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Cracking the Code: Understanding the Scoring System in Gymnastics



Gymnastics competitions are a captivating blend of strength, agility, and artistry. While the jaw-dropping routines of gymnasts often steal the show, the scoring system that determines their success is a complex and intricate aspect of the sport. In this reading passage, we will demystify the scoring system in gymnastics, exploring how judges evaluate performances and assign scores.

Scoring Components

The scoring system in gymnastics is divided into two major components: Difficulty and Execution. Each of these components contributes to a gymnast's final score.

1. Difficulty

Difficulty, often referred to as the "D-Score" or "Start Value," is the maximum score a gymnast can achieve for a routine. It is determined by the complexity and difficulty of the skills performed in the routine. Gymnasts aim to include challenging elements such as flips, twists, and difficult combinations to increase their Difficulty score. The more challenging the routine, the higher the Difficulty score potential.

2. Execution

The Execution, or "E-Score," reflects how well a gymnast performs each element in their routine. Judges assess execution based on factors like form, technique, precision, and artistry. Deductions are made for mistakes, such as wobbles, balance checks, steps on landings, and lack of fluidity. A perfect Execution score is 10.0, but deductions are subtracted for errors, resulting in a lower score.

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Judging Panels

Gymnastics routines are evaluated by a panel of judges. In major competitions, this panel typically consists of six judges. Two judges are responsible for evaluating the Difficulty score, while the remaining four judges assess the Execution score.

Difficulty Judges

The two Difficulty judges focus on evaluating the complexity of the routine. They assign scores based on the skills performed, the connections between skills, and the overall composition of the routine. The Difficulty judges ensure that each element is correctly identified and awarded the appropriate point value.

Execution Judges

The four Execution judges focus on assessing how well a gymnast performs each element in the routine. They award or deduct points based on the gymnast's form, execution, and artistic expression. The Execution judges work together to reach a consensus on the deductions for each routine.

Score Calculation

To calculate a gymnast's final score, the Difficulty score and Execution score are combined. The equation used is as follows:

Final Score = Difficulty Score + Execution Score

The final score is typically displayed to the audience and gymnasts after each routine. In team competitions, the scores of all team members are added together to determine the team's total score. The gymnast or team with the highest total score wins.

