

## Concerning the judging of the Gymnastics events at the Olympic Games in Rome

The president of the International Olympic Committee has repeatedly pointed out to the International Federations that an effort should be made to improve the method of judging and umpiring some of the Olympic contests, since the responsibility of controlling the smooth running of the Games falls ultimately on the International Olympic Committee. We are, therefore, glad to report the very satisfactory results obtained in this respect in the Games in Rome, in 1960. We are also gratified to mention a special case, and to publish the statement on this subject made by Mr. Pierre Hentges, president of the technical Committee (Men's section) of the International Gymnastics Federation, on the occasion of the Meeting

of the Executive Board held at Luxembourg on August 11th 1961.

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“The Executive Board has carefully examined all the score-cards of each of the judges from the points of view of competence and objectivity. To this end, the scores of each judge were compared with the average table of points constituting the official score and thereafter with those of the judge-arbiter... Then, a comparative order was established between the marks given by each judge to the gymnasts of his own country and those awarded to the gymnasts belonging to other teams, especially those whose placings were close to the placing of his own country.

'From the point of view of *competence*, it was observed that, on the whole, all the judges proved themselves equal to their task not just impartial but technically efficient, and the few human differences of opinions were relatively exceptional. All considered, the marks 'very good' and 'good' could be applied to almost all the judges. A certain judge, somewhat confused at the outset of the contests, recovered sufficiently to be equal to his task, so that his judging marks were most satisfactory right to the end of the competitions.

'Concerning the matter of *objectivity*, one must recognize the fact that all the judges were imbued with a feeling of fair-play and equity which did them great credit. In certain instances, however, a few judges were not able to discard entirely a certain subjectivity, but this occurred seldom and these cases were not serious, the effect of their deviations being annihilated by the elimination of extreme marks. We are sure that, by asking the federations to insist that their judges keep a better watch upon themselves, we may succeed in making all traces of subjectivity disappear in time to come.

'The Executive Board does not want to pass any comments of praise or criticism of a personal nature, since the judging on the whole, must qualify in terms of 'good' or 'very good', as we said earlier. It proposes, in future, however, to give the federations more precise information concerning the behaviour of their respective judges and wishes to draw their attention once again to the rules 5, 6, and 7 concerning the international Jury.

'Above all, it will be by means of close collaboration of all parties concerned, that we hope to succeed in improving the ways of judging, of strengthening the trust the competitors place in their judges, and in securing the good name of our international Jury.'

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We are glad to report the statement sent us by Charles Thoeni, president of the International Gymnastics Federation. It runs as follows:

'As far as the matter of judges is concerned, the International Gymnastics Federation takes considerable trouble to gather together and maintain a frame work composed of impartial and competent persons who are capable of judging in international competitions, and who are operating under the control of technical leaders. Thus, whenever World Championships, Olympic Games, European Championships, etc., take place, these sport events are preceded by special training courses lasting three to four days which *must* be attended by *all* the judges who are called to function in this capacity. Those who fail to comply with this condition owing to total or partial abstention are replaced or eliminated. The gymnasts in reserve give a display of the various exercises in turn, which are either compulsory or optional, and these are judged by the participants under the supervision of their teachers. The federations also make use of films issued several months previous to the contests in question. In addition to this, the federations have at their disposal several text books which enable them to organize these special courses for judges.

'A fact worth mentioning is that, in these contests, each exercise is judged by a group of four judges placed under the supervision of a judge-arbiter, for each section of gymnastic display. The highest and lowest marks are eliminated from the whole, and the two average marks are added and then divided by two. This method does away right from the start, with all attempts to favour or disfavour a competitor. Of course, there will always be people with a tendency to jingoism and this is bound to happen whenever judging is a matter of personal appreciation.'

We observe that the F.I.G. (International Gymnastics Federation) takes the matter most seriously and the above statement may serve as an example... even to the International Skating Federation who replied abusively in a telegram to the International Olympic Committee telling it to mind its own business! But let us not forget that any reproaches always fall on the International Olympic Committee ultimately, if 'something' does not run smoothly at the Olympic Games.