



National Association of  
Women's Gymnastics Judges

# **ILLINOIS NAWGJ GUIDELINES**

This booklet was designed to assist each judge with information throughout the year.

Some materials are from NAWGJ and USA Gymnastics. Other information and policies pertain only to Illinois NAWGJ.

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## NAWGJ MISSION STATEMENT

**\*\* All of the following information, as well as the NAWGJ National Constitution, can be found on the NAWGJ website at [www.nawgj.org](http://www.nawgj.org). \*\***

IT IS THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS JUDGES TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ITS MEMBERS AND TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS IN THE UNITED STATES.

THIS MISSION WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

- I. Providing the membership with education, communication and representation.
- II. Contracting judges to various organizations with gymnastic programs upon request.
- III. Providing other services to the gymnastics community.

### GOALS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE THE MISSION

- I. Providing the membership with education, communication and representation.
  - A. An organized facility for teaching and training members to qualify them for certification as official gymnastics judges.
  - B. An organized educational and training opportunity for certified judges to qualify them to perform at meets of a dual, triangular, local, district, sectional, state, regional, and national nature for gymnastics organizations requesting assistance.
  - C. Financial assistance for in-service training of judges.
  - D. Dissemination of national, regional, state, and lower-level judging information.
  - E. Encouraging and maintaining research projects that will benefit all levels of judging in the United States.
  - F. Continuing education of judges through the sponsorship of judges' training and refresher clinics.
  - G. Issuing and distributing of National and State newsletters updating and informing others of the latest techniques in officiating the sport of gymnastics.

- H. Maintaining high ethical standards.
  - I. Keeping records of judges' eligibility.
  - J. Recruiting potential judges.
  - K. Providing leadership.
  - L. Representing the membership as a liaison to other organizations.
  - M. Providing certification opportunities.
  - N. Negotiating contracts.
  - O. Providing liability insurance for certified officials.
- II. Contracting officials to various organizations with gymnastics programs upon request.
- A. Assigning qualified officials when requested.
  - B. Issuing contracts for NAWGJ members
  - C. Serving as an agent for Officials and Meet Directors.
- III. Providing other services to the gymnastic community.

## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS JUDGES**

### **CANONS**

CANON 1: A judge should assist in maintaining the integrity and competence of the profession of judging women's gymnastics events.

CANON 2: A judge should assist the Association in fulfilling its duty of making judges available for women's gymnastics events.

CANON 3: A judge should assist in improving the system of judging women's gymnastics events.

CANON 4: A judge should avoid even the appearance of professional impropriety.

CANON 5: A judge should be well qualified in gymnastics, know the rules, and be thoroughly prepared for each assignment. Each team, meet contestant, and participant, as well as the spectators, are entitled to the official's best efforts to administer the rules of the sport.

CANON 6: A judge should prepare for each judging assignment and should, through study and clinics, keep her/his judging knowledge current.

CANON 7: A judge should fulfill all assignments accepted and be punctual. A judge should also attend all judging and other meetings are intended to promote a well-ordered and conducted meet or event.

CANON 8: A judge should be alert at all times, quickly yet accurately produce her/his scores, and have a basis for the scores derived and prepared. If a legitimate need should arise, the judge should explain and support such scores by working through conferences and dealing with inquiries in a dignified, professional manner.

CANON 9: A judge should *not* solicit meets for herself/himself or for others.

CANON 10: A judge shall be completely unbiased. A judge should not give any appearance, especially at a meet, of any particular friendship with any coach or competitor. Also, a judge should decline any assignment in which affiliation with a team or individuals would tend to influence the judge's ability to be fair and objective.

CANON 11: A judge should treat gymnasts, coaches, judges, promoters and spectators with respect. A judge should respect their privacy, property and feelings, and should not do anything that would embarrass or offend such person. There will be no tolerance for

any discrimination related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, religion or age.

CANON 12: A judge should at all times both look and act professionally. A judge should maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance when judging. He/she should wear the uniform of the Association (except where other dress is permitted).

CANON 13: A judge should not be overly officious. She/he should not criticize other officials or attempt to explain other officials' judgments.

CANON 14: A judge should confine her/his duties to the purposes of judging; i.e., coaching or meet directing are not included in a judge's responsibilities.

CANON 15: A judge should never consume alcoholic beverages or drugs prior to a judging assignment where such consumption is evident by odor, conduct, or appearance.

CANON 16: A judge should exercise good judgment when using social networking media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, texting, e-mail, etc.) i.e. avoid communicating with coaches or gymnasts during, before or after a competition; or refrain from making inappropriate statements about fellow judges, coaches, gymnasts, clubs or parent.

CANON 17: Judges may not participate in any wagering activities involving amateur, collegiate or professional gymnastics, nor can they provide any information to individuals involved in any type of gymnastics wagering activities.

## **NATIONAL NAWGJ MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**

### **Collegial Rewards**

NAWGJ members benefit from the unified negotiations for fee structure, a pleasant judging environment, and consistency in expectations at meets. NAWGJ functions to provide members with opportunities to network and develop leadership and problem-solving skills. The professional support of colleagues assists members in handling confrontational issues and conflict resolution.

### **National NAWGJ Website – [www.nawgj.org](http://www.nawgj.org)**

The National NAWGJ website contains valuable information. You will find the constitution, canons, NAWGJ Board minutes, NAWGJ Symposium information, USA Gymnastics updates, NCAA updates, library items for sale, practice-judging scripts, practice tests, as well as links to state websites. It is a useful site for current information.

### **NAWGJ Library**

NAWGJ provides a library with a wealth of information, from study tools to videos for review. A catalog of materials available is found on the NAWGJ website.

### **USA Gymnastics Rules & Policies**

A copy of Rules & Policies is available each year, usually starting in August, for every USA Gymnastics member. You can download a copy on the Women's tab at [www.usagym.org](http://www.usagym.org). Information contained in this publication includes: affiliation of judges, duties of meet officials, CPE requirements, judges' compensation package, and judges' responsibilities. It is suggested that all Meet Referees have a hard copy in their judging bag.

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

Professional liability insurance is provided to all members and is included in membership fees. Coverage is \$500,000 per occurrence and valid for documented activities and competitions assigned by NAWGJ.

