

Well, what a year! It was tough on every school but double tough on Waikato schools and virtually impossible for any Auckland Schools to compete at the 2021 Challenge.

Thank you everyone especially those who were stuck in lockdown, I admire your courage, determination, and faith to still enter. You learn more about yourself and what you're really capable of when facing massive obstacles. We at JUMP JAM never gave up, whether it was sourcing multiple Competition venue options at last minute, finding new dates and working around all the Ministry of Health guidelines to ever changing targets on a daily basis.

Anyway, what I wanted to say is firstly I have started digitising all the old JUMP JAM Challenge National competition DVD's from 2006 onwards and we plan to share these with schools next year from preliminary round entry onwards. What has changed over this time is the creativity and costumes. What I wish to discuss is what hasn't changed. Presentation and Technical execution were still strong back in the day and winning 1st place. These two are the foundation of any great team and are really a part of the JUMP JAM **DNA** I created in 2001.

When I looked back again at the two winners from 2006 in the Yr 1-6 category, Hilltop School from Taupo won with the "Butterfly" routine and Karaka School in South Auckland won with "Jenne Kain Jarr Din" in the Yr 7-8 category. Both of these teams had great technique and presentation. If I must pick one its technique that sways it, especially the ENERGY component. Aerobics from my time in the 80's, 90's was all about a ridiculously high energy buzz created by exaggerated full range movement that made a Ford look like a Ferrari. You could actually feel it being in the audience. Energy is the most exciting component of a performance, even when its really messy its still more exciting to watch than a controlled clean low energy routine. I look forward to sharing some great videos from the JJ History over the next year with you.

Tip # 1. Train & perform with raw energy. Go harder, faster, stronger than any other team...you are the Ferrari, and they are the Ford. Aim to look better than the JUMP JAM videos I present. When reviewing your choreography, seek out the parts that the students are low on energy e.g., walking into the next move. Be aware when creating an acting scene, you limit the time of anyone 'standing around'.

Tip # 2. Every team member needs to own the routine with their presentation front to back line. The Presentation judge will seek out a weak team member to determine who is the best team. Average technique may be forgiven or overseen over someone who absolutely sells their performance. Self-belief is the most empowering quality when presenting to an audience, so always eyeball the audience/ judges whenever you can...looking down will appear less confident and convincing. The team that owns it deserves to win it. The judges and audience will emotionally FEEL a performance. Therefore, we ask the Technique judge to judge shoulders down and ignore faces and not become emotionally connected to their performance. While the presentation judges only watch the faces.

This year we shared a lot of past winning team video's from over the last 2 years, especially teams that had very imaginative choreography concepts. If you are at the highest level of Xtreme and Ultimate this is where it really needs to go. When all these amazing teams have all very similar technique and presentation very little will separate them apart from a mind-blowing creative concept. We really noticed this, this year when more top teams were pushing the imagination boundaries. Thank you for this which leads into my Tip # 3.

Tip # 3. When using your imagination to create your concept always ensure Tip # 1 & Tip # 2 is paramount to everything else. Especially Tip # 1 as this is what defines this Aerobics/JUMP JAM competition. If we lose this, then it looks like another dance pantomime routine. In other words, go for an ENERGY score of 10/10 to ensure this is Fitness based first.

Tip # 4. Creative concepts work best when the judges and audience don't have to think about how you are linking your theme. Yes, you have a 30sec intro to introduce a story, but if we still have to question "how does this relate to the theme" you start on the 'back foot'. Therefore, choosing your song/routine in the first instance is vital to everything else.

Costumes typically make up 10% of the score. BTW back in 2006 they were 25%. We limit the points so to not over advantage higher decile schools compared to lower decile schools. However, they have an amazing carry over effect on everything else when done with superb detail. The students of course absolutely get buzzed out and this helps with their character performance, the Creativity and Presentation judge is influenced as well.

Tip # 5. Remember the Costume breakdown for scoring is: Links to Theme 4points. Attention to detail: Hair and Makeup 2pts, Costume 2pts, Accessories 2pts. Tick all the boxes and aim for something we have never seen before. Most importantly If we can't get your routine link that's 4 points at stake! Also, the judges think, "could they have added anything else or is the look missing something". Could a hat or something on the feet really top this costume off?

Tip # 6. Levels, Interaction and Rhythm changes were at lot better understood this year with some great examples. Judges typically allocate 1 point per move so aim to have 4 of each to be safe. Make them different and not repeat

ideally. More points will be added if they are spectacular. Less points will be given if it's not a change to a JUMP JAM original move. E.g., you have shown your own new move and within it has level change, it will score less. To me the best rhythm changes show a sharp contrast between what is before and after it. Kind of like a light switching off to complete dark then back on to full light. So, if you show for example an original JUMP JAM move slowed down and repeated twice in a row it doesn't look as effective as if it was shown once. It's the contrast we want to see!

Tip # 7. Creative additions are typically judged 1 point for each addition, so aim for 10 new moves. Less points given for any repeats. However, they will get much higher marks if you take the original JUMP JAM move and *extend* it to something else rather than completely changing it. Therefore, pick any original move and experiment on how to tweak, extend, extrapolate, morph into a variation that makes us think "Wow that's even better than the original". Also, can your creative additions directly relate to the theme?

Tip # 8. Patterns/Formations/Shapes are typically judged 1 point for each addition, so aim for 10 new transitions/shapes. Less points given for any repeats. Aim for a Patterns/Formations/Shape that we haven't seen before and be unpredictable! Also, can you link in anyway the pattern/shape/formation to the theme?

The last two tips are not about points scoring.

Tip # 9. No matter what your result is this year, enjoy the lessons learnt, the challenges we faced created opportunities to grow as human beings. It's constantly growing and improving that makes us successful in life, particularly when faced with obstacles. This year more than ever was about Goals, Staying Focused, Keeping the Faith & believing we can still do this, Persevering & not giving up, realising its all worth it in the end. I know the online entry for North Island Schools was a new and strange concept however some great moments came out of it and proves we can survive if we adapt our attitude...which is exactly what our students need to learn from.

Tip # 10. Enjoy the journey with some laughter and keep it positive because win or lose, we win by putting ourselves on the line. Team friendships and bonding will stay with your students for life so always incorporate Fun into your training.

Before we sign off, just a heads up: we are looking at putting penalty points in the 2022 rules for gymnastic cartwheels, tumbling, round offs etc as these don't really belong in a JUMP JAM competition and send the wrong message to other coaches/teams. These are typically performed by one or two individuals and mostly have no relation to the theme.

Note: team assisted lifts will still be allowed.

Finally enjoy the Category videos from 2021

Brett & Linda Fairweather