

## CHAPTER 3. - ROUTINES

### 11. INTRODUCTION

Artistic Swimming is an aquatic discipline that at a competitive level requires a large variety of highly refined athletic skills. Many of these skills take place while athletes are in apnea. Routines are the artistic expression of the discipline. A routine is a choreography to music performed in the water. In routines athletes demonstrate their mastery in skills combining techniques to create movements that match with the selected music.

Routines can start in or out of the water but must finish in the water. How athletes present themselves before the routine starts (walk-on) as well as the movements performed during this period of 20 - 30 seconds is considered under the Artistic Impression Performance mark. Deck movements (10 seconds) are also considered under Artistic Impression Performance mark.

It is recommended that all Judges and Technical Controllers attend routine practice training sessions with the Coach Card to familiarize themselves with the routine and the content of the Coach Card in advance, so everyone is well prepared for the day of competition. Practice session viewing has no impact on results on the day of the competition. On the day of the competition the Judges and Technical Controllers will consider the performance on the day of the competition only.

### 12. ROUTINE ELEMENTS AND TRANSITIONS

Routines are composed of Elements and Transitions.

1. **Elements** include:
  - **Hybrids** (free content)
  - **Acrobatics**
  - **Technical Required Elements** (TRE), which are precisely described combinations of positions and transitions to be performed by all athletes in Technical Routines only
2. **Transitions** are the linking actions between the judged Elements, including propulsion techniques, strokes, ballet leg combinations, flexibility surface actions, surface pattern changes, or Pair Assisted Actions. This also includes all movements before and after a TRE and all Hybrids in the Acrobatic Routine.

#### 12.1 ROUTINE TYPES

There are two (2) types of routines depending on its content:

1. **Technical Routines**, which require the inclusion of TRE
2. **Free Routines**, which do not include TRE

The routine types by number of participating athletes are:

- Women Solo (1 athlete) and Men Solo (1 athlete) Technical and Free
- Women Duet (2 athletes) and Mixed Duet (2 athletes) Technical and Free
- Team (4 to 8 athletes) Technical and Free
- Acrobatic Routine (4 to 8 athletes) Free
- Free Combination Routine (4 to 10 athletes) Free

## 12.2 PANELS AND JUDGEMENT OF ROUTINES

### 12.2.1 Technical Controllers

With the new scoring system implemented on January 1, 2023 the difficulty of the Elements that the routine contains is declared by the participants before the competition through the Coach Card. Whether the declared difficulty of the Hybrids and Acrobatics or the correct TRE is executed is checked by **Difficulty Technical Controllers (DTCs)** during the competition. DTCs must officiate in all routines. The difficulty of Transitions is not declared or checked as Transitions are part of the Artistic Impression score.

The three (3) DTCs check the following:

- The number, order of performance and predeclared difficulty of Elements
- The performance and predeclared order of Technical Required Elements (technical routines)

Declared difficulty (DD) values can be found in Appendixes 6 and 7 to the World Aquatics AS Rules and the Coach Card format can be found in Appendix 8 to World Aquatics AS Rules. World Aquatics reserves the right to adjust the components assigned to each category as required.

The three (3) **Synchronization Technical Controllers (STCs)** are to observe and record the number and type of synchronization errors. STCs will register the number and magnitude of unequal actions in all routines, except for Solo events (**AS 16.1.1** and **AS 16.1.2**).

### 12.2.2 Elements Panel and Artistic Impression Panel of Judges

Two (2) panels of five (5) Judges must officiate in all routines with one (1) panel for Elements and one (1) panel for Artistic Impression.

#### 1. Elements Panel

Elements panel of five (5) Judges shall award one (1) score for the execution of each Element (Hybrids, Acrobatics and TREs).

Judges consider the level of excellence in performing highly specialized skills. Execution of all routine Elements: TREs, Hybrids and Acrobatics (**AS 17.2.1**).

#### 2. Artistic Impression

Artistic Impression panel of five (5) Judges shall award three (3) scores:

One (1) score for **Choreography and Musicality**. Choreography is the creative skill of composing a routine that combines artistic and technical components. The design and weaving together of variety, creativity, and innovation of all movements: Elements and Transitions. It also includes the pool coverage. Musicality covers expression of the mood of the music, the use of the music's structure and the synchronization of movements with music.

One (1) score for **Performance**. Performance is the manner in which the athletes present the routine to the viewers as well as the walk-on and the deck movements. The use of body language to express physical and emotional power, confidence, and total command of the performance.

One (1) score for **Transitions**. Judges consider the execution and complexity of varied and purposeful movements, propulsions and strokes that link routine Elements.

As per **AS 17.1** and **AS 17.2** in all Routines each Judge shall award scores from 0-10 points in increments of 0.25:

Perfect	10	Satisfactory	5.75 – 5.0
Near perfect	9.75 – 9.5	Deficient	4.75 – 4.0
Excellent	9.25 – 9.0	Weak	3.75 – 3.0
Very Good	8.75 – 8.0	Very weak	2.75 – 2.0
Good	7.75 – 7.0	Hardly recognizable	1.75 – 0.25
Competent	6.75 – 6.0	Completely failed	0

### 13. JUDGING ROUTINES - GENERAL OVERVIEW

Accurate judging can only be achieved by a Judge who is well prepared and has become thoroughly familiar with each of the judging categories, Elements and Artistic Impression, and routine components, Elements and Transitions.

Judges must have developed the ability to apply a consistent and validated scale of excellence to each athlete. The Judge must apply those scales while utilizing the criteria **objectively**. With training and conscientious application of the standards, all Judges should be able to award accurate scores.

The ultimate goal for Judges should be **a knowledgeable and objective judging by application of the criteria prescribed in this Manual, the World Aquatics AS Rules and other documents, as applicable, free from prejudice and preconceptions:**

- Each of the two (2) panels of Judges (Elements and Artistic Impression) should be independent and should not influence each other.
- Judges must not judge based on what they expected to see or what they saw in the past. Judges must not be influenced by previous results, practice before the competition, or other factors that are not part of the criteria to base the judgement on.
- In Duets, Team, Free Combination and Acrobatic Routines, Judges must judge the performance of all athletes.

### 14. JUDGING ELEMENTS

The Elements panel of Judges considers the execution of Elements. Execution is the level of excellence demonstrated through the athlete's mastery of highly specialized skills. Execution is how well the athlete performs the Elements they choose to perform. Elements consist of **Hybrids, Acrobatics** and **Technical Required Elements**, judging of which is further described below.

As per Rule AS **14.2**, the performance ends with music accompaniment. Therefore, if an Element is performed but not completed by the time the music ends, Element Judges shall not consider the part of the Element performed after the end of music accompaniment in their mark for that Element.

#### 14.1 USE OF EXPANDED MARKING SCALES

The Expanded Marking Scales describe typical performances commonly observed in athletes' execution of Elements across each scoring category. Typically, athletes develop all necessary skills progressively, therefore, it is uncommon to see a performance that is excellent in control but with large deviations; however, any situation may occur. Judges must be prepared for these situations and use the marking scales correctly. For each score range, Expanded Marking Scales depict a general impression of the performance, including the type and the number of mistakes/deviations from the standpoint of perfection.

**In order to determine the mark for Elements**, Judges use the respective Expanded Marking Scales for TREs, Hybrids and Acrobatics.

