

Organizing and Conducting Rhythmic Gymnastics Competitions

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Abstract

This article addresses the organization and conduct of competitions in rhythmic gymnastics. It examines the principal stages of event preparation and offers recommendations for the effective management of competitions, thereby contributing to an improvement in their quality and to the broader popularization of the discipline. The findings are contextualized with current global participation statistics published by World Gymnastics (formerly the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, FIG), which illustrate the accelerating international growth of the sport. The material is intended for coaches, event organizers, athletes, and specialists engaged in the delivery of successful sporting events in rhythmic gymnastics.

Keywords: Rhythmic gymnastics, sporting event, competition, stages of preparation, organizational recommendations, judging transparency.

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1. Introduction

The organization and conduct of competitions in rhythmic gymnastics constitute an important dimension of the discipline's continued development. Such events require meticulous preparation, close coordination among organizers, judges, and participants, and strict adherence to established rules and standards. Sound organization fosters a favorable competitive atmosphere, raises the standard of competition, and popularizes rhythmic gymnastics among a broad audience. Within this context, particular importance attaches to planning, logistics, the preparation of the judging panel, and the safeguarding of athlete welfare.

Rhythmic gymnastics is governed internationally by World Gymnastics, until December 2025 known as the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) — the

world's oldest surviving international sports federation, founded in Liège, Belgium, in 1881. Rhythmic gymnastics was recognized as an official discipline in 1961, the first World Championships were staged in Budapest in 1963, and the discipline entered the Olympic program at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. As of the 2025–2026 season, the federation comprises approximately 165–167 national member federations, underscoring the genuinely global reach that competition organizers must now accommodate.

The purpose of the present study is to develop practical recommendations for the organization of rhythmic gymnastics competitions. The results of this analysis may prove useful to a wide circle of stakeholders with an interest in sport and in the delivery of sporting events — first and foremost, competition organizers, coaches, judges, and athletes. In addition, the findings may be of

value to sport researchers, to lecturers in physical education and sport, and to students with an interest in the organization of sporting events.

2. Methods

The principal methods employed in the study of the organization and conduct of rhythmic gymnastics competitions comprised an analysis of the normative documents regulating competition delivery, and direct observation of competitions in progress for the purpose of evaluating organizational aspects. These qualitative methods were supplemented with a review of publicly available statistical data published by World Gymnastics and its continental unions, in order to situate the organizational recommendations within the current scale and growth trajectory of the discipline worldwide.

3. Results and Discussion

The proposed recommendations make possible the carefully considered organization of rhythmic gymnastics events of any scale.

Sporting events are incorporated into the Unified Calendar Plan of interregional, All-Russian, and international physical culture and sport events, as well as into the calendar plans of physical culture and sport events of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and of municipal formations. Competitions are conducted over a defined period of time and bring together numerous competing athletes. Participants compete according to rules established by sporting organizations, as well as according to the competition program set out in the event regulations.

The organization of competitions comprises the stages of preparation set out below. Well-organized competitions foster fair competition, contribute to the growth of gymnasts' sporting results, and promote the popularization of rhythmic gymnastics.

Stage 1 — Organizational and Preparatory Stage

At this stage, the following tasks are coordinated:

- Taking the decision to hold the competition and appointing its leadership;
- Drafting the calendar plan together with the competition regulations, including the definition of goals and objectives as well as the venue and date of the event;

- Determining the budget and taking decisions regarding financing;
- Distributing invitations and registering participants;
- Receiving entries and confirming participation;
- Securing the necessary equipment and apparatus;
- Preparing the venue, competition floor, and installation of equipment.

The larger the scale of the competition, the greater the lead time required for its preparation; preparation should therefore begin well in advance. It is likewise necessary to draw up the competition schedule ahead of time, establishing the order and timing of each performance.

Stage 2 — Main Stage: Delivery of the Competition

The principal tasks of this stage are as follows:

- Convening the credentials (mandate) commission;
- The opening ceremony;
- Preparation of the judging panel;
- Conducting the competition in accordance with the approved program;
- Judging and evaluation of performances;
- The closing ceremony, announcement of results, and the award of medals to winners and prize-winners.

Entry applications must be submitted to the credentials commission within the established deadline.

Stage 3 — Concluding Stage

This stage encompasses the following tasks:

- Dismantling the competition venue;
- Preparing the closing documentation and reports;
- Analysis of the event conducted.

When summarizing outcomes, it is necessary to establish

whether shortcomings or errors occurred during delivery, and whether the goals and objectives of the event were achieved.

On the basis of the foregoing, the following practical recommendations are proposed for the organization and conduct of rhythmic gymnastics competitions.

Advance Booking of the Competition Venue

A key criterion for staging rhythmic gymnastics competitions is a suitable sports hall with high ceilings and sufficient space for both the competition floor and the warm-up area. In many regions, the number of facilities meeting these requirements is limited, so the hall must be booked for the required dates well in advance.

Appointing Persons Responsible for Different Functional Areas

It is advisable to designate individuals responsible for specific functions. For example, one person may be responsible for judging — selecting the judging panel and training it in the rules; another for logistics and infrastructure — preparing the venue, apparatus, and equipment; another for the awards and closing ceremony — preparing prizes and diplomas and organizing the medal ceremony; and another for safety — monitoring compliance with safety regulations and organizing medical support, among other duties. This division of labor helps to ensure efficient event management and the timely completion of all necessary tasks.

