



Concept and Proposal for the Junior Olympic Program
Target for implementation: 2011 – 2012 Season
Prepared by the Men's Program Staff
July 29, 2010

Overview:

The men's program has reached the point where diversity and the difficulty of the rules (Code of Points) dictate a new approach to our development and competition structures. For many years participant numbers more than anything else dictated a single competitive program design. This single track program model tried to meet the needs of all athlete participants from the lowest to highest talent levels.

The first step in changing this paradigm occurred in 1996 when Junior National Team selection for athletes in the 14 to 18 age ranges moved from the Junior Olympic National Championships to the U.S. Championships. This single change spurred training and development changes that paid huge dividends less than two quadrennial later as the athletes who participated on the junior team through this new model moved to the senior program. This has been clearly demonstrated through the sustained international competitive success that has been achieved since 2005.

However; social evolution and international competitive rule changes continue to put pressure on the basic junior program competitive structure. There is now widespread agreement that the formatting within the Junior Olympic program needs to evolve to the next level both for the sake of athlete recruitment and retention in the areas of the general competitive program and for increased effectiveness in elite athlete development.

On the general age group side we need programs that emphasize access, success and long term retention for athletes who enjoy the sport but who may not be interested in or able to achieve elite competition levels.

On the elite side it is evident that our current program innovations have given the US a sustained medal competitive program at the World and Olympic level; but not necessarily a Gold Medal competitive program. In order to achieve this goal, the elite program must evolve to a higher level of excellence.

Given the current international competitive rules and the diversity of the talent levels we are trying to service, the only objective solution is to engineer a split between the general age group competitive program and the elite "national team" development program.

The question is how to do this in a manner that is effective and provides athlete and program incentives in both development tracks. Our goal is to achieve progress in both tracks while maintaining a structure which is practical from a time management perspective as well as cost effective for participants.

There is also one final overall program component that must be considered. It is important to provide for an entry level program which encourages young boys to start gymnastics as recreational students and then transition to meaningful competitive gymnastics.

The following describes the basic concepts and needs that have been identified in order to fulfill the overriding objectives.

Program Objectives/Focus

Entry Level Program: Currently encompassed by Basic Skills Achievement Program:

- Provide a developmentally sound and progressive beginning curriculum for entry level recreational instruction boys.
- Provide a progressive program that promotes a “play the game” focus from the beginning of a boy’s gymnastics learning experience by creating opportunities to participate in challenging gymnastics performance activities.
- Create a program which flows logically and developmentally into the age group competitive program.

Age Group Competitive Program:

- Provide a meaningful competitive experience for all junior male competitors regardless of age or ability level.
- Recognize coaches education and support as the key to athlete development and adequately support that mission
- Provide developmentally sound and progressive competitive levels which focus on long term development and athlete retention
- Develop team oriented atmosphere and competition especially for high school age athletes.
- Promote both All Around and Individual Event competitive opportunities.
- Provide state, regional and national level competition opportunities at appropriate age levels for both teams and individuals.
- Allow athletes, coaches and programs to more effectively manage their entire boys team program through a variety of competitive choices

Elite Development Program:

- Provide an elite training and competitive track that promotes development from the early age to competitively successful integration to the senior elite level for talented and motivated athletes.
- Recognize coaches education and support as the key to elite athlete development and adequately support that mission
- Provide Regional Elite Development training and competition opportunities that mirror the national team program.
- Focus on international competitive success
- Select National Teams based on elite competitive rule or elite development rule competitions (i.e. – events which are beyond the scope of the Junior Olympic age group program)

The chart on the following page provides a visual look at Junior Olympic Program Components