**First.** Judges set a score ceiling based on the average height achieved by the athlete(s) for all types of Elements. Subsequently, Judges determine a range for the general impression based on the control factors, extension, and stability. Dynamic and stable height scales and Split scales for Hybrids and TRE are the same as for Figures; for Acrobatics, a specific height scale is provided.

Perfect execution at a height of 7.0 cannot be scored over 7.0. Consider which scale is applicable (stable or dynamic) and what position should be evaluated (in Hybrids vertical position with one (1) leg or two (2) legs, Fishtail, Split, table, tuck, etc.; in Acrobatics position of Supporting, Featured or Base Swimmer(s)).

- Judges do not consider actions performed at ankles for height average.
- Height in pushed up non-sustained movements is not included in the Guiding Scale for Height Quality of Performance. Judges do not establish the average height considering the push-up actions, but in the final execution evaluation, the number and height of these actions may lead to move a quarter point (0.25) up or down of the Judge's score.
- If a TRE is performed at a height between the indicated levels, Judges need to calculate the mark based on the height achieved and award increments of 0.25, 0.5, or 0.75, based on how closely the height approaches the next ceiling score.
- Evaluate the performance in terms of low, medium, and high score range. In case of doubt, go with the higher mark.

**Second,** Judges deduct from the general impression score for any deviations observed that do not correspond with the description of the general impression score range that applies to each type of Element. Remember, each score range describes the type of deviation/mistake commonly observed.

An example of a deviation that might occur in a Hybrid may be in the position during a vertical descents or ascents (after rockets, during spinning, from sustained Vertical Position); unwanted travelling (clear for Duets and Teams altering positioning); unintended deviations from vertical in Fishtail, Vertical Position, etc. Judges use quarter points according to the magnitude of deviation (small 0.25, obvious 0.50, major 1.0).

**Deductions** (for more detail on deductions for TRE and Hybrids see suggested deductions in Figures section and for Acrobatics see Acrobatics section).

<b>SMALL</b>	<b>OBVIOUS</b>	<b>MAJOR</b>
0.25	0.5	1.0

When scoring Hybrids or TREs in Team routines consideration must be given to the number of athletes performing a large deviation (obvious mistake). If half of the Team demonstrates the deficiency a deduction -0.5 should be applied to the Element score. If more than half of the Team demonstrates a large deviation, then a -1.0 should be applied to that Element score by the Elements panel. For example:

- In a Team of eight (8) athletes -
  - One (1) to four (4)** athletes demonstrate the deficiency = **0.5** deduction.
  - Five (5) to eight (8)** athletes demonstrate the deficiency = **1.0** deduction.

- In a Team of six (6) athletes -

**One (1) to three (3)** athletes demonstrate the deficiency = **0.5** deduction.

**Four (4) to six (6)** athletes demonstrate the deficiency = **1.0** deduction.

Example: During a Hybrid, two (2) athletes drop into an inverted tuck and miss several intended movements. The judge will deduct 0.5 from the Element score for the Hybrid.

**Judges must remember that the difficulty of Elements should not be considered at all. This will be factored in through the degree of difficulty and the calculation of the result.**

An athlete cannot repeat an Element (Acrobatics, Technical Required Element or Hybrid) if it is missed, interrupted, or results in a Fall. Each Element in the routine is evaluated only on its first attempt. If the Featured Swimmer falls during an Acrobatics, the Element is considered a Fall and cannot be re-performed for scoring.

If a stoppage occurs during a Technical Required Element or Hybrid, the Element will be judged on what is performed, even if such Technical Required Element or Hybrid has less than five (5) movements and would then technically be considered a Transition.

It is recommended that athletes and coaches avoid choreographing Transitions that closely resemble Technical Required Elements (TRE) to prevent confusion for the Judges.

Examples how to determine the mark for Elements:

**Example 1:** The Element Judge places a performance in the satisfactory score range according to the Expanded Marking Scale. It means that the average height was between 5.5 and 6.5 and that obvious and major deviations may have been detected. The Judge does not deduct 2 or 3 points for large deviations but decides if the final score must be in high 4 or in mid 5 depending on height attained and number of deviations.

**Example 2:** The Element Judge places a performance in the good score range according to the Expanded Marking Scale, which means that small and obvious deviations may have been detected, and that the average height was between 7.5 and 8.5. To decide the final score, the Judge considers if there were obvious deviations, and how many, to stay in the high good (7.75) or good (7.0) category.

**Example 3:** The Element Judge places a performance in near perfect score range according to the Expanded Marking Scale, which means full control, near maximum height and maybe one (1) or two (2) small deviations. In such case, the Judge awards the maximum score they can, that is as for height attained (9.5 -9.75). If all requirements in Expanded Marking Scale for the near perfect execution were there BUT a large or obvious deviation was observed, the Judge deducts 1 or 0.5 point. The score does not fall into competent or good category but clearly demonstrates the impact of the major or obvious mistake/deviation and distinguishes it from a similar performance level without major or obvious mistakes/deviations.

## 14.2 HYBRIDS

A **Hybrid** is defined as a combination of five (5) or more movements performed with lower limbs with intentional apnea (head down under hips level). Note that short Hybrid-like movements of four (4) or less movements with or without intentional apnea OR horizontal movements along the surface with lower limb actions that have consequential apnea (rolling over, kicking, etc.) are considered as transitional movement. It is important that Judges review Appendix 6 to familiarize themselves how to count movements in Hybrids.

From a judging perspective, an athlete may perform a Hybrid as described, but due to their skill level, the head might not be perfectly aligned under the hips. Additionally, if a traveling walkout-type movement takes place during the Hybrid, the head may not be directly beneath the hips, yet it can still be considered a Hybrid. Judges should focus more on the presence of intentional apnea than the precise positioning of the head under the hips when determining if the movement is a Hybrid or Transition.

The following factors should be considered when judging Hybrids:

### **Design**

Components of Hybrids may show the **precise characteristics of positions, movements or transitions** described in the Appendix 1 to the World Aquatics Competition Regulations (Basic Positions and Basic Movements, and Figures) and in the declared difficulty reports, but this does not have to be the case. On many occasions the components will not match any of those described positions or movements at all or only in parts.

Also, Hybrids may be performed close to or far from Judges' position and/or in moving water caused by the (intentional) power of actions, the number of athletes performing, or the moving progression (travelling) of the Hybrid. Judges must focus on what they see at or over the water surface. It is also common to see Hybrids components performed at a fast speed.

Considering these factors, the design accuracy in Hybrids is defined as to clearly show the intended action/position whether it is vertical, tilted, arched, bent, Split, angles, Twisting, spinning, travelling etc. For example, a vertical descent can be performed travelling, but body alignment must be present; descending spinning requires the even distribution of rotation during descent, but a rapid Spin does not mean that it has to be continuous, the action can be stopped at the ankles, reversed and combined with leg or feet movements during the descent or ascent.

### **Control**

As part of control factors consider the following components:

- **Height**

See the Guiding Height Scales for stable and dynamic height in this Manual.

- **Extension**

Extension is a range to which something can be stretched to its fullest length. In this case, it is the use of muscular strength to bring a joint to its maximum physiological extension function.

In Hybrids, the knees, ankles, feet, and toes should always be fully extended with no relaxation of extension during any part of the execution, unless clearly intended otherwise in the choreography.

- **Stability**

Solid, with equilibrium maintained and unaffected by change of position. Position is unaffected by movement. Attain position exactly, without correction. Fluid without evidence of strain.

