



VAIL GYMNASTICS TEAM HANDBOOK

2015/2016

Congratulations to all of you for being part of the Vail Competitive Team. You have all shown the potential and desire to be part of this prestigious group.

We welcome you.

As you hopefully realize, being a part of the team is a huge commitment, and we ask that you read and understand all of the expectations set forth in this handbook and make an informed decision about whether being a Vail Gymnastics Team Member is for you at this time.

By paying your tuition you are agreeing to the terms of this handbook.

Many of you have participated in our program. If you are new to the competitive aspect of the program, we would like to welcome you to this exciting part of our program. Due to the fact that the gymnasts train more and the parents interact more, this part of our program is very personal and family-like.

We hope you will enjoy being a part of our Vail Gymnastics Family!

We guarantee excellent gymnastics training and progress if you choose to commit to attending classes and to working as hard as you can. We will push you to your limits and beyond, while maintaining a positive learning environment.

We will help you become better gymnasts and better people. You will learn life-long lessons through dedication, responsibility, respect, discipline, sacrifice and appreciation through these you will have more poise, confidence and self-esteem.



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a safe, fun, and positive gymnastics program while promoting the value of gymnastics as a means of human development, and encourage safe techniques and excellence in all aspects of gymnastics.

To inspire creativity, self-confidence, and self-esteem specifically to help children grow into happy and healthy individuals.

Helping our athletes achieve their personal best.

Maintaining a coaching staff with a high level of integrity, experience and professionalism.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We support families in becoming and aspiring to be the best they can be, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

For children, we use gymnastics as a physical fitness and strive to create an environment where children are shown respect, feel safe, are challenged physically, and develop ownership of physical skills. This approach is empowering and enables children to explore beyond their normal comfort level, resulting in independent, confident, and self-assured young people. We believe this approach helps to create confident, healthy, and socially adept individuals.

WE BELIEVE

That the sport of gymnastics is beneficial to everyone. Gymnastics allows athletes to develop strength, flexibility, and agility. These physical qualities are not only useful in gymnastics achievement, but, are also important to an individual's health and well-being. The performance of gymnastics skills demonstrates perseverance and an ability to overcome fears and as gymnasts master new skills, they develop self-esteem. They also develop both mental and physical strength that is not only valuable in gymnastics, but will also serve them well in their future endeavours.



CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS CONCERNING TEAM:

1. Tuition and Team Fees –Jill Johnson, Office Administrator & Julie Cotter, Director
2. Team questions, policy or concerns – Maryann Oehlerking, Head Coach & Julie Cotter
3. Gym issues, schedule or parent relations – Head Coach/Director

LEVELS OF COMPETITION

Vail Gymnastics is a member club and competes in the USA Gymnastics program. USA gymnastics' main offices are located in Indianapolis, Indiana, and are responsible for the administration of all gymnastics in the United States. USA Gymnastics is responsible for producing the competitive structure, along with its rules and regulations, which guides the athletes that represent our country in international competitions. Included in this responsibility is the development of the age group programs that direct our gymnasts from the beginning stages.

There are 11 levels to the USA Gymnastics Women's Program. According to the USAG organization, Levels 1-4 are levels that center on teaching the basic core skills for each of the four Olympic Events. Their development consists of doing routines that involve the fundamentals of body positions, foot positions, and basic gymnastic skills.

Level 6 and 7 is the bridge between compulsories and optional. USAG mandates certain skills (for example, a back layout on floor), while restricting other skills that are considered too difficult. Beyond meeting those requirements, the gymnast is free to have her own choreography and arrange the skills in her routine as she and her coach see fit.

Level 8 also has skill restrictions. Once a gymnast makes it to Level 9 and 10, however, there are no restrictions. Gymnasts are also eligible for receiving connection value or bonus points in these levels. Many college gymnasts are former Level's 9, 10, or Elite competitors.

