



As we wait for the 2010 competition season to warm up, IG Editor Dwight Normile takes a detailed look at a few issues involving numbers.

FIG - China

As reported in an earlier Stretching Out, a Disciplinary Committee will announce on Feb. 26 whether Chinese gymnasts **Dong Fangxiao** and **Yang Yun** were too young at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. When **North**

Korea

submitted various birthdates for

Kim Gwang Suk

in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the North Korean women were banned from the 1993 worlds. Didn't the North Koreans try to say it was a typo, a mistake, human error? That's what the Chinese camp has been saying.

If the FIG's Disciplinary Committee delivers a guilty verdict next month, what will the FIG do? Will it ban the Chinese women from the 2010 worlds, which is the beginning of the qualification to the 2012 Olympics? I doubt it will prevent the defending Olympic champs from qualifying to the next Olympics. But I suppose their 2000 medals will be stripped.

World and Olympic Team Size

I find it odd that the team size for the 2010 and 2011 World Championships will remain at six, when the 2012 Olympics will feature five-member teams. I suppose the upside is that one more gymnast gets to experience a world championships, even if he or she never makes it to the Olympics.

Here's the format information from the 2010 Technical Regulations, which can be downloaded from the FIG website (Click on Rules).

Reg. 5.1.3 Qualifying Team and Individual Competition (Competition I)

The results obtained determine...

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- the qualification for Competitions II, III and IV
- the ranking of the teams placed 9th or lower
- the ranking of the all-around competitors placed 25th or lower.
- in the year prior to the Olympic Games, the qualification of the teams and individuals for participation in the Olympic Games.

This competition is organized by a rotation of Groups, a Group comprising either a team of 4 to 6 (OG: 5) gymnasts entered by national federations or teams formed from individual gymnasts of different federations. A team shall provide for not more than 5 gymnasts (OG: 4) to compete on any single piece of apparatus and the 4 (OG: 3) highest scores will be taken into account for the team total.

Don't be confused by the phrase "a Group comprising ... a team of 4 to 6," which merely means that a team could technically compete in Competition I (qualifications) with only four gymnasts, since the format is 6-5-4 (four scores count).

So the 2012 Olympics will feature a 5-4-3 format in prelims, and 5-3-3 in team finals. I'd vote for any other format for the team finals (5-5-5, 5-5-4, 5-4-4 or 5-4-3), anything to put more routines on display. I think more gymnasts deserve the chance to compete in the medal round, and spectators, who paid a lot of money for tickets, deserve to see more gymnastics.

Alternate Rule

If a gymnast is injured during qualifications, he or she can be replaced by the team alternate in the team finals (with approval of the concerned Technical President, and if the injury is certified by the official competition medical authority).