



Competitive Team Handbook

Contents

- About Our Program
- Our Program Goals
- General Rules & Policies
- Gymnast Attire & Behavior
- Competitive Gymnastics
- Fees & Payments
- Communications
- Team Family Participation

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Being part of a team has an impact on a child that can last a lifetime. By being part of a team, a child develops friendships and bonds and learns sharing, teamwork, cooperation and compromise.

The Pre-Team (Level 2) begins to advance skills of the beginner gymnast and learn the aspects of competitive gymnastics. We encourage our Pre-Team members to participate in home meets and other events such as team outings and fundraisers. They are also given the opportunity to experience competitions that require travel from our local competitions with in our League to some Championship competitions in other states.

The Beginner(Level 3)/Intermediate(Level 4)/Advanced(Level 5&up) teams expands on the competitive aspect of the sport, such as rules of competition, form and routine development with teamwork as an emphasis. Individual and team goals direct the skill development and achievement at these levels. Practices times are level specific and run Tuesdays and Thursdays between 4:00-8:00, Fridays. 4:00-7:30pm and Saturdays between 9:00-2:30pm.

We also offer our Semi-Private Lessons for those team members who feel that they need extra help on a certain skill or event. During our Team Semi-Private Lessons, team members will focus on a particular skill or event in a small group setting of five or less in this 7 week program that runs on Saturday from 9:30 to 11:30 am

All Team members are required to participate in home & away meets and are encouraged to participate in Championship and Invitational meets. Events such as fundraisers, our holiday sleep-over, team outings, the Year-End Show and the Team Family Banquet are also required.





The Westfield YMCA Gymnastics Team is committed to developing a competitive spirit and good sportsmanship while maintaining the Y.M.C.A. principles of Caring, Honesty, Respect & Responsibility

Every gymnast is treated equally and everyone has the opportunity to progress at their individual rate.

Our team is a progressive goal setting environment for gymnastics training with teamwork as an emphasis. We believe the attainment of personal goals is the first step in the development of an all-around athlete. Success is the achievement of goals.

Our team program offers a great opportunity to progress in an exciting, safe and motivating environment. Gymnasts are introduced to competition when it is appropriate for them physically and mentally. Coaches will recommend progression through our level based program when the proper skill level is attained. For most gymnasts, proper skill development in a level requires a full year of participation.

If you have any questions about moving up to the next level or what group your child should be in, speak to one of the coaches, who will help you place your gymnast according to their skill level. Remember, front desk personnel can only give general recommendations.

Competition Policies

- Gymnasts must be signed up and paid for meets on time in order to participate in the competition.
- If a coach feels the gymnast is not properly prepared for a meet, they reserve the right to pull the gymnast from the meet.
- If a gymnast is late to a meet and they miss any portion of the warm-ups, it is the discretion of the coach to allow the child to compete or not.
 - Gymnasts are required to remain with their group throughout the duration of the meet until ALL competition has completed and are only allowed to leave the competition floor with coaches permission. Gymnasts are required to stay for the ENTIRE awards ceremony at a regular season home or away meet at the end of their session out of respect for their teammates.
- Gymnasts are required to wear the team uniform for the duration of the meet, including awards.
- Parents/Spectators are not allowed in the competition area during competition, including stretching and warm-ups unless a coach allows them to enter .



Our Program Goals

To understand the difference between ability and effort, and the value and reward of effort.

To realize success is getting better, rather than winning. The development of the potential of the individual through which winning has a reinforcing and positive effect.