### **Representation**

NAWGJ members are represented on the following committees: Women's Technical Committee, Women's Program Committee and USA Gymnastics Executive Governing Board.

## **ILLINOIS NAWGJ OFFICERS**

The Illinois National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges (IL NAWGJ) is part of the National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges (NAWGJ) and thereby follows all of the NAWGJ Constitution, policies and rules. The following guidelines are specific to Illinois.

### **Officers and Elections**

Following the national schedule and procedure for elections, the State Judging Director (SJD) has a term of four years. The State Governing Board members have a term of two years, elected in the odd years.

Members run for specific positions on the State Governing Board. By national policy, a state cannot have more than nine board members, not counting the SJD, without national approval. More members can be appointed, but only elected members are eligible to vote on board policies and issues.

### **Illinois-NAWGJ Elected Board Positions**

State Judging Director  
Administrative Assistant  
3 Assigners  
Education Chair  
Judges Cup Chair  
Financial Assistant  
Website Chair

### **Illinois-NAWGJ Appointed Positions:**

Ethics Chair

Current board members are listed on the Illinois NAWGJ website – [www.ilnawgj.com](http://www.ilnawgj.com).

The state board will meet minimally twice a year.

The SJD or their designee will be reimbursed for travel to any meetings that are required attendance, such as the national SJD meeting. It is expected that all relevant information discussed at any meeting will be disseminated to all Illinois NAWGJ members. Any other member sent to a clinic or a meet at the expense of Illinois NAWGJ is also expected to provide a report to the membership.



## **BENEFITS TO ILLINOIS NAWGJ MEMBERS**

### **Education Benefits**

- Clinics may be held each year according to membership needs. Efforts will be made to make these clinics either free or at a very low cost.
- Illinois NAWGJ offers a mentoring program. It is customized to meet the needs of every judge. A member can request that someone be a mentor for the whole season or a part of the season, a mentor for a day, or for a meet, to assist with video practice judging, or practice judging at a meet or in a gym. Please contact the Education Chair to discuss your specific needs. If you are an experienced judge, you may also request a mentor to assist in moving up a level or helping you to understand the specifics of judging in Illinois.
- It is recommended that every new judge and every judge moving up to a higher rating should practice judge at least two sessions before he or she is eligible to be assigned a meet at the new level. The Education Chair can assist you in finding a location to practice judge.

### **Financial Benefits**

- Financial benefits are subject to change to conform with the National NAWGJ policy. Illinois NAWGJ will pay NAWGJ membership dues if a member works a minimum of 8 hours at Judges' Cup.
- The 2021-22 Education Fund is for every Illinois NAWGJ member. The Education Fund may pay for testing, clinics and study materials for the next cycle.
- Once a year, a financial report must be made available for the membership. A member may ask the SJD to see a copy of the report at any time.

### **National Judges Cup**

Illinois NAWGJ is committed to sponsoring a Level 7 Team representing Illinois at the National Judges Cup. We are also committed to sending one judge each year. The judge will be selected based on who wishes to attend. The Illinois NAWGJ Governing Board will make the final selection.

Members who wish to attend the National Judges Cup will submit their names to the SJD by a designated date. The Illinois NAWGJ Board will make the final selection. If an Illinois judge is not sent to the National Judge's Cup, a donation, as approved by the

Illinois NAWGJ Board, will be sent instead. For more information, please see [www.judgescup.com](http://www.judgescup.com).

### **Communication**

It is important to keep all members informed of current trends and rules in gymnastics. This is done through clinics, newsletters, e-mails, and websites. The Illinois NAWGJ website is [www.ilnawgj.com](http://www.ilnawgj.com), the National NAWGJ website is [www.nawgj.org](http://www.nawgj.org). and USA Gymnastics website is [www.USAGym.org](http://www.USAGym.org).

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF ILLINOIS NAWGJ MEMBERS**

### **Illinois Judges Cup**

The judges of Illinois host Illinois Judges Cup. The purpose is to raise funds for the upcoming year. These funds help defer the cost of educational materials such as books, clinics, testing fees, NAWGJ membership, hotel fees, any supplemental materials we use throughout the year, and organization operating expenses. It is very important that all judges help with this event in order to make it a success. As a member of Illinois NAWGJ, you should volunteer to help at the Judges Cup Meet. Judges should make every attempt to volunteer the entire weekend. There are many jobs that need to be filled that weekend, to make the meet run smoothly. All judges must contact the Judges Cup Chair with their availability. A schedule of duties will be emailed to all members a few weeks before the event.

Please remember that we need everyone's help to run this meet and make it the best meet for our gymnasts and for Illinois NAWGJ.

### **Professionalism**

Judges are under constant scrutiny. The coaches, gymnasts, parents, volunteers, and runners constantly monitor your behavior and actions. Be careful that your behavior while in uniform is always professional. What you say is ALWAYS overheard by someone, even off the floor. Make sure your comments are neutral and never critical.

### **Continuing Professional Education**

An explanation of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) can be found in Rules & Policies under Criteria for Selection of Judges. An accreditation year is August 1 to July 31. Each judge is responsible for keeping track of his or her own activity and for sending the Annual CPE Record to the state CPE coordinator by May 31 of each year. If your CPE's are not completed by the due date you must notify the CPE coordinator to indicate your intentions for completion.

The number of hours required is decided by the rating the judge held on August 1 of the previous year. For example, if you were rated as a Level 4/5 on August 1, 2018, and passed the Level 6/7/8 test in January 1, 2018, your CPE requirement for May 2019 would be that of a Level 4/5.

## **ADVANTAGES OF ASSIGNMENT OF JUDGES BY NAWGJ**

NAWGJ is pleased to be of service to organizations in need of contracting gymnastics officials for gymnastics competitions throughout the United States. Our network of volunteers works many hours assigning meets on a local, state, regional, and national level. The advantages of contracting officials through NAWGJ are to assist the Meet Directors and/or host clubs in the following ways:

### **Quality**

NAWGJ provides those gymnastics officials who have met CPE requirements, been actively judging at the level at which they have been assigned, and who are current members of NAWGJ, USA\_Gymnastics, and other organizational memberships required for the competition being judged.

