

THE GREATER BUFFALO GYMNASTICS & FITNESS CENTER, LLC
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2016 - 2017 USAG Team Parents Handbook

Welcome! We are pleased to have you on our team! This year our facility celebrates its 23rd anniversary. The Greater Buffalo Gymnastics & Fitness Center is New York State's ONLY all-inclusive health and child-care complex. Our 40,850 sq. ft. facilities are home to Greater Buffalo Gymnastics & Fitness Center, Tink's Pro-Shop, Spezio's Dance Dynamics, Four Seasons Child Care & Pre-School, the museum/showroom of TJ Hirsch Enterprises, and the offices The Jacquie Hirsch for A.L.L. Foundation. This state-of-the-art development features a widespread child care and activity environment allowing all members of the family to stay active and healthy. We are located at 1641 North French Road in Getzville, just west of the 990 exit #4.

All information in this handbook is subject to change at any time

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO GREATER BUFFALO GYMNASTICS CENTER
COMPETITIVE TEAM PROGRAM**

Mission: *The Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center strives to be a positive educational force in the community. Our goal is to allow every child the opportunity to feel like a champion. We strive to introduce life skills through the sport of gymnastics that will enrich children and produce success.*

Being a member of a USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic team is a substantial commitment both on the part of the gymnast and the parent/parents. Please read this information carefully and contact your liaison, your head coach, or our team office manager with any questions or concerns you may have.

Our philosophy at the Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center focuses on the education and betterment of children - our most vital resource for the future. We believe that young people can learn to develop coordination, motor skills, and body control, as well as the more important mental qualities: self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-awareness through physical activity. Motivation, problem-solving and patience are qualities that are emphasized at our Center. Most importantly, young people will learn to develop respect for themselves and others. Our coaching staff reflects this philosophy of teaching and, uses a positive approach to place the emphasis on the individual. We will help the students to accept individual differences in skill levels and success rates.

At Greater Buffalo, proper staff selection and development is the key to ensuring that a high quality activity such as gymnastics creates a positive learning experience. Our trained staff will use the sport of gymnastics as an avenue to develop positive personal qualities in all of the participants of our program. These qualities, nurtured at an early age, will be utilized in all areas of the individual's future. Whether a recreational or a competitive gymnast, we are confident that our staff will be able to help each child reach his/her potential, while enjoying all aspects of our program.

PARENTS - Please Note:

USA Gymnastics recommends that the following paragraph be presented to all parents of gymnasts enrolled in a gymnastics program:

"By the very nature of the activity, gymnastics carries a risk of physical injury. No matter how careful the gymnast and coach are, no matter how many spotters are used, no matter what height is used or what landing surface exists, the risk can NOT be eliminated. Risk can be reduced, but never eliminated. The risk of injury includes minor injuries such as bruises and more serious injuries such as broken bones, dislocations and muscle pulls. The risk also includes catastrophic injuries such as permanent paralysis or even death from landings or falls on the back, neck or head."

USA Gymnastics Safety Handbook (1998). USA Gymnastics Publications. Indianapolis, IN.

*At Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center, safety is our most fundamental coaching concept. We hold safety in the highest regard and have taken steps to ensure the safest and most enjoyable atmosphere possible. **Gymnastics is an inherently dangerous sport. This fact combined with the high difficulty level many gymnasts at Greater Buffalo will achieve only adds to the potential for injury. All parents must be fully aware of the risks involved in the sport of gymnastics. Speed, motion, height, flipping and the difficulty of the skill put our athletes in potentially life-threatening situations on a daily basis.** Our staff is continuously learning new and improved spotting and coaching techniques to help guarantee the safety of your child. We believe in spotting whenever there is a doubt as to the consistency of a skill. We believe in padding, matting and using any training devices designed to make learning as safe as possible. One of the most noticeable signs of this is our staff's National Safety Certificates given to them by USA Gymnastics for completing a comprehensive safety course.*

The certificates are proudly displayed in our main lobby. It cannot be denied that the most important part of a safe program is the coaching staff and their ability to implement the safe practices of teaching and coaching gymnastics.

