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Naturally, the first encounter a diver has with the diving judges in a competition is when he steps up onto the diving board and assumes a standing position, or stance, before executing a dive. This stance is the first exposure of the diver to the judge and this is also when he makes his first impression. Oddly enough, most divers are not aware of the importance of the stance for they feel they are judged by their performance of the dive and not by their appearance on the board. However, the diver should note that since the objective in competitive diving is to offer the best performance possible, he should present himself -to the judge's width all the poise and confidence he can. As most will agree, the first impression a person makes on others is usually a long and lasting one. If this is true, then the diver should try to present himself to the judges as best he can from the very beginning. After all, there is no other way the diver can communicate with the judges than by his appearance and performance. From the judges view, it is much easier to judge a person on the board who is well groomed, wears an attractive suit, and portrays good posture than it is to judge a diver who does not offer any or all of these qualities. Granted, a good appearance by a diver does not guarantee a good performance but it does encourage a positive atmosphere, which can't but help the scores of the diver,

So if we were to believe that a good appearance by a diver on the board could insure better scores from the judges, then I would like to offer a few suggestions that may aid the diver in improving his appearance:

1. The diving suit. Years ago a certain country in Europe had some very good divers performing in the Olympics. However, they didn't score well because everyone, including the judges, commented on the horrible looking suits the divers wore. Everyone enjoys watching a diver who wears an attractive suit. Normally, a suit that is a little snug on a person, so as to give good support in the needed areas, is much better looking than one that is large and baggy.

The color and design of a suit also can be influential in developing a favorable impression. A dark skinned person usually draws more positive attention wearing a light colored suit while a person with a light complexion usually looks better in a dark suit. Certain suits fit women different ways so they should try to wear the type of suit that offers them the most comfort but still compliments their figures. Since there are so many styles and designs of suits these days it is suggested that the diver obtain the opinions of other divers as to what makes for the best appearance. As a coach, I find it much easier to

coach a diver who wears an attractive suit from day to day than one who does not.

2. Grooming. Though hair styles change from time to time, many judges feel that it is much more difficult to judge divers who have long and uncombed hair, mustaches, and beards than it is with those who are clean shaven with well kept hair. If a diver feels that being clean-shaven violates his personal appearance, he should at least trim the beard and mustache to make his appearance more pleasant. The female diver with long hair gives a much better appearance if she crops or braids her hair when diving. One thing for sure, an abundance, of hair on the male or female doesn't contribute toward getting more points from the judges.

3. Posture. When the diver stands on the board before executing a dive, he need not stand in a military West Point Cadet fashion. He should, however, consider standing with the head erect, chin in with the eyes focused on the other end of the board, shoulders rolled back slightly, the stomach drawn in to give a flat appearance, arms extended at the sides with the hands flat against the thighs, fingers together and extended, legs straight, and feet together. If the diver can obtain any semblance of this kind of posture, he is sure to have the judges take a better view of his performance. . Many divers have missed going to the Olympics or doing well in an important meet by hundredths of a point. Perhaps they failed to realize that the small difference in winning and losing may have been found in their making a better impression on the judges when they were standing on the board. One thing for sure, the name of the game is to win, and when a person is involved in a sport that is decided by human judgments it seems that he should offer the best appearance possible when performing. Remember that you don't get a second chance to make a first impression.