



PERFORMANCE ELITE GYMNASTICS

where your performance makes you elite

TEAM HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission is to not only teach kids gymnastics, but to help build a solid foundation of life skills. We will accomplish that by teaching teamwork; how to build others up and encourage them along the way. We will not only lead by example, but we will believe in and encourage them, proving to them that they are champion kids who will grow into champion adults in every aspect of their life.

PHILOSOPHY:

Our vision for this program is to have incredible coaches who not only say what they are going to do, but do what they say. Coaches play a huge part in the gymnasts' life and it's important that bond of trust is built and nurtured. We want to focus on the gymnasts' strength, help them set goals for themselves, and hold them accountable. We have an exceptional competition program for any gymnast, boy or girl, who wants to compete. We will compete MAGA, but teach the fundamentals of USAG, which will allow us to be strict on form and technique, but won't hold the gymnast back based on their weakness and will instead focus on their strengths. For those gymnasts who wish to compete USAG, there will be that option once they reach level 8 for girls. Our boys program will compete USAG for every level.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!!

First off, congratulations on making it to the competition level! You've worked so hard to get here and should be very proud of yourself!

A few things to remember: 1.) The hard work doesn't stop now and 2.) you will get out of this what you put into it. Your coaches and your parents are your biggest fans, so talk to them about your goals, struggles and fears. They will help you overcome any obstacle and any fear as long as you give them a chance.

Congratulations again on making the team! **YOU ARE A CHAMPION!!**

This club is all about providing a fantastic gymnastics experience to all its members. We are here for the children, many who have hopes and dreams of being the best they can be in life and in this sport. We are here to support them in that dream.

To make that dream come alive the gymnast, parents, and coaches must function as a **TEAM**. Team for our purposes means:

Together

Everyone

Achieves

More!

You might have noticed that there is no "I" in **TEAM**. It does not mean that your child, as an individual or you as a parent, is not important, not at all! It simply means that the whole is stronger than the sum of its parts. If we all work together toward common goals we have a much greater chance of achieving something really significant with our program.

Through this team manual we hope to give you a better insight into how our program operates and answer many of your questions. If, after reading this manual, you have any questions about any aspect of the program please **ASK!** We would be happy to answer any question you may have.

Gymnastics Goals

Does your daughter plan to make it to the Olympics, get a scholarship to college, or does she just enjoy the achievement of new skills and the companionship of other team members? Any of these may be valid reasons for joining the team, but it may be important to assess her goals in a shorter time frame, such as within the next six months to a year.

Talking to parents reveals that in many instances there is no agreement as to what the actual goal is regarding the child's gymnastics experience. The father may say, "*I want her to be the best, win state championships!*" while the mother says, "*I just want her to enjoy herself*" and the gymnast says, "*I like to go to gym because my friends are there and we have a lot of fun working out.*" Which goal should the coach follow? And what about the goals the coach has for the team?

It is for this reason that we will hold Parent/Coach Conferences twice a year; once in the fall before competition season starts to go over existing goals and set new ones, and again in the spring after competition season has ended to go over the strengths from the season, as well as to set new goals for summer training. This is important in helping the parents and coaches to work together to encourage the gymnast, as well as to help hold them accountable for the goals they set.

Gymnastics is a specialized sport that demands many hours of hard work and dedication. In this day and age teaching children to delay gratification for the attainment of a worthy ideal is a significant challenge. Everything they see and hear on television can be absorbed and internalized as "real life". If a 30-second commercial can get us to buy a product, a 30-minute sitcom or drama will surely sell us a lifestyle.

The problem with television is that it condenses what in the real world takes years of hard work and dedication to achieve. Please understand if your daughter says she wants to be on a gymnastics team, or go for the gold at the Olympics, that's great, but it will take lots of hard work and dedication to make it there. It certainly will not happen overnight.

The rest of this team manual will go over the various aspects of team participation. Please take the time to read this material carefully and discuss it with your family.

Be warned, however, that once a child has developed a taste for the sport of gymnastics (*especially the competitive aspect*) it is an addiction that will grow and become a part of your child for life.

