



*Gymnastics Ethics Foundation
Fondation d’Ethique de la Gymnastique*

Disciplinary Commission

GEF DC 01/2025 - Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) v. Ms. Irina Rodina

DECISION

rendered on 29 August 2025 by the

GYMNASTICS ETHICS FOUNDATION DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

sitting in the following composition:

President	Dr. Mirjam Koller-Trunz (Switzerland)
Members	Ms. Laurence Burger (Switzerland) Mr. Mike Cook (USA)
Ad hoc secretary	Ms. Althéa Vurpillot (Switzerland) / Ms. Yoana Yankova (United Kingdom)

In the disciplinary proceedings between:

The **Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG)**

- **Claimant** -

and

Ms. Irina Rodina

- **Respondent(s)** -



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List of abbreviations

<i>Art.</i>	Article
<i>Arts.</i>	Articles
<i>CAS</i>	Court of Arbitration for Sport
<i>CC</i>	Swiss Civil Code
<i>CEO</i>	Chief Executive Officer
<i>cf.</i>	Confer (compare)
<i>CHF</i>	Swiss Franc
<i>CO</i>	Swiss Code of Obligations
<i>CoD</i>	FIG Code of Discipline
<i>CoE</i>	FIG Code of Ethics
<i>DC</i>	GEF Disciplinary Commission
<i>e.g.</i>	Exempli gratia (for example)
<i>et seq.</i>	Et sequens (and the following)
<i>FIG</i>	Fédération International Gymnastique
<i>GEF</i>	Gymnastics Ethics Foundation
<i>i.e.</i>	Id est (this is)
<i>Mr.</i>	Mister
<i>Ms.</i>	Miss
<i>p.</i>	Page
<i>para.</i>	Paragraph
<i>paras.</i>	Paragraphs
<i>pp.</i>	Pages
<i>v.</i>	Versus



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I. Parties to the proceedings

1. The Parties in these proceedings are the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (“FIG”), i.e. the Claimant, and Ms. Irina Rodina, i.e. the Respondent.
2. The FIG is an association incorporated under Swiss law and has its registered office in Lausanne, Switzerland. The FIG is the worldwide governing body for the sport of gymnastics. It has established the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation (“GEF”), i.e. a non-profit foundation under Swiss law with its seat in Lausanne, Switzerland.
3. Ms. Irina Rodina is a gymnastics judge from Belgium (FIG ID 1013).
4. The Parties shall be referred herein collectively as the “Parties”.

II. Factual Background and Procedural History

5. Below is a summary of facts and allegations drawn from the Parties’ written exchanges and the hearing. Additional facts and allegations may be set out, where relevant, in connection with the legal discussion that follows. In reaching its conclusion, the Panel has duly taken into consideration all arguments advanced by the Parties therein, although not specifically addressed in the below section of the present decision.

A. Summary of relevant facts

6. The Panel now sets out the relevant factual background. The Panel has taken into consideration all the facts presented to it by the Parties, however, that which is set out below is, in its view, most relevant for the outcome of this case.
7. From 18 to 22 June 2025, the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships took place in Sofia (BUL).
8. On 18 June 2025, during the Individual Qualification of Group C, Rotation 2, the Respondent, serving as an Artistry Judge on Panel A (Hoop), used her mobile phone during a gymnast’s routine to send one text and one voice message to a coach from her own delegation, who is also the Respondent’s daughter. The purpose of this communication was to remind the coach to stay within the designated coaches’ area to avoid a 0.50 penalty for her gymnast, as stated in the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Code of Points.



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9. On 19 June 2025, the President of the Rhythmic Gymnastics Technical Committee, i.e. Ms. Noha Abou Shabana, informed the Respondent (prior to the judges’ drawing of lots) that she was not permitted to officiate in any further phases of the competition. She also notified the Respondent that the matter would be reported to the FIG Secretary General and handed over to the GEF Disciplinary Commission. Later that day, the FIG sent an official letter to the Belgian Head of Delegation issuing an administrative warning against the Respondent.
10. On the next day, i.e. on 20 June 2025, the Respondent sent a letter to the FIG providing a *“contextual clarification regarding the administrative warning”*.
11. On 24 June 2025, the Belgian national federation informed the FIG that it did not condone the behaviour of its judge and fully agrees with the administrative warning issued by the FIG.

