressure exerted against the bar for the entire support phase of the skill, both on the downswing and the upswing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- On downswing, shoulders open, good extension up and away from bar
- Create sink through bottom by relaxing / extending shoulders
- On the upswing, maintain pressure and extension away from the bar
- Strong hollow body shape lifting with the upper-back
- Shift the wrists and maintain open shoulder angle
- Finish in straight handstand with support

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Early pirouette to handstand

The early pirouette begins as any other forward giant. As the body rises in a hollow shape on the upward swing, the athlete must begin to shift weight in the desired direction of the turn. The wrist of the turning arm is shifted upward to gain support as early as possible in the upward phase of the giant. Positive forward and downward pressure is exerted against the bar as the body begins to turn 180° on turning arm. It is critical that there be constant pressure against the bar during this turn. The body will transition from hollow to fully extended during the course of this turn. This extension of the body will lengthen the radius of rotation, moderating the velocity of the giant and allow better control of the finishing position (nominal handstand). The direction of pressure must transition from downward and forward in the hollow to downward and sideward during the ¼ turn point. Here, the body has transitioned from a tight hollow to a tight side arch on its way to completely extended. Optimally the skill is started and completed on the upward phase of the giant swing. It is better to finish this skill in a bit of a hyper-extended tight arch just short of the handstand with enough momentum remaining to swing smoothly through the handstand, than to allow the body to pass the plane of the bar with an incomplete turn finishing beyond the handstand.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Early shift of wrist upward to attain support
- Shift of weight to post arm during upswing
- Open shoulder angle maintained during turn
- Maintain pressure against bar during turn
- Head remains neutral

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Early toe-on, toe-off

The early toe-on, toe-off is recognized by this committee as being an essential step in the development of the 'Chinese' or 'pull-over' tap for horizontal bar dismounts. It begins as a normal giant swing backward. As the body passes through the lower vertical position, the chest and hips open pushing forward and upward to a very aggressive hollowing action through the chest and shoulders as well as a rounding action through the hips. The shoulders should remain as extended as possible with the back being round with ribs in, and hips turned under. This should be an aggressive action with the intent of bending the bar upward, away from the floor. The toes are pointed directly toward the bar with the soles of the feet lightly making contact just below the balls of the feet. The toes remain pointed to facilitate staying in contact with the bar through the bottom of the 'sole-circle' action. If correctly performed, the 'sole-circle' action will be very fast and there will be more than enough power in the swing to very easily allow the feet to release from the bar and the body will un-fold from the pike and extend once again. It is important to note that although this skill is allowed to be done in a straddle, it should be a very narrow straddle in order to allow the piking action to be the primary focus. The more efficient the rounding and piking action is, the less need for straddling the legs. The narrower the straddle, the further the center of mass of the body remains from the bar.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Good shoulder and hip extension through the bottom of the swing
- Aggressive rounding to pike action to place toes onto bar
- Open to extended position at 45° or higher as the sole-circle is completed

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Layout flyaway

The layout flyaway begins just as any other giant swing backward. As the body nears the lower vertical position the 'hang' and 'drag' phase of the giant is performed with the same technique as the backward giant (shoulders extended downward, chest and hips open) but it happens a bit earlier than on that of the rhythm of the giant or giant swings to prepare for the dismount. As the tap is performed and the bar bends in response to the shortening of the radius of rotation, the athlete should hold this shape until the bar responds in kind. The response of the bar is the cue for the release of the bar. When the bar is released, the body remains in exactly the same tightly extended hollowed shape as it was at the completion of the kick for the tap. The fingers of the hands should be the only body part to move as the bar is released. The response of the bar combined with the direction of the kick to a proper hollow position will launch the gymnast upward above the bar with the required direction and rotation. Optimally, as the body leaves the bar, the hollow position should be held to the peak of the flyaway flight. As the body rotates past vertical there should be a slight extension from tight hollow to stretched and beyond to the tight arch. Thereafter, the body is stretched to full extension. The arms should be lifted along with the chest and shoulders in preparation for the landing of the flyaway.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Maintain well-extended hollow on downswing
- Create 'hang' through bottom vertical position by relaxing and stretching shoulders downward and not forward
- Turnover with toes leading toward vertical into a candlestick body shape
- Release the bar while maintaining hollow body shape
- Extend body completely and beyond into slight tight arch
- Extend body with arms overhead in preparation for landing

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Hecht-tap back uprise and pirouette to handstand