Junior Olympic Program Structure

Recreational Boys Program		
Entry Level Program		
Learning / “Competitive” Component	Educational Component	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels 1 to 3 which feature entry level curriculum currently encompassed by the “Basic Skills Achievement” program. • A recreational competitive program designed for intra & inter-club competition and performance opportunities accessible to the entry level participant which help to motivate and prepare boys for transition to the age group competition program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Coaches Workshop • National and Regional Congresses • Regional and State camps • USA Gymnastics University • Coaches certification 	
Age Group Competition Program		
Level 4 to 10 (current) Age Group Competition consisting of compulsory, modified optional and modified FIG competition		
Competitive Component	Educational/Training Component	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Championships – Club Team, Regional Team, AA and IE competition • Regional Championships – Club team, AA and IE components • State Championships – Club Team, AA and IE components • Qualification events where needed • Sanctioned age group invitational meets and events - Club team, AA and IE components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Coaches Workshop • National and Regional Congresses • Regional and State training camps • USA Gymnastics University • Coaches certification 	
Elite Development		
Competitive Component	National Teams	Educational/Training Component
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Competition • US Championships • National Qualifier • Winter Cup Challenge • “Elite” and/or Regional Development Team level competitions • Future Stars Program • Sanctioned elite rules competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jr Elite: 14 – 18 (14-17 in 2013) • Selected at US Championships • Jr National: 12 -13 • Selected at National Qualifier • Future Stars: 10-12 • Selected at Future Stars Championships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Team training Camps • Regional Elite Development training camps • National Coaches Workshop • National and Regional Congresses • USA Gymnastics University • Coaches certification

The following information reflects intense work of the Junior Olympic National Championships Format Committee, the Junior National Coaching Staff and the Junior Olympic Program Committee over the past 12 months to meet the goals and objectives previously stated for the men's program. This proposed Optional Age Group Competition format is an effort to achieve the stated goals in an efficient and cost effective manner which allows for increased opportunities and for coaches and athletes to effectively manage their individual goals, training structure and level of competition.

It is important that coaches review and consider the information contained in this proposal very carefully. Also, please understand that this presented proposal is the result of hundreds of hours of work by committee members who very thoroughly considered virtually every imaginable scenario for the Junior Olympic Program along with their myriad variables to arrive at this proposal. It should also be noted that this proposal attempts to address the difficult issues of athlete development, athlete and coach time commitment and economic factors in an efficient and progressive manner. Invariably continued review and adjustment will be required in order to address changing needs as the program evolves.

We are now at a point where we can begin to move forward towards implementation but the work is not yet finalized. Constructive input from the coaching community which may offer improvements to the proposed structure within the framework of our objectives is welcomed by the committee for consideration.

Other areas of the junior men's program currently under review and development:

- Basic Skills Achievement Program: This program is currently under review for reorganization, modernization and incorporation into a more expanded recreational boy's development program.
- Age Group Compulsory routines for Levels 4 – 7: A working committee group is being formed to develop the compulsory structure for the next 4 to 8 years. The men's program would like to hear from coaches on their ideas for compulsory routine elements for these levels as well as any other rule change or competitive format suggestions that you might have.
- Optional Rules Structure: A working committee is being formed to evaluate modifications to the FIG rules appropriate for both the JO age group program and the Elite development program at each age level.
- Club Team Championships: The concept of a Club Team National Championships is being developed for future inclusion in the age group competitive program schedule. The men's program would like to hear from coaches regarding desirable formats for this event.
- Elite Development Program: The Junior National Coaching Staff is developing Technical Sequences in conjunction with the National Team Coordinator.

We would like for you to get involved.

Please put your comments and suggestions in writing and email them to:

Dusty Ritter: Junior Olympic Program Coordinator at: dustyritter@gmail.com

Your participation in the sport at all levels is important to both the development and the success of the men's program here in the United States. We hope that you will take the time to carefully review the material and to make suggestions. Everyone should know that we have some tremendously dedicated individuals who have given their time and expertise to this project and who truly want to see athletes at every level of participation succeed.

For USA Gymnastics,
Dennis McIntyre, Men's Program Director
Kevin Mazeika, National Team Coordinator
Dusty Ritter, Junior Olympic Program Coordinator

PROPOSED RULE STRUCTURE & AGE GROUP ALIGNMENT FOR 2012 JO OPTIONAL LEVELS

Level & Rules	AGE GROUP	DIVISION	CHAMPIONSHIP	National Team Selection
8	12/13	1	National	National Qualifier
8	12/13	2	National	NA
8	14/15	2	Regional	NA
8	16/17&18	2	Regional	NA
9	14 -15	1	National	Visa Championships
9	14 -15	2	National	NA
10	16/17&18	1	National	Visa Championships
10	16/17&18	2	National	NA

Note: Slash mark denotes two different age divisions. For example 12/13 = 12 year old division & 13 year old division. The "&" mark denotes a combined age division.

