



Dear Parents and Athletes,

This handbook is designed as an information tool that will help make your experience as a parent or team member at First State Gymnastics more enjoyable. Hopefully it will answer majority of your questions regarding team training and the requirements that go along with it.

The standards of the team training are quite high and quite demanding. Our coaches will always expect the most and best out of each gymnast, and always demand a relentless pursuit of perfection. This is not to say training won't be fun, but the main emphasis will be on maintaining a high level of discipline and achievement. We believe that every gymnast who is offered to train under our direction is talented and has a potential; however, not every gymnast will rise to the top. Only those gymnasts, who work hard, listen to and respect their coaches and peers, will find climb to be filled with success. Once parents and gymnasts understand this concept, the philosophy behind team training versus class or recreational instruction becomes clearer and is placed in a better perspective.

A preliminary schedule of competitions for the competitive year is in the works.

If you need to speak to a coach, please call the gym:
FIRST STATE GYMNASTICS: 302-368-7107

Thank you for your support of the program and for the privilege of working with such wonderful athletes!

Sincerely,

Slava Glazounov
Head Coach
Girls Team Program
First State Gymnastics.

Being a Team Parent

Understanding the Mission and Philosophies of First State Gymnastics Team

A key component to your child's success is you. USA Gymnastics coined the term "Athlete Triad"; Athlete, Parent & Coach working together to achieve the best possible experiences and outcomes.

First, last and always is the Athlete, the center of our attention and focus. Often this reality is lost (or misplaced) due to negative outside factors such as ego, an unhealthy emphasis on winning, too much focus on the outcome rather than the entire process and/or a parent living vicariously through their child.

Coaches and Parents have choices to make for their athlete/child. When making a decision we must ask; "What overall, long-term benefits will the athlete receive? Will the process be both fun and rewarding? What are the possible dangers or harmful side effects of this decision? Are the goals set too high, too low, too fast, too demanding, or for a benefit of someone other than the athlete?"

Parents play a vital role as the supporter, both of the athlete and the coach. When your child needs a little encouragement, it is your job to give them a hug, tell them how wonderful they are and send them to train with a renewed confidence. It is your responsibility as a parent to know your child's goals, dreams, challenges, limitations and achievements. After all, you are in the child's corner for life. It is your challenge to effectively communicate to the coach and listen, seek to understand, and do what is best for your child.

We are a sum of all of our experiences. Our mission is to provide a fun, safe, nurturing, challenging and rewarding environment for athletes to have a healthy experience both overcoming challenges and learning from failure.

Just because you can doesn't always mean you should

Parents are driven to do what they perceive as the best thing for their child. This may not be realistic, healthy or focused on the long-term best interest of their child/athlete. In the end, the parent has the choice whether or not to support the coach's decision, compromise with the coach or find another coach with a more congruent philosophy.

Below is an overview of the Athlete/Coach/Parent Triad.

The Athlete

The athlete is on the team to learn from their coaches, from their teammates and from themselves. In our sport, athletes compete individually, against themselves. However, they are not alone...their coaches, their teammates and their parents are by their side lending support and cheering them on. In the end, the athlete will learn and remember the sum total of the entire experience in the sport.

The Coach

The coach is a mentor and a guide. The coach plans the training and competitive cycle for every athlete on the team. The coach is not always right and sometimes makes mistakes. The coach is constantly learning and striving to find new ways to teach, motivate, inspire and propel their athletes to the next level of performance.

The Parent

The parent supports the athlete, the coach and the team. The parent is a spectator, allowing the athlete and the coach to perform their roles. The parent is strong enough to watch their athlete fail and tender enough to give a hug when they need one. The parent will occasionally cross the line with the athlete or coach and be humble enough to apologize and return to their territory.

FIRST STATE GYMNASTICS TEAM RULES AND POLICIES

Description of JO (Junior Olympic) team levels

Developmental Team – Developmental program is designed for girls who exhibit an above average ability in strength, flexibility, coordination and attentiveness. The focus is directed more toward further developing the attributes necessary for success in competitive gymnastics and other sports.