B. Procedural history

12. On 1 July 2025, the FIG requested the opening of disciplinary proceedings against the Respondent.
13. On 4 July 2025, the GEF appointed a Disciplinary Commission Panel (“Panel”) consisting of Ms. Laurence Burger, Mr. Mike Cook and Dr. Mirjam Koller-Trunz to hear the case. The Panel elected Dr. Mirjam Koller-Trunz as its President. Pursuant to Art. 15 of the FIG Code of Discipline, Ms. Althéa Vurpillot was appointed as ad hoc secretary.
14. On the same date, the GEF opened disciplinary proceedings against the Respondent.
15. On 9 July 2025, the Panel invited the Respondent to submit her comments to the FIG’s allegations until 31 July 2025.
16. On 13 July 2025, the Respondent submitted her comments.
17. On 16 July 2025, the Panel confirmed receipt of the Respondent’s comments and invited her to inform the Panel by 23 July 2025 whether she wanted a hearing to be held.
18. As the Panel did not receive a response by the fixed deadline, it granted the Respondent a final deadline until 28 July 2025 at lunchtime to indicate whether a hearing was desired.
19. On 25 July 2025, the Respondent informed the Panel that she wanted a hearing.



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20. Upon request by the Panel, on 5 and 7 August 2025, the Respondent submitted a screenshot of the text message sent to her daughter during the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships and a transcript of the voice message sent.
21. A virtual hearing took place on 25 August 2025. The following individuals participated in the hearing:

For the Panel:

Dr. Mirjam Koller-Trunz, President
Ms. Laurence Burger, member
Mr. Mike Cook, member

For the Respondent:

Ms. Irina Rodina
Ms. Tzonka Iotzova (interpreter)

For the FIG:

Ms. Charlotte Perret
Ms. Noha Abou Shabana

For the GEF:

Ms. Yoana Yankova, acting as ad hoc secretary

III. Jurisdiction

22. Under Art. 31 of the FIG Statutes (2025), Art. 2.1 of the FIG Code of Discipline (2025) as well as Art. 4.2 of the GEF’s Operational Rules (2024), the GEF has jurisdiction for conducting disciplinary proceedings under the FIG Code of Discipline that are subject to FIG rules.
23. Any infringement of the Statutes, Rules and Regulations, Policies and/or Procedures, as well as of the principles of integrity and sports fairness by the FIG member federations, gymnasts, officials (judges, coaches, medical staff or others) or by members of the FIG authorities is liable to sanctions provided for by the FIG Statutes and the FIG Code of Discipline (Art. 3 of the FIG Code of Discipline).



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24. According to Art. 11.2.1 of the FIG General Judges’ Rules, any case of unauthorised use of electronic devices during a FIG approved competition by a judge must be referred to the GEF Disciplinary Commission. The allegations concern a FIG approved competition. The Respondent is a FIG breveted judge and therefore subject to the FIG Rules. The Parties did not object to the jurisdiction of the GEF Disciplinary Commission.

25. As a consequence, the GEF Disciplinary Commission has jurisdiction to decide in this case.

IV. Applicable Law

26. Pursuant to Art. 32 of the FIG Statutes, the GEF shall manage disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the FIG Rules.

27. Pursuant to Art. 1 of the FIG Code of Discipline, *“in the absence of a specific provision in this Code, in the WADA Code or in other disciplinary provisions of the FIG Rules, the Disciplinary Authority shall rule according to the general principles set out in this Code and according to the general principles of justice, fairness and equality. It shall apply the general principles of Swiss law, and principles acknowledged internationally”*.

28. The relevant provisions of the applicable FIG regulations read as follows:

Art. 11.2.1 of the FIG General Judges’ Rules:

“A judge can be warned once, at most a second time and then may be excluded from the competition. However, in case of a very serious mistake, the Technical President can exclude a judge immediately, without previous warning.

The disciplinary measures taken during a competition are without prejudice to any possible sanction pronounced after the analysis made of the judges’ work.

Ac#on	Disciplinary Measures
[...]	