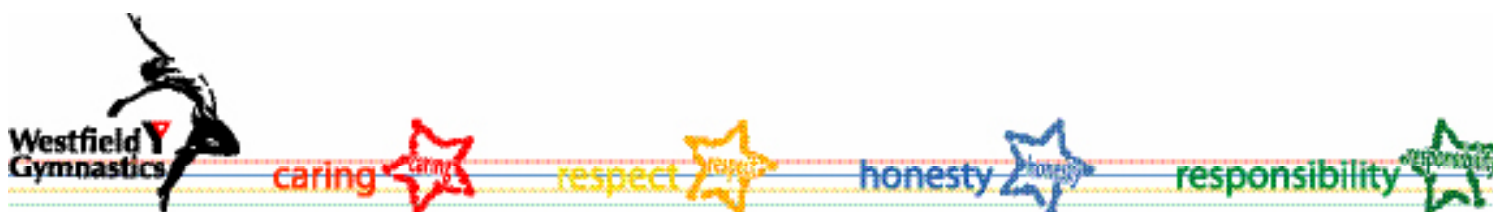
Develop the spirit, mind and body within the philosophy of keeping a good kid good.

To learn:

good sportsmanship,
self discipline,
commitment,
team play,
goal setting,
how to lose,
how to win,
personal achievement,
individual excellence,
maintaining a schedule,
responsibility,
time management,
handling disappointment,
handling frustration,
handling success,
handling pressure
and leadership

To understand that athletics provides a lifetime outlet for exercise and living a healthy lifestyle.

To promote a love for sports.



Rules and Policies

All Rules and Policies Must be Followed at All Times.

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!

Parent/Guardian Behavior:

Parents/Guardians and spectators must remain in the designated seating area at all times, and use care when moving around the gymnastics area.

We want everyone to be comfortable and encourage parents/guardians to stay and watch their children's' practice. However, gymnastics can be a very complicated task and needs the coaches' & gymnasts' full concentration. It's not only difficult for gymnasts to learn but is also dangerous for everyone if a child is distracted, running over to spectators, waving, or talking to their parents during practice time. Please help us and do not allow or encourage your children to do any of these activities. During practices the gymnasts take a short break to allow for a quick drink or visit. We reserve the right to ask anyone causing a disturbance or distraction to leave the seating area and/or gym. At no time should children who are or are not enrolled in class be on gymnastics equipment without a coaches permission

If for any reason a parent/guardian needs to speak with one of the coaches, please wait until the end of the class or call or email us to schedule a time.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to inquire about YMCA memberships to use the facilities during classes.

Gymnast Drop Off/Pick Up

Gymnasts should be dropped off a few minutes before their practice is scheduled to start to ensure they have time to get ready for practice.

If a gymnast arrives late to practice, this is a major hindrance on their own practice as well as the rest of the group. The beginning of practice is important and should not be missed. There are announcements and discussions, in additions to warm-ups and stretching that prepare a gymnasts body for exercise.

ALL team gymnasts, regardless of their size are required to help pick up the gym. Everyone has a job and everyone can help keep pick up!

Parents/Guardians must come in to the gym to pick up your child. Gymnasts are only allowed to leave the gym at the end of pick up accompanied with a parent/guardian or they are wait in the lobby of the YMCA until their parent/guardian arrives.



Team Attire & Items to Have at Practice

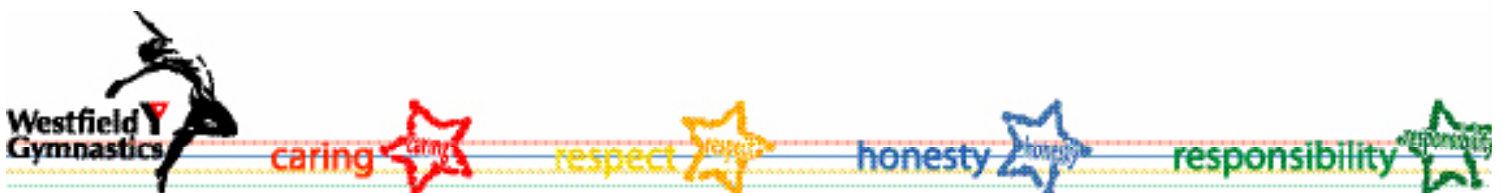
Gymnasts are required to wear a leotard. Tight fitting shorts, pants or footless tights may be worn with a leotard if desired. Pants must fall at ankles or above. Socks or tight with feet may NOT be worn. NO baggy clothing. Absolutely no leotards with skirts or two-piece leotards. Boys must wear shorts or pants and t-shirt that tucks in.

