



January 21, 2026

NFHS Weekly Girl's Gymnastics Rule Interpretation

Balance Beam – Directly Connected Elements

One of the keys to achieving a higher-scoring balance beam routine is the direct connection of elements for bonus. *Directly connected* elements are defined as two or more elements performed without a pause, step, or repositioning of the feet. In an acro series, the trunk must continue to move in the direction of the element. A *series* consists of two or more elements directly connected.

For bonus consideration, 0.20 may be awarded when two or more low-level back-to-back superior (LL BBS) elements are directly connected. A second LL BBS bonus may be awarded if a third superior element is directly connected to the first two, or if there is another combination of back-to-back superiors directly connected. Several principles govern whether elements are considered directly connected.

ACRO OR DANCE SERIES – DIRECTLY CONNECTED

- There must be continuous connection between elements to be considered directly connected.
- The landing leg or free leg of the first element must be the takeoff leg for the next element.
- If the first element lands on two feet, the takeoff for the next element must be from two feet.

Situation 1. Backward Acro Series and Sideward-to-Backward Acro Series (with one or more flight elements)

These series are considered broken if there is a delay in the immediate takeoff of the second element.

Causes for a delay that break the connection include:

- Arms moving low to the thighs or further back after landing the first element.
- A cautious, slow-moving attempt to connect one or more elements.

Ruling:

- The acro series is broken.
- No rhythm deduction is applied.

Situation 2. Non-Flight Acro Series (Any Direction) or Acro Flight Series

These series are considered not broken if there is:

- A lack of tempo or poor rhythm between elements due to a slow, but continuous connection in line with the beam.

Ruling:

- Deduct up to 0.20 for lack of tempo between elements.

Situation 3. Dance Series / Mixed Series

These series are considered not broken if:

- There is a lack of tempo or poor rhythm due to a slow, but continuous connection in line with the beam.
- An arm circle occurs, provided the body continues moving.

Ruling:

- Deduct up to 0.20 for lack of tempo.

Dance series will be broken if:

- The free leg drops and lifts again.
- The trunk stops forward movement.

Situation 4. All Series Are Considered Broken When:

- There is a stop between elements.
- There is a loss of balance.
- There is any deviation of body movement not in line with the beam.
- The foot or feet are repositioned or pivoted.
- There is an extra step, hop, or jump between elements.
- The legs straighten between elements:
 - First element lands in a plié on two feet.
 - Legs straighten completely, then plié again to initiate the next element.
 - Straightening the legs breaks the series.
- In an acro series, the kick or leg swing rises above 45° when leading into the second element.

Situation 5. Inherently Non-Connectable Acro Elements

- If the first element lands in a lunge on two feet, the elements are not connectable.

Example:

- Backward walkover or back handspring step-out ending in a lunge to a round-off or cartwheel.

Ruling:

- No acro series credit.
- No connection credit for BBS.

If the first element lands on one leg and steps through into the second element, the elements are directly connected.