If you've watched the Olympics, you've seen elite gymnasts. Elites are divided into junior (ages 11-15) and senior (ages 16 and up). These athletes have the opportunity to be selected for the National Team, which competes domestically and internationally.



COMPETITIONS/ LEVEL DETERMINATION

There are very easy qualification scores (from the national office) to move from one level to another. Thus we set our own standards. Another more damaging problem is there are no maximum scores or move up policies. If a coach felt it necessary, they could have a team of girls compete at level 6 for their entire career. This is not likely however holding gymnasts back for the purpose of looking good as a team is very common. Therefore it is not uncommon to have gymnasts with 3 & 4 years at one level compete with first year girls. Each season is unpredictable and seasons vary in success.

The Vail Gymnastics staff determines when and what level to compete each athlete based on the following guidelines. One major factor is safety - gymnastics can be very dangerous.

- 1.) Consistent safe performance in the gym is essential before we allow routines in a competition setting. Consistency is shown within several weeks of time. The coaching staff determines the safety of the athlete.
- 2.) We want the athlete to feel good about their performance and have a shot at a reward for their efforts. Whether we want them to or not, they will compare themselves to others. Self-esteem is fragile and an important factor for the future of their progress. This is a difficult choice sometimes, but will be made with the athlete's best interest in mind.
- 3.) Another important factor is our own standards of quality. To move an athlete up a level, we look at what and how the skills are being performed, the work ethic and desire of each gymnast. The athlete must prove to us that they can be successful at the next level. This again is an educated judgment call from the coaching staff.
- 4.) **TESTING!!**
For Compulsory levels we will test the athletes three times throughout the year:
 - Our first testing will take place in February when they conclude their season in the winter. This testing will determine where the gymnast is prior to their 'off-season'. These scores are only used as a base line for the athlete.
 - The second testing date will be in May. This testing will determine how much the gymnast has progressed in the spring season and scores will help determine how much work needs to be put in over the summer to prepare for the next level. The gymnasts' scores should improve from the scores recorded in February if the athlete has put in the time and effort. This testing will also decide which 'training group' they will be placed in during the summer.
 - The final testing will be held in August. August testing is **FINAL** and will help determine what level the athlete is ready to safely and successfully compete at the first competition. Vail Gymnastics requires a score of 75% overall on final testing to advance. If a 75% is not reached in August testing, the gymnast must complete private lessons or attend extra practice time in order to prepare for competition safely. These and other



options can be discussed with the coach. A final and educated decision will be made by the coaching staff.

This method helps create a fair, safe, and successful preparation for competition while promoting the importance of class attendance in order to be able to execute all of the skills for the next level.

PAYMENTS

Payments are required in order to participate in meets. We will send you the information as quickly as we receive it. Entry fees and coaches expenses will be requested directly from the parent. No entries will be accepted past the deadline unless there is a family emergency that prevented you from coming by the gym or making payment. If this happens, please call us so we can enter your child in the meet. We cannot do so after the meet director's deadline has passed. If your child does not have workout on the day of the deadline then please send money in early. A meet director sets the deadlines so they know the number of participants they have competing. This is when awards are ordered and competitive sessions are set. Then they send each participating club a schedule and we send the information to you. Please check your email daily, as this is our communication with you. Meet directors DO NOT refund money on entries regardless of circumstance.

It is the goal of Vail Gymnastics to let compulsory parents know in August what their meet fees and coaches assessments will be for the upcoming competition season. Typically all meet and competition fees are due by the middle of October.

Optional level parents will be sent meet costs by November 1st. All competition expenses/costs are typically due by mid-January.

*Parents are not permitted to "pick and choose" which meets their child will attend. By doing so, the athlete will not benefit from the correct progressive competitive schedule.

State Meet: Championship Meet held in the State for all competitors that have scored the qualifying score to attend. This is the final meet for levels 3-6 (at the state level) of their season in order to determine the "Best of the Best" in the state.

