

Figure Overview, General Judging Criteria and Sample Photos/Commentary

Overview

Figure competition provides an alternative contest for the athletic woman who trains, but does not wish to the gain muscle size, vascularity and striations associated with bodybuilding competitions. The three important elements for figure that should be followed are:

- **Femininity:** A combination of beauty, athleticism and body shape.
- **Symmetry:** Related to the overall body parts and muscle groups. All areas should show relatively equal development, an overall degree of athleticism, and proportion. The physique should neither be excessively muscular or excessively lean and should be free from deep muscle separation, striations, overly developed shoulders or any other body part.
- **Presentation:** Includes the athlete's posture, grooming, facial beauty and healthy appearance. Makeup should be finished and feminine. Keep in mind your face makeup should match the body makeup and skin tone. The skin tone should be smooth and healthy in appearance, and without cellulite. Hair can be of any particular style, including up or down, but long hair should be moved off your back during quarter turns to the rear. The face, hair and makeup should complement the "total package" presented by the athlete.

General Judging Criteria

The judging criterion for figure contestants is based on the two physique/suit rounds. Each round is judged separately, with the judges handing in a score for each round. Each round accounts for 50 % of the final score. In each round, the competitor will be assessed using the following criteria:

The judge will first assess the overall athletic appearance of the physique. The assessment will begin at the head and extend downwards, taking the whole physique into account. The assessment, beginning with a general impression of the physique, should take into consideration the hair and facial beauty; the overall athletic development, including the presentation of a balanced, symmetrically developed physique; the condition of the skin tone; and the athlete's ability to present herself with confidence, poise and grace.

The physique will be assessed as to its level of overall muscle tone, achieved through athletic endeavors. The physique should neither be excessively muscular nor excessively lean and should be free from deep muscle separation and/or striations. Physiques that are considered either too muscular or too lean will be marked down.

The assessment should also take into consideration the tightness and tone of the skin. The skin tone should be smooth and healthy in appearance, and without cellulite. The face, hair and makeup should complement the "total package" presented by the athlete.

The assessment of the athlete should include the athlete's entire presentation from the moment she walks on the stage until the moment she walks off the stage. At all times; the competitor must be viewed with the emphasis on a healthy, fit, attractive and athletic physique.

The judges must be mindful of the fact that a competitor may present a different "total package" while wearing a two-piece bikini with high heels as opposed to wearing a one-piece swimsuit with

high heels. Therefore, judges must ensure this round is judged from a fresh perspective, ensuring that all competitors receive a fair assessment based upon their attire in this round.

Sample Photos/Commentary

The OPA adheres to the same kind of standards followed by the IFBB Pro League and the NPC. The IFBB Pro League is where professional competitors compete. The NPC is the national-level governing body for amateur figure competition in the United States.

The following photos were gathered by from the [Muscular Development](http://MuscularDevelopment.com) and HardFitness.com websites and illustrate acceptable figure physiques and posing practices.



These photos show Ontario competitor Sheri Fisher posing to the front and rear at the 2008 IFBB North American Championships. Note that although Sheri is posing, she is not flexing the way a bodybuilder would. Also, the hands are kept reasonably to the side, the heels are together, and the posing is done confidently and without looking strained. The idea is to show off a feminine/athletic physique.



This shows various Class winners at the 2008 IFBB North American Championships, a continent-wide amateur-level event. Georgina Valenzuela (second from left) was the overall winner. Natalie Waples (far right) was the runner-up. This competition qualified these two to be professional figure competitors so the posing has to be exact. Note that in this side pose, the competitors pose confidently but not excessively, the feet are kept together, and the face is always facing to the side in this pose. Also take note that the hands are kept to the sides.



This photo is from the 2008 IFBB Tournament of Champions professional-level competition. Gina Allioti, third from left, was the winner. Sonia Adcock, third from right, was the runner-up. Note that even in the professional ranks, the level of muscularity and definition in no way approaches that of female bodybuilding. The top women also pose in a confident, relaxed manner, not in a hard, forced manner like bodybuilding. Strong emphasis is placed on physique shape as well as overall

presentation. Note how the cut and color of the suits affects the look of each competitor. Judges factor in all this information for the final assessment.



This photo was taken at the same Tournament of Champions competition and shows the same six competitors as shown above. From the back, the women stand in a confident manner; the top competitors don't push their arms too far from the side. There is a certain level of muscle development, but not the kind associated with bodybuilding. The women's physiques are free from cellulite, but they don't have the deep muscle separation that bodybuilding has.