Level 4 – The first major compulsory competitive level. USAG Invitational and local meets are attended. Gymnasts receive awards based on scores on each event in their age level and division. Level 4 is the stepping stone to future higher levels.

Levels 5 & 6 – A continuation of the compulsory competitive level with training on more advanced optional skills.

Levels 7-10 – Advanced optional level routines are developed and choreographed individually by the coaches for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty level.

Description of TOPs/Hopes/Elite program

ELITE – The Elite Program is designed to provide competitive experiences for athletes aspiring to the National Team or the Pre-Elite Training Squad. The National Teams (Senior and Junior) are selected from the USA Championships each year. These athletes represent the United States in international competitions.

TOPS – TOPs is an educational program designed to find "potentially" talented athletes and educate these athletes along with their parents. There are several factors involved in the development of an elite athlete, therefore, TOPs cannot be a guaranteed predictor of gymnastics success or failure.

HOPES

HOPES is modified pre-elite program dedicated to potential gymnasts 10-12 years old.

Athlete Expectations, Commitment and Priorities

At First State the coaching staff is committed to making a positive difference in the lives of all the children they teach. The team program is more disciplined than the recreational gymnastics programs by design; therefore, the expectations of the athlete are higher.

- First State Team Member is expected to enter the gym with a positive attitude.
- First State Team Member is expected to set reasonable goals.
- First State Team Member is expected to respect her instructors, her teammates, and herself.

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.

Communication and Parent Waiting Area

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.

Never use the waiting area as a sounding board for any gym problems you may experience. Any of the above could be cause for dismissal from the program. If you need or want to know any information please see the coaching staff (except during workout).

The parent waiting area is not intended for the long-term use by the parents of our Team members. Parents are kindly requested to allow their gymnast(s) to train without parental influence or parents being present at practice. Communication with your children during practice is disruptive to their training progress and hampers the coaches' mission to develop a coach-athlete relationship with your child. If desired, parents may observe their children workouts last week of the month.

Attendance

- Athletes are expected to arrive on time and ready to practice. When unable to make a scheduled training session, the parent is expected to phone the First State Gymnastics office to inform the Team Staff of their daughter's absence or tardiness.
- Missed practices may not be made up – except at the discretion of the Head Coach.
- Parents of athletes and those car-pooling other athletes must allow for gymnasts to remain after practice, if necessary, to complete assignments not completed during normal training hours.

Injured gymnasts are expected to participate

- Every athlete and/or her parent (s) are responsible for notifying Team coaches of any injury, illness, or medical condition. Athletes under a physician's care are required to have a doctor's note outlining the athlete's limitations.
- Injured athletes are expected to participate in practice and gym activities to the extent possible. It is often possible to work around injuries and turn a difficult situation into something positive by increased work on flexibility, strength or specific skills. There is no reduction in tuition unless the injury takes you completely out of the gym for over one month and then only if the gymnast cannot participate in workouts in any way. In that instance, tuition may be adjusted depending on the circumstances.

First State Gymnastics Practice Rules

- No food or gum allowed in the gym, including in the cubby area. Water bottles shall contain water or sports drink only.
- Gymnasts may not leave the workout or competition floor without the expressed permission of the coaching staff.
- **Cell phone use during practice hours is not permitted!**

Work Ethic

A poor work ethic, rudeness or any other exhibition of an inappropriate attitude will be dealt in one of the following ways, at the coach's discretion:

- Conditioning that is deemed appropriate.
- Be excused from the practice area for appropriate amount of time.
- Be sent home with a subsequent parent-coach-athlete conference.
- Suspended from upcoming competition or activity, regardless of importance.
- Loss of a team spot/dismissal from the Program, if conduct is not corrected in a timely manner or has a deteriorating trend.

Termination of enrollment

Discipline and gymnastic technique are determined only by the coaching staff. Workouts are not for socializing; they are for skill development.

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.