NAWGJ assures the Meet Director that each judge assigned has fulfilled the aforementioned requirements, which include attendance of recognized clinics, verification of practice judging experience with a higher-rated official, and active judging experience. As members of the respective organizations, the host club can assume that the officials are familiar with the rules and regulations that govern the sport of gymnastics, which will in turn maintain the quality of competition.

### **Objectivity**

A rotational system is used whenever possible based upon USA\_Gymnastics criteria for the assignment, and specific needs/requests of the Meet Director, judge's preferences and geographic location.

### **Professional Standards**

NAWGJ sets standards for ethical behavior, personal appearance, and job performance. It is the goal of NAWGJ to train and educate a body of gymnastics officials who are professionals and who are held accountable for their actions in this regard.

## **ILLINOIS MEET ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES**

### **Membership and Eligibility for Assignments**

#### **Membership Requirements**

All officials MUST be current members of NAWGJ and USA\_Gymnastics, be current with their safety certification and background check, SafeSport certification and be CPE compliant. The Administrative Assistant will keep a record of all judges eligible to be assigned. Copies of your credentials must be updated in gymjas and in your Profile in Member Services on the USA Gymnastics website. If current credentials are not updated, a judge will not be assigned a meet.

If a judge should move it is the responsibility of that judge to notify the SJD of his or her new address. If moving out of state, the SJD will provide transfer paperwork that enables the judge to notify his or her new SJD and the National NAWGJ office of the move.

#### **Eligibility for Assignments**

NAWGJ assigns meets from different organizations: JO, Xcel, AAU, GIJO, Sokol and YMCA. All judges need to be ready to judge any type of meet that they are assigned. The link for JO, Xcel and AAU rules may be found on the Illinois NAWGJ website. Judges are required to keep their information and expiration dates updated in the assigning system, gymjas, to qualify for assignments. All judges need to be prepared to judge every level and every event for meets that they currently are rated to judge. If a judge is not CPE compliant, he or she can be assigned but will be used only if all other available judges are assigned. The noncompliant judge will have their pay reduced by \$5 per hour.

#### **USA, AAU, GIJO, Sokol and YMCA Gymnastics Meets**

All organizations who request Illinois NAWGJ to be the assigning agent will be assigned judges according to the Rules and Policies of USA Gymnastics. Remember that NAWGJ liability insurance only covers a judge for meets that are assigned with a contract through NAWGJ. When assigning, the assigners must consult the "USA Gymnastics Criteria for Assignment of Judges" as stated in the Rules and Policies Handbook and consider judge's preferences as indicated in the assigning system. The assigners and the SJD will develop a tentative list of officials based on these criteria. The assigner of record is responsible for distributing the contracts to the judges and the Meet Director. The Meet Referee, as designated by the assigner, will determine the chief judges and make the event assignments.

Meet Directors are allowed to make specific requests (geography, rating, level, previous experience with this meet, etc). Whenever possible, rotation of officials should occur. Meet Directors must request Illinois judges through the assigning system in order for their requests to be honored. Out of state judge requests must be sent to the SJD.

### **Availability Notification**

Be sure to enter your availability by **September 1** so assigning can begin. Do **NOT** enter your availability if you do not have all of your memberships and certifications current: NAWGJ, USA Gymnastics, Background Check, and Safety Certification and SafeSport Certification. The meet schedule is listed in the assigning system. The schedule is often heavy, requiring 32 judges a weekend. Keep this in mind before you sign up for high school, park districts and college.

### **NAWGJ Judge's Contract**

The three elected assigners and the SJD will assign all meets. All meets must be contracted with a written agreement between the assigning officials and the judge. In Illinois, all contracts are assigned and accepted online through the assigning system. Illinois judges wishing to be assigned must set up their account on gymjas.com, the Illinois assigning system. Once you receive notice that you are assigned a meet, you have two weeks to accept or decline. If no action is taken within that time period, you will be removed from that meet. After completing your availability, you will receive an email when you are assigned to a meet. If you do not accept the meet within two weeks of receipt, you will be replaced. The assigner will send an email confirming your failure to acknowledge the contract and your removal from the meet. Do not send signed contracts to the meet directors. The assigning system sends them for you.

The assigners and SJD will be able to see your availability and judging preferences. The assigners and SJD will make every effort to spread out all the meets to all judges. Keep in mind that meet directors are allowed to request judges for their meet and may also request NOT to have a particular judge on their meet. Even though you may be very close geographically, you may not be assigned a meet because of meet director requests and other factors such as rating/levels.

All changes must be done through the assigner of record. There shall be no switching of meets or replacing yourself. Contact the assigner of record as soon as possible if a conflict arises.

Map/Meet Location: The correct meet location will always be on the contract. Due to the volume of emails/phone calls that the assigners receive, contact the meet referee for directions and correct meet locations or visit the host club's website.

When you accept a contract and a signed copy is emailed to the assigner, you are entering into a legal binding contract to judge that meet. Your verbal agreement to the assigners and/or your submitted availability online means that the assigners can count on you to be available. If your circumstances change for any reason, it is your

responsibility to go online and change your availability. Cancelling is a violation of a binding contract unless there are extenuating circumstances. Replacements are very difficult to find at the last minute, especially on busy weekends.

### **Assigning Criteria**

Meets are assigned considering the following criteria:

- Meet Director requests
- Level of meet and certification level of judges
- Judge's preference as indicated in the assigning system
- Geographical location of the meet
- Affiliation of judge

### **Replacements**

Once a contract is signed, judges are expected to honor the contractual agreement to judge the meet. In the event of an emergency and you are unable to judge, it is your responsibility to call the assigner. Judges may not replace themselves on a meet.

### **Affiliation**

The definition of "affiliation" is found in USA Gymnastics Rules & Policies. If you are affiliated, please inform the Meet Referee before the event assignments are completed. You will be required to take off your "Parent" or "Coach" hat and put on your "Professional Judge" hat. You may not acknowledge that you have a child or team in the competition. If your child is too young to understand these rules, it would be wise to decline a meet where your child is competing. A judge who has a child in the meet may not request to be on a specific event, or request to not be on a specific event, so as not to affect his or her child. Think twice before you accept an affiliated contract.