Rules and Policies

1. **Seasonal tuition** is divided into 12 monthly payments, **regardless of gym closings, holidays, competitions, and absences.** Our registration fee of \$40.00 covers insurance, but it is not an accident policy- each student must be covered by his/her own health insurance throughout their enrollment period. Payments may be made in CASH, CHECK payable to Greater Buffalo Gymnastics & Fitness Center (GBGFC), Master Card, VISA, or Independent Health Flex Fit Family. Tuition is due by the 1st of each month regardless of the day of the week that the 1st falls on. There is a \$5 late fee/child if received after the 10th. A **\$25.00** fee will be charged for all returned checks. A drop box is provided for monthly tuition checks and any other payments. Checks may also be mailed to the center. Please be sure your child's name and level is on the front of your check. If a problem with payments arises, please call the office at 639-0020. The Junior Olympic team program is a year round program and team members are expected to pay the monthly tuition and meet the summer requirements. Each gymnast, based on his/her level, will be required to attend a mandatory number of weeks during the summer (July - August). Parents are expected to pay summer tuition to remain on the team regardless of the gymnast's attendance. Gymnasts may attend up to eight summer weeks for the same cost as their minimum required weeks.
 - IF TUITION IS NOT PAID FOR ONE FULL MONTH, YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PRACTICE UNTIL ALL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS ARE MET. PLEASE DO NOT PUT US IN A POSITION OF HAVING TO TAKE YOUR CHILD OUT OF PRACTICE.
 - ALL TUITION MONEY PAID WILL FIRST BE APPLIED TO OUTSTANDING BALANCES (MEET FEES, BOOSTER CLUB FEES, ETC. BEFORE BEING APPLIED TO TUITION.)
2. Family Discounts: All team members receive discounted per-hour tuition depending on their level and hours scheduled in the gym. Family discounts will not apply if you have one (1) sibling in our recreational classes. If the Team family has two (2) or more children enrolled in recreational classes, the discounts apply to the recreational students. Please see 2015-2016 Parent Handbook for Classes.
3. Please do not drop your child off at the gym more than 5 minutes prior to the start time. Please be on time to pick your child up after workout is dismissed. We will not be able to provide staff to watch your children and provide for their safety for extended periods before workout begins or after dismissal. We prefer you come in to the facility to pick up your child. If you will be late picking up your child, please notify the Center. Parents - please remind your children to wait inside the building to be picked up.
4. Please notify the gym as soon as possible if your child is injured outside the gym or is diagnosed with any communicable diseases (i.e.: chicken pox, mumps, Fifth disease, conjunctivitis, etc.) and will be missing an extended number of workouts.
5. Medical releases are **REQUIRED** before returning to Team for any child who has been seen by a doctor or under medical care for any injury or illness EXCLUDING CHILD WELL VISITS. **NO** child will be allowed to participate until the gym receives the medical release.
6. The Center WILL NOT be responsible for lost items or articles of clothing. Please do not allow your child to bring valuable jewelry, clothing, MP3 players, CD players, video games, radios, large amounts of money, phones or other items to the gym. Label clothing so it may be returned if it is misplaced. There is a lost and found bin in the parents' waiting room. Please check there for lost items.
7. Parking or standing in front of the building, curbs or retention ponds is PROHIBITED while dropping off or picking up children. For the safety of the children parents should park in allotted car parks and escort children in and out of the facility.

8. **PARENTS OR UNREGISTERED CHILDREN ARE NOT TO ENTER THE GYM AREA AT ANY TIME.** If you need assistance, please come into the office. Parent viewing is available and encouraged from the Parent Waiting Room on any workout day. Upstairs Observation Days are included on your Team Calendar, please be sure to note these dates. During upstairs observation time, parents, siblings, and friends may watch from the second floor viewing area. Please note, as per USA Gymnastics, no flash pictures are permitted in the gym during practice or competition to ensure the safety of all gymnasts. No food or drink, INCLUDING WATER, is allowed on the balcony.
 - **PARENTS:** Children may **NOT** be left unattended anywhere in the building. This includes the balcony, parent waiting room, lobby, and locker rooms. Parents are reminded to keep all small children away from the stair areas, balcony, and off the balcony railing. Parents are responsible for the safety of siblings during watch week. This applies to Fitness Members as well. Your child **cannot** be left to wait for you while you work out. All children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult at all times.
9. Children will not be permitted to sit on the sinks or hang on the partitions in the locker rooms. Anyone found doing any of the above will be excused from workout that day.
10. **NEW FOR 2016-2017 SEASON:** Parents – If you would like to talk to your gymnast's coach or inquire about your child's progress, please stop in to the office and fill out a call sheet. Please do not give your child's coach information to pass along to the office staff. Coaches cannot be expected to do this. Parents are responsible to contact the office.