### 14.3.2 Procedure for Judging Acrobatics

In order to determine the final score for Acrobatics, Element Judges shall take the following three (3) steps:

#### a) Height

The first step is for Element Judges to establish the “ceiling” mark in the Main Phase of the Acrobatic Movement based on height, as indicated in the Guiding Scale for Height Quality of Performance. Height should be referred to:

- Featured Swimmer(s) in Group A and Group P
- Support Swimmer(s) in Group B (Stack)
- Base Swimmer(s) in Group B (Lift)
- Any of the above swimmers in Group C, depending on the type of Acrobatics.

If an Acrobatic Movement is performed at a height between the indicated levels, Judges need to calculate the actual height and award increments of 0.25, 0.5, or 0.75, based on how closely the height approaches the next ceiling score. Example: In Group B, Stack Head Down, the Support Swimmer’s height is between kneecap (7.0) and mid-thigh (8.0), the Element Judge will determine a ceiling score of either 7.25, 7.5 or 7.75 depending on how close the height is to the mid-thigh reference point.

Judges must remember that the height score is not the final score for the Acrobatics; it merely establishes the ceiling, or maximum score once other judging factors are considered. Note that the ceiling score indicated on the diagrams is the maximum score, not a range of the score category, e.g. if the height chart indicates that waist height is 8.0, the ceiling score for Acrobatics that achieved that height is 8.0 and not between 8.25, 8.5 or 8.75.

See the Acrobatics Guiding Scale for Height Quality of Performance and height diagrams in this Manual for more details on judging height in Acrobatics.

#### b) Overall Impression

After the ceiling mark is determined, the Element Judges establish a category for Overall Impression according to Expanded Marking Scale for Acrobatics Execution.

##### 1. Construction - Support Swimmers & Base Swimmers

Judges consider the support/Construction of the Base Swimmers for:

- **Push problem** affecting the Featured Swimmer
- **Design** for efficiency and effectiveness of the Construction
- **Control, stability** and **sustainability** of the of the Support Swimmer(s) or Base swimmers
- **Angle accuracy** of the positioning of the of the Support Swimmer(s)
- Full body **extension** of Support swimmer(s)’ positions

- Clean and intentional **water entry** (for example: when Featured Swimmer jumps from the Support Swimmer, the Support Swimmer still needs to enter the water in a controlled manner, not just “fall on the back”)

## 2. Actions of the Featured Swimmer

Actions of the Featured Swimmer must be clear and easily recognizable, shown long enough to be understood and display a definite completion or finishing of the action.

Judges consider the movements of the Featured Swimmer in relation to:

- **Angles** for accuracy of positions
- **Stability** and **control**. The Featured Swimmer should display controlled movements. There should not be any ‘falling off’, loss of balance, or instability of the Featured Swimmer
- Full body **extension**
- **Direction** and **distance accuracy**. An incorrect direction line or distance may influence an Overall Impression for the Acrobatic Movement and can be dangerous to other athletes
- Clean and intentional **water entry**

## 3. Minimal set-up and recovery time

A minimal time should be given to the set-up and the recovery time after the completion of the Acrobatic Movement. Both should be achieved without any underwater scramble or struggle.

### c) Inaccuracies

If the Acrobatic Movement does not align with the Overall Impression category in the Expanded Marking Scale for Acrobatics Execution due to additional inaccuracies noted by the Judge, the Judge should refer to the Inaccuracy Identification Table for Acrobatics to further adjust the score, as needed. Inaccuracies in execution can be identified as small, obvious or major, depending on the severity of the inaccuracy:

- **Small (S)** Inaccuracies are slight deviations from the intended action, visible only to a Judge’s trained eye. Deduction for small inaccuracy is 0.25.
- **Obvious (O)** Inaccuracies detectable and display clear deviations from intended actions. Deduction for obvious inaccuracy is 0.5.
- **Major (M)** Inaccuracies are noticeable errors in accuracy that are easily recognized. This includes an execution inaccuracy reaching a 45° deviation but not recognized as a Fall. Deduction for major inaccuracy is one (1) point.

Acrobatics with a Fall cannot be awarded a higher mark than the Competent Category (no higher than 6.75 score). An Acrobatics that is considered a Partial Fail will be rewarded with 2.0 points. An Acrobatics that is considered a Complete Fail will receive 1.0 point.

**Examples of the three-step approach to judging Acrobatics**

**Example 1:** The Element Judge notes on the program that an Acrobatics in Group B (Balance) - Stack is to be performed. While the Support Swimmer achieved a height of eight (8.0), the Construction was very unstable causing the Featured Swimmer to fall off during the Main Phase. As a result, the Element Judge determines the Overall Impression to be in the Deficient category (4.0 - 4.75). Even though there were other minor inaccuracies, the Judge would not make any further deductions, as Deficient category already accounts for inaccuracies in many areas of execution.

**Example 2:** The Element Judge notes on the program that an Acrobatics in Group P (Platform) is to be performed. However, the Featured Swimmer was never able to get onto the Construction. Since the Judge is unable to determine whether this Construction was indeed meant to be a Platform in Group P or a Lift in Group B, it can be considered a Partial Fail as something was completed but it is unclear what. As a result, the Element Judge determines the Overall Impression to be in the Very Weak category (2.0). The Judge would not make any additional deductions.

**14.3.2.1 Two (2) Team Acrobatics**

If two (2) Team Acrobatic Movements occur one after another without submerging it should be considered as two (2) separate Acrobatic Movements. Element Judges will award two (2) scores, one (1) score for each Acrobatics.

If two (2) identical Acrobatic Movements are performed simultaneously, it should be considered and calculated as one (1) Acrobatic Movement. Element Judges will award one (1) score representing the average of both Acrobatics.

It is cautioned that if two (2) different Acrobatic Movements are performed simultaneously, Element Judges may not be aware of which Acrobatics is intended to be scored first. Whilst this will result in a base mark, Element Judges must score both.

**14.3.2.2 Two (2) Identical Acrobatics**

If seemingly identical Acrobatic Movements are repeated (not performed simultaneously) in the same routine, the Artistic Impression Judges will adjust the Choreography and Musicality scores due to lack of variety, while the Element Judges will score the performance based on the marking scale.

