

# Men's Artistic Gymnastics Event Descriptions

## Olympic competition order

The international competition order is decided by the FIG. The men's Olympic order is floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, vault, parallel bars and horizontal bar.

## Floor Exercise

The entire floor area should be used during the exercise, which consists primarily of tumbling passes performed in different directions. Acrobatic elements forward and backward and acrobatic elements sideward or backward take-off with one-half-turn must be performed during the routine. There must also be a non-acrobatic element included, such as a balance element on one leg or one arm; a static strength move, held for two seconds; or jumps, circles or flairs. Transitional skills, or gymnastics movements performed in between tumbling and acrobatic passes, should be executed with proper rhythm and harmony. The exercise must not exceed 70 seconds in length.

Today's floor exercise routines consist of dynamic tumbling skills that only a few years ago were performed solely on the trampoline. The best gymnasts will incorporate tumbling passes with substantial difficulty, performing multiple twisting and flipping saltos during their routines on the 40'x40' floor exercise mat.

### This event is difficult because:

It is one of the more difficult events to achieve a high difficulty value. The best routines will include difficult tumbling passes with connected bounding skills and will look near-effortless to the spectators.

### What can we expect to see?

- Difficult tumbling passes with multiple flips and twists
- Connected bounding skills
- Creative routines with a high difficulty value which have no execution errors and stuck landings

### Specs:

- Length: 12 m (approx. 40 ft.)
- Width: 12 m (approx. 40 ft.)

## Pommel Horse

Many consider the pommel horse to be one of the most difficult of the men's gymnastics events. It requires an enormous amount of practice to master even the most basic skills.

Pommel horse routines consist of continuous circular movements interrupted only by the required scissors elements. Swinging through a handstand position, with or without turns, is allowed. The hands are the only part of the body that should touch the apparatus and the entire exercise should flow with steady, controlled rhythm. A maximum of two cross support travels for bonus are permitted (forward and/or backward). The hand

placements should be quick, quiet and rhythmic.

**This event is difficult because:**

The event's difficulty stems from two factors. First, the gymnast must perform skills with a circular movement in a horizontal plane. Second, he spends most of each routine on only one arm, as the free hand reaches for another pommel or part of the horse to begin the next skill.

Pommel horse is the only event in which gymnasts do not get to stop or pause during the routine. If a gymnast gets in trouble, he must continue moving through the routine while making corrections. The constant movement makes this very difficult to do. Also, many of the skills learned in gymnastics can easily be transferred to other events; however, with the exception of a circle and a flair circle, this is not the case on pommel horse. Mastering basic skills on this apparatus often takes twice the time.

While the untrained eye may not catch these flaws, judges may deduct for several mistakes. For example, deductions may be taken if the hips are not high enough and the legs are not separated enough while performing the scissors requirement; the gymnast does not make it completely up to a handstand during a handstand dismount; or the gymnast performs a dismount that does not match the rest of the routine.

**What can we expect to see?**

- Flawless routines performed with extended circle swings
- Landings without any steps or hops

**Specs:**

- Height: 115 cm (approx. 3.8 ft.)
- Width: 35 cm (approx. 13.8 in.)
- Length: 160 cm (approx. 5.25 in.)

## Still Rings

Stillness and proper body position while performing strength elements are paramount on the still rings. Gymnasts with the best command of the event will display extraordinary skill in arriving at all holds with absolute precision. The rings should be absolutely still and under control at the end of each skill. The body should be straight with no arching, and arms should be sturdy and strong with no shaking.

The still rings routine must include one swing to handstand and swings to strength hold elements. At least two elements of strength, one swing to strength element and the other a static strength element, must be held for two seconds during the routine.

Examples of strength elements include a cross, an inverted cross and a swallow or Maltese cross. A cross is performed in a straight body or L position with the body perpendicular to the floor and arms stretched perpendicular to the body, while an inverted cross is executed in an inverted handstand position with arms stretched perpendicular to the body. A swallow or Maltese cross is performed when the body is in a straight position parallel to the floor at rings height. The rings must remain still throughout the routine. Deductions are taken for unnecessary swings and instability.

Today, the trend among gymnasts is to achieve a high difficulty value for their routine by combining strength

moves with one another.

Look for confidence in the strength elements. The gymnast should move directly into the proper and controlled position when performing his cross or Maltese, stopping securely for a full two seconds, and then move smoothly into the next part. During the swinging elements, watch for stretched body positions and straight handstands.