The hecht tap begins after the stemme is completed to its prescribed end position. This end position may be anywhere from above horizontal to the handstand; the higher the better. The body should be fully extended until horizontal on the downswing. At horizontal on the downswing, the heels begin to lead the swing with back pressure exerted against the bar by the hands ensuring a smooth tight arch from the hands to the toes. The heels continue to lead until just prior to the bottom of the swing. At this point, the hips relax and the body draws backward in a hollow piking action through the bottom dragging with a lead through the upper back and shoulders and releasing into a tight arch and secondary heel drive toward the handstand. This secondary heel drive shortens the body and creates a turnover action that will accelerate the body toward the handstand. The direction of the secondary heel drive should be in the desired direction of the pirouette. As the handstand is approached, the body flattens and the post arm hand turns to undergrip. With the post arm wrist shifted, exert downward pressure against the bar as the turn begins. The body continues to turn as the heel drive (arch) becomes a side arch and eventually to a tight upper back arch as the turn is completed. Optimally, the skill should be completed to a fully extended position in a handstand.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Arch through upper back and shoulders on downswing
- Hollow body with drawn upper back through the bottom of the swing
- Heel drive to tight arch toward the handstand
- Shoulders stay down as heels drive in the desired direction of turn
- The wrist is shifted up and pressure is maintained on the bar by the post arm during the entire turn
- Complete the turn in a handstand

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Free-hip to handstand

The free-hip to handstand is one of two in-bar skills in the 15-18 year sequence. The free-hip begins in the handstand. As the body leaves the handstand, the first action is a breaking of the shoulder angle. The body should remain completely extended from shoulders to toes. As the body continues to fall, there should be an early-drop type of shortening of the body, very similar to the action of the peach basket on parallel bars. The difference is that the body remains in an extremely tight extended hollow position from shoulders to toes. The hips and gluteus musculature must be as tight as possible to maintain an efficient hollow position. As the body nears the lower vertical position there is a strong turnover action to a tightly hollowed candlestick position that should be held as the body passes underneath the bar. When performed with proper aggression, this drop will bend the bar quite a bit. Once again, the response of the bar will return energy to the body and will help to propel the center of mass in its elliptical up and down path around the bar and back toward the handstand. The opening of the shoulders along with an early and efficient wrist shift, is a critical timing issue and must be properly executed in order to ensure a completion to the handstand. Optimally, the body will transition from a tight hollow to full extension as the shoulders un-fold and open to the handstand.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Control shoulders on top of bar
- Drop shoulders back to initiate speed of early-drop
- Maintain body hollow and tension through bottom and on opening
- Pull bar aggressively on open while shifting wrists with head neutral
- Finish in a handstand

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Endo

The Endo is the other in-bar skill in our 15-18 sequence. It also begins from the handstand, this time in under-grip. As the body begins to rotate forward from the handstand the shoulders and hips should remain as extended as possible for several degrees of rotation. The further the center of mass of the body is kept from the radius of rotation (the hands on the bar) the better. Optimally, the body will pike at the hips and the shoulders will remain extended as much as possible during the first 90° of rotation. At 90°, the more distance the center of mass is from the hands, the more the mechanical advantage and the more appropriately distributed momentum the skill will have at this point. As the body circles down toward the bottom vertical position, the shoulder angle must increase to allow the body to compress in to a straddled pancake position. Optimally, the body will reach maximum compression just past the bottom vertical position. The arms will be fully extended and the upper back and hips as rounded as possible into a hollow. As the skill continues to circle upward, care must be taken to allow the compression to subside slowly as the shoulder circling action continues backward and upward toward support. As in the forward giant, the chest remains hollowed and there is a deliberate lifting of the upper-back and shoulders toward support. The shoulders open first, the wrist shift on top of the bar and the legs pancake widely to extend and close in the handstand. The well-performed Endo is a by-product of a strong well-controlled drop into a basket-style compression at the bottom. When performed with proper aggression, like the free-hip, it will bend the bar quite a bit. As the bar responds it will return energy to the body and help to propel the center of mass toward the handstand.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Keep hips far from bar on drop
- Attempt to bend bar through the bottom
- Early wrist shift upward with strong drawing of shoulders upward and over the bar
- Roll smoothly up to handstand with wide 'pancake' action of legs
- Finish in a handstand

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Tuck Open Double and Double Layout Flyaway

The Tuck Open Double Flyaway is a continuation of the evolving tapping and lifting action described in the layout flyaway section while adding the initiation of the rotation to a double salto. The giant swings leading to the dismount should encourage an increasingly powerful tapping action to bend the bar downward significantly in the hang phase. A sharp kicking action through the vertical release point on the upward swing as the bar rebounds upward will follow. With correct timing of these actions, an accelerated rotation and vertical lift allows the gymnast to open quickly to a straight position at the peak of the double flyaway. The gymnast may perform the tuck with hands on or off the knees. The opening to straight position will stop the rotation of the flip and allow the gymnast to prepare for a controlled landing from the descent. The double layout flyaway utilizes the same lead-ups described above. On release, the body shape is hollow and the shoulders stay down with head neutral. As the body rotates the first $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ rotation, the athlete has the option to maintain a hollow position or stretch to a tight arch for the remaining rotations to completion and preparation for landing.

Coaching Points

(To be emphasized in teaching / learning)

- Pull across bar to hollow pike position leading to tap
- Create 'hang' through bottom vertical position by relaxing and stretching shoulders downward and not forward
- Turnover with toes and knees leading toward vertical into a candlestick body shape
- Release the bar while maintaining hollow body shape
- Extend body completely and beyond into slight tight arch
- Extend body with arms overhead in preparation for landing

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