COMPETITIVE PROGRAM POLICIES

One Month Trial Phase

- All incoming competitive gymnasts will be interviewed and evaluated by the coaching staff concerning acceptance and placement in the competitive program.
- After evaluation new competitive gymnasts may be able to enroll for a period of one month on a trial basis, and then be re-evaluated at the end of the month concerning final acceptance.
- Parents of potential team members will be informed of club policies and philosophies concerning the competitive program.

Team Guidelines

1. Each gymnast is required to attend and be on time for all regularly scheduled practices. That means on the floor ready to go when practice begins and not talking or hanging around out front. If for some reason you will be late or absent you are required to call the office and notify the coaches.
2. Proper workout attire is a must at all times. A properly fitting leotard is the only acceptable workout attire. Hair should be appropriately tied so as not to interfere in any way during practice. No jewelry of any kind may be worn during the workout.
3. All gymnasts are required to bring to each workout a gym bag with the appropriate equipment as listed by the coaching staff.
4. Absolutely no food, drink, candy or cell phone is permitted on the workout floor. All snacks or meals must remain in the seating area. Water bottles are the only exception to this rule.
5. Gymnasts may not leave the workout or competition floor without the expressed permission of the coaching staff.
6. Interaction between gymnast and parent (visually or verbally) during workouts or at gymnastics competitions is not appropriate. A distracted gymnast is a prime candidate for injury. Contact the front desk first if you need to communicate with a gymnast on the workout floor or competitive site.
7. All gymnasts are expected to maintain the best physical condition possible.
8. All injuries, no matter how small, must be promptly reported to the coach. Injured athletes are required to attend practice. They will be assigned a modified workout, keeping within doctor's restrictions.

9. No gymnast may be left at the facility unattended. When dropping off a team member please do so within a reasonable time frame. Please do not drop off any one more than ten minutes before the start of the scheduled practice and be prompt to pick them up at the conclusion.

10. Coaching technique and discipline are not subject to compromise with parents or gymnasts. The coaching staff has the final say in all competitive program matters, as they are ultimately responsible in the eyes of the law for each child's well-being. You will be given a warning, then a reprimand of conditioning, and finally asked to leave practice for unacceptable behavior that is disruptive to others.

11. All competitive gymnasts must demonstrate proficiency in all skills appropriate to their competitive level to be allowed to enter any competition. In addition, the gymnast must be in good health and have attended ***every practice the week prior to any competition***. Special situations should be discussed well in advance of the competition with the coach.

12. The majority of this section has focused on the gym and competition; however, we believe that the order of importance always needs to be family, education, and ***then*** gymnastics. If you choose to be a member of our program, we make the assumption you have allowed appropriate time for family functions and that your child's study habits and schoolwork is of exemplary quality.

We do not advocate the use of this statement as an excuse for coming late to workouts, missing practices, etc. As with all things in life, it is your responsibility to fulfill your commitments.

Communication

Rumor, innuendo, and just plain backstabbing tend to occur when there is a vacuum created by a lack of information - this is detrimental to the successful operation of any gymnastic facility. If you need or want to know any information please see the front desk staff. Any of the above could be cause for dismissal from the program.

To avoid this being an issue in our club, we will implement a Parent Rep/Coaches Meeting once a month to address any suggestions, questions or concerns that our team parents may have. This allows one parent who is elected from each team, to be the spokesperson for all the parents on that team. They will be able to report back to the parents with a summary of what was said during the meeting, as well as pass along any material that was given out.

If there is an issue that was not addressed that you would like to meet with the coach about, please stop at the front desk to make an appointment.

Discipline

Discipline and gymnastic technique are determined only by the coaching staff. Goofing around and horseplay is not acceptable during workout. While we understand that these kids work hard and need some time to “blow off steam”, when it’s their turn on the equipment, they should be focused and ready. Distractions can lead to injuries. If a gymnast is being a distraction to others, there is a warning system that will be implemented. First they are verbally warned, then they are given conditioning, and after the third warning, the gymnast will be asked to leave the rest of practice.

