What Is Acrobatic Gymnastics?

Acrobatic Gymnastics, Acro for short, combines the strength of gymnastics with the agility of dance. Engaging choreography captures the audience’s attention with a combination of partner acrobatic elements, dance, tumbling, and individual skills.

Acrobats have been performing around the world for centuries. In the early twentieth century, acrobatics split into two distinct directions: Apparatus (trapeze, ropes, etc.), which found a home in circus performances; and Tumbling and Pyramids, which showcase the efficacy of the human body. This second direction has evolved into the competitive sport you see today.

In addition to the local and national competitions for our athletes, there are several World Cup events held every year. The World Championship events are held in even numbered years and since 1993 Acro has been a part of the World Games, which are held every four years.

Athletes compete as pairs or groups. Pairs may consist of two men, two women or mixed. Women’s groups have three members, men’s groups have four. Throughout the year they learn cooperation, trust, and perseverance as they perfect their routines. Pair/Groups are separated into levels based on ability. Within Levels 9 and below there are separate age divisions based on the oldest person on the team. Level 10 and Elites are not divided by age.

Teams need athletes of varying heights, weights, and body types. Smaller, more flexible athletes work well as tops while taller, stronger athletes are ideal for base positions. All athletes perform tumbling and individual skills appropriate for their level.

Routines are set to music and range from 2-3 minutes each. Everyone competes on a 40’x40’ spring floor. Level 7 and below compete one routine, Levels 8-10 compete two routines, Balance and Dynamic, and the combined score determines the medal winners. Elite athletes add a third routine called Combined. In some competitions the scores from all three routines are combined to determine the medalists. In others, the Balance and Dynamic scores are combined to determine ranking for the finalist group and the scores from the Combined routines determine the medals.

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