



Competitive
Team
Handbook

Our General Philosophy

U.S. Gold Gymnastics & Cheerleading Academy, Inc. believes that gymnastics is not only the root of all sports, it provides a vehicle with which we can teach skills that will last a lifetime. The development of every child in our program is our top priority.

Physical skill development is certainly a by-product of a good gymnastics program. Gymnastics as a sport, however, is an age-limited experience. (You won't find many 30 year-olds flipping and swinging away their afternoons.) With this in mind, U.S. Gold has made it our primary goal to ensure that our program delivers more than just pure physical skill. Determination, perseverance, self-discipline, work ethic, time management, team work, team spirit, sportsmanship, and respect for self and others are all learned skills and traits that will surely benefit our students throughout the rest of their lives. We measure our success not by the number of trophies on the wall, but rather by what each child takes with them when they leave the sport of gymnastics.

Competitive Team Philosophy

With an understanding of our basic philosophy, U.S. Gold Gymnastics Competitive Team Program will always be dedicated to producing national caliber gymnasts. This does not mean, however, that every child earning a place on our competitive team must have a burning desire to someday be an Olympian! The staff at U.S. Gold will treat each athlete's goals and aspirations individually. We will always run a structured, disciplined program. It is our belief that gymnastics is far too dangerous and costly to have training be considered just an opportunity for socializing. Our staff will demand respect and a strong work ethic from every athlete. In return, we will show your child love and respect while serving as positive role models. We will expect proper respect, positive attitudes, and good manners from every athlete. This is something that our parents need to be aware of prior to committing to the program. If the idea of enforcing or demanding proper behavior is an issue, then U.S. Gold is most likely not the place for your child. Conversely, athletes will be treated with respect and provided positive guidance in order to help them reach their individual goals.

Another of our fundamental beliefs is that we want our program to be as family-oriented as possible. The coaches, athletes, and parents should be members of a cooperative communication triangle engaged in assisting the child/athlete in reaching their goals. It is important that parents show respect for the authority of your child's coach. If ever you feel the need to carry a concern to our head coaches, please know that our doors are always open to you and that we take your concerns and suggestions very seriously. Always start with emailing the Owner of U.S. Gold Gymnastics, Kathy Dwyer, at usgoldteamgym@gmail.com.

What is Competitive Team?

Competitive team membership is for the child who wants more of the sport than can be achieved by participation in our recreational program. Among the over 1000+ students enrolled at both of our U.S. Gold facilities combined, only 70-75 are competitive team members.

Team Levels

In lieu of competing in compulsory levels 1-5, U.S. Gold chooses to participate in the USA Gymnastics Jr. Olympic Xcel Program. We offer Bronze (level 2-3), Silver (level 3-4), and Gold (level 4-5). Each level gets progressively more difficult and requires a certain caliber of required skills. At each skill level, the coach will choose skills from required categories to piece together routines in hopes of achieving the highest score possible. They strive to start at the highest point value possible for that gymnast to help them achieve success. Any mistakes made result in deductions of points and a lower score. As a team member progresses through these levels, they will participate in in-house sanctioned mobility meets to allow for compulsory level testing so that they can successfully qualify and transition to the higher level Optional Program (Levels 6-10) when their time comes. To compete at Level 6, a gymnast must first test out of Levels 4 and 5, and achieve a score of 31.00 all-around points at the in-house mobility meet. Please refer to your competition page for dates and prices.

Advancement through the Levels

Although our advancement policy is not “etched in stone”, due to the variety of circumstances involved, we do have a fair method intact. This method has been utilized for 25 years and has been successful for us. From time to time, we all can suffer from the “little league” parent syndrome, where we are blindsided by our ambitions for our kids, and we grant that it is helpful for us to get the view of parents regarding advancement. As gymnastics professionals, it is our duty to protect what we feel is in the best interest of the program and the athlete’s development. Oftentimes it is necessary for us to keep an athlete in the same competitive level for two or more years to ensure the gymnasts’ success in more advanced levels. Proper skill development and self-confidence are the keys to success in this sport. Parents may not always agree with our decisions but, should support the coaches’ decisions as we have the athlete’s best interests in mind.

Conduct Expectations

For Parents:

Being a Parent of a Team Member

U.S. Gold is a “pro-parent” organization. This is not always the norm when it comes to national caliber sports organizations but being that Miss Kathy is a parent herself and has her daughter actively participating in the sport of gymnastics, we all agree parents should be involved. With this being said, however, it is important to know your role as a parent. We are the gymnastics professionals and, although your input serves a purpose, it is ultimately our responsibility to protect the integrity of our gymnastics program, business and the welfare of the athletes we coach. We take this responsibility extremely seriously.