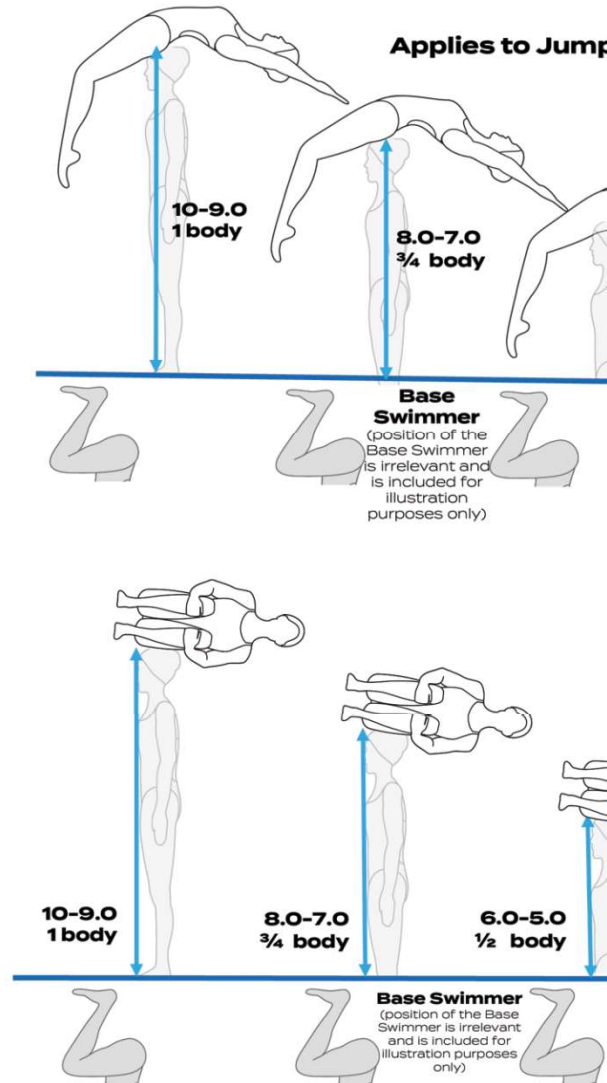
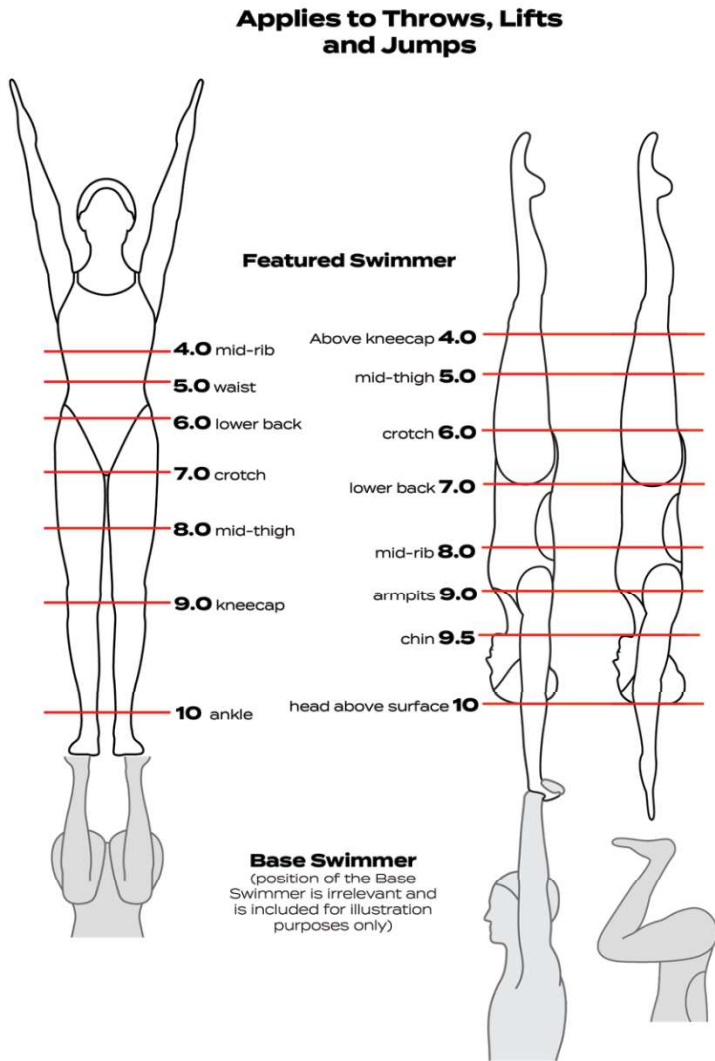
#### 14.3.4.8 PAIR ACROBATICS

In order to assign the Elements score for Pair Acrobatics (Lifts, Jumps, or Throws) Judges must follow the same three (3) steps used in Team Acrobatics: 1. determine the height, 2. evaluate Overall Impression and 3. determine any additional inaccuracies. For height, please refer to the Height Charts for Pair Acrobatics. Please note that Fall and Fail principles apply to Pair Acrobatics

##### **When to determine the height:**

- For Pair Acrobatics with tuck or tuck variant, Judges determine the maximum height just before the dismount action is initiated.
  - For back flip/somersault and front somersault, Judges determine the height similarly to Group A in Team Acrobatics, i.e. when the Featured Swimmer is at the maximum airborne height. The point of maximum height is determined when the Featured Swimmer's pelvis reaches its highest position above the water, regardless of gender.
  - To establish the height for Sustained Lifts, Judges should calculate the average height achieved during the entire length of the Sustained Lift, including the boosted movements and sustained movements, using the height chart for Pair Acrobatics – Lift. Note that for sustained movements Judges cannot use the Guiding Scale for Height Quality of Performance for Basic Position, as this chart is designed for actions performed by one (1) athlete without the support of another athlete.
  - For Pair Acrobatics where the Featured Swimmer is repeatedly boosted or lifted by the Base Swimmer other than the Sustained Lift, Judges average maximum heights achieved in each of the boosted or lifted actions using the Pair Acrobatics Height Chart.
  - For all other Pair Acrobatics, the height is determined at the maximum height achieved by the Featured Swimmer as per the Pair Acrobatics Height Chart Diagram below.
- Overall Impression of Pair Acrobatic Movement is based on the main control factors of the Featured Swimmer (height, clarity, angles, extension). Judges must also evaluate the design, stability, and sustainability of the entire Acrobatic Movement, including the Featured Swimmer and Base Swimmers and the way they interact. Judges are looking for a clear water entry, and must pay attention to unintentional falls, push problems and other execution issues.

**14.3.4.9 PAIR ACROBATICS HEIGHT CHART DIAGRAM**

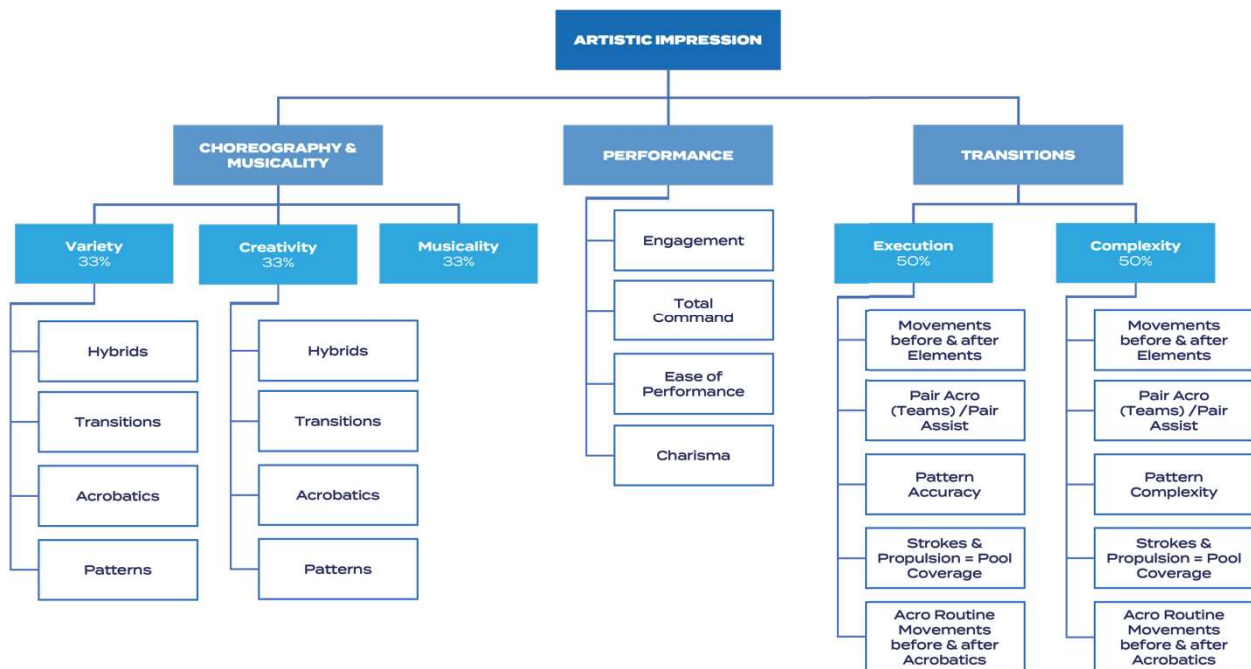


## 15. JUDGING ARTISTIC IMPRESSION

Artistic Impression is an effect, image or feeling retained as a result of the demonstration of skill by the athlete(s). The Artistic Impression score covers three (3) areas: **Choreography and Musicality, Performance** and **Transitions**. Each area is scored separately from 1 to 10 points with 0.25 increments.