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<p><i>A judge may be removed and replaced immediately or not allowed to judge in a following compeRRon phase for the following:</i></p> <p><i>[...]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>- Having used means of communication which are not permitted during the compeRRon (e.g. mobile phone)</i>	<p><i>1) Immediate removal from the compeRRon and prohibited from judging for all remaining phases of the compeRRon</i></p> <p><i>2) The case must be reported to the Secretary General and handed over to the GEF Disciplinary Commission</i></p>
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Art. 5.4, Section 1, of the FIG Technical Regulations:

“[...] During competition, on the FoP, gymnasts/athletes, coaches, medical staff, and judges are absolutely prohibited from using any electronic device to talk, transmit or receive messages (mobile phones, mini-notebooks, computers, smartwatches, etc.) or use any camera or video device.”

Art. 15 of the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Code of Points:

“During the actual performance of the exercise, the coach of the group (or any other member of the delegation) may not communicate with the group gymnasts, the musician, or the judges in any manner. Coach(es) accompanying the group to the Field of Play must stay in the area designated by the LOC.

Penalty: 0,50 p. if this rule is not met”

Art. 23 Judges’ eligibility and panels of the Official Work Plan for the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships:

“[...] During competitions, working judges will be prohibited from using any electronic device to talk, transmit or receive messages (mobile phones, mini-notebooks, computers, connected watch etc.) or use any camera or video device. [...]



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Failure to follow this rule will result in the exclusion of the judge concerned from the judges' panel, and further steps will be possible (e.g. case to be submitted to the FIG Ethics Foundation)."

Art. 33 FIG Statutes:

"Disciplinary measures which can be imposed amongst others on a Member Federation, on a legal entity or on an individual are the following:

- 1. the warning*
- 2. the blame*
- 3. the suspension of the Member Federation or the person concerned for one (1) or more official FIG events and other international events*
- 4. the proscription to take part in the FIG events and other international events for one given or unspecified duration*
- 5. the exclusion of any participation in the FIG activities and other international events for one given or unspecified duration*
- 6. the demotion of functions*
- 7. the withdrawal of a honorary title or distinction*
- 8. the cancellation of the brevets or diplomas awarded*
- 9. the financial fine*
- 10. the suspension for one (1) or more functions of a person elected within one of the FIG Governing Bodies and/or of a continental Union for one given or unspecified duration*
- 11. the suspension of a Member Federation for one given or unspecified duration*
- 12. the expulsion of a Member Federation for one given or unspecified duration*
- 13. the exclusion of a FIG person*
- 14. the cancellation of results of a competition*



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15. the obligation to restore the financial benefits and prices received

16. the disciplinary measures resulting from the anti-doping regulations

17. or any other sanction which could be proposed by the Disciplinary Commission of the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation

All the sanctions taken can be published in the FIG bulletin or in any other official FIG publication.

Any gymnast/athlete or official who is suspended or declared temporarily or permanently ineligible as a result of the Disciplinary and Ethics Procedures of the FIG, shall automatically be considered suspended by all Continental Unions, Regional Groups and Member Federations.”

V. Position of the Parties and Requests for Relief

29. The Panel does not provide an exhaustive list of the Parties’ contentions, but, rather, a summary of the Parties’ main arguments. In considering and deciding upon the Parties’ claims, the Panel has accounted for and carefully considered all the submissions made and evidence adduced by the Parties.

A. FIG

30. It is undisputed that the Respondent used her mobile phone during competition, thereby violating several FIG rules. The FIG cannot tolerate violations of its own rules and must safeguard the integrity of its competitions.

31. In the letter of 1 July 2025, the FIG officially submitted the following requests for relief:

“The FIG respectfully requests the Disciplinary Commission to:

- a) investigate the case and request any additional documents, materials and evidence necessary for a fair and thorough assessment;*
- b) confirm that Ms Irina Rodina breached applicable FIG rules, including the FIG General Judges’ Rules and FIG Technical Regulations, and official instructions;*



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c) take any appropriate sanction(s) against Ms. Irina Rodina (BEL), taking into account the seriousness of the breach, particularly considering Ms Rodina’s extensive experience as a judge.”