Competitive Gymnastics-What Does It Mean?

The decision to enter competitive gymnastics is an important and exciting step in the life of your child! You are to be congratulated because you are taking the time to think through the prospect of team membership. Many parents are so thrilled when their child is asked to be on the team, they do not take the time to assess the level of commitment.

We believe that gymnastics is the greatest overall body conditioning activity in which your child could be involved. However, competitive gymnastics is a unique sport requiring the backing and support of the entire family for any gymnast to be successful. Therefore, when making the selection for team gymnasts, we also look closely at the team parents. Can they also make a commitment to the program? This should not be a difficult or demanding task, only one that shows each family is interested in and committed to providing their child with a positive learning experience through the competitive aspect of men's/women's gymnastics.

Competitive Team Philosophy

Competitive Team: The Greater Buffalo competitive team consists of USAG Levels 1-10. Our goal for competitive athletes is to help them go as far in gymnastics as their ability and desire will take them. Our team coaches will place gymnasts at the level where they can be happy, safe, and confident. This means every gymnast must be able to perform the skills and routines required at a given level comfortably. The skills should not be at the edge of or beyond his/her ability level. We can never ask or expect our athletes to perform skills or routines in a competition which they cannot perform consistently in practice.

Selection for Team

Initial placement and subsequent advancement from one team level to the next will be determined by the Greater Buffalo coaching staff. Where possible, objective measures of learning potential will be used, however, subjective predictors such as courage, commitment, desire, "coachability", and integrity will also be considered. A trial period will be offered in order to assess the gymnasts' placement, readiness for training, parental support, and compatibility with the team. **Keep in mind that team participation is by invitation only. Remaining on the team is also by invitation only and is dependent upon the athlete and parents' attitude and behavior, athlete work habits, and coachability.**

Moving from Level to Level

Moving up from one level to the next is decided by the coaches based upon attendance at workouts, skill level, attitude of the gymnast, and with higher levels, score achievement set by USA Gymnastics if necessary. This decision will be made in the best interest of the child, not on parent recommendations or a friend's mobility.

Requirements for Competitive Eligibility

1. USA Gymnastics athlete membership. Annual membership is \$57 for USAG/USAG State for boys & girls Level 1-10 and \$25 for the Xcel level. The USAG (level 1 and up) athlete should be prepared to show her membership card at all sanctioned meets. The athlete number and card are obtained each year prior to the competitive season. **(Parents are asked to purchase a luggage tag for their child's USAG card to place on their gym bags).**
2. **Gymnasts must be current on all Greater Buffalo financial obligations in order to compete in meets.**
3. Attendance: missed practices can mean missed competitive opportunities.
4. Athletes must be physically, emotionally, and mentally prepared for competition. The coaching staff will determine when each athlete is competition-ready and relay this information to the parent.

Description of USAG Junior Olympic Levels

The Women's Junior Olympic Program is divided into three major segments.

1. The **Developmental Levels** 1 through 3 may be used as a non-competitive and achievement-oriented program for use within a gym's pre-team program, or they may be used as an introductory/recreational competitive program. States may also offer State Championships for these levels.
2. The second part consists of **Compulsory Levels** 4 and 5. Both of these levels are progressive in nature, building upon the skills required at the previous level. Competitive opportunities are provided up to and including the USA Gymnastics State Championships.
3. The third segment is Optional Levels 6 – 10. Levels 6, 7, and 8 have difficulty restrictions, while level 9 and 10 have no restrictions in the skill choice.

Xcel: The Xcel Program is designed to offer a broad-based, affordable competitive experience outside the traditional Jr. Olympic to attract and retain a diverse group of athletes.

