**During a Meet**

**What should I expect at my first meet?**

* You are expected to arrive minimum of 30 minutes prior to march-in or the report time indicated by the Meet Referee. Failure to arrive at the designated time may result in a fine being deducted from your check. Report time for state meets and higher is generally one hour prior to march-in.
* When entering the gym, you may ask the workers at the gate where the judges room is located. The other judges assigned to the meet will also be reporting to this room.
* As a new face, the other judges will help you feel welcome and answer any questions you have about the structure of the meet.
* Prior to the meet, the Meet Director or Meet Referee will go over the logistics of the meet (ie: how we are going to write down scores, who our flashers will be, and any other information we will need to know specific to that competition)
* The Meet Referee will then confirm that all judges understand event assignments and responsibilities during the competition. If you have any questions, this is the time to ask.
* It is a good idea to visit with the other judge who is assigned to your events. During this time you can discuss the event requirements and help to ensure you are both on the same page.
* Once on the competition floor, it is helpful to have reference cheats available, plenty of paper, and an extra pen. The Chief Judge will check with the runners and flashers understand their responsibilities. If you are judging by yourself, you will want to do this.
* Once competition begins, you are responsible to judge each gymnast fairly and consistently. You are required to perform your judging functions according to the USA Gymnastics Rules & Polices, membership policies and the USA Gymnastics Code of Ethics

NOTE: If during the competition, there is a long waiting time between rotations or teams, you may want to have a meet volunteer locate the Meet Director so you can make him/her aware of the situation. While there may be nothing that can be done, often times making the Meet Director aware of this situation prompts coaches to make sure they are being as efficient as possible to keep the meet on schedule. During times between judging gymnasts, you should maintain a professional image by avoiding doing “non-judging” activities.

**What is an inquiry form?**

* If during the competition, a coach would like more information about a score, they may inquire. There are particular ways a coach should complete an inquiry form based on USA Gymnastics Rule & Policies.
* The inquiry form is completed by the coach and turned into the Meet Referee or Meet Director. After reviewing the form, they will bring the event table.
* The Chief Judge reviews the inquiry and then will generally call a conference with the Acting Judges. During this time the Chief Judge will asks the Acting Judges specific information about the routine. The Chief Judge completes the inquiry, indicates whether there was any adjustment in the score, signs the form, and returns the form to the Meet Referee or Director.
* It is the responsibility of the Chief Judge to complete the inquiry form and lead any conferences.
* More information about inquiries is available in the USA Gymnastics Rules & Policies and all judges should be familiar with this information.

**What do I wear, is there a dress code?**

* Yes, there is a dress code at all sanctioned meets. The Meet Director will note on a contract whether an official uniform is required (navy blue pants/skirt, white blouse, NAWGJ jacket, and closed-toe shoes).
* During “themed” meets, the Meet Director may request you dress in themed clothing. However, the attire must follow USA Gymnastics Rules & Policies for allowable clothing during a sanctioned event (ie: no jeans, open-toes shoes, etc.)
* Sometimes it can be very cold during a gymnastics meet when you are sitting still for hours – please dress accordingly. Many judges wear layers. Judges should still look as much in uniform as possible at all times.
* At all times, a judge should look and act professional.

**What is the difference between a Meet Referee, chief judge, and acting judge?**

* In order of ranking:
	+ Acting Judge: a judge on a > 2 panel assignment, responsible for judging each gymnast during the competition and providing the score to the Chief Judge. An acting judge can be affiliated.
	+ Chief Judge: This judge is responsible for averaging the gymnast’s final score, reporting the score to the score table, and maintaining accurate records of all gymnast’s numbers in case a score needs to be referenced. There are also “Chief Judge Deductions” that may be taken from a final score (ie: out of bounds, overtime, inappropriate attire, etc.). There is a list of the Chief Judge Deductions in the judge’s reference information. The Chief Judge cannot be affiliated. They are also responsible for calling a conference and completing any inquiries.
	+ Meet Referee: The Meet Referee acts as a liaison between the judges and the Meet Director and coaches. The Referee provides information to the judges on the logistics of the meet, handles all inquires, and assists judges when needed during unusual situations. At most large invitational’s and at state, regional, and national competitions, the Meet Referee is not judging and is available to assist judges during the competition.

**How do I know about any updates to the routines and/or rules?**

* As a USA Gymnastics judge it is your responsibility to be prepared at each meet with updated rules. However, the MO NAWGJ assists with communicating changes through email and posts the updates on the MONAWGJ website.
* Any changes/updates are also printed in the ‘Technique’ magazine and is posted on USA Gymnastics’ website.

**What conversations should and should NOT be held at the judging table?**

* While limited conversation occurs during a gymnastics meet, there are times when there is “down-time” (ie: during rotation changes, warm-ups, etc.). It is VERY important judges maintain a professional image at all times, including conversations.
* Often, the judging tables are surrounded by volunteer parents, other coaches, teammates of gymnasts, siblings, etc. Therefore, judges must be sensitive and aware of their surroundings, and avoid topics related to the current meet, past/future meets, or any other inappropriate conversation.

**What should my relationship be with coaches and gymnasts as a judge during a meet?**

* Whether a judge has an affiliation at a meet or not, the relationship with all gymnasts, coaches, spectators should be the same.
* It is acceptable to be friendly and have a brief conversation with coaches/gymnasts during a competition; however, it should be similar to all and not APPEAR to hold bias towards any particular person/team. Perception of gymnasts, coaches, and spectators if very important for our image and reputation. A judge should not initiate any conversation with a coach or gymnasts.
* If a coach has a question about the routine or score and approaches the judging table, they should be instructed to submit an inquiry.
* Again, it is important we maintain a professional image and portray fairness and integrity during a meet. However, a friendly smile, a polite hello, and friendly laugh are absolutely ok…after all, we are human!