Regionals: Championship Meets for Level's 7-10. This meet is within our Regional area, which includes 7 states. Those are Colorado, Arkansas, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma,



Texas and Wyoming. This is the final competition of the season for Level 7 and 8. It is also a qualification point for Level 9 and 10 for their respective National Championship.

Eastern & Western Nationals: Championship Meet for Level 9. This meet is held as a final meet for Level 9s. It involves the Eastern or Western regions of the country. Level 9 therefore competes against half of the United States. Colorado gyms compete in the Western half.

National Championships: Championship Meet for Level 10. This meet involves the whole United States. It is the final meet of the Junior Olympic season.

If your child qualifies for any of the above meets in their given level, these fees are collected separately from the girls meet schedule. Costs and due dates are subject to change year to year.

TUITION COSTS

Tuition costs are due according to the yearly calendar. Team tuition is collected from September-May. Summer costs are collected according to the summer billing calendar. The calendar is broken down into 4 week billing cycles. Credit cards (preferred method of payment) are processed on the tuition due dates and email receipts are sent out. If you pay by cash or check please be pro-active and make payments on time and according to the payment calendar. Any late payments without notification will be charged a late fee. We do not invoice monthly, we expect payment to be received by due date.

All Vail Gymnastics Competitive Team athletes are by enrollment and tuition only. There are **NO DROP-INS**. The expectation is for the athletes to attend all practice times required throughout the entire year in order to maintain a safe level of progression. Tuition is subject to change from season to season.



COMPETITIVE READINESS

- 1.** Everyone on the competitive team (as long as they have achieved their testing score) is allowed to compete (even if only on a few events) at the first competition. These are normally learning meets for our first year athletes and assist our athletes in understanding their individual scores. Safety is the only factor involved in the decision of not allowing someone to compete in the first competition.
- 2.** During the remainder of the competitive season, safety is our number one concern. To be considered eligible for competition, it is required that each gymnast is able to safely execute ALL of their required elements on all four events. Being prepared for competition also includes: skill level, competitive readiness, physical and mental ability.
- 3.** All injured athletes are considered on a case-by-case basis. If an athlete has met up with the requirements but then suffers an injury, as long as safety is not an issue, she will be allowed to compete on whatever event(s) she is ready and the doctor allows. Tuition will not be pro-rated for an injury. The gymnast is expected to attend practice to the best of their ability.
- 4.** The Vail Gymnastics coaching staff reserves the right to scratch any athlete at any time from any event or meet based on safety, discipline or behavior. Please note that mental readiness may also be a factor in safety.

Athlete attendance (specifically during the two weeks prior to a competition) is mandatory. The final practice before a meet may be shortened or cancelled to provide adequate time for rest and travel for the competition. Tuition is not pro-rated for canceled or shortened practices. This was taken into consideration when tuition costs were determined.

STATE QUALIFYING SCORES PER LEVEL:

Level 3- 33.00 (Vail Gymnastics Standard)

Level 4- 33.00 (Vail Gymnastics Standard)

Level 5 - 33.00

Level 6 - 33.00

Level 7 - 33.00

Level 8 - 32.00

Level 9 - 32.00

Level 10 -32.00



PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS/REQUIREMENTS

Attendance is an extremely large part of the sport of gymnastics. It is very important that our gymnasts and their parents take their commitment as a Vail competitive gymnast seriously. Good attendance is essential for the progress and safety of your athlete. In order to make sure we are taking the necessary steps to keep your gymnast progressing safely we have an attendance policy.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