### **Meet Procedures**

When a contract is accepted, the assigning system will send the completed contracts to the Meet Director. Meet referees should notify their judges that they are the meet referee for a particular meet. It is the responsibility of meet referees to be in constant contact with their judges. The Meet Referee will make the event assignments and select the chief judges. This information along with specific details (report time, approximate finish time, dress required, hotel requirements, etc.) will be sent to each judge a minimum of one week before the meet. One week before the meet should not be the first time a meet referee contacts the judges. If you do not receive this information, contact the Meet Referee, not the assigner or SJD.

### **Credentials**

Credentials (USA\_Gymnastics card, NAWGJ membership receipt) do not have to be worn at the meet. However, a judge must be able to show the meet director or USA Gymnastics official these cards if asked to produce them at a competition.

### **State Meets**

The Illinois USA Gymnastics Committee chooses the judges for all Illinois USA Gymnastics state meets. The ILNAWGJ state governing board will determine the chief judges and panels.



## WHO DO I CONTACT?

The proper chain of command is important for all of our members to receive accurate and prompt answers to their questions. Asking the responsible person saves us all time and effort. Our website is the No. 1 location for information.

### **Contact the SJD if you:**

- Are moving out of state
- Are moving within state of Illinois or have just moved into Illinois
- Need guidance on how to handle a specific problem/issue
- Want something brought to the board's attention
- Have an item you would like the board to vote on
- Have anything you would like to discuss in confidence
- Need information on buying a uniform or finding a used uniform
- Have a subject or article for the newsletter
- Would like an e-mail sent to the membership informing them of a personal event, baby, wedding, death in the family, etc. Only with the judge's permission will personal information be shared

### **Contact the Administrative Assistant if you:**

- Have questions about your credentials
- Would like information about a group registration for state, regional or national congress

### **Contact an Assigner if you:**

- Need help navigating the assigning system
- Need to cancel an already contracted meet

### **Contact the Education chair if you:**

- Want information about testing
- Would like a mentor
- Would like to practice judge and need the name of the Meet Referee
- Would like to know about clinics or study sessions
- Have a question, or need a clarification, about a specific point
- Want to volunteer for a clerk position
- 

### **Contact the Judges Cup chair if you:**

- Want to volunteer for Judges Cup

- Have any questions about Judges Cup that are not answered on our website

**Contact the Financial Assistant if you:**

- Have receipts for reimbursement
- Need to find out how to be reimbursed
- Accessing Judges Cup benefits

**Contact the Website Chair if you:**

- Have trouble navigating the website
- If you have suggestions to improve the website

**Contact the Meet Referee listed on the top of the contract if you:**

- Have a question about meet specifics (report time, number of sessions, directions to the gym, etc.)
- Need a hotel room
- Have a mentor you wish to judge with
- Want to practice judge at their meet

## ILLINOIS NEW JUDGE EXPECTATIONS

Those interested in becoming a judge for the first time will be expected to show commitment by:

- a. Paying for their test(s).
- b. Paying for their NAWGJ membership, USA Gymnastics membership, background check, safety certification, SafeSport Certification and study materials.
- c. Adhering to all of the national and state guidelines.

Upon passing Level 4/5 or upon moving up a level, in order to actively start judging in Illinois, it is recommended that a judge should:

1. Practice judge at least two sessions on the competition floor and in uniform.
2. If this is impossible, he or she should video practice judge with a judge as assigned by the SJD or Education chair.
3. After actively judging three days as assigned by an Illinois assigner, a new judge will receive \$100. This is offered to all new judges and one time only. The three days must be completed within 2 years.

### **Practice Judging Protocol**

- 1) The judge who wants to practice needs to call the Meet Referee for a specific meet. Contact the assigner if you do not know the Meet Referee. The Meet Referee will then decide if this specific meet is appropriate to have a practice judge(s).
- 2) The Practice Judge needs to wear their uniform and arrive at the requested time. They should check in with the Meet Referee upon arrival.
- 3) The Practice Judge may have to carry their own chair from event to event. They should sit close to the Panel Judges, but not so they interfere.
- 4) The Practice Judge is there to observe. Questions may be asked, but at an appropriate time as indicated by the chief judge.
- 5) A Practice Judge should never comment on another judge's score (I didn't give that connection – but you did?)
- 6) The Practice Judge should never make any comments about their own score – either to another judge, a coach, a parent. Your score is not an official score.
- 7) The Practice Judge should feel free to follow up with the Education Chair after the meet if they have questions.

## **PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOL**

### **Ethics**

All judges need to respectfully work with any other judge with whom they are assigned. Judges must adhere to the Code of Ethics as stated in the NAWGJ Canons and the USA\_Gymnastics Rules and Policies. Complaints concerning judges in a judging situation should be reported to the Ethics Chair in writing. Complaints may come from judges, coaches, or meet personnel. The Ethics Chair should respond within 15 days by consulting with the reporting party and the judge accused of the violation. The SJD will maintain a file of complaints that have been found to have merit about a judge for a period of seven years. A series of complaints or a major complaint will be reviewed on an individual basis according to the national policy of Problem Resolution Process and Disciplinary Action Guidelines (See Appendix A). Judges should make every effort to resolve issues with other judges before filing a written complaint. Judges filing a complaint should also be aware that they must participate in a meeting (in person or phone or teleconference) conducted by the Ethics Chair, who will be the moderator of the meeting as specified in the Problem Resolution Process and Disciplinary Action Guidelines.

### **Body Language and Communication**

Refrain from talking to other judges while you are judging or calculating your score. Comments such as “that was a better vault,” “I loved that routine,” or “I didn’t connect that” should always be avoided. It is easy for observers to assume that you are trying to influence the score of the other judge or that you do not have sufficient knowledge of your event. Meet Directors are paying for two independent judgments. Only comment on a routine when asked to do so by the Chief Judge in a conference situation. Facial expressions are just as powerful as words. If an athlete makes a mistake, try to maintain a neutral expression even though it may be very difficult. Wrinkling your nose or sighing are all expressions easily picked up by observers. It is courteous to smile at the gymnast at the conclusion of the routine. Give her respect by having all judges acknowledge their signal when they are finished. By the end of a long meet you may have a harder time looking alert. Try to maintain good posture throughout the entire day or weekend. Do not sit with your head in your hand or slumped over in your chair. It may be a judge’s third day and 12th session, but it is every gymnast’s first and only session when she performs for you. Gymnasts competing in the last session of a long weekend deserve the same attention and energy that you gave the gymnasts competing in the first session of the meet. Remember that others are observing, and therefore judging you at all times -- at your table, in the washroom, at the hotel. Remain professional even when out of uniform.