Age Group Competition Program Rules for Invitational competitions, State, Regional and Junior Olympic National Championships.

Level 8 rules: 8 parts / JO Modified FIG rules
Division 1 requires Technical Sequences and Optional Routines

Level 9 rules: 10 parts / JO Modified FIG rules
Division 1 requires Technical Sequences and Optional Routines

Level 10 rules: 10 parts / JO Modified FIG rules
Division 1 requires Technical Sequences and Optional Routines

Qualification for Optional Divisions:

Division II:

Levels 8, 9 & 10:

- Must perform Optional routines at the State Championships to qualify to the Regional Championships in D2
- Must perform Optional routines at the Regional Championships to qualify to the Junior Olympic National Championships in D2
- Division I athletes at the Regional Championships who do not achieve the qualifying score for Division I qualification to the Junior Olympic National Championships will have their optional score automatically considered (count) for Division II qualification to JO Nationals (same for State Championships to Regional Championships)

Division I:

Levels 8, 9 & 10:

- Must perform both Technical and Optional routines at the State Championships to qualify to the Regional Championships in D1.
- Must perform both Technical and Optional routines at the Regional Championships to qualify to the Junior Olympic National Championships in D1.
- Must perform Optional Routines at the Junior Olympic National Championships in order to qualify to the Junior/Senior Elite National Qualifier

National Team Selection:

- Level 8 must perform both Technical and Optional routines at the Junior/Senior Elite National Qualifier in order to be selected to the Junior National Team
- Level 9 & 10 must perform both Technical Sequence and Optional routines at the Junior/Senior Elite National Qualifier in order to qualify to the Visa Championships
- Levels 9 & 10 must perform Optional Routines at the Visa Championships in order to be selected to the Junior Elite National Team (2 days of competition)

Technical Sequences: (note see **attachment A** for further discussion of technical sequences)

- The Junior National Coaching Staff under the direction of National Team Coordinator will develop Technical Sequences to be used as part of the competitive process for selection of the Junior National Team at Levels 8, 9, & 10.
- Technical Sequences are intended to be basic elements arranged in skill sequences identified as critical on each event for the success of our national team program internationally.
- The Technical Sequence may or may not take the form of a “traditional” routine sequence and could be different on each event in terms of format and evaluation. Technical Sequences will take on routine qualities in order to be effectively evaluated by judges.
- The Technical Sequence on each event will be fundamentally basic enough that it could be used as a warm-up in daily practice and at the same time encourage and motivate athletes to refine their technique to the highest artistic level.
- The Technical Sequences will be designed to address fundamental weaknesses currently identified within our athlete development structure.
- The use of Technical Sequences should encourage participation and aspiration through state, regional and national camps, clinics, and educational opportunities.
- The Technical Sequence concept has already been instituted in the national team program at both the senior and junior levels with tremendous success. This concept can have a direct correlation to competitive success for athletes at all competitive levels.

Age Group Program Events Competition Format:

Sanctioned Invitational Meets: Competition format options

- Optional routines for levels 8, 9 and 10
- Technical Sequence sessions for levels 8, 9 and 10 if desired
- FIG Elite rules sessions if desired
- Competition in AA, IE and team competition

State Championships

Division 1

- Day 1* – Technical Sequence competition Level 8,9 & 10
- Day 2* – Optional routine competition Level 8, 9 & 10

Division 2

- Optional routine competition Level 8, 9 &10

*Note: Competition format could be modified to fit state or regional needs as long as Technical and Optional routines are scheduled on different days for Division I.