The coaching staff has the right to suspend or ask a gymnast and/or parent to terminate enrollment due to continuous disciplinary problems, which impair the safety and progress of the other program participants.

We understand both the financial and time sacrifice that is made by the parents and want to make sure that while your gymnast is at practice, they are getting what is expected out of it.

COMPETITIVE PROGRAM - FINANCIAL POLICIES

Team is a year round commitment.

1. Tuition is paid on a monthly basis, determined by the number of hours the gymnast is training. Payment must be received in the office by the first of each month. Payments after the tenth (10th) of each month **must include a \$25.00 late fee**. Competitive program accounts must be current and paid in full to enable your gymnast to participate in the competitive season.
2. Notice of intent to cancel enrollment must be made in person, and reduced to writing at least one month previous to the gymnast's final workout. If you choose not to notify the office you will be charged for the month following your gymnasts' last workout.
3. We will do our best to allow make-up for missed practice, however there are no discounts, or prorated accounts due to absence of any nature. This includes, but is not limited to injuries, vacations, illnesses, etc.
4. Meet expenses for all coaching fees (*i.e.: gas, mileage, food, lodging, and session fees*) must be shared by all gymnasts competing and will be included in your meet fees for the season.

5. As a member of this competitive program all gymnasts are required to attend and be actively involved in all gymnastic activities related to this facility. (*i.e.: fundraising projects, exhibitions, meets etc.*)

Competitive Season Information

USAG, MAGA, & AAU Fees: PEG Teams compete in the MAGA, USAG and AAU competitive systems. USAG dues are \$56 per year (August 1 – July 31) and must be paid in July. AAU fees are \$16 per year and must be paid in July. MAGA fees are \$18 and must be paid in October.

Athlete Registration Form: To be registered for competition each gymnast must complete and sign a MAGA and/or USAG, and AAU Athlete Registration Form.

PEG Registration Form: PEG's registration form along with its corresponding Team membership fee – currently \$100/family – is due by April 1st. This fee goes to off-set various certifications and fees we have to pay for our staff to attend competitions, camps, etc.

Competitive gymnasts – or soon to be – will require a MAGA and/or USAG, and AAU membership. These fees will be collected in July, with the exception of MAGA fees, which will be collected in November.

Meet Expenses: Meet expenses for all coaching fees (i.e. transportation, lodging, meals and session fees) must be shared by all gymnasts scheduled to compete as set by the club.

Meet scheduling: At the beginning of each season (early October), a preliminary schedule of meet locations and dates will be handed out to the gymnasts. Meets may be added, changed, or canceled.

Home Meets: For the most part each competitive season will begin with our in-house meet scheduled for late-October/early-November. Every team member is required to participate in this event.

Meet information sheet: 1-2 weeks before a competition, participating gymnasts will receive a meet information sheet that includes dates, times, gymnasts & coaches attending, host hotel (if needed), phone numbers, a map, and web address when available. Gymnasts invited to a meet will be given only one notice. For your convenience, the Front Desk will also have a copy of the meet information. Pay careful attention to the information, in particular arrival time. Arriving late to a meet could cause your child to be disqualified from participating in that meet. This is a safety issue as insufficient warm-up time can cause injury and no one wants to assume that liability. It is not uncommon for host clubs to send out meet information late or make last

minute changes. It is a good idea to clear the whole weekend of a meet on the chance there will be last minute changes that could conflict with your previous plans.

The Meet Takes How Long?

The average meet can take as little as 3 ½ hours or as long as 6 hours. Some competitions begun back in the 80's are still not finished. All right, that is an exaggeration, but I suggest that you bring reading material or some other project with you to help pass the time while at a one of your child's competitions.

Most competitions run in a format similar to the one listed below.

Open Warm Up – Usually a half-hour long. This time is for general stretching and getting equipment settings specific to the gymnast.

Traditional Timed Warm Up - Every gymnast warms up on each of the apparatus. This procedure can take from an hour to an hour and a half, depending on the number of gymnasts competing.