*Taken from www.usagym.org

Team Guidelines

The decision to join the Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Team Program is a big one and reflects a commitment to the team for an entire year. Team members do not move on and off the team based on illness, injury, conflicts or the like. You are either on the team or you are not. The following are guidelines which all team members are expected to follow:

1. We recommend pre-participation physical examinations for all team members.
2. Each gymnast is required to attend all regularly scheduled workouts. **Be on time to all workouts.** If for some reason you will be late or absent you are required to call the office before the start of your workout and notify the coaches so that they may adjust the workout accordingly. Being responsible can never start too soon or last too long.
3. Homework will have to be done much more efficiently and with better study habits due to shorter periods of time available. It has been the experience of most coaches that students who are involved in a team program such as gymnastics tend to have good grades and are better at studying because they have learned to budget their time more effectively than their peers. Time management skills will become a necessity in all areas of your child's life (and yours).
4. Proper workout attire is a must.
For Girls: A properly fitting leotard and leo-shorts are the only acceptable workout attire. No shirts are allowed; no bare midriffs are allowed. Hair should be appropriately tied, and NOT hanging in the gymnast's faces so as not to interfere in any way during the workout. No jewelry, other than stud earrings, may be worn

during the workout. For the courtesy of the coaches and other athletes, proper and appropriate hygiene is appreciated. You will be notified when your child requires extra equipment such as grips.

For Boys: Boys should wear a T-Shirt that is able to be tucked into the entire circumference of the shorts. No jerseys! Shorts must be athletic shorts and should not cover or reach below the knee or have a drawstring waist: no cargo or jean shorts. You will be notified when your child requires extra equipment such as grips.

5. Work hard and try your best. This is all that we will ever ask of you and this is always what you should demand of yourself. Do not compare yourself with other gymnasts. You are all different and will advance at different rates. Only concern yourself with things that YOU can control which are YOUR ATTITUDE, YOUR EFFORT... YOUR GYMNASTICS!
6. Gymnasts may not leave the workout or competition floor without the express permission of the coaching staff.
7. Alert your coach when your body is telling you to slow down or stop. If you are sick, on medication, or are injured we need to know, and you need to listen to your body. Pain is the body's way of telling you to stop. In addition, alert your coach if you have engaged in any strenuous activity prior to the start of practice.
8. Treat your coaches and teammates with respect. Be kind to those gymnasts younger than you; they look up to you.
9. Do not hold yourself out as better than other gymnasts. THERE IS NO PLACE IN THE GYM FOR RUDE OR BELITTLING COMMENTS, DISPLAYS OF ANGER OR DISGUST, OR TALKING BACK TO COACHES OR OTHER ADULTS.
10. Be honest. Cheating is the ugliest form of disrespect. It shows disrespect to your coaches, your parents, and most importantly, to yourself. If you cannot or will not complete an assignment be honest about it.
11. Maintain a positive attitude when facing fears and frustrations. Gymnastics is the most demanding and difficult of all sports. All athletes suffer setbacks, frustration, fear, and defeat. Expect these things, learn from them, face them, and overcome them. Set **high** goals and achieve them step by step.
12. All team members must attend the dates and times designated for his/her level. At the lower team levels, the number of hours of practice per week is relatively small. As your child progresses up the competitive ladder, the hours and days of workout will continue to grow. Team members may not switch days and times or come for less than the required amount of days or hours per week. This is due to staff scheduling and the number of team members already in the gym at that time.
13. Team members and parents will be notified in advance if a team workout has to be re-scheduled or cancelled for any reason. If inclement weather arises, please tune into Channel 2, 4, or 7 or check the homepage of our website. If team practice is cancelled, the notification will say the "gym is closed". If it states that "classes and/or activities are cancelled", team practice still meets. Those will be updated as weather becomes an issue but we may not be able to get to the gym office to answer phone calls regarding cancelled workouts. If there is no indication of a closing on the local news outlets or our homepage, please assume we are open.
14. The end of the year banquet is held in June and will be open to all team members, family, and friends. Information will be given to your child when available.
15. Conferences may be scheduled with a team member and his/her parents at any time to discuss the gymnast's progress, evaluation, and goals. The gym will also schedule interim conferences if problems/situations arise which affect the gymnast.
16. We may have the opportunity for our team members to perform exhibitions and demonstrations throughout the season and summer. If these become available, we will hand out information as soon as we have it. This is an excellent time for our gymnasts to "show off" and perform in a non-competitive setting. Please give your child a chance to participate whenever possible and demonstrate what they have worked so hard to achieve.