Parents need to realize that this sport is for their children. They are the ones who will benefit most from the experience and lessons learned. Let your child learn, love, and succeed while you, as the parent, provide support and balance.

Parents need to have perspective on why sports exist. In our opinion, it is not for the fame and glory, the medals or the scholarships. It is for the lessons learned: the ability to make decisions, to make good choices, to set goals and to establish character traits that will assist them through life.

Your role and responsibilities:

First and foremost, your job is to be your child's biggest supporter. Your number one role is providing unconditional love and support. You are their rock of stability. They will need you for your positivity during all the adversities that sports will throw at them. You should be their number one fan, let us be their critics.

Parents are an important part of the “team”. Your support of the rules, the standards, and the communication process will assist with the development of your child in and out of the gym. It is important to always know that our coaching staff has the best interest of your child at heart when it comes to all decisions and although we may not agree with the decision, let there never be doubts as to the underlying motivation. Please support and reinforce the coaches' expectations outside of the gym. A united coach/parent front ensures the athlete's success in this sport.

Learning and understanding all the rules, policies and parent expectations takes time. Parents can shorten the learning curve by being pro-active in their quest to be “informed”. It is good to know the basics of the sport and learn what you can, as long as you do not enter into coaching mode.

- Unfortunately, at the Team Gym, there is no space in the team gym for parent observation on a regular basis. If you need to enter the gym for drop off or pick up, please do so quickly and quietly, as other teams may be practicing and shouldn't be distracted. You wouldn't appreciate your child's practice being disrupted, so please be courteous to others. Please understand that the coaches may already be coaching other groups when you arrive and may not be available to speak with you right then and there. Should you need to speak with a coach, please refer to the communication section of the handbook for guidance.
- We will allow parent observation days during the summer and fall. Exact dates will be announced as the year progresses.

- Report on time for practices, meetings, and events. Warm-up is an important part of the training process. The flexibility gained from your warm-up is how the body gets ready for activity. A good warm up also limits potential injury. Being on time shows respect and sets a disciplined tone for training sessions where goals and objectives may be discussed.
- When an absence is going to occur, coaches should be notified as soon as possible. Please see the communication page for the proper method.
 - Injury – a doctor's note is required to return to practice. We will NOT accept a note from a chiropractor, holistic medicine professional, or physician's assistant. Please have your child seen by a doctor with knowledge of how to aggressively treat a gymnast. If she has an orthopedic injury, please see an orthopedic doctor or sports physical therapist. If an injury requires more than 2 weeks of immobility (in either a cast, brace, crutches, etc.), then physical therapy outside of the gym is required. Your athlete is required to come to practice even on physical therapy days. Injured athletes should not stay at practice more than 2 hours but that time in the gym is essential to condition the rest of the body as well as maintain her mental health in the gym.
 - Illness – If a child contracts contagious illness (viruses, skin conditions, staph infections, etc.) DO NOT SEND HER TO PRACTICE. Maintaining a healthy gym is of highest priority. A doctor's note stating that she is no longer contagious will be required to return to practice.
- Please send your athlete prepared to practice. Hair should be pulled completely up. Bring a labeled water bottle and a healthy snack that can be eaten quickly. Wear a leotard for practice. Extra clothing (shorts, tights, tank tops, etc..) will be NOT allowed to be worn over leotards during practice. However, your child should come to practice and leave with clothing over her leotard and shoes on.
- Your child is required to attend all scheduled daily workouts for her assigned group. If she will be late or leaving early due to school, testing, or physical therapy she will be required to make up any work she missed (much like school). This will be done on a case-by-case basis. Missing her assigned group practice and having to make up assignments puts a physical and mental strain on your child. She will be missing the intensity and focus of normal practice sessions. Do not make it a habit to come late, leave early, or skip practice consistently. Her performance as well as the team dynamic will suffer.
- Private Lessons are available with members of the team coaching staff at a rate of \$1 per minute. These can be helpful if a child is struggling to master a particular skill or routine during meet season. Think of them as tutoring for gymnastics. They are to be used if an athlete is falling behind – not to try to put them ahead. The demands on the gymnasts are great during their regular workouts. Extra privates can put a strain on their bodies and minds. Coaches will not agree to do a private lesson to work upgraded skills not needed for the upcoming meet season.
 - Private lessons will not be given to make up missed scheduled workouts. The only exception will be if a child is injured or sick and has been out for a while and, once cleared, needs some extra help to get caught up. **If your child misses a practice during the week of a scheduled private lesson, it will be cancelled. No exceptions.**