March In – all the gymnasts line up and march in to the gym to be presented to the audience and judges. Usually the National Anthem is played. This takes about ten to fifteen minutes.

Competition – the gymnasts now actually compete and receive scores from the judges at each event. This may take an hour and a half to two hours to complete. Longer if it is an optional meet and one touch warm ups are necessary.

Capital or Modified Capital Cup – (also known as “Warm-Up/Compete” format) This combines the above format where the athlete warms up on a specific event and readily competes at that event before moving on to the next event and so on.

Awards – if the organization running the meet is on the ball you may only have to wait five to ten minutes before the awards are handed out. It has been known to take significantly longer to get the awards ready. Once they are prepared it can take from fifteen minutes to half an hour to hand out the awards. Are you sure you brought enough to read?

Participation in Scheduled Meets

All team gymnasts should compete in ALL meets to which they are invited unless they are sick or injured. On occasion, a meet will be scheduled at the last minute. In this case, gymnasts will not be expected to compete.

Meets have different meanings and the training for each will differ accordingly. Some meets, the focus may only be on obtaining a qualifying score for the state meet; therefore, a coach may tone down the power and focus on higher quality execution. Another meet might be used to develop confidence and the coach may allow the gymnast to attempt new skills while removing the worry of scoring high from the gymnast's mindset.

Finally, there is the meet that everyone hopes the coach and gymnast will pull out all the stops – **state championship**, where everyone hopes their efforts from the past year will make them a winner and qualify them for **individuals**.

Meet Fees & Travel Expense

Each gymnast is responsible for paying her own meet fees. These fees will vary depending on the type of meet (I.E. local qualifying meet, invitational or state meet). Meet fees are generally between \$35 - \$55. Each gymnast is responsible for her own transportation to the competition, hotel (if needed), and all meals.

Admission is charged to spectators at meets.

LATE FEES:

Many gyms have instituted a late fee per club that varies depending on the club, plus \$25 per gymnast. If your fees are not paid on time this cost will be divided among those paying late!

Moving from Team to Team

The final decision of team placement rests solely with the coaching staff. Please do not make this a difficult process. You trust us with your child everyday they walk in the gym. Trust that we will do what is in their best interest.

Moving up from one team to the next is decided by the coaching staff based upon scores from the meet season, attendance at workouts, skill level, and the attitude of the gymnast. This decision will be made in the best interest of the child.

As a gymnast moves up, their responsibility to train and to participate in scheduled meets increases as well.

Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts

The following guidelines will help each gymnast make competition a fun and successful experience.

- Be friendly and use sportsmanlike conduct at all times. Everybody has a unique way of experiencing gymnastics competition. Some people look for the fun in the experience; others are simply hoping to cope with their fears, while others are focused to the point of excluding everything else around them – including you!

At times this may make it seem difficult to be friendly with some gymnasts at a meet. Just remember, everyone is doing the best they are capable of at that moment. When the opportunity presents itself, introduce yourself to the other gymnasts and coaches in your competitive rotation. Most of the time you will have the chance to develop some new relationships, however, when another gymnast is being given directions by her coach or preparing to compete, you must allow her time to concentrate without distraction.

- Stay focused on the competition. Talking with parents, relatives, or friends is *inappropriate* during the meet.

Even with the best of intentions, relatives and friends may give advice that conflicts with what your coach says. What will you do when you receive advice from Mom that differs from what Dad told you, then the coach says something different? The answer is you will become more nervous and uptight because you do not know where to place your focus. ***During workouts and competition pay attention to the coach.***

- Before leaving the competition, notify the head coach. Always let the coach know when you are going to leave the facility. You should never leave the competition facility without specific permission from the coach. You should always be accompanied by another team member or coach when leaving the competition floor.
- There is absolutely no reason for you to be on any piece of gymnastics equipment unless you are warming up or currently competing.

If you are staying to watch another teammate compete, or you have arrived early for warm ups, stay seated in the bleachers do not to wander out onto the competition floor.