Parent Commitment

1. Make sure your gymnast attends all regularly scheduled workouts, meets, and special functions. If your child will miss, or be late, or have to leave a workout early, for any reason, please notify the gym office.
2. Communicate with the coaches regarding any problems. Your thoughts are important to us. **COMPLAINING TO OTHER PARENTS CANNOT SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM, NOR CAN WE SOLVE THEM IF WE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THEM. We feel that the support of our team parents is important for team morale and unity. We will come to you if we hear that you have been making negative comments regarding the team program. Please come to us first if you have concerns!**
3. Check the bulletin board and your **e-mail** regularly to stay current with team activities. **E-mail will be our first means of communication. Please give us as many e-mail addresses as you like!** Be sure to notify us if your email address changes.
4. Ensure that your child gets enough sleep, proper nutrition, gets to and from the gym on time and has proper clothing and equipment.
5. Provide unconditional love, encouragement and support to your young athlete. Please do not compare your child with other athletes. Each athlete is unique with differing strengths and weaknesses. It is unfair to you and your child to compare him/her to another athlete. Rather, try to look for the progress your child is making in gymnastics and celebrate it!
6. **PLEASE DO NOT COACH YOUR CHILD.** Your comments detract from what the coach is doing by giving the gymnast another thing to think about; it interferes with the development of the coach/athlete relationship which is critical for long-term success.
7. **Please stay in the waiting area and out of the gym while waiting for your child.**
8. Please let a coach know before practice if you think your child might have a problem due to illness, medication or injury.
9. Please attend team parent meetings which will be held two or three times per year. The meetings are an opportunity for coaches and parent board officers to communicate detailed information with plenty of time for questions and answers.

Team Family Requirements

1. Home Meets- Greater Buffalo Gymnastics hosts one large meet a year, The Jacquie Hirsch Memorial Buffalo Challenge. Further information will be forthcoming regarding these events but please note, once the dates for these are released you are expected to set aside the weekend, this is the team's largest fundraiser of the year.
2. Uniform Exchange- A parent is needed to coordinate bringing in and selling outgrown uniforms to new gymnasts.
3. Team Banquet- (End of June) A parent is needed to organize the end-of-season banquet and awards ceremony.
4. Halloween Sleepover- Gymnasts are invited to bring a friend for a spooky sleepover in the gym. Costumes are required and no parental help is needed.
5. Team Holiday Party- Usually held the weekend before winter break. Gymnasts bring a donation for the charity the gym chooses. No parental help is needed.
6. We ask that Parent Liaisons write meet articles to submit to the local Bee newspapers.
7. Throughout the season, there will be other fundraisers that you may be responsible for; these fundraisers are chosen by the parents' board, not by the gym office.

Meet Scheduling

At the beginning of each season, a preliminary schedule of meet locations and dates will be handed out to the gymnasts. Meets may be added, changed, or canceled. Please check the team board and your email regularly for updates.

Gymnasts in all levels are expected to attend all scheduled meets. The more experience you obtain, the better you will become.

Host clubs will set a deadline for meet entries. After this date the host club will set the final meet schedule depending on the number of entrants. It is not uncommon for host clubs to send out final meet information late or make last minute changes. Information in many instances is not received until a few days before a competition. It is a good idea to clear the whole weekend of a meet on the chance that there will be last minute changes that could conflict with your previous plans. **Please check your email and the parent board for information regarding meets; we will release the information to you as soon as our office receives it.**

Meet fees are paid for by each individual team member by the due date. We will give meet fee deadlines, which must be adhered to. Meet fees received any time after the deadline will incur a late fee charge of \$10.00. Unless we receive a written note to the office BY THE DEADLINE that your son/daughter will not participate in a meet, your child's entry fee will be submitted and you are then responsible for that meet fee. PLEASE DO NOT REPEATEDLY ASK IF WE HAVE MEET INFORMATION. As soon as we receive it, you will be notified and the information will be posted on the team board. Again, please read this board on a regular basis. Each gymnast is responsible for her own transportation to the competition, hotel (*if needed*), and meals. Admission is charged to spectators at most meets.

Acceptable Competition Attire

Girls Competition - the competition dress code is set by USA Gymnastics and failure to comply can result in deductions from the gymnast's scores, the inability to receive awards, or disqualification.

Warm-ups- A Greater Buffalo warm up suit, and competition leotard for levels 3 – 10 and Xcel.