32. During the hearing, the FIG specified its prayers for relief and requested a suspension for either a set period of time or a set number of competitions, as deemed appropriate by the Panel.

B. The Respondent

33. In her written response as well as during the hearing, the Respondent explained as follows:

34. The Belgian delegation at the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships consisted of the Respondent as judge, her daughter as coach, an athlete and her mother.

35. Prior to the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships, the Belgian delegation was provided with an initial work plan. However, this plan did not include information regarding where the coaches were permitted to stand during the athlete’s performance. The Belgian delegation only received detailed information about the positioning of the coaches on the second day of the World Championships, after the incident had already occurred.

36. As the coach of the Belgium delegation had to sit for an university exam, she was unable to attend the pre-competition orientation meeting. The Respondent was not permitted to attend this meeting as a judge. To avoid a fine for the national association for non-attendance, the mother of the athlete attended the meeting instead. However, due to her limited English skills, she did not understand where the coaches were supposed to stand during the performance. There was also no information about the coaches’ position in the PowerPoint presentation provided to all attendees.

37. Before her athlete began the exercise, the coach searched in vain for the black square, which usually indicates where coaches are permitted to stand during the performance. As there was no steward - who could have shown her the right place - present, she stood where she thought appropriate. After her athlete was penalised with a point deduction, the coach sent a text message to the Respondent asking for an explanation, as she was unaware that judges are not permitted to use electronic devices.

38. Afterwards, the mother of the athlete from the same delegation signaled to the Respondent from the stands that she should quickly check her mobile phone. Worried that the athlete might be injured, the Respondent took out her mobile phone, despite knowing that this would violate the FIG rules.



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39. Due to stress and concern for the athlete, the Respondent checked her mobile phone. The following text message exchange then took place between the Respondent and her daughter:

Coach: “Mom, there is a penalty of 0,5+ (picture of the score)

What is this?”

Respondent: “I do not understand”

40. As the Respondent initially did not understand why her daughter’s athlete received a 0.50 penalty, she quickly reviewed the rules and concluded that the reason was the coach's position.

41. The communication continues as follows:

Coach: “Every time

She did not do anything, what is 0,5”

Respondent (voice mail): “Tanya, she received the penalty of 0,5 because you were not on the right spot. You should stay where the flags are and not at the exits”

42. At this point, the Respondent was spotted, penalised, and removed from the competition. As the coach had not received the message, the gymnast received an additional 0.50 penalty during the second exercise.

43. During her 26 years as a judge, the Respondent has never been involved in any scandals. She has never been accused of bias or received any complaints. The Belgian federation has already punished her by removing her from the list of referees for the World Cup in Milan, which took place from 18 to 20 July 2025.



VI. Merits

A. Analysis of the charges against the Respondent

44. It is undisputed that the Respondent has violated Art. 11.2.1 of the FIG General Judges’ Rules, Art. 5.4 of the FIG Technical Regulations, Section 1 and Art. 23 of the Judges’ eligibility and panels of the Official Work Plan for the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships by using her mobile phone. As the Respondent has admitted to breaching these provisions in both the written submission and during the hearing, the only remaining issue is that of the appropriate sanction.

B. Sanction

45. Based on Art. 24 of the FIG Code of Discipline, the Disciplinary Commission determines the type and extent of the disciplinary measures to impose according to the objective and subjective elements of the case, taking into account of any aggravating and mitigating circumstances.

46. By determining the appropriate sanction, the Panel acknowledges the reasons behind prohibiting the use of electronic devices by judges during competitions. Firstly, it is important to ensure that judges are not distracted by electronic devices. Secondly, the FIG also wants to prevent communication between coaches and judges, or between judges and the public.

47. The Panel acknowledges the Respondent’s assertion that amid the chaos, she sent her daughter a text and voice message instructing her to stand within the flagged area, to avoid an additional penalty for the athlete. However, it was the coach’s responsibility to ascertain in good time before the competition where she was permitted to stand during the athlete’s performance.

48. An aggravating factor in the present case is that the Respondent wanted to give an athlete from the same nation an advantage by using her mobile phone to communicate with her daughter in an attempt to prevent a penalty. Although this could not be achieved, she intended to protect the athlete from a point deduction.