- Do not schedule more than 2 private lessons per week for your child (between all coaches combined). The gymnasts' bodies need time to rest and recover from the intensity of normal practice sessions. The coaching staff is fully aware of the private lesson schedule of all coaches and will tell you know if your child is already scheduled for the maximum allowed.
- Please refrain from contacting or signaling your child at the gym or at a competition. This will cause distraction and jeopardize the safety of all gymnasts. If you are caught communicating across the gym, the coaching staff has the authority to remove your child from the practice and a competition. This will not be tolerated.
- Please remember that sometimes a gymnast has a bad day! Please do not let that affect your attitude. These are all things that can be discussed after the practice and should not affect anyone's behavior while in the gym. Parents and athletes are expected to behave with proper sportsmanlike conduct at all times, even on the tough days. There will be no unsportsmanlike behavior permitted in our program at any time. These are life lessons that gymnastics teaches your child.

Personal Hygiene – If your gymnast starts to emit body odor (or her leotards do when she gets home from practice), **it is time to use deodorant regardless of how young she is!** Please choose what type of deodorant is best for your child and send it with her to practice. If she has a body odor at practice she may be embarrassed. Plus, we as coaches spend a lot of time in close proximity to your gymnast. Please encourage her to wear it every day!

- Periods – When your child begins her period, it is a very stressful time for her. This sport requires your body to be seen. A natural tendency of a young girl going through puberty is to withdraw and cover up. You cannot do this in gymnastics. Please teach your child how to properly use a tampon, cut the string to a shorter length, and instruct them to check it often during workout. Pads are not to be worn under a leotard. Only tampons will be allowed because they do not show through the leotard and it allows your gymnast to move freely. Shorts will not be allowed to be worn over leotards as extra clothing is a safety hazard when being spotted through skills. Also, wearing shorts is an “advertisement” to the rest of the gym that your child is on her period. We want discretion for your child so she can focus on workout and not on what everybody is thinking about her. Communicate with your female coaches so that we are aware and can remind your child to check often or help her with any questions she may have. Send her with an extra leotard on the days she is menstruating. We have this policy because it is inevitable that a period will eventually happen during a competition. Gymnasts are not allowed to wear clothing over their competition leotard to compete. Therefore, they need to be trained not to be afraid or embarrassed when on their period way before the stressful situation of a competition occurs. Let's work together on this issue to ensure a happy and healthy body image and attitude while your gymnast is on her period.

For Athletes:

- Wear a leotard to practice and make sure your hair is tightly arranged and away from your face. Be sure you have a water bottle for practice. Only water may be consumed during practice.
- At practice, gymnasts will be broken up into practice groups and will rotate around the gym/coaches/equipment as determined by the team coaches. Full effort and good behavior is expected. Some workout days may prove to be more difficult than others, but rest assured, the progression and curriculum is designed with your best interest in mind. Trust the process!
- Bathroom and drink breaks are allowed when permission is granted. Snack breaks are also allowed if the snack is easy to access and can be eaten quickly and without a mess between rotations. Healthy snacks are encouraged. No junk food is allowed.
- Piercings (other than one small stud earring per ear in the earlobe) are a safety hazard and are not allowed.
- Nail polish on fingers and toes is not allowed during the competitive season (December through May).
- Summer practices are HOT. Have extra deodorant, a small sweat towel, and an extra leotard in your bag at every summer practice session. More often than not you will change leotards in the middle of practice.
- Please be prepared if you are on your period. Communicate with your female coaches with any questions/concerns that may arise during practice during these times.
- We expect and enforce proper attitudes while training. Team members must listen to, respect and adhere to the training outline established daily by the coach. Disrespect will not be tolerated and immature attitudes are discouraged. Major conduct violations include crying due to frustration or pouting, eye rolling, back talk, cheating on assignments, lying, unproductive effort, improper tone of voice or improper body language when addressing teammates, coaches and/or other adults. We expect eye contact. We expect complete effort at all times, as our sport is far too dangerous not to give full effort. We enforce honesty and integrity at all times. Behaving poorly could be cause for removal from the practice space, gym floor, competition, etc.
- Remain attentive and supportive of your teammates. Congratulate your teammates on their accomplishments. Gymnastics is a team sport and your support will help create a positive and energetic atmosphere.
- Listen, respect, and respond to coaching corrections, advice or directives. If you don't understand a correction, you need to explain your confusion immediately to your coach. There are no stupid questions.

How to communicate with coaches

U.S. Gold team admin will contact you through a **Remind Text** regarding anything important throughout the season. Please join both groups (your competition level and your practice group) when asked **immediately** as you will receive your most important announcements this way. All vital information such as schedules, meet information and holiday schedules will be posted on the team gym front door as soon as they are available.