Competition - Greater Buffalo leotard. The gym's warm-up suit should be worn after competing on an event.

Awards- Greater Buffalo warm-up suit must be worn in order to receive awards.

Jewelry - There is NO JEWELRY allowed during competition.

Boys Competition- the competition dress code is set by USA Gymnastics. Failure to comply can result in deductions from the gymnast's scores, the inability to receive awards, or disqualification.

Warm-ups- A Greater Buffalo or gymnastics related t-shirt, competition shorts, competition pants and a clean, intact pair of socks. The Greater Buffalo bodysuit must be worn underneath all other clothing during warm-ups. Manufactured braces or supports may be worn on any event when needed throughout warm-ups and competition.

Competition - Greater Buffalo bodysuit, competition shorts, competition pants, and a clean, intact pair of black socks. A Greater Buffalo or gymnastics related t-shirt or sweatshirt, or the gym's warm-up suit should be worn after competing on an event. Socks and/or gymnastics shoes, along with competition pants must be worn on Pommel Horse/ Mushroom, Still Rings, Parallel Bars, and Horizontal Bar. The gymnast may perform on Floor Exercise and Vault wearing shorts, socks, gymnastics shoes (slippers), or bare feet.

Awards - Greater Buffalo Warm-up suit must be worn in order to receive awards. There are no shoes or boots of any kind allowed during the award ceremony. Look sharp!

Jewelry - There is no jewelry allowed during competition.

Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts

- ◆ Athletes should arrive at the competition site 15 minutes before open stretch is scheduled to begin or a time designated by the coach.
- ◆ No food or drink is permitted in the gym area.
- ◆ Gymnasts must present themselves in proper attire. Gymnasts should be well groomed. No nail polish should be worn. Long hair should be pulled back and sprayed ("glued") in place, only snap clips or barrettes, no bobby pins.
- ◆ Athletes should stay with the team until competition is over and the coach releases them. Once a gymnast has entered the competition area there should be no contact between the gymnast and his/her parents.
- ◆ Athletes must remain in the designated competition area throughout the course of warm-ups and competition and obey all warm-up regulations and procedures. You may not visit with family or friends until your coach has dismissed you.

◆ We expect all team members to act responsibly and politely at meets or other places we attend as a team. We expect that all property at other gyms will be treated as if it were ours. Team members and their families are to follow all rules established by the host gym. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will be reason to be excused from the competition floor for the remainder of the meet and awards.

◆ **Each athlete should accept their place in the line-up and the scores they receive with dignity and without criticism. There is no place for crying and uncontrolled emotions during gymnastics' meets. Athletes cannot control the scores they get nor can they control the performances of any other gymnast. Athletes can only control their own performance.**

* **NOTE TO ATHLETES:** If you do your best and receive a disappointing score, ask your coach about it when the meet is over. If you make mistakes and are disappointed in your performance, do not make matters worse by becoming emotional and jeopardizing your chances for good performances on upcoming events. Remember too that you are part of a team. The team needs you to be in control and ready to perform.

◆ Be courteous, respectful and polite to all meet officials, hosts, competitors, and coaches. The only time you should approach a meet official is to **thank them** for hosting or judging a meet.

◆ Gymnasts should have a competition bag and keep all of their belongings in the bag during the meet. GBGFC will offer a once per year ordering of "team backpacks" that have the GBGFC logo on them and your child's name.

◆ Athletes must stay for awards dressed in their team warm up. Most meets have a formal system for presenting awards. As a participating athlete you have an obligation to stay for all the awards, whether you are receiving them or not, and to accept any award presented to you with courtesy and gratitude. It is customary to accept awards with a firm handshake and a warm smile. Congratulate and shake hands with the other athletes as well. Remember that you are not just representing yourself; you are acting as a representative of Greater Buffalo Gymnastics & Fitness Center as well.

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

◆ Keep in mind that each meet is a learning experience. Have fun, be positive and realize that if you are unhappy with your performance, *you* need to work harder for the next meet.

Meet Etiquette for Parents

1. Team Spirit is a big help... Wear our team colors or one of our team parent t-shirts.

2. 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. Even the coach is not allowed to approach the judges regarding routines or scores during the meet, but must submit an inquiry through the Meet Director. Points could be deducted not only from your gymnast but the team score as well for failure to follow these rules.

