



Interview n°5: Laurie Colton/GBR, TC-ACRO President of the European Union of Gymnastics (UEG)

O. Do Rosario: Can you give us some details about your background within the UEG and come back briefly to your gymnastics' past?

Laurie Colton : As General Secretary of the European Sports Acrobatic Federation [EUROSAF August 1993 – 1999], I was instrumental in the merger of EUROSAF with the UEG. On completion of the merger, I was elected to lead the ACRO working group.

My introduction to Acrobatics was around 1976 shortly after the inauguration of the International Federation for Sports acrobatics [IFSA]. I have served on the British ACRO and Tumbling TC for many years in various roles including Chair, Secretary and Competition organiser. Other roles included National Squad Coach and International Judge. I have been honoured by British Gymnastics as distinguished judge, and received two other awards for outstanding service to the sport.

O. Do Rosario: What is your professional activity and how do you reconcile it with your involvement in the UEG?

Laurie Colton : I am currently retired. In my professional career I was Regional Manager for a large animal charity.

Managing a demanding and hectic work schedule, alongside an active sport commitment is extremely difficult.

O. Do Rosario: Since how long have you been at the head of this structure and what were your motivations to join and even conduct it?

Laurie Colton : Excluding time with EUROSAF, I took on the position of President when we joined the UEG in 1999 as a Working Group; I have held that position since. Leading the group has been a pleasure for me. I am able to use the skill gained during my professional career with knowledge of our discipline. I work with some highly motivated people.

I was first attracted to the discipline when my daughter took up the sport. As a sports man [amateur footballer] I was intrigued by the skill, dedication and the partnership aspect of the sport.

O. Do Rosario: The complete team (composed of 7 persons) is "physically" meeting 3 times a year; how is your work organised throughout the year?

Laurie Colton : We will take an opportunity to exchange views and opinions on any occasion, using modern technology we interact on a frequent basis. Over recent times I have used the Skype conference service for discussion.

O. Do Rosario: To come back more specifically to this mandate 2009 – 2013, what is the element/event that has marked you the most?

Laurie Colton : There are many! The inclusion of Acrobatics in the European Games is momentous and is probably the most important and fulfilling event during my career with Acrobatics.

The continuing development of ACRO in Europe and the opportunity for the UEG ACRO TC to take a lead role is very rewarding. I have also been impressed with the enthusiasm and drive of the UEG President and the time and effort my fellow members on the Executive give to their work.

O. Do Rosario: Let's talk about the future.... How do you envisage the coming months and what would you say about the next events?

Laurie Colton : I am greatly looking forward to the European Championships in Portugal. The Portuguese always put on a good show for us. I must also refer again to the European Games a truly memorable time for ACRO.