**** All gymnasts must be prepared for class before the class begins.****

- All hair must be secured back away from face. Any stray hair that falls in the face of the gymnast must be secured by either a headband (pre-wrap is acceptable) or hair clips.
- All jewelry must be removed before entering the gym. This includes earrings with the exception of stud earrings
- Absolutely NO gum chewing is allowed in the gym.
- Hydration is important during exercise. Gymnasts are encouraged to bring a water bottle or sports drink bottle which they may carry around with them
- Gymnasts are allowed to bring a small HEALTHY snack to practice. If it becomes too much of a distraction, gymnasts will be asked to put it away.

Team Practice Rules

- Do not use the equipment without a coach's supervision.
- Before using the equipment, make sure it is tightened and adjusted correctly, and all mats are in the correct place.
- Every gymnast must stretch and warm-up with their group or they will not be allowed to participate in class that day.
- Never attempt any skills without permission and supervision of a coach.
- No one will be allowed to leave the gym without permission from their coach. Gymnasts must have a buddy chosen by the coach and must wear shoes when leaving the gym.
- When walking around the gym, do not walk across the equipment or crash mats. Other gymnasts may be using the equipment, so please keep an eye out for others working out.
- "NO HORSE PLAY" at any time while on or around gymnastics equipment.
- Gymnasts are only allowed to leave the gym at the end of pick up accompanied with a parent or guardian with a coach's dismissal.
- All Team members must set-up and pick-up every day before and after their practice time. If a gymnast must leave practice early, they must inform their Level coach AND Megan or Linda . They will be required to pick up equipment not in use before they leave.
- All Team and Pre-Team members must bring their gym bags every practice. All personal belongings must be kept inside a gym bag. Gym bags may be left in the designated area or may be brought to each event once practice has begun.



Competitive Gymnastics

Westfield YMCA competes under the auspices of USA Gymnastics, which is the national governing body for the sport of gymnastics in America. USAG sponsors competition for levels 4 through 10 and elite (national and international). International elites are the gymnasts you see on television, competing in the Olympics and world championships. These athletes work out two times a day, six days a week. Our coaches have the expertise to instruct at this level, but we have chosen not to be directed toward this level. We have consistently developed gymnasts through level 8. We have done this while training at least 2 days a week less and 4+ hours less than most of our competitors at the higher levels. We take great pride in this aspect of our program. We also provide a wonderful environment for our gymnasts to grow. We pride ourselves on treating our gymnasts as individuals, giving them the attention they need to progress. We would like our girls to be involved in gymnastics for a long time. No one can sustain an activity in an overly intense, anxious atmosphere. We give our athletes the information, opportunity and encouragement to succeed. We will not promise you a champion. However we will work hard to help your child reach their gymnastics potential.

The compulsory program is set up to take the athletes through carefully elevated, progressively harder, gymnastics skills. We can tell how well a gymnast is doing by how well they do at a meet. The girls must compete on all four events, the vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise. The elements are put together in short routines. Each routine is judged and given a score (the highest possible score being a 10.0.) representing how well she did. After the meet, sometimes immediately or later at practice, the coach and athlete discuss the performance at the meet and make plans on how to improve.

As mentioned, the girls will be "judged". Even though this is the basis for their awards, it is not the only factor we use to evaluate their performance. First of all, many things are happening during the competition. The girls have to:

1. Get themselves ready to compete, by warming up their skills and acclimating themselves to a different gym and different equipment.
2. Learn how a meet is run so they are prepared for all situations.
3. Handle how well they liked their performance, dealing with success and disappointments.

We are continually training the girls to understand how to function at a meet.