3. 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*).

4. Once a gymnast has walked into the competition area for warm-up, he/she will not be permitted to have contact with parents, family, friends, etc. until competition is completed for **ALL** team members unless given permission by the head coach. This has less to do with control than it does with FOCUS. The coach's job at the meet is to monitor the gymnast's condition and teach her/him to respond appropriately. The gymnast needs to focus on his/her coach's advice. 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 your gym and you have had time to reflect.**

5. 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 along with all other relatives and friends. Your child could be immediately scratched from the meet if a parent is in the competitor's area.

6. In case of injury during warm-up or competition at a USAG sanctioned event, **YOU MUST** stay in the spectator area unless your coach flags you onto the floor.

7. **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. Even the most helpful comment from you could have disastrous consequences.

8. **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.

9. On the day of competition your child should eat a well-balanced meal about two hours prior to the actual competition. This energy will carry them through the entire competition. If necessary, a gymnast may carry fruit juices and pieces of fruit in their gym bag to curb hunger pangs.

Problems occur when a parent expects too much from an athlete. 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. Some parents seem to have developed their own system of evaluating the scores their children earn during a gymnastics competition. The key is to recognize when your child is working up to his/her potential. If he/she completes all her skills for the first time, without a fall, that is a winning routine regardless of what score he/she receives. 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 your son/daughter's coach will go over those elements that need work and congratulate him/her on the elements he/she 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 he/she learns to react to them that illustrate his/her development as a competitor. Remember that a score given to your child in a gymnastics competition is an evaluation of one single performance, not an evaluation of the child.

Some Guidelines for Parents Feeling Stress (as suggested by USAG)

We know that you are excited about your child's participation in gymnastics and want him/her to be successful, but as a parent you actually have the least amount of control over your gymnast's performance. This combination of high emotional stake in the performance with little or no direct control over the outcome can produce stress and can lead to some bizarre behavior. Danger Signs: Watch for these. If you recognize yourself in these descriptions, you probably need to reevaluate your actions, your role, and your attitudes.

**Wanting to observe every practice intently.*

**Praising or punishing your child for what you see during observations of workout.*

**Finding your sense of worth and happiness dependent on the success of your gymnast.*

**Constantly comparing your child and her progress to others in the group, on the team or in competition.*

**Verbally abusing the gym, the coaches, and the program while still placing your child under their care.*

Inappropriate Comments	Appropriate Comments
"You finally beat Sally"	"You scored your highest yet!"
"How many (current difficult skill) did you make today?"	"How was practice?"
"I'll give you \$20 if you win today"	"Do your best and have fun"
"That judge always scores you low"	"Work hard and next time you'll do better."
"I cannot believe they moved Sally up and not you!"	"As long as you are happy, safe, and progressing, I'm happy."

Disciplinary Actions

The rules and policies which govern the gymnasts and their parents have been outlined here in the Boys'/Girls' Team Handbook. In the event that there is an ongoing pattern of disruption or there are major rule infractions, it may become necessary to impose some disciplinary action in an attempt to improve the situation.

The list and procedures noted below are not intended to be all-inclusive. They are presented as an expression of our beliefs as to what disciplinary actions are necessary and appropriate. We will treat all of our gymnasts and gym parents as individuals and will seek to impose the most effective disciplinary actions based on each unique set of circumstances.

1. The gymnast may not be permitted to rotate with her group at the designated time. He/she will have to stay and finish or repeat an assignment on a particular piece of equipment.
2. The gymnast may be asked to sit and watch. Or the gymnast may be given appropriate conditioning to perform which will help focus their attention and build strength to accomplish the task at hand.
3. The coach may request a meeting with a parent.
4. The gymnast may be excused from the team for one or more practices or may be scratched from a competition. Please note that if the gymnast is suspended from a competition due to poor attendance, a poor work ethic or a negative attitude, the entry fee is nonrefundable.
5. The gymnast may be asked to leave the program if we cannot get him/her to conform their behavior to the expectations of the team, the coach, or the gym.

The development of the coach/gymnast relationship is paramount. We cannot and will not run to the parents every time we have a problem. We will attempt to build our own relationships with our athletes. Those relationships are built on time shared, belief in the same dreams and values, work performed together and the emotional ups and downs, all of which are an important part of development. Requesting a conference, signifies a need to work outside the coach/athlete relationship. In this instance, we need your help to overcome a challenge that is too large for us to accomplish on our own.