### **Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

All cell phones MUST be turned off while on the competition floor. No calls or texts should be received or sent during the competition. All electronic devices, such as iPads, Notebooks or tablets, must be turned off while on the competition floor unless using them to judge. See USA\_Gymnastics Rules & Policies for the complete cell phone/electronic devices policy.

### **Seating Assignments**

Check your seating arrangements and line of vision before the competition starts. Once the first athlete competes, your seating arrangement must stay the same throughout the entire meet. Every athlete is entitled to the same viewpoint as all other athletes. Stay at your event until the entire meet is finished. Do not walk around and talk to other judges or coaches if your event finishes early. All judges must remain at their event until the last gymnast dismounts. It is unacceptable and against R&P to leave the competition floor until the competition is over for all four events.

While you are in uniform, you should not hug any athlete (even your own daughter) or show familiarity to any specific gymnast. Do not provide coaches or parents with information about the judging at a particular meet or event. Judgments that occur at a meet should not be shared with anyone. Never comment on other judge's scores and /or events.

### **Social Media**

Canon #16 reads: "A judge should exercise good judgment when using social networking media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, texting, e-mail, etc.) i.e. avoid communicating with coaches or gymnasts during, before or after a competition; or refrain from making inappropriate statements about fellow judges, coaches, gymnasts, clubs or parent."

Social networking is an extremely powerful tool. When something is put on the Internet it can go anywhere. A judge should NEVER put something on the Internet that:

1. Shows disrespect to anyone
2. Gives any appearance of bias
3. Thanks or praises a meet or meet director

The consequence for showing bias toward a meet or meet director will result in NOT being assigned to that meet the following year. When you comment on how poorly a meet was run you are disrespectful. When you complain about the food, you are disrespectful. When you contact a gymnast or a coach after a meet to compliment them on a routine, you are showing bias. Use common sense.

### **After the Meet**

After the meet is over, the scores have been checked and the meet referee dismisses the judges, it is a nice gesture for each judge to thank the Meet Director as well as any

volunteers. The Hospitality Committee as well as the event volunteers make an important contribution to a successful meet. Judges should clean up their areas at the end of each session. Do not leave your garbage on the judging table. The judges check scores in Illinois after each session. Each Chief Judge is required to sign the official score sheets. Unless directed otherwise, the panel judge is expected to assist the chief judge in reviewing the scores. All judges must stay on the competition floor until all scores are checked.

### **Judges as Spectators**

It is best to refrain from providing information to other spectators about judging while you are sitting in the stands. It is advised to answer questions in a general manner rather than to comment on a particular athlete's routine. If a parent asks you a question, mention that it is different watching a meet from the stands and that unless you have the same perspective as the judge, it is hard to predict a score or apply a specific deduction.

### **Requesting Meets**

Judges should never ask or indicate to Meet Directors a desire to judge a meet. Even a simple statement, "It has been a long time since I was assigned your meet" is not allowed. When you indicate a desire to judge a meet, you are putting the Meet Director in an awkward position. Assignments are made based on the Meet Director's written request, level of the meet, affiliation, location, and availability.

### **Confrontations**

Coaches, gymnasts, and parents often see us as the "enemy." What they lose sight of is that our job is to make the playing field fair for everyone. We do not give a score – the gymnast earns a score. We are to evaluate the routine as we see it and make the best decision we can based on our knowledge of written routines and deductions.

As judges, we must come to every meet prepared to judge our event. Personal study will take away the strain of unsure actions.

Confrontation with coaches can occur when our decisions do not seem appropriate to the coach. An inquiry may not result in a change of score and may not answer the coach's question. Anger and frustration may result in inappropriate behavior.

Keep in mind what is behind the confrontation:

1. The coach's mental state. As judges, we must remember not to take things personally.
2. Coaches are pressured by the gymnast and parents to "find out what is going on."
3. The emotional attachment between the coach and gymnast will tighten their bond.

4. Perception is different. The coach may see the gymnast has made major improvement in one area, but has failed to see other mistakes in other areas.
5. Fatigue for all parties.
6. Encouragement from other coaches
7. The failure of the judge by:
  - a. Looking down while judging
  - b. Lack of knowledge of the event assigned
  - c. Lack of experience

We need to understand each person's job at a meet and work together. As judges, we must remember we cannot control every situation that may arise. We must take care of ourselves by being knowledgeable. Recognize that confrontation is a power struggle. Determine ahead of time that you will not engage in a confrontation but state "I am sorry we do not agree" and suggest the coach contact the meet referee.

### **Objectivity**

It goes without saying that we need to ALWAYS be fair, objective, and consistent when judging. *We always need to take the same deduction for the same error no matter the level of the athlete or the level of the skill.*

### **Problems with Another Judge**

If you have a specific unresolvable problem with another judge, you must put the problem in writing and submit it to the Ethics Chair. If your problem is with the Ethics Chair, submit it to the SJD. The person receiving the complaint will then follow the procedures set forth in the NAWGJ Disciplinary Procedures

### **Uniforms**

All judges are expected to wear the official NAWGJ blazer with either navy slacks or a skirt to all meets. Exceptions are if the meet director has requested themed attire. A white shirt or blouse is required, along with sensible shoes. High heels can damage a mat. First-year judges may wear white blouse/shirt and navy slacks. All judge's uniforms should be clean and pressed and judges should look professional at all times. Information about purchasing a uniform can be found at [www.nawgj.org](http://www.nawgj.org).

### **Consequences for Conduct Unbecoming a Judge**

There are consequences for violating NAWGJ Cannons. For example, a judge who does not attend a NAWGJ paid event, does not accept a contract, uses social media inappropriately, does not wear the appropriate uniform and other violations of NAWGJ Cannons, as listed in the Cannons, will result in the judge being in non-compliance of expectations of a NAWGJ member in good standing. Those consequences are listed in Appendix A: Problem Resolution Process and Disciplinary Action Guidelines.