Ensuring Transparency of Judging

Rhythmic gymnastics is a discipline in which scoring carries an inherent subjective component, making honest and objective judging essential. Transparency can be strengthened through several measures: the use of video equipment and automated review systems; the introduction of video-surveillance and instant-replay systems to verify judges' decisions; the clear, public description of the rules and criteria applied by judges; the real-time display of scores or their publication via public platforms; and the publication of reports on the work of judging panels, including statistics on errors or contested decisions. These measures render the judging process more open, fair, and objective, thereby strengthening confidence in the results of rhythmic gymnastics competitions.

This recommendation is consistent with the broader trajectory of technology-assisted judging across the gymnastics disciplines. Following judging controversies at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, the international federation introduced an Instant Replay and Communication System (IRCOS), giving judging panels the ability to review a routine frame-by-frame in the event of a scoring inquiry. This approach was subsequently extended: beginning with the 2019 World Championships, an artificial-intelligence-based Judging Support System (JSS) was progressively introduced across gymnastics apparatus, assisting — though not replacing — human judges in reviewing routines during formal inquiries. While JSS has to date been applied primarily in artistic gymnastics, its underlying logic — supplementing the judge's eye with objective, reviewable video and motion data — is directly transferable to rhythmic gymnastics and reinforces the case for wider adoption of video-review tools at all levels of competition, from regional to international.

Use of Social Media, Websites, and Other Communication Channels

The effective use of social media, television channels, websites, and other communication channels plays a pivotal role in keeping participants and spectators informed about the progress of a competition, its results, and important developments. The principal strategies and recommendations for the use of these channels are set out below:

- An official competition website with up-to-date information, schedules, results, news, and contact details;
- Posts announcing changes to the program;
- Photo and video material from training sessions, preparatory events, and the competition itself;
- The organization of live broadcasts for a wide audience;
- Cooperation with television and radio stations to cover the competition;
- The distribution of press releases and newsletters to journalists;
- The use of dedicated hashtags to consolidate content (for example, #Championship2024);

- The publication of summary materials: photo reports, video reviews, and interviews with participants.

The use of these channels renders competitions more transparent, accessible, and engaging for a broad audience, and helps to raise the level of engagement with, and trust in, event organizers.

Sponsorship

Sponsors play an important role in the organization of competitions, influencing a range of aspects of the event and, through their participation, substantially enhancing its quality and scale. The principal ways in which sponsors influence competition organization are set out below:

- Providing the budgets required for venue rental, equipment purchase, and other expenses;
- Supplying sporting apparatus, uniforms, and the technical equipment required for broadcasting and judging;
- Ensuring comfortable conditions for participants and spectators (for example, catering and medical services);
- Facilitating the involvement of renowned

coaches, judges, or experts, thereby enhancing the prestige of the competition;

- Using their own communication channels to promote the event, attracting greater media and public attention;
- Strengthening participant and spectator confidence in the event through the presence of well-known sponsors.

Overall, sponsors are key partners in the organization of rhythmic gymnastics competitions, helping to make the event more professional, larger in scale, and more attractive to all participants and spectators.

Global Scale and Growth of Rhythmic Gymnastics Competitions

The practical recommendations above acquire particular significance when set against the current scale and growth trajectory of rhythmic gymnastics as an international discipline. World Gymnastics statistics on recent editions of the World Championships — the pinnacle event of the competition calendar and a principal qualification pathway to the Olympic Games — indicate a marked increase in the number of participating national federations over a short period, as summarized in Table 1.

World Championships	Participating nations	Competitors
2022 — Sofia, Bulgaria	62	234
2023 — Valencia, Spain	62	232
2025 — most recent edition	76 (record)	320

Source: World Gymnastics (FIG) competition records, 2022–2025.

Between the 2023 and 2025 World Championship cycles, the number of participating nations rose from 62 to a record 76 — an increase of approximately 23 per cent within two years — with seven federations (Aruba, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Paraguay, Peru, Syria, and Tunisia) sending gymnasts to a World Championships for the first time. This trend of rapid geographical expansion corroborates the article's central premise: that professionally organized, transparent, and well-promoted competitions are a direct driver of the

popularization of rhythmic gymnastics. It also raises the practical stakes of the recommendations set out above, since organizers at every level — from national to international — must now plan for a steadily broadening and more geographically diverse field of participants, judges, and delegations.

4. Conclusion

This article has examined in detail the importance of organizing and conducting rhythmic gymnastics

competitions and has proposed concrete steps for improving this process. Organization demands meticulous preparation, professionalism, and close attention to detail. A successful event includes the development of clear regulations, the provision of the necessary infrastructure, the preparation of the judging panel, and the creation of comfortable conditions for participants and spectators alike. Compliance with safety rules, fair judging, and the creation of a supportive and inspiring atmosphere for athletes all play an important role. The current global growth of rhythmic gymnastics — reflected in record participation at recent World Championships — demonstrates that the conduct of well-organized competitions makes a direct and measurable contribution to the popularization of the discipline worldwide.

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