The aim of the Artistic Impression score is to give Coaches and athletes the opportunity to exploit athlete's artistic qualities. The scores given by this panel should not be influenced by the other areas that determine the total score: Difficulty, Synchronization and Elements execution. It is very important that Judges realize that a routine with low (declared) difficulty can achieve a perfect score in the Artistic Impression area. The strategy of the Coach and the athlete is aimed at maximizing the total score, so the Artistic Impression Judges should make sure to only reward the Artistic Impression area.

Due to the subjective nature of many parts in Artistic Impression, wide latitude must be allowed. What may be considered artistic to one may seem common to another. An appreciation of a variety of cultures, styles, music types and interpretations should be cultivated. Personal feelings, i.e., whether one likes the routine or not, should not sway the Judges' perception. Evaluations and scores awarded should be based on how the routine fits the judging criteria.



## 15.1 CHOREOGRAPHY AND MUSICALITY

### 15.1.1 Approaches to choreography

Choreography (from Greek *choreo*: circle, dance, *graphy*: writing) is the art of composing dances. The design of movements and structures inside a routine (dance) so that Elements (TRE, Hybrids, Acrobatics), patterns and Transitions are combined, and an aesthetic effect is produced. In Artistic Swimming routines are choreographed to music.

Choreography is the creative skill of composing a routine that combines artistic and technical components. It involves the design and weaving together a variety, creativity, and innovation of all movements: Elements and Transitions.

Choreography is defined as the art of assembling movements so that they have:

- Meaning (an idea that is expressed physically): the routine can tell a story, create an abstract experience, or give a physical form to music. There should be purpose to the combination of movements.
- Form/structure: primary organising principle for expressing and unifying the meaning/intention. Music plays a central role determining the structure of a piece.
- Style: matching movements of a particular dance models with music styles (classic, popular, urban, hip-hop...etc.) or the creation of a personal own style.

The pillars of choreography are:

- Weight and size (movements can be heavy or light, big or small)
- Time (movements can be sudden or sustained, cadenced or in unison)
- Space (pathways or lines of travel, direction-facing during movements)
- Flow (movements bound and controlled or free and unrestrained)

The routine is not just a combination of unrelated actions. It should resemble a novel rather than a collection of short stories.

It is extremely important for the Artistic Impression Judge to keep an open mind and the ability to appreciate a variety of styles, even though they may prefer one style over another. Judges should always be prepared to judge something they have not seen before and evaluate it according to the appropriate judging criteria.

Note that when an athlete does not complete their choreography by the time the music accompaniment ends, Artistic Impression Judges must consider and factor in the length of time that movements continue when the music accompaniment ends into their Choreography and Musicality score.

Beyond the aesthetic experience, when evaluating the Choreography, the Judge *must* consider the entire routine for variety and creativity. This assessment includes the Hybrids, Acrobatics, Transitions, and patterns.

Note: previously, bonuses were awarded through the Coach Card for Placement, Traveling, and Synchronization of Hybrids. Judges should continue to recognize and reward routines that effectively showcase these components through a well-balance routine in the Choreography portion of the Artistic Impression score.

### 15.1.2 Variety - diversity, assortment

The athlete(s) should demonstrate a variety of body positions, body movements, strokes, arm movements and propulsion techniques to demonstrate proficiency in the various Artistic Swimming skills. When demonstrating these skills, it is desirable to use a variety of levels of space. The athlete(s) should show a balance of strokes, body positions, and propulsion techniques appropriate to the music. It is not necessary to include every skill, and some repetition may enhance the performance.

#### 1. Hybrids composition

There are uncountable variations possible in Hybrids:

- Body positions: Vertical Position, pike, tuck, Split Position, bent knee, etc.
- Components from the different Families in different combinations
- Multi-dimensional movements including simple and complex angles
- Varied beginnings and endings
- Ascending, descending, continuous, combined, opening, and closing Spins, Twirls, and sustained rotations, all in a multitude of body positions and combinations
- Travelling or stationary movements
- Connected movements, movements in unison or in cadence

#### 2. Transitions

A variety of transitional actions should be employed when moving from Element to Element (Hybrids, TRE, or Acrobatics). These actions include:

**Strokes and propulsion techniques.** Examples of variety in these techniques include the following:

- Bent, straight, angled, or curved arms
- Single or double arms
- Spread, flat, angled, cupped, straight, closed, or curved hand and finger positions
- Tilt, turn, lift, or stay erect head and body angles
- Height or body position changes can be made within a stroking sequence
- Front to back to side
- Horizontal to vertical and vice versa
- Boosts
- Flutter, eggbeater, scissors, whip, dolphin kicks
- Torpedo (with or without leg or arm movements added, rolled, etc.)

**Ballet leg(s).** All possible combination: single, double, flamingo, from side, straight, rolled, etc.

**Surface flexibility actions**

- Surface Splits in any variant
- Prone spine flexibility actions (ex: ring feet-head)

**Pair assisted actions**

- Actions performed by two (2) athletes where the bottom (base) athlete may remain under the water surface or on it, but the Featured Swimmer always remains on the surface (not lifted). Also “boost-type” assist movements are considered as pair assist actions.

Please remember that Transitions encompass all movements occurring before and after the Elements (TRE, Hybrids, Acrobatics), as well as all movements before and after the Acrobatics in an Acrobatic Routine.

**3. Acrobatics**

- Different groups (A, B, P and C)
- Variety in positions, directions, rotation, planes
- Pair Acrobatics

**4. Patterns and pattern changes**

- Patterns and pattern changes can also vary
- Spread patterns and close formations
- Curved lines and circles
- Straight lines and diagonals
- Moving or stationary patterns
- Symmetric and asymmetric patterns
- Box, diamond, triangle, V, X, cross
- Groups in a Team can be varied:
  - All 8 athletes
  - 4-4 athletes, 2-2-2-2 athletes, 3-2-3 athletes, 1-7 athletes, 2-6 athletes, etc.

### 15.1.3 Creativity - the act of being original or imaginative

Creativity should be considered in the broad sense of making something out-of-the-ordinary, something unexpected or surprising. It may entail combining or changing familiar material to offer something unique, or it may be the way in which music is used to make something happen, to cause an element of surprise, or to replace the obvious stereotype with the unexpected. The meaning of *creative* should not be restricted to new or original, but instead should be understood as the making of a lasting impression, something truly unique, a 'memorable moment'.

In Duets and Teams, connections between athletes may add to the creativity of the choreography.