Regional Championships

Division 1

- Day 1* – Technical Sequence competition Level 8,9 & 10
- Day 2* – Optional routine competition Level 8, 9 & 10

Division 2

- Optional routine competition Level 8, 9 &10

*Note: Competition format could be modified to fit state or regional needs as long as Technical and Optional routines are scheduled on different days for Division I.

Junior Olympic National Championships :

- Preliminary Optional Competition: Division 1 & 2 Level 8, 9, 10 – Thursday and Friday Individual Event & All Around Finals Division 1 & 2 – Saturday and Sunday
- AA & Individual Event finalists by each Division 1 & 2
- Individual Event final rankings by 'single age years' (i.e. Level 8 - 12 & Level 8 – 13)
- Regional Team Competition during preliminary competition sessions with Regional Teams for 12, 13, 14-15 and 16-18 (4 different teams).
- Regional Teams can consist of both Division I and II qualifiers

Junior/Senior National Qualifier: (current National Qualifier format expanded to include 12 to 13 year olds and accommodate technical sequence and optional routine competition and could be a three day format with Jr. competition on Days 1 & 3 and Sr. competition on Day 2).

Day 1

- Level 8, 9, 10 (FIG age eligible Division 1 qualifiers from the JO National Championships) – Technical Sequence competition

Day 2

- Optional routine competition Level 8 – with combined Day 1 & 2 scores used to qualify for Junior National Team Selection.
- Optional routine competition for Levels 9 & 10 - with combined Day 1 & 2 scores used to qualify for Junior Division at the Visa Championships
- Optional competition in Senior Division to qualify for Senior Division at the Visa Championships

Visa Championships

Day 1

- Junior Division Optional Competition
- Senior Division Optional Competition

Day 2

- Junior Division Optional competition with combined Day 1 & 2 scores used to qualify for Junior Elite National Team Selection.
- Senior Division Optional competition with combined Day 1 & 2 scores used to qualify for Senior Elite National Team Selection.

Note: It is projected that the Level 10 (16-17 year olds) will use the same FIG rules - with any US modifications – as the Senior Division at the Visa Championships so that those athletes have the opportunity to challenge for a position on the Senior National Team. **All participants in the junior division at the National Qualifier and Visa Championships must be FIG age eligible. Beginning in 2013 FIG “junior” athletes may not be older than 17 anytime during the year that they compete as a junior.**

Additional Training, Education and Competitive Opportunities

In addition to the competitive program opportunities noted previously the following educational, training and competitive opportunities are possible.

- Future Stars state, regional and national program
- State, Regional and Nationals clinics and camps – including Technical Sequence development, skill refinement and skill development
- Regional “Elite Team” camps, activities and competition (expanded regional team concept)†

The following two pages give a more detailed look at the competitive format for the Junior Olympic National Championships. The Format Committee’s objectives were to create the following positive benefits to the junior program through these format modifications:

- Two divisions emphasizing ‘peer vs. peer’ competition and reducing the ‘field’ in each division to a reasonable competitive number by division.
- Ranking by ‘single age years’ where possible provides much greater opportunity for recognition within each level.
- Advancement of more athletes to Finals gives more athletes the opportunity for a 2 day competition and provides greater value to all for their investment in JO Nationals.
- Re-allocation and spacing of sessions to create a more enjoyable event experience.
- Combining IE Finals with AA Finals conserves judge’s time, creates more opportunity for individual recognition and creates an event schedule which is more enjoyable for all.
- Require no junior athlete to compete more than two times.

Junior Olympic National Championships Preliminary Format:

Day 1 (Thursday) Template

Session	Flight	Division	Athlete	Level	Age	Max #	Panel	Squad
1	1A	2	Ind. Qualifiers	9	14 & 15	72	A	5
1	1B	2	Ind. Qualifiers	10	16 - 18	72	B	6
2	2A	2	Ind. Qualifiers	9	14 & 15	72	A	6
2	2B	2	Ind. Qualifiers	10	16 - 18	60	B	5
3	3A	1	5 man Regional Teams + Add D1 Qualifiers	9	14 & 15	60	A	5
3	3B	1	5 man Regional Teams + Add D1 Qualifiers	10	16 - 18	60	B	5