If you need to contact a coach, please do the following:

1. Send an email to usgoldteamgym@gmail.com and allow 24 hours for a response (72 hours if it is a weekend as coaches might be traveling for competition).
2. If the information is urgent (injury, sickness, impending practice issue) and cannot wait 24 hours, please text message the coaches at the following number and **please state who you are and what gymnast it concerns:**
for levels 6 -10 contact, Coach Kelly (850) 533-0089
for levels Silver and Gold, contact Coach Hannah (812) 599-0151
for level Bronze, contact Coach Heather (850)797-1698
3. If you have followed the proper channels and have not received a response by the next business day (or Monday if you left the message on Friday or later), please send an email to Kathy at usgoldteamgym@gmail.com or leave a message at the Destin rec gym (850) 654-3124 to let us know.

If you need to discuss something at length such as progress or development, please plan to set a meeting time with the coaches as this is not a topic that can be handled via text message or quickly before or after a practice. Please understand that even though you think your question might be quick, coaches may not be available to speak while coaching or while preparing for practice. It is very important to follow the communication guidelines for everyone's benefit.

Social Media and Special Event Policy

U.S. Gold takes pride in its reputation. We strive to make every experience for our students a positive one. At no point in time should a parent, family member, family friend, or team member post negative things about the program, an event, a meet, a practice, etc. on any social media forum. Everyone has a bad day, a bad practice, a bad performance. Instead of taking it to social media, contact your coaches and get the issue resolved in the appropriate way. Blasting the team program, coaches, other participants, or events on social media is not a productive use of energy and will solve nothing. **Participating in this kind of activity can result in removal from the event, practice, or the program without forgiveness of the contract balance.**

Competitive Team Pricing Policies

Monthly Tuition	To be withdrawn on the 7th day of each calendar month. If the 7 th day falls on a weekend or holiday, it will be withdrawn on the next business day.
Late Payment Penalty	Tuition is considered late as of the 7th of each month and will be assessed a late payment fee of \$35.00
Refund policy	U.S. Gold Gymnastics does not offer refunds for any reason nor do we prorate for missed training sessions due to injuries, sickness or competitions. Monthly tuition is determined by considering the cost of the total program for the year and not a per-hour charge. The total cost is based on 50 weeks per year (there is no team practice the week of Christmas or Sports Festival week in May).
Membership Fee	Team members are charged an annual registration fee in the amount of \$80.00 and must pay a USAG Membership Fee of \$20 for Xcel Levels and \$54 for Optional Levels 6-10.
Year-Round Commitment	Although we encourage families to vacation together, it is our policy that competitive team members must consider training at U.S. Gold Gymnastics to be a year-round commitment. Your commitment to a 12-month training cycle ensures consistency in coaching and greater progress toward achieving goals.
Competition Fees	Your contractual obligation to pay for competition fees includes: competition entry fees, coaching session fees, coaches' food per diem, coaches' hotel rooms, rental cars & gas, and/or airline tickets. This is not included in your tuition. This is a separate fee that is included in your payment schedule and included in your contract NOT TO INCLUDE Regionals, Easterns or Nationals for Levels 6-10.

Additional Costs

Other than monthly tuition and competition fees outlined in your contract, you will also be required to purchase:

Competition Uniform for Xcel Bronze, Silver and Gold

- Competitive Leotard - \$215
- Competitive Warm-up Jacket - \$93
- Competitive Warm-up Tights - \$18
- Meet Backpack - \$55

Competition Uniform for Level 6 -10

- Competitive Leotard - \$340
- Competitive Warm-up Jacket - \$80
- Competitive Warm-up Tights - \$18
- Meet Backpack - \$75
- Slides for feet - \$30

Workout Gear: (prices are approximate and **not sold at U.S. Gold**)

- Grips, wristbands, and grip bag (for levels gold and up only) - \$50
- Tiger Paws (level 6 and up) - \$40
- Athletic Tape and pre-wrap - \$10

Floor routine choreography fees (price includes cost of music)

- Xcel Bronze \$30
- Xcel Silver \$50
- Xcel Gold \$150
- Level 6: \$150
- Level 7: \$175
- Level 8-10: \$250

Mobility Testing: We offer a mobility meet at the end of May and again in October at the team gym for all gymnasts eligible. The price for each level test is \$75.

End of Season Banquet: Our team celebrates the end of meet season in May with a banquet where the gymnasts are recognized for their accomplishments throughout the season.

- Banquet Price - \$20 per adult/\$15 for children under age of 12
- No fee for team gymnast