### **Duties of a Clerk**

IL NAWGJ is often asked to provide clerks for state meets and above. This volunteer position is open for any IL NAWGJ member who has current credentials. The duties are:

- 1) The clerk coordinator will email you with the report time before the day/s you are assigned. Pre-meet - any questions should be addressed to that person and not the Meet Ref or Meet Director.
- 2) Please report to your clerk coordinator when you arrive.
- 3) You should attend the judges' meeting before the first session of the day.
- 4) Please remember, you are a clerk - not a judge. Please do not comment or ask questions about any score. Keep conversation to a minimum.
- 5) Your duties will be to keep the average sheet, input scores, time routines and/ or warm ups - what ever the Meet Director and your Chief Judge deem necessary.
- 6) At the judges' table, you should sit between the Chief Judge and the Panel Judge.
- 7) The meet will supply your meals.
- 8) As these are our state's important meets, a uniform is required. If you are a first-year judge, blue slacks/ skirt and a white blouse are allowed. Information on how to purchase a uniform can be found at [nawgj.org](http://nawgj.org).
- 9) For regional and above USAG sanctioned events, Level 10, National and Brevet rated judges eligible for the National test, will have priority if they reply by the stated deadline.

### **Travel Guidelines & Mileage**

Refer to the Rules and Policies of USA Gymnastics for guidelines regarding travel.

### **Meals**

Judges with dietary restrictions should bring their own meals to a meet. If you do not like the meal served, you are not entitled to a per diem nor should you request another option. See the Rules and Policies of USA Gymnastics for further clarification.

Additionally, refer to the current Rules and Policies of USA Gymnastics for a dinner per diem if the judge is requested to arrive the night before the meet.

### **Hotel Accommodations**

Some Meet Directors prefer to have the judges arrive the night before the meet. Some Meet Directors prefer that all judges stay at the hotel, no matter where they live. The Meet Referee will inform the judges what the Meet Director prefers.

NAWGJ guidelines state two judges per room. If you need to have a single room, inform the Meet Referee that you will book your own accommodations.

Meet referees will email the assigned judges before the room assignments are made.

Judges will be asked roommate preferences and specific sleeping conditions (i.e. sleep



in cold room, snore, no TV on when sleeping, etc.) All requests should be honored if possible.

### **Family Members**

These guidelines are established so as not to put undo-pressure on any judge to accommodate the family needs of another judge.

1. Requests should not be made to take family members in the carpool, either a gymnast or a coach.
2. Hotel rooms are not furnished for family members.
3. Food is not provided for family members at the meet. Do not take food out of the designated area to provide a gymnast or a coach with a meal.
4. Family members are not permitted in the Judges Room.
5. Family members who wish to attend the meet must pay admission.

### **Panel Judges**

The responsibility of score averages is the responsibility of the chief judge. A panel judge should never answer questions a coach may have about a routine. Refer the coach to the chief judge. If the chief judge asks for your opinion, please feel free to comment. Please refer to the USA Gymnastics Code of Points for specific duties of the panel judge versus the chief judge. The panel judge should be prepared to assist the chief judge in whatever duties are requested.

## **Meet Referee Duties**

The Meet Referee is assigned by the assigner and may be requested by the meet director.

### **Prior to the Meet**

- Contact the Meet Director to discuss meet logistics (session times, levels, team competition).
- When assigning events, take into consideration any legitimate special requests (i.e., being a mentor, having an event at a state-regional-national meet). Every judge should be willing and able to judge every meet with any judge. Requests to not judge a specific event or with a specific judge should not be considered. Send assignments and session times to the judges via email as soon as possible, but at least one week prior to the meet. A copy of the event assignments using the official Excel spreadsheet should also be sent to the SJD, assigner, the Meet Director, and any other individual the SJD designates to receive event assignments.
- Inform meet director of hotel needs, if necessary. Ask for roommate preference requests to each judge before assigning rooms.
- Provide the contracted judges with an emergency contact number.
- The Meet Referee should come with a complete set of materials, including a Rules & Policies.

### **At the Meet**

- Discuss meet specifics with the Meet Director (event special awards, rotations, palm pilots, Pro Score, etc.).
- Provide a judges' pay sheet. Judges should report 30 minutes prior to march-in for local and invitational meets, unless otherwise specified by the Meet Referee prior to the date. Refer to the Rules & Policies of USA Gymnastics regarding a judge who is late to the Report Time.
- Confirm all judges sign the sanction.
- Conduct a judges' meeting. Review the meet format and touch procedures. Complete base scoring for state meets.
- Attend the coaches meeting (run by the Meet Director) and be available for any questions.
- Handle any inquiries. Review the basis for inquiries. Compulsory (incorrect elements, evaluation of major elements, fall, neutral deductions, or unusual occurrences) and optional (start value, falls, neutral deductions, or unusual occurrences). See Rules & Policies for further clarification.
- Give official warnings for chief judge deductions that require a warning. If a chief judge deduction does not require a warning, do not give one. Example: shouting

to the coach to move a board, this is not a deduction with a warning. You are giving unfair advantage to that team.

- All Judges' must stay on the floor until the last competitor is finished per R&P.
- Make sure all chief judges check scores and sign the score sheets. Meet referees must also sign score sheets after all of the chief judges sign it.
- Record the report time and end time for each day of the meet.
- Complete the judges' pay sheet and circulate it to the judges to initial prior to submitting it to the meet director for payment.

### **Practice Judge Protocol for Meet Referees**

All new judges in Illinois, or judges with a new higher rating are encouraged to practice judge twice before they are assigned. The Meet Referee is the one responsible for assuring the Practice Judge knows what is expected of them. If the Meet Referee is unable to perform this function, they should assign another judge.

The Practice Judge will contact the Meet Referee to assure it is an appropriate meet to practice. Considerations should include: the size of the venue, if there is adequate room for another judge, time constraints, if another judge has already requested to practice.

The Meet Referee is responsible to inform the Practice Judge of the report time and location address. The Meet Referee is responsible to assure the practice judge knows the protocol and anything that is specific for that meet. If a Chief Judge or Meet Referee are unable to answer questions at the meet, please tell the Practice Judge to contact the Education chair.