- *Regional Teams may include D2 individuals.*

Day 2 (Friday) Template

Session	Flight	Division	Athlete	Level	Age	Max #	Panel	Squad
4	4A	2	Ind. Qualifiers	8	12	72	A	6
4	4B	2	Ind. Qualifiers	8	13	72	B	6
5	5A*	1	5 man Regional Teams + Add D1 Qualifiers	8	12	60	A	5
5	5B*	1	5 man Regional Teams + Add D1 Qualifiers	8	13	60	B	5

- **Note: Additional 12 spaces in each flight available for D1 or D2 qualifiers.*

Total numbers all age groups by qualification = Approximately 672

D1 + D2 Level 8 = 264

D1 + D2 Level 9 = 204

D1 + D2 Level 10 = 204

JO National Individual Event Finals and AA Finals Sessions:

Day 3 Template (Saturday - Capitol Cup 12 rotations)

Session	Flight	Division	Level	Age	#Athlete	Squad Totals	Squad Size	Panel	Original Field	# Est. Advance to Finals
6	6A	2	9	14	24 AA 12 IE	2AA + 1 IE	6	A	78	70%
6		2	9	15	24 AA 12 IE	2AA + 1 IE		A	78	70%
6	6B	2	10	16	24 AA 12 IE	2AA + 1 IE	6	B	78	70%
6		2	10	17/18	24 AA 12 IE	2AA + 1 IE		B	78	70%
7	7A	1	9	14-15 Combined	42 AA + 6 IE	3AA + 1 IE or 1 AA	4	A	48-60	80%
7	7B	1	10	16-17/18 Combined	42 AA + 6 IE	3AA + 1 IE or 1 AA	4	B	48-60	80%

Note: On the average most Individual Event qualifiers work 2 events or less.

Day 4 Template (Sunday - Capitol Cup 12 rotations)

Session	Flight	Division	Level	Age	#Athlete	Squad Totals	Squad Size	Panel	Original Field	# Est. Advance to Finals
8	8A	1	8	12	36 AA 6 IE	3AA + 1 IE	4	A	48 - 60	80%
8	8B	1	8	13	36 AA 6 IE	3AA + 1 IE	4	B	48 - 60	80%
9	9A	2	8	12	24 AA 12 IE	2AA + 1 IE	3	A	84	70%
9	9B	2	8	13	24 AA 12 IE	2AA + 1 IE	3	B	84	70%

Note: % Advance refers to the estimate of the number of athletes from the total population field that would advance to the finals based on an analysis of past JO National results.

Additional Notes:

- All Sessions are Capitol Cup format.
- In all Finals sessions AA rankings by Division & Flight.
- In all Finals sessions Individual Event (IE) rankings by 'single age years' – 12/13, 14/15, 16/17&18
- Selection for advancement to Qualifier is based upon age group.

Attachment A

WHY TECHNICAL SEQUENCES?

The United States has proven that it is now a contender for a team medal at every World Championships and Olympic Games. Now the established goal of the program is to be a country that is always challenging for the team Gold Medal. It is clear that if we are to be a consistent Gold Medal country we must raise the bar on competitive excellence. In order to reach a higher level of technical excellence and competitive consistency we need to ingrain within our program the development of a stronger fundamental foundation which effectively addresses the technical weaknesses in our execution as a whole.

Each athlete on a team is an individual with different strengths and weaknesses. When a team competes, athletes perform on their assigned apparatus as a unit which can limit the effect of individual weaknesses. However, the hallmark of a dominant program is a team which shows a uniform and identifiable style as a result of their level of technical mastery which has eliminated technical flaws across the board – “all around excellence.”

It is the chemistry between this technical foundation, consistent execution, and artistic style which creates a uniquely characteristic and ultimately successful team performance. The fusion of these critical elements elevates the performance and confidence required to transform goals into reality.