Gymnast selection criteria for meet invitations

Meets should be a positive experience and therefore gymnast selection is made very carefully. Coaches make the decision on meet participation based on the following criteria:

Physical condition – All gymnasts are expected to maintain the best physical condition possible.

Eligibility – Gymnast must have all necessary fees paid and be considered an active and eligible gymnast.

Performance level – Mastery of skills is based on performance in workouts. A gymnast will not be sent to a meet unless she can perform all required skills on every event.

Attendance – Gymnasts missing an excessive number of practices may not be permitted to compete.

Attitude – A positive attitude and showing respect to coaches and teammates is important. Gymnasts must be emotionally ready for the competitive arena.

Participation in scheduled meets

All team gymnasts should compete in ALL meets to which they are invited unless they are sick or injured.

Meets have different meanings and the training for each will differ accordingly. Some meets, the focus may only be on obtaining a qualifying score, 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.

Skill requirements & moving from level to level

Too frequently, gymnasts are advanced to higher levels at the bequest of their parents, but are not sufficiently prepared to be competitive with other gymnasts at the same level. The resulting frustration often leads to a general disenchantment with the sport and a premature end to an otherwise promising career. Throughout your gymnastics career you will notice that several clubs have varying philosophies with regard to this concept. First State Gymnastics demands higher requirements than most clubs, and these requirements are not subject to negotiation.

Again, the team coaches will determine the appropriate level for each gymnast.

At the conclusion of the competitive season, team members will receive a letter indicating their training level for the next season. Each gymnast will be re-evaluated in the fall to ensure the appropriate competitive level. Gymnasts will assume this schedule starting in June each year. Some athletes may require a parent conference with the coaching staff. These conferences will take place prior to letters being sent. Occasionally gymnasts will move a level during the competitive season. These decisions will be discussed with parents on an individual basis.

COMPETITIVE PROGRAM – FINANCIAL POLICIES

- **Team is a year round commitment.**

There is no doubt that joining team is a significant commitment of time, effort and money. Is it worth it? Most parents will say that other than family life, team involvement becomes the most significant event in their child's life. Besides the obvious physical benefits, those children who become involved in team rarely accept negative influences into their lives. They learn self-discipline, how to work closely as a member of a team, how to handle themselves in a large variety of situations and how to prioritize and manage their time. Team kids are almost always excellent students. For those reasons and more, team membership is a bargain.

- **Tuition is due regardless of attendance**

Team tuition is calculated on a yearly basis and then divided by 12 to arrive at the monthly amount, which is due the first day of each month, regardless of attendance. It is important to make this next point clear – team members do not move onto and off the team based on illness, injury, vacations, camps, schedule conflicts, or the like; **you are either on the team or off the team.**

- **Notice of intent to cancel enrollment**

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.

- **Practice Cancellations**

Inevitably, over the course of a year, there will be practice cancellations due to conflicts, most often meets or other team functions. We do our best to keep these at a minimum, but please expect them. Also, please note that team practice is sometimes curtailed or reduced a couple of weeks a year for various reasons. We will keep you informed.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

Annual membership fee is due at time of registration. This fee (\$35.00 – per person, \$55.00 per family) is not included in the tuition fee.

PAYMENTS

- The fees paid for team tuition are due 1ST of each month.
- We offer a variety of payment options including MASTERCARD, VISA, bank draft, check, or cash.
- Preferred payment for team tuition is by a Bank Draft. Bank Draft Forms available on our website or in the gym.
- A service charge of \$30.00 will be assessed for each RETURNED CHECK!
- **LATE FEE of \$25 will be added to the balance owed if payment is not received 10 (ten) days after balance is due.**

DISCOUNTS

We offer a 15% discount for additional family members, with no charge for the fourth child.

Parent Commitment

- Make sure gymnast attends all regularly scheduled workouts, meets, and special functions. Communicate with the coaches regarding any problems.
- Check your email regularly to stay current with team activities.
- Membership in the FSGAA (First State Gymnastics Athletic Association) is required. Please attend all scheduled FSGAA meetings. Notice will be posted in the gym and emailed to the parents.

