

PA/DE NAWGJ State Committee Meeting

Sunday, August 17th at 7:30 pm

In attendance: Laurie, Linda, Steph, Kelly, Barb, Jeannie, Sara, Kathy, Marcy, Charity, Amy, Laura, Jean, Mary Ann

Absent: Terry, Abby

Laurie called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

1. Welcome – Introductions and overview of new State Committee. All members present introduced themselves with title.

2. Mission of NAWGJ –

The mission of the National Association of Women Gymnastics Judges is to provide professional development for its members and to support and promote women's gymnastics in the United States.

The central message is to focus on the mission—supporting and improving the organization for the benefit of the athletes. Committee members are reminded to continually educate and improve themselves, with the athletes' needs at the core of their efforts.

Key reminders include:

Confidentiality is critical: Information shared in meetings must remain private. Any breach may lead to removal from the committee.

Only one confidentiality form is outstanding, and the group is otherwise compliant.

Communication with membership must be clear, consistent, and professional. As committee members, your words and actions matter—you are leaders and representatives of the organization.

Volunteer roles are appreciated, and leadership acknowledges and thanks everyone for their dedication and service.

When uncertain about a question or concern, especially regarding confidential matters, members should refer inquiries to leadership (Linda or Laurie) instead of speculating or answering independently.

Everyone is expected to uphold the organization and the sport in a positive light, both in the judging room and externally. Address negativity with professionalism and report it to leadership when needed.

Laurie concluded by emphasizing professionalism, integrity, and positive influence in all interactions.

3. Review and approval of Meeting Minutes from 5.28.25 Meeting previously sent out via email.
 - Motion to approve - Jean
 - Seconded by – Sara
 - All in favor. Motion approved.

4. Current Business

- a. Level 7 Qualifier – Abby & Barb (5 minutes): tabled for this meeting. Update provided 8-24-2025: The Level 7 Qualifier will be held in Anaheim, CA the first week of January. This year, we are working with Hanover Gymnastics to run the Level 7 Qualifier as part of the Tim Weaver Invitational. This is our first year running it like this and we have a year-to-year contract. As of 8/19, there are 17 athletes registered from gyms with Hanover having to still register their athletes. They do not use MeetMaker, so will check in week to week. Laurie sent an email the last week of July to all of the gyms that have attended before, letting them know about the change of venue for the qualifier this year.
- b. Western Critique – Sara (5 minutes)
 - 41 athletes registered
 - Resending invites – everyone is just renewing their USAG but they have time
 - There will be a move up meet portion
 - Four CPEs to be available. Kathy and Kim presenting so far.
 - Two sessions needed to get NAWGJ dues paid
 - Will have an additional meeting or email in September once we have more final numbers
- c. Judges Cup – Laurie (5 minutes)
 - i. Current numbers: 184
 - ii. Proposed budget: Projected Expenses – \$21350, Projected Income - \$33000, Projected Revenue - \$11800. (Budget spreadsheet was reviewed). Price of everything has increased. Looking at PTs instead of EMTs to help bring down the cost of medical. Scoring cost discussed and to remain the same as last year.
 - iii. Need ideas for athlete gifts. Tree gift no longer feasible, increasing max dollar amount of athlete gifts instead. Athlete gift budget increase from \$5 to \$7. Email Laurie with ideas.
- d. PA NAWGJ State Clinic – Jeannie & Steph (10 minutes)

24 registered. Reminder to be sent.

 - i. Agenda/Schedule Overview: Jeannie and Steph have organized a day with 6 CPE available with an hour long lunch break. Local eateries near the gym make lunch convenient. Sessions include: Updates, Policy & Procedures by Linda and Laurie, avatar comparison project, interactive What If scenarios, Bonus comparison by Leslie, and a conflict resolution and emergency preparedness presentation by a guest speaker.
- e. New Judges – Jean (20 minutes)
 - i. Use of pins - After much discussion of Pin Options (magnetic versus pins, name format and who gets them) the following motion was made by Jeannie: All membership – Level 8 and above to receive magnetic pins with first name and last initial from Jaxxon Promotions. Motion Second by Jean. All in favor and motion approved.
 - A. Demos will be provided prior to production. Linda and Jean will work on the list of judges.
 - B. Pins will be delivered by Laurie and Linda handing off at various meets and events to save on shipping. Jaxxon Promotions will store left overs and customize at a later date.
 - ii. New judge milestone compensation
Supporting New Judges – Milestones, Costs, and Incentives
 - A. Background:
 1. Becoming a judge (especially without coaching affiliation) is expensive — about \$1,100 to get to level 7/8 (includes testing, memberships, travel, materials, etc.).

2. Newer/younger judges often get no reimbursement or incentives for years.

B. Proposed Solution: Milestone-Based Reimbursements

Goal: Encourage and retain new judges by offering small financial incentives (e.g., \$20 per milestone) for completing key activities.