We have proven results from the Future Star program where we have dedicated ourselves to the goal of technical refinement in athlete’s age 8 to 12. We can also see measurable loss in technical execution once our most talented athletes begin serious pursuit of optional difficulty by FIG standards beginning at age 12. The need to achieve what the rules dictate is understandable; however the lack of a continued technical refinement program during this critical time period of ages 12 to 16 is limiting performance potential down the road. We must do both, build skills and refine technical execution. Technical refinement also addresses the need to patiently manage the physical demands on an athlete’s body as he transitions through this period of physical growth and increased emphasis on skill acquisition and will allow for the achievement of higher success levels in the future.

Our National Team camp program has had demonstrated success with the current Performance Evaluation and Review Technique Charts (PERT) program at both the Junior and Senior levels. The technical requirements in the PERT program have pushed athletes and coaches to a higher level of responsibility for their basics when they come to team camps. Requiring accountability to higher standards of basic execution has translated to more technically refined gymnastics which in turn has improved competition results internationally. Our results can be even better by engaging our athletes at an earlier stage in the process as well as reaching a wider base of talented athletes before they enter the National Team program.

The implementation of Technical Sequences will provide a structural framework whereby the ideals and standards of the Future Star program can be continued in developmental training utilizing a competitively accountable standard for our junior athletes during the critical age period of 12-16 and beyond. In this manner, refinement continues to be ongoing as an athlete grows and the weaknesses which occur with this growth are managed to a positive outcome. The result is a team with a more uniform and stable foundation and thus a better chance of performing at the highest levels more consistently – “all around excellence.”

Attachment B

Information on Projected Timeline and Program Implementation Issues

The proposal that has been presented for the 2012 - 2016 Age Group Competition Program has several aspects which raise questions about development and implementation of the program. These are natural and worthwhile questions that should be considered with any program change or modification regardless of how big or small.

For the 2012 - 2013 proposals the following areas regarding development and implementation have been projected.

Program Development Timeline:

The basic timeline for development and implementation of the age group program proposal follows. The goal of this timeline is to develop materials in such a way as to provide adequate review and input from the community at each step of the process.

8/2010	Initial proposal on 2012 - 2016 Age Group Competition Program format out to men's community for review and comments (the attached document)
9/2010	Establish committee to develop Compulsory Routines – Levels 4 to 7 Establish committee to develop optional FIG rule exceptions and Technical Sequences Levels 8 – 10 (Effectively these two committees form the 2012-2016 Age Group Program Committee)
3/1/2011	First working draft document of Compulsory Routines First working draft document of Technical Sequences
12/1/2011	Final draft document of Compulsory Routines Final draft document of Technical Sequences
2/1/2012	Video production of final Compulsory Routines Video production of final Technical Sequences
3/1/2012	Final program materials to production
5/1/2012	Final material ready for Age Group Program Coaches Workshop following the Junior Olympic National Championships
9/1/2012	Implementation of the new age group program for the 2012 – 2013 season

Development Considerations within the Timeline:

- Periodic updates concerning the content of the Compulsory Routines, the Technical Sequences and FIG rule exceptions will be released in order to inform the community of progress and to obtain comments and feedback from the coaching and judging community. These updates will be released during the development of both the first working and final draft documents. This follows the successful approach used in program development for the last two quads. In this case the timeline for developing these materials has been extended in order to gain more feedback and working knowledge – particularly with regard to the Technical Sequences.
- The Technical Sequences will get a great deal of development attention through review and implementation as part of the PERT program at our National Team training camps through the course of 2011. This will allow for a high degree of field testing and review over an extended period of time of the sequences and their evaluation criteria. Field testing at the national team camps will also provide feedback from a large pool of very experienced coaches and members of the NGJA will also be involved in these camps.
- It is anticipated that Regional and National camps, workshops and seminars throughout 2011 and early 2012 will focus on Technical Sequence education so that coaches will understand and feel comfortable with the sequences and their evaluation prior to implementation.