The FSGAA

The primary function of the FSGAA is to support the team financially. This includes, but is not limited to: coaches' travel expenses, equipment specific to the team, hosting social activities for the gymnasts and their families, awards at the end of the season, and hosting meets at First State Gymnastics.

The FSGAA conducts various fundraising activities throughout the year. All families are expected to in these activities.

Why should I get involved with the FSGAA?

Whether your daughter is at a competitive level or not you benefit from the fundraising activities of the First State Gymnastics Athletic Association (FSGAA).

The recreational gymnastics class program with higher student to instructor ratios and higher per hour fees make recreation classes a viable program. In order to have the quality of coaching necessary to produce successful team gymnasts, the competitive program gymnast to coach ratio is lower and the cost per hour is also lower. In effect, teams get the higher paid professionals for less than the cost of recreational training.

In addition, several pieces of equipment in the gym are specialized and are only necessary for competitive programs. Another expense that benefits primarily the team programs.

The FSGAA through its efforts has created the potential for this club to have a successful gymnastics team by offsetting those costs. Whether your child is entry level or accomplished gymnast, the FSGAA already has and will continue to create the conditions for every gymnast to have the best possible instruction and training equipment.

We ask that you join with your fellow parents and support the efforts to continue this successful program by lending the FSGAA your thoughts, ideas, and abilities in their fundraising activities.

Competitive season information

USAG Fees: The First State Gymnastics Team competes in the USAG competitive system. USAG dues are \$49.00 per year (August 1 – July 31). These dues are subject to change. Competition begins at Level 4.

Meet scheduling

At the beginning of each season (September/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

Home meets will be held at First State Gymnastics. All members of FSGAA are required to participate in preparation and hosting home meets.

Meet information sheet

1–2 weeks before a competition, participating gymnasts will receive a meet information sheet that includes times, gymnasts & coaches attending, host hotel (if needed), phone numbers, and a map.

It is not uncommon for host clubs to send out meet information late or make last minute changes. Information in many instances is not received until the week before a competition. 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.

Meet etiquette for gymnasts

- Be friendly and use sportsmanlike like conduct that all times.
- Stay focused on the competition. Talking with parents, relatives, or friends is inappropriate during the meet. During workouts and competition pay attention to the coach.
- Before leaving the competition, notify the head coach.
- If you are staying to watch another teammate compete, or you have arrived early for warm ups, stay seated in the bleachers. Do not wander out onto the competition floor.
- Competing gymnasts must stay in their rotation group, sitting quietly, until the last competitor has finished.
- Warm ups should be worn when accepting awards.

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.

Meet etiquette for parents

1. Team Spirit is a big help.... Wear the team colors, or better yet one of our club T-shirts.
2. Remember, your gymnast is part of the First State Gymnastics team. She competes not only for herself but also her teammates, parents, coaches and First State Gymnastics.
3. Please show proper respect to all Officials and Coaches at every competition. Under no circumstance should you attempt to contact any official on the competition floor during or after the meet. 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.
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.
6. In case of injury during warm-up or competition, YOU MUST stay in the spectator area until 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.

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 water and pieces of fruit in their gym bag to curb hunger pangs.

10. 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.

PARENT AND ATHLETE CONTRACT

Contract Date _____

I/we have read and accept the First State Gymnastics team information and policies included in the attached manual. I/we agree to support team activities as outlined, and fulfill all obligations thereof.

_____ has my/our consent and permission to participate in the First State Gymnastics Team program at Level _____ for the _____ season. As stated on the waiver form, I/we release First State Gymnastics, its staff and directors from any and all responsibility and/or liability in case of accident or injury to the above named child.

As the coaching and administrative staff has made a professional commitment to the gymnast, the gymnast and her family also commit themselves to the completion of the entire season through the State Competition or May 31, _____ - whichever is applicable to the level of the gymnast. Upon signing, the gymnast and family are also financially responsible for team leotards and warm-ups, as well as all monetary obligations the athlete accrues.

Parent Signature

Date

Gymnast Signature

Date