

2015 UANA PAN AMERICAN SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS ROUTINE DE-BRIEF

OVERALL IMPRESSION BY THE UANA COACHES COMMITTEE AND JUDGES:

Improvements through the Quad:

- Choreography is improving in sophistication, speed and variety of movement.
- Music selection and use of music
- Height in general, but not enough to be competitive in finals at the International level
- The gap between the top and bottom Federations in UANA has narrowed but we need to push the whole Continent up ("System Uplift")

Major Areas of Focus for Improvement for the next Quad in order of priority:

- Extension - knees, feet, full body
- Matching movements in time, space and positions to achieve perfect synchronization
- Performance - Confident engagement of audience and judges from walk-on to last position
- Maximum height is needed to achieve high 8's and 9's
- Finishing ends of movements with appropriate accents to enhance the look of the movement
- Continuous, fluid connections from one movement to the next with strong propulsion
- More strategic placement of key movements

EXTENSION:

- Ensure the knees, ankles and feet are extended and together - pretty feet especially on endings
- Maintain feet and ankle extension during fast movements
- Horizontal extension and height needs improvement
- Find a longer line in both hybrids and strokes - stretching up and out with arms and legs making them appear longer
- Extension during downward movements (arms or legs) to appear lighter

HEIGHT STILL NEEDS ATTENTION:

- Pay attention to horizontal height - dry, clean layouts (front, band and side) pikes, swirlies
- More dynamic level changes (pops) in stroking and hybrids. Think of it as an accent or exclamation mark with maximum height.
- More sustained height

PROPULSION & TRANSITIONS:

- In walkout endings, move powerfully in torpedoes (no rest)
- Coach tempo in all kicks (flutter, eggbeater)
- Routines still need to cover more of the pool

- Hold posture and body extension during a kick transition from eggbeater to side layout and to pike
- Coach the leg transitions - how to move with flow and maximum speed during a transitional movement. Legs need to accelerate (increase tempo) during a transition.
- Too many “dead spots”
- Ensure transitions make sense to avoid awkwardness or a “stuck” look.
- All transitions must be choreographed. This is the thread that connects one movement to another and must be continuous (the thread should never be broken).
- Keep a continuous directional flow (try not to back track)

SYNCHRONIZATION:

- Define the ending of one position before starting another. More clarity and exactness of each movement.
- Perfect synchronization is a function of 3 things: (1) Clarify the starting position (a) and the ending position (b). (2) Define the pathway from (a) to (b), (3) Clarify the exact timing of moving from point (a) to (b)
- Stick positions with maximum stretch and extension
- Pay attention to beginning and endings (ups and unders) of movements
- Preparation counts need to be precise and defined

PRESENTATION and USE OF MUSIC:

- Coach accurate head positions and posture for all stroking. Maintain posture on boost descents.
- Connect on an emotional level and engage with the audience and judges with more eye contact and use of the upper body (front and back). Try to look natural and not mechanical
- Project arm strokes to the largest audience.
- “Sell” the routine
- Arm strokes need to lift from underneath, not from the shoulders to maintain proper posture.
- Use more upper body, torso and head expression. Drill tip: do strokes without arms on land, then in the water to exaggerate the use of the body. Then add the arms back in.
- Do not release air until the mouth has cleared the surface to avoid water spewing out
- Continue to work on expressing different moods of the music
- Point toes and ankles on deck walk outs
- Good to see athletes exploring multiple tempos in use of music
- Maintain energy from beginning to end. The power, strength and conviction of the movement will create energy.

CHOREOGRAPHY:

- Try for more variety in surface and ending actions
- Ensure that highlights and technical hybrids are placed strategically in the pool
- Most athletes are becoming more expressive with arms/legs. The next step is to use more space and planes (levels).
- Try to begin and end routines center stage

- Explore more variety of difficulty in figures beyond spins and thrusts
- Ensure the choreography matches the ability level of the swimmer
- Lifts and throws are becoming more exciting and higher but make sure there is a good variety
- Choreograph under water recoveries - they need to be tidy and efficient

DIFFICULTY:

- Choreography should not be too difficult for skill level of athlete
- Need more difficulty in double arm and leg actions
- Placement of difficulty is improving
- Jumps and throws are too similar which affects difficulty
- How actions are synchronized need to be more intricate and include less obvious use of beats and rhythms.
- Need more variety of difficulty in flexibility moves, changes in spine, arch, etc.

POOL PATTERN BALLANCE:

- Try to ensure routines use all 4 quadrants of the pool with a good balance of choreography in all 4 quadrants. Map your routines
- Coach from all sides of the pool as well as on the angles to ensure balance of content as well as focus
- Avoid swimming straight across the pool especially in a solo to cover more space (use diagonals)
- Accuracy of pattern changes