The routine may also demonstrate a creative use of the music. This refers to using the music in an appropriate manner but in other than the expected stereotype for the music used.

Look for creativity in all actions: Hybrids, Transitions, Acrobatics and Patterns. A superior routine will use a wide variety of creative movements for the entire performance.

- **Uniqueness**

Look for unique, unusual, innovative, out-of-the-ordinary, surprising, or unexpected actions.

- **Paired and Team actions**

These may include joined or intertwined movements in pairs or groups, floats and connected actions, lifts, Throws (such as somersaults in the air) and platforms with statues.

- **Highlights and memorable moments**

In addition to the above, memorable moments may come from:

- a combination of actions
- rapidly changing combinations of float sequences
- combinations of figure and/or stroke sequences
- peel-off or add-on cadence actions
- exciting figure actions such as Rocket Splits, Thrusts, Thrust Spins or open and closed multiple spins of varying tempos

### 15.1.4 Patterns

Pool pattern is described as the area through which the athlete moves or the pathway the athlete takes through the water. Constant travel throughout the routine is desired. Patterns and their formations should be innovative and add to the uniqueness of the routine. How the athlete creatively moves throughout the pool area and the pattern of movement they create should be major considerations considered.

A well-choreographed routine will be constantly moving and will cover the whole pool. In a routine with good pool coverage, athletes will avoid spending extended periods of time in a small area of the pool.

**Constant flowing action**

Routines travel the length, on angles, to corners and sides of the pool while moving in and out of patterns. The flow should continue without abrupt stops, reverse actions, or retracing paths unless they are for choreographic effect. Time spent in any one spot should be minimal.

**Effective use of space**

Although the space should be effectively used for movement to cover all areas of the pool, consideration should also be given to the placement of highlights and special actions. These special actions should be placed where they can be effectively seen and appreciated.

**15.1.5 Musicality - Use and Interpretation of music**

Musicality is defined as "musical quality or character"; therefore, all music and its interpretation have musicality. We understand musicality in Artistic Swimming as the ability of athletes to express what the music says and how it makes them feel based on their personality. Athletes should be expressing the mood of the music, while making use of the music's structure.

The use of music refers to how the athlete(s) use the structure of the music. The use of music should be judged with an open mind, allowing for a wide latitude of individual interpretation. Maybe a spoken word piece is used or there are deliberate silences in the routine. Judges should be prepared to reward the use of all kinds of sound or the absence of it.

Music has a far greater influence because music is the basis for all the other categories. Choreography is dependent upon it; performance relates to the feeling the athlete has for the music. Using music effectively should be thought of as the blending of movements and music into a oneness of expression.

In the Solo event, when use and interpretation of the music are done to perfection, it will appear as if the soloist and their music are one. It is as though the music was written for them.

**Interpretation of character, mood, feeling**

Music Interpretation in Artistic Swimming means the translation of sounds, rhythms, dynamics, melodies, moods, accents, and highlights in the music to suitable expression of movement in water. The nature of the music, from full symphonic orchestration to a single violin concerto, from symphonic choral works to pop ballads, determines the type of action that the choreographer chooses to use to express its mood, and the emotional responses needed for its portrayal.

Music may range from strong, forceful, staccato, and loud to soft, subdued, delicate and flowing. Strong, dynamic music calls for powerful, grandiose actions and movements. Soft, flowing music calls for a more lyrical interpretation with rounder, more fluid and delicate actions. Fast, quick, complex movements fit music with a fast tempo, whereas slow, graceful movements must be created for slower passages. The mood of the music may induce tension or excitement, joy, or tranquillity in the listener. Some music calls for continuous flowing action; other music has stops and starts demanding intermittent or staccato action. The nature and demands of the music should all be found in the athlete's portrayal of it. An exceptional performance will give the effect of the athlete being the music, exploring all qualities and adding their own special interpretation.

- **Character, quality**

Consider the sound: full symphonic orchestration or single instrument; pop vocal or military band; chamber quartet to rock band; strident, overriding beats or soft, flowing melody. Then consider whether the character of the music has been portrayed by the movements in the water.

- **Mood, meaning of the music**

Consider the mood or meaning of the music, strong, romantic, joyous, sorrowful, patriotic, etc. Consider both the obvious and subtle qualities of the music and whether they have been interpreted and provide meaning.

- **Feeling, fervour, and passion**

Consider the emotional impact of the music and how it has been interpreted. The athlete must be able to bring out the emotion heard by the viewers through the interpretation given.

### **Use of the music's dynamics**

The term 'use' means 'availing oneself of something as a means to an end'. The music's rhythms, dynamics and accent points set the tempo and power for the actions. Literally, use of the music is how the athlete uses the beats and measures, the 'highs and lows', varying melodic themes, different instrumental sounds, and the dynamic changes (highlights and accent points).

Highlights or accent points in music call for something special such as boosts, platforms, lifts, Throws, Airborne Split, multiple spins, etc. A superior routine will match the highlights to the special accents in the music. These are the memorable moments that remain with the viewers.

- **Tempo changes**

Actions must match the tempo - fast, moderate, slow, or stopped—and change when the music does.

- **Power and delicacy**

Movements match the strength and delicacy heard. Strong, angular, and forceful actions are used for dynamic music. Flowing, curving, soft actions are best for lyrical, melodious parts. The highs and lows in the music are matched by actions, up high or low in the water.

- **Accents and highlights**

Memorable moments are matched to the accents and highlights in the music—the crescendos and decrescendos, big cymbal clangs, drum rolls, etc.

The athlete can portray a special performance by using the music in a very different way as the 'standard' description above, giving additional effects that are only brought out in this specific performance.

**Synchronization with music**

The Artistic Impression Judges must consider whether athlete's actions are coordinated with the rhythm, melody, accents, or highlights and whether there is synchronization with the special effects in the music that may be used for spins, rockets, boosts, stacks, lifts, and Throws. Changes of the pace of movements should occur in conjunction with the tempo changes in the music.

Artistic Impression Judges should take into consideration major deviations from the tempo or feeling of the music, or obvious failure to match actions with a musical accent or highlight.

Please note that this should not be confused with athletes not being in unison. The synchronization with music can be perceived as being more prominent in Solo routines and in the execution of Acrobatic Movements.

## 15.2 PERFORMANCE

Performance is the way the athlete or athletes present the routine to the viewers, as well as how they “dominate” the space.

Performance involves the use of the face and the whole body. The athletes must demonstrate that they are in total command throughout. The impression is one of a richness of movement, with the athlete ‘owning the water’. Total command requires a completeness of performance that demonstrates confidence, poise, and effortlessness; a high-energy level, both physical and emotional; and consistency of performance with the maintenance of an illusion of ease throughout. There must be responsiveness to the emotions expressed by the music and appropriate to the choreography, along with the ability to communicate with sincerity and enjoyment to viewers so that they are drawn into and feel as if they are a part of the performance.

Routines that receive top scores in this category show dynamism and strength yet are also fluid, graceful and captivating. They have an allure, an appeal to the senses, a magnetism; in short, they have charisma.

- **Engagement/Completeness of performance**

- **Use of whole body, body language**

- Superior athletes will demonstrate excellent posture and be able to display and make use of body language in head and torso positions, in leg, arm and hand movements and in facial expressions, to carry a message to the viewers.

- **Focus of body and face**

- Look for eye contact and use of the head. The focus can be erect and upright, with straight or squared shoulders, or it may be soft, curving, turning with tilting shoulders and accompanied by appropriate facial expressions to carry a message to the viewers.