Examples of Proposed Milestones:

- Pass the judging test.
- Practice judge 1–2 meets.
- Participate in a 1-on-1 or small group mentorship (e.g., via Zoom or in person).
- Judge 2–3 real meets.
- Attend a state or regional clinic.
- Participate in NAJG activities.
- Prepare for the next level with a mentor.

Max reimbursement discussed: ~\$150–\$180.

C. Debate & Concerns:

1. Too Many Milestones?

- Some felt 7+ milestones may be too complex and hard to manage.
- Suggestion to simplify and prioritize the most meaningful milestones.

2. Precedent & Budget Implications:

- It's not about this year's budget (e.g., \$3,600 for 20 judges is feasible).
- Concern is setting a long-term precedent that may not be sustainable.
- Suggested: Tie incentives directly to event registration (e.g., clinic discounts) rather than reimbursements.

3. Tracking and Management:

- Needs someone to manage and verify milestone progress.
- Jean currently tracking but will be stepping down in ~2 years.

4. Barriers to Getting New Judges Assigned:

- Judges with Level 4/5 ratings often struggle to get assigned to meets.
- Assigners prioritize judges with Level 7/8+ ratings, especially at larger meets.
- Logistical issues: mileage reimbursement, single-panel judging at low levels, etc.
- Proposal: Have experienced judges give up sessions or days at end of season to allow newer judges opportunities.

Next Steps:

1. Create a Google Form to gather feedback from members on:
 - Most valuable milestones.
 - Preferred structure for incentives.
2. Review judge availability and current progress to assess feasibility.
3. Revisit the idea at the next meeting with simplified options and more input.

iii. Mentor program

- a. Summary of the Discussion on Establishing a Mentor Program for New Judges

The group discussed launching a pilot mentor program to better support and guide new judges.

b. Purpose of the Program

- To offer natural, professional support for new judges—not overly rigid or compliance-heavy.
- Aims to reintroduce the informal support structure that used to exist when people judged regularly with more experienced peers.
- Mentors will serve as a touch point, not educators or evaluators.

c. Program Structure

- Jean developed a checklist for mentors: flexible communication (chat, text, phone, Loom), suggested topics, and a place to log follow-ups.
- Mentors will not be responsible for practice judging or formal test prep—those areas remain under existing training structures.
 - The role is to help with "off the record" questions about judging etiquette, testing, scoring ethics, etc.

d. Pilot Launch

- Two initial mentors will be selected (one in the East, one in the West).
- New judges will be paired with mentors based on compatibility, proximity, and availability.
- The pilot will help test:
 - The checklist's effectiveness
 - Frequency of communication ex: is 4 times a season enough?
 - Coverage of necessary topics

e. Mentor Selection Criteria

- Not everyone will be accepted as a mentor.
- Candidates must be:
 - Positive, approachable, and experienced
 - Actively involved in the judging community
 - Capable of being a positive influence and trustworthy source of informal guidance
- The team will politely decline unsuitable candidates using vague language about fit or logistics.

f. Concerns & Clarifications

- There's concern about misinformation being shared by less-qualified mentors.
- Existing informal mentoring (e.g., coaches helping their own athletes become judges) can continue.
- Once someone begins testing, they'll be offered a mentor, but it's not mandatory.

g. Group Consensus

- General support for the program.
- Emphasis that everyone should be informally mentoring new judges whenever they judge with them.

A motion was made by Amy to implement a trial of the mentor program (One East and One West judge) to start. Motion second by Kathy to move forward with the pilot mentor program with two initial mentors.

5. New Business

Discussed the feeling that professionals in the state are unaware of the committee members. Discussed adding board member name and photos (if member is ok with it) to the website. Charity will work on adding the page with a general "contact form"

a. Education

- i. Dates approved: 9/28/2025, 10/12/2025, 11/2/2025
- ii. Topics for each Zoom Clinic: Discussion included updates, pre-season judging, level 6/7 vault.

b. Testing Opportunities

- i. Jeannie: 9/26/2025 and December possibly
 - ii. Laurie: 9/6/2025
 - iii. Marcy: a date late October/ early November
- Discussed the testing hiatus and the changes to the upcoming testing for levels 6/7 as a prerequisite to the level 8 test.

c. General Membership Meeting – October 12, 2025 6:30 to 7:30PM then transitioning into the zoom clinic.

d. 2026 State Clinic – Update Possibly May 30, 2026 – full day near Harrisburg. Discussion about timeframe related to testing and congress dates.

e. Reminder to finalize your Brevet/National Course Forms and get them into Jane Caruso.

6. Questions and vote to conclude meeting

Discussed current meet list and need to get availability in asap as assigning starts September 1st. If availability changes, remember to update GymJas. Google doc will be sent out regarding volunteering at Judges Cup.

- Motion by Kathy to adjourn meeting at 9:23PM
- Second: Sara
- All in favor and motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Charity Ruhl
Secretary/Webmaster