### **Sanction Infractions**

Any and all infractions must be noted on the **front** of the sanction and signed by the meet referee. The infractions are not up to the judge's discretion. See Rules & Policies. Examples of common infractions:

- Warm-up time - note if gymnasts are on the floor prior to 8 a.m.
- Competition ending time – note if gymnasts are on the competition floor after 10 p.m. (excluding awards). Indicate the time the actual competition ended and the reason for finishing after 10:00 pm.
- Session time – note if the athletes are on the floor longer than five hours (from warm-ups through the end of competition (excluding awards).
- Exceeding the allotted number of judgments per competition type.
- Incorrect matting (such as supplemental mats on the corners of the floor mat)
- Violation of any regulation within the Rules & Policies.

### **Pay Sheet Clarifications**

- A portion of the hourly rate may be broken into halves, not less.

- All judges should be given the opportunity to review the pay sheet before the checks are written.

### **After the Meet**

Be sure to alert the SJD regarding any unusual or questionable occurrences – pass on any good things also! The idea is to stop small problems, ethics issues, education deficiencies, or just lack of common sense before they are big problems. All Meet Referees should understand this need and work together for the betterment of all of our judges.

## APPENDIX A

# PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCESS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION GUIDELINES

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These guidelines are designed to provide fair and equitable resolution of complaints regarding the professional conduct of judges. All NAWGJ members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to adhere to the NAWGJ Canons. Judges who engage in unprofessional behavior or who violate any of the NAWGJ Canons may be subject to disciplinary action. The level of disciplinary action will be based on the gravity of the violation, the number of previous violations, and the mitigating or extenuating factors and circumstances bearing upon the infraction.

The purpose of the guidelines is to: (1) resolve issues in a manner that is instructive to the affected judge and (2) prevent the re-occurrence of a violation so as to maintain the integrity of the judging profession. The guidelines are designed to address issues involving NAWGJ members while they are performing duties as judges or performing other activities that may reflect on their professionalism as judges as representatives of NAWGJ.

The intent of these procedures is to resolve problems related to professional conduct at the state level whenever possible, i.e., the SJD or State Governing Board. In the event that the matter cannot be resolved at the state level, the affected judge may utilize these procedures to appeal the decision or the disciplinary action. The term “affected judge” refers to the NAWGJ member who is the subject of a complaint based on a Canon violation or unprofessional conduct.

The term “State Judging Director” or “SJD” may refer to the SJD or to the SGB member designated as ethics/professional chair. Throughout these procedures, 15 calendar days is allowed to complete each step of the process. This timeframe may be adjusted by the SJD at Level One and Two, the RJD at Level Three, and the President at Level Four if needed to accommodate special circumstances. However, the process should continue in as timely a manner as possible.

**This document is not intended to address situations involving suspected child abuse. In such cases, state and federal laws take priority over the NAWGJ Problem Resolution process after which NAWGJ may use this process and apply the appropriate disciplinary actions.**

### **Level One: Reporting Procedures**

1. A party desiring to report a potential violation of the NAWGJ Canon or other

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unprofessional behavior must communicate this information to the State Judging Director in writing by email or postal mail. When a potential violation is reported, the SJD is responsible for reviewing the allegation and attempting to resolve the

issue. Within 15 days of receiving the complaint, the SJD must consult with the judge accused of the violation to describe and discuss the concern. The SJD may consult with the reporting party and others who may have witnessed or have knowledge of the alleged violation. The SJD will listen to the judge's account of the situation and give the judge the opportunity to provide information regarding the concern.

2. Depending on the information received from the judge, the SJD may end the complaint process by clarifying any misunderstandings/misperceptions with the reporting party thus ending the complaint process. Both parties must be notified that the situation has been resolved without need of further action.
3. If the complaint is thought to have merit or to need further action (i.e., it is not the result of a misunderstanding or misperception by the reporting party), the SJD shall convene a meeting (in person or by phone or teleconference) of the judge and the reporting party within 15 days to seek resolution. The SJD will be the moderator of the meeting.
4. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, the SJD shall make a determination that no further action is needed or that a letter of counsel or letter of reprimand should be issued to the affected judge within 15 days of the meeting.

A letter of counsel is an advisory letter notifying the affected judge of a behavior that should be modified to avoid the appearance of or actual misconduct or unprofessional activity.

A letter of reprimand includes a specific disciplinary consequence associated with a finding of misconduct or unprofessional activity. Examples of disciplinary actions are provided in Section C.

5. The letter must include a description of the violation that occurred, the NAWGJ Canon that was violated if applicable, the disciplinary action that will be applied if any, and notification of the judge's right to appeal the outcome. A URL link to the NAWGJ Code of Professional Responsibility and Disciplinary Procedures must be included in the letter. The letter must be sent by registered or certified mail to the affected judge, return receipt requested, with delivery restricted to the addressee only. The envelope in which the letter is transmitted shall be plainly marked "Personal and Confidential."

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6. The SJD shall keep a copy of the correspondence in the judge's file for a period of seven years and shall give all files to the new SJD so that comprehensive records may be maintained.

**Level Two: Appeal Procedure**

1. The affected judge may appeal a disciplinary action by sending a written request to the SJD within 15 days of receipt of a Letter of Reprimand. The request for an appeals hearing may be sent by email (or postal mail) to the SJD who will send an acknowledgement of receipt to the affected judge via email. The affected judge is responsible for contacting the SJD to ensure the appeals request was received if notification is not received. The request for an appeals hearing must clearly specify the purpose of the appeal, state what is being appealed, i.e., the violation itself, the disciplinary action, or both, and indicate what remedy is sought.
2. Within 15 days of receiving the written request to appeal, the State Judging Director shall convene an appeals panel comprised of three members of the State Governing Board (SGB Appeals Panel). If the violation occurred in a state outside the state of NAWGJ membership of the affected judge, the SJD (or designee) of the state in which the violation occurred will be included as one of the three panel members. In the event the State Governing Board does not have three members to serve on the Appeals Panel, the SJD will consult with the RJD to identify members from other State Governing Boards in the region.
3. A date, time and place shall be determined to hear the appeal by the SJD. The affected judge shall be informed and advised in writing of the date, time and location of the hearing and the composition of the appeals panel. The affected judge shall be accorded a reasonable opportunity to appear personally (or via conference call or electronic platform) before the panel, may elect to present testimony, and may submit other information/materials in defense of the charge or the rationale for adjusting the disciplinary action stated in the Letter of Reprimand. The SJD shall also submit any materials relevant to the situation that resulted in the Letter of Reprimand and may participate in the hearing to discuss the situation.
4. The reporting party shall have the option to attend the appeals hearing (in person or via conference call or electronic platform) but shall not be required to do so.
5. The SGB appeals panel shall, within 15 days of receipt of the request for a hearing, select a chair of the panel who will coordinate the hearing, review the materials presented, and render the panel's decision regarding the appeal. The

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SJD, the affected judge, and the reporting party may not be present while the SGB panel deliberates and determines its finding.

