

# Judging Pro Tips

## Using Half-Tenths

When judging, the smallest deduction we can take is a half-tenth or .05. If you're new to judging you may find it difficult to keep up with the routine while writing .05 or 05 on your paper. The most common way amongst judges to record a half tenth is by using a large dot: •

Using this method should make it much easier for you to capture routines quickly and accurately. Good luck!

## Shorthand

Similar to the inefficiency of writing out half-tenths, it's difficult to record a routine without using symbols for skills. These symbols are referred to as shorthand in the judging world. There are a few ways you can get accustomed to using these. See below:

- NGA Women's Technical Handbook
  - Shorthand is available for most skills in the section of each event covering value parts
- USA Gymnastics Compulsory Exercises book
  - Skills included in compulsory routines are shown in shorthand
- Xcel Program book
  - Some skills may be written in shorthand for various examples of rules throughout the book
  - Towards the back of the book you can view charts for each event showing the group, skill number, shorthand symbol, and value part (A,B,etc.) of each skill
- Optional Code of Points book:
  - Some skills may be written in shorthand for various examples of rules throughout the book
  - Towards the back of the book you can view charts for each event showing the group, skill number, shorthand symbol, and value part (A,B,etc.) of each skill
- USA Gymnastics flipchart:
  - For compulsory routines, the shorthand symbols will be shown for each skill per level/event

Additionally, the NAWGJ store offers a Shorthand 101 book for purchase. Having said all this, many judges make up their own shorthand and that is perfectly acceptable as long as you can go back and know what skills the gymnast did or did not do.

It may be intimidating to start using shorthand while judging live. Many judges will record routines in a way that works for them and then go back through their scripts and practice using the official shorthand until they feel ready to use them live.

Last, when taking exams for new judges ratings, although the skills will be written in shorthand, the name or description of the skill will be provided below the symbol, so you do NOT need to know shorthand when taking a judging exam.

## How to Average

We would be remiss to not credit the individual who originally introduced this method of averaging (at least to me), thank you to Byron Holden for this quick and accurate method of averaging. Now granted, most meets we judge have tablets that do this for us (that's no fun!), but every once in a while you will come across a meet where you don't have a tablet to do the math and in those situations, this trick is very handy – it's also a fun party trick 🤖

## Start with Simple Math

There are two types of numbers we need to average:

- When **both** judges' scores end in .0 or .X5
- When one judge has a score ending in .0 and the other judge has a score ending in .X5

Let's start with when both judges' scores end in .0 or .X5. Can you average the following fairly easily?

8.4 & 8.2  
9.1 & 8.7  
8.8 & 8.5  
8.2 & 7.7  
8.35 & 8.05  
9.15 & 9.35

The easiest method to average these numbers is to find the difference and halve it.

8.4 & 8.2 → Difference = .2 → Half the difference = .1 → Average = 8.3  
9.1 & 8.7 → Difference = .4 → Half the difference = .2 → Average = 8.9  
8.8 & 8.5 → Difference = .3 → Half the difference = .15 → Average = 8.65  
8.2 & 7.7 → Difference = .5 → Half the difference = .25 → Average = 7.95  
8.35 & 8.05 → Difference = .3 → Half the difference = .15 → Average = 8.2  
9.15 & 9.35 → Difference = .2 → Half the difference = .1 → Average = 9.25

Don't forget you have a range to consider! Having said that, being able to average numbers like above is a prerequisite to being able average scores where one judges' score ends in .0 and the other judges' score ends in .5. Let's talk about how we average those numbers.

## Evens and Odds

Now let's talk about when one judge has a score ending in .0 and the other judge has a score ending in .X5 - have you ever seen another judge put a finger over the 5 on a score that ends in .X5 to find the average? There's a reason behind this and we're about to explain it. The first thing you need to understand here is the difference between two scores:

- If the difference is EVEN you're going to end up with a .X25
- If the difference is ODD you're going to end up with a .X75

Let's review a few examples:

8.45 & 8.2 → Cover up the 5 in 8.45 → Average 8.4 & 8.2 → Difference = .2 → Average = 8.3  
Is .2 EVEN or ODD → EVEN → Final average is 8.325

9.1 & 8.75 → Cover up the 5 in 8.75 → Average 9.1 & 8.7 → Difference = .4 → Average = 8.9  
Is .4 EVEN or ODD → EVEN → Final average is 8.925

8.8 & 8.55 → Cover up the second 5 in 8.55 → Average 8.8 & 8.5 → Difference = .3 → Average = 8.65  
Is .3 EVEN or ODD → ODD → Final average is 8.675

8.25 & 7.7 → Cover up the 5 in 8.25 → Average 8.2 & 7.7 → Difference = .5 → Average = 7.95  
Is .5 EVEN or ODD → ODD → Final average is 7.975\*

*\*Personal soapbox: This is my least favorite average ever.*

That's all I have for you, and thank you, again, Mr. Holden 🙏