- Competing gymnasts must stay in their rotation group sitting quietly until the last competitor has finished. Gymnasts are **NOT** dismissed until the last athlete is done competing in the whole meet. Encourage your athlete to be respectful of the other's efforts by watching them and applauding their efforts.

- Gym bags, warm up suits, grips, and any other stuff you brought with you should be placed inside your gym bag and kept near you or under your chair.
- **Warm ups should be worn when accepting awards. They must be zipped up with no sleeves or t-shirts hanging out.**
- Hair must be up and out of the face for competition.

*The meet is not complete until **ALL** the awards have been handed out. The other gymnasts have waited patiently to receive their awards and have applauded your efforts. You owe them the same consideration.*

Win, Lose, or Wipeout

It is important to remember that a score for any routine is an evaluation of one single performance in your career as a gymnast, not a label you must live up to (i.e. winning the all around this time means you must win it every time), or hang around your neck for the rest of our life (a 95th place ribbon for falling off the beam 20 times). Each meet teaches you more about your abilities as a gymnast, competitor, and human being, and are necessary ingredients for success at higher levels of competition and life in general.

Regardless of the outcome of a routine or overall competition, you must learn that crying and feeling sorry for yourself is not an appropriate response to the situation, or to most learning situations in the gym or normal life.

Meet Etiquette for Parents

1. Team Spirit is a big help.... Wear the team colors, or better yet one of our club shirts.
2. Remember, your gymnast is part of the PEG team. She competes not only for herself but also her teammates, parents, coaches, and PEG.
3. Please show proper respect to all Officials and Coaches at every competition. They are all there for one reason, to support your child's interest in gymnastics. **Under no circumstance should you attempt to contact any official on the competition floor during or after the meet** (*judges, score keepers, etc.*) If you have any questions regarding the meet or your child's scores you must contact your coach.
4. Please show proper respect to all competitors. You **NEVER KNOW** who is sitting near you (*I.E. parents of the gymnast you just made a remark about*).

5. Once a gymnast has walked into the competition area for warm-up, they **ARE NOT ALLOWED** to talk or have contact with their parents until the competition is over. This has less to do with control than it does with FOCUS. Any distraction could disturb the focus necessary to have a successful routine. The coach's job at the meet is to monitor the gymnast's condition and teach them to respond appropriately. If the gymnast is too excited, the coach calms them down. If the gymnast is too complacent, the coach pumps them up and motivates her to do her best. The emotional dynamic is fluid in a competition. An excellent vault score may cause a gymnast to be over-confident. A terrible bar routine may actually provide an educational moment. At these times the gymnast needs to focus on her coach's advice, not distractions from off the competitive floor.

As coaches, we know that you mean well with your comments, but they may not be appropriate for the long-term training of your gymnast. If you have any questions about what happens at a meet, talk to the coach after you have returned to the gym and you have had time to reflect.

6. In any competition, parents, friends, and relatives of the gymnast **ARE NOT ALLOWED** onto the competitive floor. **YOU MUST** remain in the spectator's area. This also includes other relatives and friends. Your child could be immediately scratched from the meet, by the meet director or her coach, if a parent is in the competitor's area.

7. In case of injury during warm-up or competition, **YOU MUST** stay in the spectator area until your coach flags you onto the floor.

8. **DO NOT** coach your child. Coaches should coach, everyone else should encourage. Injury may result from changing the gymnast's focus away from the coach's technique.

9. **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY** is permitted during a meet. The sudden flash of light could cause a gymnast to be injured. Check out your camera in advance. Many cameras come with an automatic flash that will go off if it detects low light levels. If you cannot manually disable this device, please do not take pictures during the competition.

10. On the day of competition your child should eat a well-balanced meal about three hours prior to the actual competition. This energy will carry them through the entire competition. If necessary, a gymnast may carry crackers, pieces of fruit, or energy bars to curb hunger.

11. All gymnasts are expected to stay until the end of the awards ceremony whether they are receiving an award or not. They need to cheer all award recipients - especially their teammates.

Expectations

Problems occur when a parent expects too much from an athlete who is new to the competitive arena. (*New is defined as having only competed for two or three years.*) It takes a number of years of quality competition for a gymnast to develop the poise and grace to continuously take top honors in a gymnastics competition.