**This event is difficult because:**

It requires a great deal of upper body strength and it is almost impossible to obtain a high start value without strength moves in the routine. Gymnasts without excellent upper-body strength fail to score high on this event. If a gymnast does have a high difficulty value, it often boils down to sticking the dismount in order to win.

**What can we expect to see?**

- Strength moves connected to strength moves that are held in a perfectly straight position for more than two seconds
- Straight handstand positions
- No movement of the feet during the landings (stuck dismounts)

**Specs:**

- Tower height: 575 cm (approx. 19 ft.)
- Cable/strap length: 300 cm (approx. 9.8 ft.)
- Space between cables/straps: 50 cm (approx. 19.7 in.)

## Vault

Quick, explosive and dramatic - a good vault is often described as a "big" vault. The height, distance of travel, overall acceleration into the vault and sudden impact of a no-step, "stuck" landing all create a good impression for the judges.

Men have a choice of performing one or two vaults, depending if a gymnast is attempting to qualify into the individual event finals of this event. Each individual vault has been assigned its own value based on the vault's complexity.

Following the pre-flight from the springboard to the table, the gymnast must demonstrate a rise in the height of his body after pushing off of the table and not deviate from the extended axis of the table. The gymnast should show an opening in preparation for a controlled landing, which should be accomplished without extra steps and in line with the table, springboard and runway.

**This event is difficult because:**

The entire performance happens very quickly. The gymnast must stay intensely focused and be prepared for the ground when it is time to land. Speed, power and spatial awareness are essential to performing high-level vaults correctly.

**What can we expect to see?**

- Handspring double fronts in the piked position and in the tucked position with a half-turn
- Tsukahara double backs in a tuck and piked position

- Kasamatsu stretched with multiple twists.
- Yurchenkos (round off entry vaults) with multiple twists

**Specs:**

- Height: 125 cm (approx. 4 ft.)
- Width: 95 cm (approx. 3 ft.)
- Length: 95-105 cm (approx. 3-3.5 ft.)
- Runway width: 1 m (approx. 3.2 ft.)
- Runway length: 25m (82 ft.)

## Parallel Bars

A parallel bar routine consists mostly of swing and flight elements. The gymnast should not stop or hold a move more than three times during the routine. The gymnast is required to execute swinging elements from a support, hang and upper arm position. The gymnast is also required to perform an under swing, sometimes referred to as a basket swing.

The most difficult skills require the gymnast to lose sight of the bars for a moment, such as a double front or back salto. Difficulty is earned by executing these skills in connection with other higher valued skills.

**This event is difficult because:**

It requires a great deal of hand-eye coordination, timing and balance. Many of the skills' execution must be coordinated with the flex of the bars. Losing sight of the bars on the high-level skills makes it difficult to re-grasp the bars and smoothly continue.

**What can we expect to see?**

- Double front and back saltos in-between the bars performed in tuck and piked positions
- Peach basket elements from handstand to handstand often with half and full turns
- Double backward dismounts in a piked position with stuck landings

**Specs:**

- Height: 195 cm (approx. 6.4 ft.)
- Width: 42-52 cm (approx. 16.5-20.5 in.)
- Length: 350 cm (approx. 11.5 ft.)

## Horizontal (High) Bar

Usually the most crowd-pleasing and spectacular of all the events, the horizontal bar consists of swings, release moves and high-flying dismounts.

During the routine, the gymnast must execute a series of continuous swings and turns and at least one move in which the gymnast releases and re-grasps the bar. He also must perform at least one element in el-grip, dorsal hang or rearways to the bar.

The gymnast is also required to perform an in-bar skill, such as a stalder circle. High-level gymnasts usually complete multiple release moves and receive bonus points for connecting high-difficulty skills before and after their release moves. Look for soaring dismounts with multiple somersaults and twists.

**This event is difficult because:**

A gymnast must perform very difficult release moves that have a small margin of error to have any hopes of winning. Release moves are performed 12-15 feet over the bar, which requires a fearless and aggressive effort. He must maintain form throughout the release move and while catching the bar, which is usually a matter of just inches. The world's best will have several release moves, no execution errors and a big dismount with a perfect, stuck landing. Examples of big release moves are Kovacs with a full twist, a Tkatchev stretched with a full twist or a Gienger with a full twist.

**What can we expect to see?**

- Double back saltos over the bar (Kovacs) in different body positions (tucked, piked and stretched) performed with twist
- Double twisting, double back dismounts in a stretched position
- Intricate in-bar skills with pirouettes

**Specs:**

- Height: 275 cm (approx. 9 ft.)
- Diameter: 2.8 cm (approx. 1 in.)
- Length: 240 cm (approx. 8 ft.)