As stated the girls are judged, the score is the judges opinion of the athlete's routine. The score should rank the routine as to whether it was the best or the worst routine or somewhere in between. Different judges have different opinions on similar routines. This is a constant in gymnastics. Judges work hard to keep up on their ratings and do their job earnestly. That does not mean we always agree with them. Sometimes we have a hard time making sense of the scores and we have been doing this for over many years. We don't expect the gymnasts or parents to understand every aspect of scoring. Of course things like bias and not being completely objective when our gymnasts are performing might have something to do with it. Our advice is to deal with it. We can always gripe about the officiating. Notice if you see your child doing some skill better as the meets go along. Ask her what her coach says about her routine. Sometimes the judges will agree with us, sometimes not. As long as you are a gymnastics parent you will have to deal with a subjective sport. Come to terms with it now!

As a parent you have a very big role in your athlete's gymnastics career, it is being a parent, **NOT** a secondary coach. The literature on this subject has been conclusive. Your child needs your support. If your child is putting forth the effort they are earning your support. If they are not progressing or performing up to your expectations please conference with your head coach. The coaches can tell you what you need to know about your child's progress.

It is not possible to cover every condition that might occur in a team gymnastics experience, however as all the information you are reading attests to, we are trying. When you make the decision to participate in our team program it should be based on the fact that Westfield YMCA is the place where you want your child to take gymnastics. Your view of competitive gymnastics for children should be in line with what is stated above. We are working very hard for your support.

Competitive Team Requirements

Uniforms

Pre-team uniforms consist of a red & black stock leotard. These leotards are approximately \$26. All pre-team gymnast will be measured and leotards will be ordered once all sizes are gathered. Team uniforms consist of a leotard and personalized warm-ups and team bag. All team members will be measured and once all sizes and personalizations are gathered the orders will be placed.

Meets

Our meet schedule is set in mid-September. The season consists of home and local away meets with our Western Mass League, judging clinic & inHouse meets, travel Invitational meets and Championship meets that may require qualifying scores. Gymnasts are encourage to attend as many of the different types of meets as possible throughout the year to experience all different levels of competition

Health Form

All gymnasts must turn in a health form.



Fundraising

Fundraising is a team effort and every team family is expected to participate. We are currently raising funds to help the YMCA pay for a gym specifically for gymnastics. Other uses for the money we raise throughout the year are used to buy new equipment and supplies. We are trying new creative fundraising activities for the gymnast to participate in throughout the year as opposed to selling just selling candy or fundraising through catalogs. Keep an eye on the bulletin board for new fundraisers coming up.

Communication

There are several ways for our team families can stay current on all the events and happenings of the team.

- Website: The website is updated first and frequently. It is a good idea to check it weekly for updates. The address is www.westfieldymcagymnastics.com
- Email: Get signed up for our Program Newsletter. Emails are sent out frequently with the goal of keeping all those enrolled as up to date as possible. If there is a cancelation or change, the newsletter members are the first to know. You can sign up on our website, www.westfieldymcagymnastics.com
- Bulletin Board: There is a Gymnastics Program bulletin board inside the gym in the parents seating area. We post notices, sign up sheets schedules, etc.. Make sure to take a look at the board every time you come into the gym to make sure you or your child isn't missing out on an upcoming event. We've also started posting the most recent e-newsletter on the board for those who don't have access to email.
- Notices: Notices are frequently handed out to the gymnasts about upcoming events, meets or fundraisers. Please make sure to check with your child to get the most recent handouts.

Team Family Participation

It is very important for a young athlete to be shown that they have the support of their families. They spend many hours training to reach their goals, for competitions and to improve and it is important for them to feel a level of commitment from you as well. Team parents must be willing to volunteer and participate at meets, events and fundraisers. In order to run this types of events successfully, we need everyone's help. At a home meet, there is something that everyone can help with, whether it's setting up and picking up the equipment, bringing in foods or paper goods for our food table, helping with leotard sales or the scoring table. It is important for parents to be involved, if you have a special skill or you're just looking for a way to help out, just ask us!