6. If a majority of the panel finds no reason to adjust the outcome of the Level One proceeding, the panel shall notify the affected judge and SJD that no further action will be taken. The panel shall record its findings in written form and shall transmit a copy of its findings to the affected judge, the SJD, and to the NAWGJ National President for inclusion in the official records of this Association. The record must include a description of the procedures used by the SGB panel.
7. If a majority of the SGB panel finds the appeal to have merit and adjusts the Level One outcome, the rationale for the finding must be described, the adjusted outcome must be clearly stated, and the procedures used by the SGB Panel to review the case must be described. A report of the panel's findings shall be provided to the affected judge, the SJD, and to the National NAWGJ President. A copy of the report must be maintained by the SJD in the judge's file for a period of seven years.
8. The affected judge shall have the right to appeal the findings of the SGB Panel if, and only if, the finding and judgment made by the panel was not unanimous.

**Level Three: Regional Review Panel Procedures**

1. The affected judge may appeal the findings/judgment of the SGB Panel by submitting a written request to appeal within 15 days to the Regional Judging Director of the region in which the affected judge is a registered NAWGJ member.
2. Within 15 days of receiving the request for a regional review, the Regional Judging Director shall select two SJDs and one RJD to comprise an RJD Review Panel. The SJD who issued the letter of counsel shall not be a member of the RJD Appeals Panel. If the violation occurred in a state/region other than the state of membership of the affected judge, a representative from that state or region will be included as one of the three panel members. During this same 15-day time period, the SJD shall send the RJD a copy of the record of the proceedings and all relevant materials reviewed by the SJD and SGB Appeals Panel. The RJD will send these materials to the panel members within 15 days of receipt from the SJD.
3. The RJD Review Panel will review the record and materials presented to the SGB Appeals Panel (including materials from the affected judge, the SJD, and the reporting party). The RJD Review Panel may request additional information



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from any party but must inform the affected judge and the SJD of such request, and must provide them with copies of the information received. Both the affected judge and the SJD may provide a written response to the additional materials received by the RJD Review Panel. The affected judge, SJD, SGB members and reporting party may not attend or participate in the RJD Review meeting.

4. Within 15 days of receiving the materials from the RJD, the RJD Panel shall report its decision to sustain, reverse, or revise the findings and judgment of the SGB Panel. The decision of the RJD Review Panel shall be sent to the affected judge, to the SJD of the state of the affected judge's membership, and to the NAWGJ National President for inclusion in the Association records. If the violation occurred outside the state of membership of the affected judge, the report will also be sent to the SJD of the state in which the violation occurred.
5. A copy of the report must be maintained by the SJD(s) and RJD for a period of seven years.

**Level Four: National Review**

If the Regional Review Panel's decision is not unanimous, the affected judge may request a review by the NAWGJ National Board.

1. If the affected judge wishes to have the decision of the Regional Panel reviewed by the National Board, he/she must submit a written request to the NAWGJ President within 15 days after receiving a copy of the findings of the RJD Panel. The request must clearly specify the purpose of the request, state the area being requested for review, i.e., the violation itself, the disciplinary action, or both, and indicate what remedy is sought.
2. Within 15 days of receiving the request, the National President will appoint a National Review Panel consisting of three National Governing Board members. During this same time period, the RJD who convened the RJD Panel shall transmit all prior materials (including materials from the affected judge, the SJD, and the reporting party) to the NAWGJ National President who will in turn provide the materials to the National Review Panel.
3. The National Review Panel will base its recommendation on a review of all materials submitted by the RJD. The affected judge, SJD, SGB, RJD Review Panel, and reporting party may not attend or participate in the National Review meeting. The National President may be present during the deliberations but shall refrain from providing input. The National Review Panel shall complete its

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review of the materials and make a recommendation to the President within 15 days of receipt of the materials from the President.

4. The President will review the recommendation of the National Review Panel and make the final decision on behalf of the Association.
5. A copy of the report must be maintained by President for a period of seven years.

In the event that the affected judge is a State Judging Director, a Regional Judging Director, or a National Officer (other than the National President), then the NAWGJ National President shall designate an appropriate replacement to act as part of the relevant panel for purposes of the appeal or review.

If the affected judge is the NAWGJ National President, then the Vice President shall take the place of the President in all communications and deliberations.

## C. –DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

In determining the disciplinary action to be applied, consideration should be given to the relative gravity of the misconduct, the number of previous offenses or infractions by the aggrieved party, if any, and the mitigating or extenuating factors and circumstances bearing upon the infraction. The following list provides examples of disciplinary actions that may be considered. The list is not prescriptive or comprehensive and other actions may be applied that are considered appropriate for the behavior in question.

- Formal apology by affected judge to the reporting party and/or others affected by the behavior
- Letter of counsel
- Letter of reprimand (with specific disciplinary action stated)
- Development of a professional improvement plan (focus on education and/or professional behaviors)
- Assignment of a professional mentor
- Professional training in the area of concern, e.g., Interpersonal skills, anger management, cultural/diversity education, professional conduct
- Loss of contract assignment by NAWGJ either as a judge or in a particular judging role (e.g., Chief Judge, Meet Referee) for up to two years
- Expulsion from the Association for a fixed period of time not to exceed five years;
- Permanent expulsion from the Association.

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The penalties shall be effective fifteen (15) days from the date of communication of same to the affected judge. However, the initiation of an appeal or regional/national review as herein described, if submitted within the specified timeframe, may postpone the imposition of the penalty pending the conclusion of the process.