WHAT IS ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS?

Acrobatic gymnastics combines dance, gymnastics skills, and synchronization. Engaging choreography and brilliant attire are also a part of the sport. The competitors tell a story with their performances, all while capturing the audience’s attention with thrilling tempo and graceful balance skills. The magnificent performances could hardly be accomplished without cooperative effort and mentoring among partners. There are five events incorporated within the acrobatic gymnastics discipline. The events are women’s pair, men’s pair, mixed pair, women’s group (3), and men’s group (4). Each pair/group performs routines featuring gymnastics tumbling skills, partner balances, and tempo skills. Balance skills highlight the athletes’ strength and flexibility through pyramids and static positions of the top and middle. Dynamic skills involve somersaulting and twisting with landings on the floor or catches by a bottom partner. Routines are performed on the same 40’ x 40’ spring floor that the artistic gymnasts use to perform floor routines.

Athletes of varying heights, weights, and body types are needed for acrobatic gymnastics. Smaller, more flexible athletes are needed as tops, while taller and stronger athletes are ideal for base positions.

ROUTINES

Each elite pair/group performs three routines, balance, tempo and combined. All exercises are choreographed and performed to music.

BALANCE EXERCISE

A balance routine consists of static balance elements, intricate pyramids, transitions between balance holds, and individual elements of flexibility, balance, and agility. In a balance routine, a pair/group is required to perform a minimum of six balance elements (minimum three pyramids for men’s and women’s groups) and four individual elements. Pair/group tops are typically in handstand, arched handstand, planche or straddle hold positions being supported by one or two hands of a partner. Some balance elements require the top to balance on a partner’s head, torso or foot.

DYNAMIC EXERCISE

Dynamic routines include skills with partner throws and pitches to catches by the base partner(s) or landings on the floor. Also included in tempo routines are individual tumbling skills. Pairs/groups must perform six elements with flight and four individual elements, two of which must be a salto. An example of an advanced dynamic skill is a salto with full twist performed from the hands of a partner back to the hands of a partner. Tops may be thrown into the air and perform double and triple saltos, some with twists, and land on the floor.

COMBINED EXERCISE

A combined routine is just that, a combination of balance and dynamic skills in one routine. Three balance elements and three dynamic elements are required in the combined exercise. Again, pairs/groups also are required to perform individual skills.