The final two items on the list are reserved for the most serious violations of our rules and policies. They are seldom used. They are reserved primarily for times when there is an ongoing problem with disruption and disrespect within the gym that has proven resistant to improvement. We will not let the bad attitude of one gymnast bring down the spirit and work ethic of an entire group.

It is also possible that a gymnast will have to leave our program because of the actions or inaction of his/her parents. While we never want to punish a child for the actions of their parent(s), we will not tolerate parents who, by their words and actions, do not support the policies and values of our team program.

Injury Policy

Team gymnasts pay a lower per-hour tuition rate, therefore there are no makeup classes for team members for any reason. If the gymnast becomes injured and needs to take time to heal, the following shall apply:

- A. Minor injury is one that requires rest of a body part for up to two practices at the discretion of the parents, gymnast, and coach with no involvement from a doctor. The gymnast will then be expected back in the gym for flexibility and strength training of all healthy body parts and to return to full workouts as soon as possible.
- B. If an injury requires more than two practices off and a visit to a doctor then a physician's note must be obtained and brought to the office for our records. This note must contain a diagnosis of injury, an expected duration of absence for healing of injured area, and a list of all areas of the body that may still be trained for strength and flexibility (i.e. broken wrist will still permit splits and assisted shoulder stretch, as well as strength training for abs and legs.) The gymnast is expected to return to the gym after diagnosis so that he/she may maintain as much of their strength and flexibility as possible.

- C. In the event of a serious injury requiring full time away from the gym, a meeting with Torey or Sharon must be arranged.

The sport of gymnastics is one of the most demanding on the human body, and injuries do require time to heal. In the event of an injury, first aid procedures will be performed, and an injury report will be filled out and kept on file. No child will be asked to perform activities that put the injured area in danger of further injury.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter. Our goal is to offer an environment for your child to reach their gymnastic goals and dreams while safeguarding their health and wellness for all future endeavors.

Emergency Procedures

In the unlikely event of a **medical emergency** involving your child, the following procedure will be followed:

- A. Greater Buffalo staff will assess the situation and emergency first aid will be administered, including requesting of emergency medical technicians and an ambulance if needed.
- B. You will be contacted using the emergency contact information you provided to us in the annual team registration packet. Your instructions will then be followed.
- C. In the event we are unable to make contact with a parent, we will attempt to contact the medical staff and hospital you indicated as a preference in your annual team registration packet.

Team Parents: Please see the following addendum to the Team Handbook, effective February 17, 2017.

General Absences: Just like the tuition at an academic institution, Team Tuition must be paid regardless of attendance. The reason we cannot prorate is simple: all team expenses - wages, insurances, utilities, facility, and other - continue unabated, no matter if your athlete is at the gym or not.

There will be no makeups for missed, scheduled workouts. Each day's lesson plans and staffing schedule is based on a particular number of specific athletes being in the gym. It is impossible for us to properly train each athlete in the way they deserve if extra people are in the gym on nights they are not scheduled.

Injured Athletes: Injured athletes are expected to participate to the extent possible. In most cases it is possible to work around injuries and turn a weakness into a strength by increased conditioning on strength, flexibility or specific skills. Because athletes will still be in the gym utilizing equipment, lesson plans, and coaching, no discounts or credits will be given due to injury.

Should an injury require total absence from the gym for a period of 30 days or longer our office and coaching staff will made a determination about a reduction/credit to your tuition.

Changes/Cancellations to Workouts: As a member of our competitive team you know or will quickly learn that most meets take place Friday-Sunday. Because we run workouts on Friday and Saturday sometimes a competition may take place the same day as a scheduled workout. Please refer to the following general guidelines as to whether or not a workout will be held.

- If your child's level competes on the same day they normally have workout, workout for that day will be cancelled. We do not want our athletes overextending themselves by practicing and then going to a meet tired or coming to workout tired from having competed earlier in the day. This stands for all athletes on a level who are eligible to compete.
- If your child's level has workout the day before or after their scheduled competition time, workout will still be held. For example, if you compete on Friday and normally workout on Saturday, there will still be workout. If you normally workout on Saturday and compete Sunday, there will still be workout on Saturday and so on.