The key is to recognize when your child is working up to her potential. If they complete all their skills for the first time, without a fall, that is a winning routine regardless of what score they receives. Winning isn't just about coming in first. Comments from you should be congratulatory and positive. No mention should be made at that time of what he/she can do better, that would lessen the effect of this "victory" for him/her. The week after the meet their coach will go over those elements that need work and congratulate them on the elements they competed correctly.

Any score he/she receives during a competition is no reflection on you as parent. There is no reason for you to feel embarrassed if your child is having a bad meet. Everyone has good days and bad days, and it is how they learn to react to them that contribute to his/her development as a competitor and as a person.

Remember always that a score given to your child in a gymnastics competition is an evaluation of one single performance, not an evaluation of the child.

Gym Bag Necessities (Can be kept in locker rooms)

For Practice:

- Uneven bar grips, wrist bands, gymnastics tape and hand lotion.
- Extra leotard.
- Water Bottle or Sports drink
- Hair care, make-up, and personal hygiene items.
- Any vital medical braces, supports, or bandages.
- Fruit, crackers, or pretzels for snack break

For Meets:

At the end of your last practice before leaving for a competition each gymnast must make sure the following items are in her gym bag:

- Uneven bar grips, wrist wraps, gymnastics tape and hand lotion.
- Team competition leotard.
- Team warm-up suit.
- Water Bottle
- Hair care, make-up, and personal hygiene items.
- Any vital medical braces, supports, or bandages.
- Emergency phone numbers.
- Money for meals on the road.
- Fruit slices or crackers to snack on when the meet runs long.

Glossary of gymnastic terms

AAU - American Athletic Union

ACTIVE - A gymnast in good standing who is current in payment of PEG fees and attends all regularly scheduled training sessions.

ALL AROUND SCORE - A gymnast's total score from all events (*I.E. vault, bars, beam, and floor*).

ELIGIBLE - an active gymnast, current with USAG, AAU, MAGA, and club fees, who, with coaches' approval, may participate in all activities including meets and exhibitions.

INACTIVE - A gymnast who has officially dropped or voluntarily chosen not to compete, or whose PEG fees are 30 days delinquent.

INELIGIBLE - A gymnast who is not current with the PEG fees, or USAG, AAU, or MAGA fees, has had some disciplinary problems, or is considered not ready by the coach.

INVITATIONAL MEET - A meet, usually with a specific theme, hosted by any gymnastics club. These may or may not be qualifying meets for state championships, but scores may usually be used to move a gymnast from one level to the next.

MAGA – Midwest Area Gymnastics Association.

OPTIONAL ROUTINES - Routines developed and choreographed by the coaches for each gymnast to be used for competitive team gymnasts. The routines will be individualized for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty.

STATE MEET - In most cases, the season finale, where qualified gymnasts compete with other gymnasts throughout the state. Higher level gymnasts may go on to compete in regional or national level competitions.

USAG - USA Gymnastics.

PEG Emergency Contact Information & Medical Release Form

Gymnast Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Family Physician: _____ Phone: _____

Known allergies or medical conditions: _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet as needed.)

Mother's First & Last Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Father's First & Last Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell
Number: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contacts:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

I hereby give permission for certified and licensed medical personnel to use appropriate procedures to aid my child, _____ and prevent further injury and/ or death. If possible, I wish to be contacted before any procedures are initiated, however, if the injuries are catastrophic and life threatening, I give permission to the emergency care physicians and support personnel to do what they deem necessary in the best interests of my child.

Legal Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent / Gymnast Acknowledgement

I have read the document titled "Welcome to the Team!" from cover to cover and understand and agree to the guidelines set forth.

I also understand that the policies and procedures may change throughout the year. Modifications and additions to this document may be made via letters or communications from the Team Coach and / or Gym Director.

Should I have any questions regarding any policies or procedures, I understand that I should contact the Gym Director for the appropriate answers.

Parent Signature Date

Gymnast Signature Date