Logistical Considerations within the Proposed Format:

It is anticipated that one of the main areas of concern with the proposed format will be the logistical considerations of including the Technical Sequences at the State and Regional Championships. In preparation for a smooth implementation of the program the following action items need to take place:

- By the fall of 2011 coaches should have enough information concerning the Division I and II formats, as well as the content and criteria of the Technical Sequences, to begin making informed decisions concerning the competitive direction that they will take their athletes. At this time it will be necessary for State and Regional Chairmen to poll the coaches in their areas in order to ascertain approximate numbers that coaches would project entering as either Division I or II participants. This polling will give State and Regional Chairmen a baseline projection for planning State and Regional Championships in 2013.
- The 2011 State and Regional Chairman's Summit scheduled for September, 2011 will focus on final review and implementation of the 2012 to 2016 Age Group Program.
- Competition planning assistance will be offered to State and Regional Chairs to help determine the best competitive format for implementing the new age group program within their respective State or Regional Championships. This should be accomplished by late 2011 or very early in 2012 in order to provide review time by the community prior to State and Regional Coaches meetings in March and April of 2012.
- Monitoring by the JOPC of the projected participant numbers in each competitive division, as well as any projected cost increase as a result of format changes to State and Regional Championships, will allow the JOPC to make informed and reasonable decisions regarding any adjustments to meet entry fees that might be needed.

Program Material Development Considerations:

The timelines and communication plan within the men's community for the development of the content of the 2012 - 2016 Age Group Competition Program has been covered. A few additional comments about the proposed program materials:

- It is projected that the 2012 - 2016 Age Group Competition Program materials will again be formatted to CD and DVD media. This has proven to be the most effective means of presenting the program materials. If USAG Media Department technology allows, it is possible that all materials will be web based with program purchases resulting in a provided pass code that would allow the viewing and downloading of all materials as well as access to future updates.
- It is anticipated that the Technical Sequence portions of the age group program will include much more detailed performance criteria. This will extend to the video of the Technical Sequences where plans are to format the presentation to include the technical and performance criteria in visually specific terms.
- Program updates will be handled as per the current policy. There will be a drop dead date for any program changes established by the JOPC (currently January 15). The final update will continue the current practice of including replacement pages for any text changes so that the age group program manual can be easily updated.

Judging Considerations:

The NGJA and U.S. judging community at large have proven to be one of the most organized and effective judging groups in the world. Over the past few years USA Gymnastics and the NGJA have been working very hard to provide the very best in judges (and coaches) education, consistent judge's evaluation across the country and a well organized method for asking questions and receiving feedback on age group program questions.

The judging plan for the 2012 - 2016 Age Group Competition Program will remain the same with periodic review and modification for effectiveness. That plan, as it currently exists, is:

- The NGJA, in conjunction with USA Gymnastics, will develop judge's course materials for the age group program in order for the NJGJA to conduct courses to certify judges. The NGJA course materials for the junior program have been subject to review and modification each year to make them more effective.
- The NGJA Junior Olympic Regional Technical Directors (JORTD) will continue their practice of frequent conference calls with the NGJA Junior Olympic Vice President (JOVP) to review problematic areas of routine or skill evaluation within the age group program. These calls have helped to establish national consistency within the program as each JORTD can take the information discussed on the conference call back to the judges in his respective region. Questions that cannot be readily answered by the JORTD's are relayed to the Age Group Competition Committee (AGCC) for review. Again, this insures a more consistent approach to routine evaluation.
- Prior to the start of the Regional Championships a conference call is conducted by the JOVP and the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic Program Coordinator with all of the Regional Championships Technical Directors. The purpose of this call is to alert the Technical Directors to any problem areas and promote a consistent evaluation of all Regional Championship events.
- The current policy/process for seeking answers to questions regarding the Age Group Program will also be continued. That process is:
 - a. Questions regarding competition format or qualification go directly to the Junior Olympic Program Coordinator (Dusty Ritter)
 - b. Questions regarding routine evaluation go the coaches' respective JORTD*. If the JORTD cannot answer the question, he will pass the question on to the JOVP (Dean Schott). If the JOVP cannot answer the question, he will refer the question to the AGCC. Coaches should be patient with respect to a response so that this process can be followed. This will allow for the most consistent evaluation of routines across the country.

*Coaches can identify their Junior Olympic Regional Technical Director by consulting the NGJA web site at <http://www.ngja.org/jo.html>