

## Dear NGJA Judges-

In the next 24 hours, you will be asked to vote for your next NGJA president. Though I have had the good fortune of meeting many of you in my 15 years as a competitive gymnast and 30 years as a judge, this email may be my first introduction to you. Here is my vision for the NGJA going forward and my philosophy of judging. This vision includes support for the local organizations, and for your individual development and enjoyment of the sport. After all, we judge because we have a long-standing personal connection to the sport and the gymnastics community. We want judging, at its best, to be fulfilling, effective, and fun.

### Scott Schaffer



I have local (Oregon President), regional (Regional Director West // Region 2), and national (NAL and NCAA-NAL) leadership experience. But like most of you, I was a kid gymnast who only wanted a fair score from the intimidating adult in the suit. I grew up in Oklahoma as a Region 3 gymnast and I was a Developmental Junior National Team member. In college I competed for Stanford where I became an All-American. I then returned to Oklahoma for law school and worked out a bit with the OU team to stay in shape, and then moved to Portland, Oregon for work in patent law. I have two kids in college so find myself with extra time on my hands due to impending empty-nester status. My wife is supportive of my mysterious obsession that is gymnastics.

### Ambassador

Important advice I got from my parents is to live life as if the details could be publicized on the front page of the newspaper – in other words, be proud of what you do and be kind, supportive, fair, and self-deprecating. Be an ambassador for yourself and for your community. For example, is a parent helping you keep score at a junior meet? Engage them in conversation and show them what you do and why and how you do it. Working with a judge on a panel? Celebrate their successes, admit to your own errors, and take the opportunity to exchange points of view and evaluations. I find that judging is ultimately most fulfilling when it is a social experience, that is, working with others at a live event with plenty of opportunities to socialize outside of the competition floor.

### Solutions (may not be one size fits all)

We all come to judging with a different backgrounds, time commitments, and goals. One size may not fit all. I have learned this in my work as president of my neighborhood association, representing 7000 residents and businesses, and as president of the coalition of west-side neighborhoods in Portland (100,000 residents). Although I continue to practice as an attorney and have a teaching role at Portland State University, it is my elected/volunteer work in local government that hammers home the importance of communication, transparency, patience, and clarity of purpose that is most appropriate to an organization like the NGJA. A leader has a very simple job: to make your life easier. Your time is precious and should not be wasted on unnecessary tasks or worries. The NGJA leadership must do the job necessary to ensure that you are properly educated, prepared, certified, promoted, and paid.

### Goals

1. SURVIVAL – NGJA must survive as a service organization. Especially regarding how its members (in light of USAG changes) are assigned, trained and advanced.
2. LOCAL SUPPORT – enhance support for local associations and their membership who know best local conditions, constraints, and talent (including the recruitment of new judges).

3. EDUCATION – should provide ongoing standardized training content (although not mandatory) for local associations to use for their courses. In my own state, I use our judges’ course as an opportunity for give experience to those who wish to teach – because often the best way to learn something is to teach something. Standardized tests should continue. Off-season training such as the NCAA Challenge should continue, but with modified procedures to provide for multi-panel live participation if possible.
4. COLLEGIALITY – facilitate exchanges, and develop a complete visual roster with pictures, hobbies, etc. so that judges get to know one another.
5. TRAINING – increase opportunities for two-judge panels that match senior with junior judges, including subsidized shadow-judging.

## VOTE

My default is to see the best in others. I am at heart an optimistic person and treat others as if they have the best of intentions. This has served me well in my time as an attorney and in local government where anxious residents (I hope) see me as a calm guiding hand. I see the judges of the NGJA as a brotherhood (with some highly skilled sisters). We are some of the best in the world and are so lucky to have such talented and dedicated individuals. I look forward to seeing that our work continues to improve, and for your own personal journey within it.

I appreciate the opportunity to be your next NGJA president and hope to earn your vote. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Very Best Regards,

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