49. The Panel also finds it disturbing that independent judges accompany athletes from the same nation to competitions, as the Respondent regularly does.

50. Additionally, the Disciplinary Committee is mindful that the Respondent has not committed any offences during her 26-year career.



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51. It duly noted Ms. Noha Abou Shabana’s testimony who emphasised during the hearing that the Respondent is a good judge who has always behaved appropriately. This is also reflected in the fact that the Respondent has been classified as a FIG Category 1 judge for several years.
52. Furthermore, the fact that the FIG only introduced the new rule in 2025, whereby a 0.50 penalty is imposed if coaches are not within the designated area, must be taken into account as a mitigating factor. As a result, many 0.50 penalties were imposed during the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships, including against athletes from other nations.
53. It also emerged during the hearing that, unlike on the other days, there was no steward present to provide guidance on coach positioning on the first day of the competition when the incident occurred. In this context, the Respondent’s spontaneous reaction can be regarded as humanly understandable.
54. Finally, when determining the sanction, the Panel also acknowledges the fact that the Respondent’s national federation has already banned her from judging at the World Cup in Milan in July 2025.
55. According to Art. 33 of the FIG Statutes, the Panel may select an appropriate sanction from the list of sanctions. One possible sanction would be “demotion of functions”, whereby the Panel could demote the Respondent from a category 2 judge to category 3. However, during the hearing, it became clear that both the Respondent and the FIG would consider this sanction to be too harsh. Given that the Respondent has served as a FIG judge for 26 years and has an impeccable reputation, the Panel considers a suspension to be a more appropriate sanction than a demotion.
56. In view of the aforementioned circumstances, the Panel deems a suspension from acting as a judge in any FIG-sanctioned event, starting as of the date of the GEF Disciplinary Commission’s decision until 31 December 2025, to be an appropriate sanction for violating Art. 11.2.1 of the FIG General Judges’ Rules, Art. 5.4 of the FIG Technical Regulations, Section 1 and Art. 23 of the Judges’ eligibility and panels of the Official Work Plan for the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships.



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ON THESE GROUNDS

The GEF Disciplinary Commission issues the following decision:

1. Ms. Irina Rodina is suspended from acting as a judge in any FIG-sanctioned event, starting as of the date of the GEF Disciplinary Commission's decision until 31 December 2025, for violating Art. 11.2.1 of the FIG General Judges' Rules, Art. 5.4 of the FIG Technical Regulations, Section 1 and Art. 23 of the Judges' eligibility and panels of the Official Work Plan for the FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior World Championships.
2. Ms. Irina Rodina is ordered to pay CHF 1,000 as a contribution to the costs of these disciplinary proceedings.
3. This decision is to be published on the FIG website.

VII. Costs

57. According to Art. 26 of the FIG Code of Discipline, the Panel must decide who bears the cost of the proceedings.
58. The Panel considers CHF 1,000 to be a fair contribution by the Respondent towards the costs of the proceedings.
59. In relation to the Parties' legal fees and expenses, the Panel notes that both Parties have not requested a contribution to their legal fees and expenses and have not been represented by an external law firm. Therefore, no compensation will be awarded to the Parties.

VIII. Publication

60. Art. 22 of the FIG Code of Discipline provides that final decisions shall be published in full, partly or in short on the FIG website or in the FIG official publication, or even in other media.
61. The Panel confirms that the decision will be published.



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Lausanne, 29 August 2025

Dr Mirjam Koller-Trunz, Panel President

Koller

Ms. Laurence Burger, Panel Member

Mr. Mike Cook, Panel Member

L. Burger

MP Cook

Notice of Appeal

**Appeal Proceedings before the Court of Arbitration for Sport
(Article 29 of the FIG Code of Discipline)**

ARTICLE 29 - APPEAL TO THE CAS

An appeal against any decision of the Disciplinary Commission, or other decision if provided otherwise in a specific provision, may exclusively be lodged to the CAS in Lausanne (Switzerland), within 21 days from the notification of the decision.

The Parties as well as, in any case, the FIG and the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation shall be authorised to appeal to the CAS.

The rules of the Code of Sports-related Arbitration with regard to sport apply for the proceedings to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.