- **Use of varied moods**

- The athlete should be able to demonstrate a desired mood (love, power, joy, sorrow, anger, pain, etc.) to allow the audience to also feel the emotions heard in the music.

- **Aura of total command, confidence**

- **Convincing presentation**

- The entire performance should be purposeful, riveting, and demanding attention, with confidence and command maintained throughout. Athletes(s) show complete personal involvement in the routine.

- Consider in the scoring the initial appearance (self-introduction): the walk-on and deck movements and positions should be assured, with sharp, clear, and commanding positioning. The ending position should also be sharp, clear, and commanding.

- Note that while the swimsuit is not of a principal importance, if a very special creative or innovative design to match the theme or music is shown, Judges may consider rewarding it with a bonus of maximum of 0.25 points.

- **Ease of Performance/Effortlessness**

An illusion of ease should be maintained throughout the performance. The breathing should be quiet and not explosive or wheezing. All movements should appear effortless and powerful without splash or struggle. The return to the surface and 'break-through' should be smooth and easy, without sputtering, blowing bubbles or fountains of water. The athlete should not look frantic or panicky and should remain poised and confident throughout.

**Consistency of performance**

Top athletes will not look rushed or exhausted but will demonstrate a consistency in their level of performance from start to finish. The routine will flow seamlessly, with continual movement throughout, so that the viewer is led from one action to the next, never able to look away even momentarily because there are no stops or resting points where movement lags.

- **Charisma and communication**

**Ability to communicate with viewers**

The personal presence of the athlete(s) can be captivating, enchanting, intriguing, fascinating, etc. The routine seems too short when it is done so well.

**Facial expressions**

If the mood of the music changes, so may the facial expressions. A 'pasted-on' smile is seldom appropriate, especially if the feeling of the music is serious, strong, angry, or sad and sorrowful. Throughout the routine, the athlete or athletes need to portray confidence and at ease in all their movements.

**Sincerity**

To be convincing, athletes should be able to establish eye contact with the Judges and audience.

**Showmanship**

The terms magnetism, charm, appeal, and charisma signify how the athlete projects to the audience. Athletes must 'sell' their performance every time it is executed, always appearing new and fresh. Each performance should bring obvious enjoyment eliciting spontaneous applause from the viewers. You could watch it again and again.

### 15.3 TRANSITIONS

Routines are not just a random assortment or a loose connection of isolated movements; one of the key aspects of Artistic Impression is how the Elements are linked together. This connection is known as a Transition.

A Transition is a movement or series of movements bound together by a physical impulse or line of energy that result in the recognition of logical connection that prevents Elements from appearing arbitrary and isolated.

Transitions are typically defined as all actions that are not Elements (TRE, Hybrids and Acrobatics). While Hybrids are defined as a combination of five (5) or more movements performed with lower limbs with intentional apnea, Transitions afford all expressive possibilities with upper body as well as short Hybrid-like movements of four (4) or less movements with or without intentional apnea or horizontal movements along the surface with lower limb actions that have consequential apnea (rolling over, kicking, etc.). Note that Sustained Surface Connections with travel ("SuCon") required for Mixed Duet Routines are considered under Transitions and Choreography and Musicality score.

- In the Transition score, Execution and Complexity of Transitions should be considered equally. The variety and creativity of the routine's transitions is considered with the Choreography and Musicality score. The ability of the athlete to perform a larger variation of complex transitional movements, showing constant movement of many different body parts in an excellent manner will increase the Transitions score. For the execution of Transitions, please refer to the height charts for Eggbeater and Ballet Legs. Judges will also consider movements before and after a TRE and all Hybrids in the Acrobatic Routine as part of the Transition score. Please refer to height charts and Hybrid Execution Marking Scale.

Judges should consider the Transition for **Execution** through the following aspects:

- Transitions should be smooth and seemingly effortless unless clearly intended otherwise in the choreography.
- Athletes should maintain control, extension, stability, clarity, easy of performance and height during Transitions.
- Fluidity must be seen through all Transitions.
- The ability to travel and cover all pool areas.
- Accuracy of the pattern formations during the Transitions.

Judges should consider the Transition for **Complexity**, "richness" or "intricacy" through the following aspects:

- Complicated actions that contain many parts.
- The amount of body movement Involved. Exploring the complete range of possible body movements (upper body and horizontal movements).
- Multiple changes in body positions, angles, directions, and water levels.
- Very rapid, multiple quick movements to change arm, hand, leg, or foot positions.

- A complex combination of changing angles of the arms.
- Strokes that require an extreme range of flexibility, such as those with the extended arm behind the shoulder line.
- Complexity and large variation of the pattern changes during the transitions including the close distance between the athletes.

The most effective Transitions are hardly perceived by the viewer and are accomplished so smoothly and naturally that they are finished before one is aware what has happened. Whether from stroke to Element, Element to stroke, all Transitions should flow from start to finish smoothly, logically, and effortlessly. They should be efficient and purposeful. There should also be evidence of a high energy level with no loss of power, speed, or height throughout the routine.

### **Impact of the major error on Artistic Impression**

The Artistic Impression score will be impacted when a major error occurs during the routine. Considering this may be a small portion of the total routine it is reasonable to consider a small deduction (0.25). If multiple errors occur throughout the routine these deductions can be accumulated resulting in a larger impact on the scores with maximum deduction of one (1.0) point.

When a failure to do the intended action happens (major error) the Artistic Impression Judges will consider the following:

- If the error occurs during a Transition a small deduction to the execution portion of the Transition score should be applied.
- If the error affects the total command a small deduction to the Performance score is applied.
- If the overall choreography is impacted causing confusion in the understanding of the routine a small deduction may be applied to the Choreography score.

## 18. FREE COMBINATION ROUTINES

The Free Combination must have four (4) to ten (10) athletes who make a combination of routines.

The routines have a predetermined number of Elements (**AS 4.4**) choreographed to music (see Competition Regulations).

This event is for age groups Youth and 12 and under only.

While the execution is important in the Free Combination, the Artistic Impression is at the heart of this type of routine.

### 18.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Time Limits: refer to Competition Regulations.

Start may be on the deck or in the water, or a combination of both. All subsequent parts must start in the water.

A new part begins in very close proximity to the previous part.

The routine must portray a theme which must be declared on the Coach Card.

As in all routines, the Coach Card must show the required Elements in the selected order of performance.

#### Open Free Combination Required Elements

At least two (2) parts must have fewer than three (3) athletes, and at least two (2) parts must have all Athletes.

As per Appendix 3, **Youth** Open Free Combination must include:

- Four (4) Team Acrobatics with degree of difficulty safety limit (free choice but must not repeat the same acrobatic).
- One (1) Solo Hybrid with degree of difficulty.
- One (1) Duet Hybrid with degree of difficulty.
- Two (2) Team Hybrids (must be executed with a minimum of four (4) athletes) with degree of difficulty.
- One (1) Team choreography Hybrid with no degree of difficulty (i.e. factor of 1.0) (must be executed with a minimum of 4 athletes).

Element parts cannot occur simultaneously (i.e. Team Acrobatics occurs while Solo Hybrid starts).

As per Appendix 3, the **12U** Open Free Combination must include:

- Three (3) Team Acrobatics with degree of difficulty safety limit (free choice but must not repeat the same Acrobatics).
- One (1) Solo Hybrid with degree of difficulty.
- One (1) Duet Hybrid with degree of difficulty.

