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## ***Gymnastics Divorces the AAU: The Role of the Penn State Versus Cologne Gymnastics Affair***

In 1888, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) organized and gained control of all amateur athletics in the United States. In 1905, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was formed and questions of the governance of international events began to arise between the two organizations. After several decades of attempting to compromise and work with the AAU, the NCAA eventually severed relations with its rival and supported the formation of new governing bodies in the sports of basketball, track and field, and gymnastics. In 1962 the United States Gymnastics Federation (USGF) organized as part of this movement.

However, control of international gymnastics events remained in the hands of the AAU, and so the USGF began a quest for recognition by the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) as the official national governing body for gymnastics in the United States. The USGF wished to represent all involved in the sport of gymnastics, and host educational sessions, clinics, and competitions. When, in 1967, the Penn State Men's Gymnastics Team competed against an international team from Cologne University of Germany on the Penn State campus, questions of governance arose. Because the meet involved an international team, the AAU insisted that it should be sanctioned under its policy. The NCAA laid claim to the event on the grounds that it was a university competition. A fight for control ensued and the future athletic careers of the Penn State gymnasts were affected in a number of ways.

This paper examines the role of the Penn State University *versus* Cologne University gymnastics meet in the role of the eventual recognition of the USGF as the official governing body for gymnastics in the United States. It examines the following questions: Did the meet serve as a turning point in the USGF's quest for FIG recognition, or was it just another step in the process? Did the meet further divide opinion on the merits of the USGF and the AAU? How did the AAU sanctions affect the Penn State gymnasts, two of whom risked their eligibility to compete at the 1968 Olympic Games? What actions did the AAU and USGF take to either retain or regain control of amateur gymnastics in the United States as a result of the meet?

Primary sources used for the paper include newspapers such as *The Daily Collegian* and *The Centre Daily Times*; archival material such as the correspondence between Penn State gymnastics coach, Gene Wettstone and Raymond P. Shafer, governor of Pennsylvania, as well as Penn State University, AAU, USGF, NCAA, FIG, and various international gymnastics governing body officials; and personal interviews with former gymnasts and coaches.