1. The athlete must be ON TIME for practice. If your gymnast is late this puts them at risk for injury because they are not completing their entire warm-up. This is a great concern to the coaches at Vail Gymnastics and they will not be held responsible for injury because a gymnast failed to be on time and fulfill their warm up requirements.
2. An excused absence consists of a doctor's appointment, family emergency, illness, injury, or school function, etc. A parent or guardian MUST notify the gym BEFORE the missed practice. You can do this by calling the Gymnastics Center at 970-479-2287 and leaving a message on the machine or with a coach. Please contain the reason for your child missing practice in your message.
3. We understand the need of family time such as vacations. It would be to the benefit of your gymnast if you could try your best to schedule vacations during your gymnasts off season. This is so your gymnast is not missing crucial practices before a competition. Vacations taken during a monthly billing cycle require notification to coaching staff and office staff 30 days prior to vacation dates. If vacation is taken in the summer months, please try to schedule around mandatory summer camps and practice weeks.
4. Having excessive absences and coming late to practices will result in consequences for your gymnast. The gymnast will not be progressing at the same rate as the rest of their teammates and they will be putting themselves at risk for not competing and performing well on testing. If your child does not have their skills, they will not be able to compete. This is a problem we don't wish to see our gymnasts face. **If they fail to take their attendance seriously they will inevitably suffer.**
5. If your gymnast is injured or severely ill a parent or guardian needs to contact the head coach and plan out an altered workout schedule. This schedule will be carried out until the gymnast is back to normal health. Injured gymnasts are still required to



attend practice and work on strength and flexibility using uninjured body parts. This helps maintain a safe level of strength necessary to progress back to normal health once the injury has healed.

GYM RULES FOR GYMNASTS AND PARENTS

1. No cell phone use during practice hours.
2. No food inside the gym.
3. No pants or tights should be worn with leotards, only SHORTS.
4. No gum, candy, or sweets during practice unless needed for health reasons.
5. Parents should not be contacted by the athlete during practice hours unless a coach approves. Parents will be contacted by coaching staff directly in case of emergency or illness.
6. Parents may NOT sit in the waiting room and watch practice for more than **30 minutes per practice**. We suggest parents drop off- and pick up gymnasts only to avoid any disruption during the extent of the practice.
7. No parental coaching from the waiting area and no communication with gymnast in waiting area unless authorized by coaching staff.
8. Gymnasts must ask a coach to be dismissed from the floor early, for water breaks, or to use the bathroom.
9. Gossiping, criticizing, or making judgments towards other teammates will not be tolerated. If necessary, parents will be contacted for disciplinary action.
10. We are teaching our children to self-advocate; therefore the gymnast needs to inform coaches of issues during or after practice time.

SUMMER PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS (June-August)

Gymnastics is a year-round sport; therefore gymnasts are expected to attend ALL summer practices required for their level. The summer months are considered a gymnast's "off-season", however they are some of the most important learning and building months in their career. Summers are used for skill learning and progression to the next level. A gymnast cannot spend their off-season in and out of the gym at their leisure and expect to be ready for competition the following season. In order to maintain a safe level of progression and to ensure



that the gymnast stays on track, it is important to maintain good attendance throughout the summer.

All Vail Gymnastics Competitive Team athletes are by enrollment and tuition only. There are **NO DROP-INS**. The competitive team summer schedule will be finalized in the late winter/early spring and will give ample time to plan family vacations around mandatory summer camps. There will be 3 to 4 separate weeks of camp held between June-August.

Vacations need to be addressed to the coaching staff at least 30 days prior. This gives coaching staff time to plan and provide the gymnast with supplemental workouts to be used during vacation time. If a gymnast does miss a large fraction of the required summer practices, this needs to be discussed with the Head Coach and plans will need to be made accordingly.

Vail gymnasts are asked to find a gymnastics facility to train at while away for extended periods of time and the Vail Gymnastics Head Coach will need the gym name and coaches' information with whom they choose to train with. Communication between coaches can help ensure that the gymnasts are training the skills that their Vail Gymnastics coaches are requiring of them.

COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS/EXPECTATIONS

- 1.) All gymnasts should support other team members at all times.
- 2.) Any competing gymnast who is experiencing a problem/difficulty is expected not to let their problem affect other gymnasts. Keep it between you and the coaches.
- 3.) A positive CAN-DO! attitude must be present before stepping into the gym. Gymnasts must enter the competition with the goal to perform their routines to the best of their ability.
- 4.) The gymnast should not consume sugar or junk food before the competition. Fresh fruit or juice and a small snack is to be eaten within 30 minutes of warm ups.
- 5.) The gymnast is to keep their focus on the meet. No speaking to anyone in the stands without permission from their coach. Always ask permission from a coach before leaving the team. This includes water and bathroom breaks.



6.) The gymnasts must be respectful of all judges and coaches no matter how their performance was completed, good or bad. The gymnast must directly report back to the coach after their dismount.

Gymnast's Personal Responsibilities:

- Make sure you have all personal equipment with you at the meet. Optional gymnasts should bring an extra copy of their music (CD or iPod) and a spare pair of grips.
- Bring extra tape, pre-wrap, or tan colored braces for any injuries that need to be wrapped.
- ALWAYS arrive 15 minutes to ½ hour before the open warm-ups. Late arrival because of traffic or getting lost will make it VERY difficult for physical and mental preparation.
- Hair preparation is to be completed BEFORE the warm-ups start. Leotard and warm-ups must also be on and competition ready before warm-ups begin.
- When awards are presented, you will remain in your competition attire until awards are finished. When receiving an award, stand with good posture and smile. Show appreciation to other gymnasts, coaches, meet directors and anyone else who helped support you during the meet.
- Show sportsmanlike behavior at all times.
- Absolutely no use of profanity or harsh slang language is allowed while competing as part of the Vail Gymnastics Team

PRIVATE LESSONS & CHOREOGRAPHY

Privates are to be scheduled with the coach directly. A 1 hour lesson is \$50.00 and is paid by cash or check directly to the coach at the time of the lesson. If you plan to have continual lessons with a coach, the coach may be able to negotiate a set rate. Private lessons may be suggested by a coach as an alternative if the gymnast has missed a significant amount of practices or needs extra time in the gym for skill work.

Choreography for optional level gymnasts (levels 6 and up) is to be scheduled through the Head Coach. Floor routines can be choreographed in house by either Maryann Oehlerking or Julie Cotter. Floor music needs to be chosen and approved by the Head Coach. If you plan to get your routine



choreographed from an outside source, this also needs to be discussed and approved by the head coach.

The Vail staff may bring in outside choreographers as an option for the gymnasts. Payment goes directly to the choreographer. The cost for in-house choreography is \$150 per floor routine. Outside choreographers range from \$250-\$500.

Beam routines are separate and may require a private session with the coach if it is not learned during practice time.

GRIEVANCES

If there is an incident that you would like to discuss, please allow a 'cool-down' period to address the incident before bringing it to the coaches' attention. We ask that the gymnast bring any injury, illness, or related issues to the coaches' attention during practice. If a parent has an issue that needs to be addressed with the coach the parent MUST contact the Head Coach by email ONLY. An email may be sent during office hours to the head coach expressing any questions or concerns. If questions cannot be answered via email, the Head Coach will then schedule a time to have a meeting or phone call to discuss the issues.

The coaches should NOT be contacted on their personal phones (calls or texts) or after gym hours (9:00am-8:00pm). If the problem is urgent and the coach has approved of contact on their personal phone this may be an exception.

THE REWARD

Their reward for hard work and commitment will not only be the quality gymnasts they have the opportunity to become, but the self-esteem they will gain from their accomplishments, the relationships they will build, and the life-long lessons they will learn. They will stand out whenever they are doing gymnastics. They will stand out on their own. They will become better women overall.

In closing, we would again like to congratulate you on your success. Vail Gymnastics knows how special it is to be a competitive gymnast and the beauty



of its staff, desire, curriculum, and facility which offers a variety of classes, programs, levels, and styles to accommodate everyone.

Please discuss with us any concerns or questions you may have. We are attempting to create a program that we feel is best for a demanding, yet beneficial program. Your input is appreciated!