- Two (2) Team Hybrids (must be executed with a minimum of four (4) athletes) with degree of difficulty
- One (1) Team choreography Hybrid with no degree of difficulty (i.e. factor of 1.0) (must be executed with a minimum of four (4) athletes)

Element parts cannot occur simultaneously (i.e. Team Acrobatics occurs while Solo Hybrid starts).

### Acrobatics safety limits

12U and Youth Team Acrobatics safety limits for Open Free Combination is as follows.

Acrobatic Elements cannot have a degree of difficulty higher than the total degree of difficulty (max):

<b>Youth</b>	<b>Acrobatic degree of difficulty</b>	<b>Plus Base Mark</b>	<b>Total degree of difficulty (MAX)</b>
Youth - Group A	2.2	0.5	<b>2.7</b>
Youth - Group B	2.3	0.5	<b>2.8</b>
Youth - Group C	2.3	0.5	<b>2.8</b>
Youth - Group P	2.5	0.5	<b>3.0</b>
<b>12U</b>			
12U - Group A	2.0	0.5	<b>2.5</b>
12U - Group B	2.1	0.5	<b>2.6</b>
12U - Group C	2.1	0.5	<b>2.6</b>
12U - Group P	2.3	0.5	<b>2.8</b>

Acrobatics must not be repeated:

- For Group A –same position(s) (as P1 or as P2), with the exception of the third position bonus, cannot be repeated
- For Group B –the same construction and type of connection (grip) cannot be repeated.
- For Group C –the same construction cannot be repeated
- For Group P –the same construction AND the same type of connection (grip), the same position/s (as P1 or as P2), with the exception of the third position bonus cannot be repeated.

Refer to World Aquatics Acrobatics Catalogue for Acrobatic Movements and their assigned difficulty values. Difficulty values are subject to adjustment by World Aquatics, as needed.

### 18.2 JUDGING FREE COMBINATION ROUTINES

As in all routines, two (2) panels of five (5) Judges will officiate and provide the scores:

1. First panel: **Elements**
2. Second panel: **Artistic Impression**

Two (2) groups of three (3) Technical Controllers must officiate in the Free Combination Routine:

1. **Difficulty Technical Controllers** (DTCs) who check the number, order of performance and predeclared difficulty of Elements.
2. **Synchronization Technical Controllers** (STCs) who register the number and type of synchronization errors (unequal actions) observed.

### **18.2.1 Elements Panel**

Element Judges shall award one (1) score for the execution of each Element required for the Free Combination – Acrobatics and Hybrids.

Execution is the level of excellence in performing highly specialized skills.

For general information of judging execution of Elements see section Judging Elements in this Manual.

### **18.2.2 Artistic Impression Panel**

The intent of the Free Combination Routine is to be free, with limited rules and regulations with special attention given to Artistic Impression and exchanges between parts.

The term “**exchanges**” refers to switching from one part to the next part. The exchanges can be viewed as the glue to fitting the parts of the puzzle together seamlessly to make a whole cohesive fluent and artistically meaningful routine following the declared Theme. The intention is that the routine should flow and be logical, not requiring Judges or TV cameras to search for the next athlete. The distance between athletes must be safe for them, especially in Team exchanges. At the same time, obvious distance between exchanges will affect the fluidity of the routine and, therefore, the Judges’ score and will also be subject to a penalty based on the Referee’s decision.

Artistic Impression Judges award one (1) score for each of the following three (3) components:

#### **Choreography and Musicality**

Choreography is a creative skill of composing a routine that combines artistic and technical components. It includes variety and creativity in Hybrids and Transitions, the design, and the weaving together of all movements and the pool coverage.

Musicality covers the use and interpretation of music, expressing the mood of the music, use of the music’s structure and the synchronization with music. How well does the athlete in each part interpret the music?

Each routine must interpret a Theme and declare it on the Coach Card. Does the Theme make sense? Does the overall flow of the routine match the Theme?

Exchanges are a characteristic feature of this type of routine. Thus, Judges should consider the choreography around the exchanges as a key factor in judging the Free Combinations:

- Judges should consider the variety of exchanges. Are Team exchanges done involving different numbers of athletes?

- Is there variety in the moves used within exchanges? Are exchanges between parts creative and *unique* or predictable? Is there an element of surprise?

Judges should also consider:

- The variety and creativity of moves. The stronger athletic performances will show energetic, original, imaginative moves in the parts and exchanges.
- Are the same athletes always used for Solo/Duet/trio and highlight parts or is there a variety of athletes used in all parts?
- The number and order of parts. Are there too many parts so that the Judge does not have time to appreciate what is being done? Are the parts with less than three (3) athletes interspersed between Team parts OR are there several Solo/Duet parts in a row?
- Does the routine flow logically and cover the pool or is it fragmented by the parts with a lack of logical movement? How well are the parts woven together? There should be a harmonious blend of all parts. Each part should seem needed in order to make the routine seem whole.
- Is the routine seamless with each part and exchange flowing and adding to the Overall Impression of the routine? Does each part work well together?

### **Performance**

Consider the manner in which athletes present the routine to viewers, total command of the performance of the routine. Throughout each part of the music, athletes should ideally be showing total command, compelling Judges to watch. In addition to athletes currently performing the part of the routine, the athletes waiting should also give the feeling that they are involved and part of the routine.

Judges also consider:

- Efficiency, power, and energy level for strokes. Does the level of execution, power and energy change within parts or vary as the routine goes on?
- Are the parts with less than three (3) athletes performed better than the parts with four (4) or more athletes or vice versa?

### **Transitions**

Judges should consider execution and complexity of movements, propulsions and strokes that link routine Elements.

Judges also consider:

- How is the execution performance ending one part and starting into the next part? Does it flow smoothly and start where the last part finished?
- How clear are the pattern formations between exchanges?

**Free Combination Exchanges Marking Scale**

The below Marking Scale for exchanges should be considered by Artistic Swimming Judges in both Transitions (when the exchange occurs during Transitions) and in Choreography and Musicality score.

Category	Mark	Description
<b>Perfect Near perfect Excellent</b>	<b>9.0-10</b>	Surprising exchanges, unexpected, "WOW" factor: no distraction during exchanges, athletes just 'disappear' when finished and 'appear' to start. Full extension and control. Stable, high clean. Complexity is performed effortlessly.
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>8.0-8.75</b>	Very good and interesting exchanges, no wait time but more obvious what is happening. Some distraction by athletes at the time of exchange. May lose full extension or height for minimal time. Shows complexity during most exchanges.
<b>Good</b>	<b>7.0-7.75</b>	Good but somewhat predictable exchanges, minimal wait time, may stay on one side of the pool for too long. Some distraction by athletes at the actual exchange. May lose execution/height for a short duration during the exchanges. Complexity shown during some exchanges.
<b>Competent</b>	<b>6.0-6.75</b>	Ordinary and predictable exchanges with wait time, athletes finishing a part and those starting a part are distracting. Competent extension and height during the exchanges. Simple in complexity.
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>5.0-5.75</b>	Exchanges are satisfactory and simple with a lot of wait time (body boost under to finish part, waiting and surfacing to start next part); swimming in and out of the exchanges is awkward. Some difficulties with execution of exchanges. Lack of efficiency in exchanges. Simple exchanges.
<b>Deficient</b>	<b>4.0-4.75</b>	Exchanges do not appear to link routine, look like separate sections with lack of connection. Mostly low execution level. Very Simple.