2020-21 Handbook

Girls’ Gymnastics
Competitive Team
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PART I Introduction to Team Oswego Gymnastics

Welcome to the Team

The Oswegoland Park District welcomes you to Team Oswego Gymnastics. Thank you for choosing to be a part of our family. It is our goal to provide an opportunity for your child to learn, develop and mature into an outstanding young adult.

Mission Statement

Team Oswego is committed to assisting each gymnast in their pursuit of excellence in both, the sport of gymnastics and as an individual. We will strive to instill self-confidence, persistence, teamwork and a positive self-image that can be carried throughout their lifetime. While experiencing positive, safe, mentally and physically healthy training, each gymnast will be encouraged to have fun and celebrate their successes.

Team Philosophy

Team coaches will place gymnasts at the level where she can be happy, safe, and confident. This means that every gymnast must be able to perform the required skills and routines comfortably at a given level. The skills should not be at the edge of or beyond her ability level. Athletes are never asked or expected to perform skills or routines in a competition that they cannot perform consistently in practice.

To understand and appreciate what goes into the development of a competitive gymnast, one must understand exactly what it is we are trying to achieve during training. Four fundamental areas are addressed during training: strength training, flexibility, skill development, and mental training.

- Strength training is a very important part of gymnastics as it also can play a role in the reduction of injuries. We use many varieties of conditioning in order to keep it challenging and hopefully a fun part of training.
- Flexibility is also critical to the long-term success of the gymnast. Flexibility adds to the aesthetic appeal of the performance, allows the athlete to master skills more easily and plays a role in reducing the frequency and seriousness of injuries.
- Skill development falls into two categories: basics and new skills. Basics are the foundation of gymnastics. If a gymnast does not have strong basics, his or her entire performance is weakened. These core skills must be continually refined in order to move on to more difficult skills and to improve performance. New skills are introduced as the coaches see fit.
- Mental training is used to try to create the competitive atmosphere during practice. Visualization techniques are practiced to reduce or eliminate anxiety that may occur at competition.
Team Oswego Selection

Team participation is by invitation only. Initial placement and subsequent advancement from one team level to the next is determined by the Team Oswego coaching staff. Remaining on the team will be determined by the athlete’s work habits, coachability, commitment, desire and both the athlete’s and their parent’s attitude and behavior. As gymnastic professionals, we will make placement decisions that preserve the integrity of the program and that are in the best interest of the athlete. Each May staff will evaluate the athletes and make recommendations on the appropriate competition level.

Team Structure

Training Team: This is a stepping stone to the rigors of competitive gymnastics, to give our gymnasts the opportunity to see if this sport is right for them. This Pre Team membership offers an opportunity to experience gymnastics beyond the recreational level. Required practice is 2 hours, 2 times per week.

Xcel: This USAG program allows gymnasts to compete routines that are customized to their strengths, taste, and personality. The Xcel program is ideal for not only entry-level gymnasts, but a great way to prepare gymnasts to try out for a high school gymnastics team. Required practice is 6-12 hours per week depending on competition level. Gymnasts may advance through Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond levels.

High School Prep: Girls entering 6th grade through high school will train to become a high school gymnast. The focus will be on skill building, form, flexibility and conditioning. Gymnasts in Prep will not attend competitions, only train. Practice hours will be 8-12 per week.

Private Lessons
The Park District offers private gymnastic instruction for gymnasts who express an interest in more concentrated, personal training. All team members taking private lessons must be current with their tuition and any other financial obligations. Private gymnastic lessons must be paid in full to complete registration and are billed separately from Team Oswego fees.
Gymnast Expectations

The decision to join Team Oswego Gymnastics is important as it reflects a commitment to the team for an entire year.

- Each gymnast is expected to attend all regularly scheduled workouts. Please arrive on time to all workouts. That means on the floor ready to work out when practice begins.
- Any behavior or attitude in a practice or a meet that has an adverse effect on the team will be grounds for removal from practice or meet.
- Girls should wear a properly fitted leotard. Please avoid excessively baggy clothing, as it is a safety concern. Hair should be appropriately tied so as not to interfere in any way during the workout. Please do not wear any jewelry (other than stud earrings) during workouts.
- Required equipment to be brought to each practice
  - A pair of 2.5 lb ankle weights labeled with gymnast’s name
  - Water bottle - gymnast will not be permitted to leave the gym until designated break times.
- It is the coach’s discretion if the child wears grips. The coach will help size the child so the parents can order the correct grips.
- Break times are given with a designated area for these breaks. Please bring only nutritious snacks to eat during these times. No candy, pop, greasy foods for snacks. Please make sure to clean up after yourself. Remember, it’s your gym and it’s only as nice as you keep it!
- Work hard and try your best. Every gymnast is different and will advance at different rates. Concern yourself with things over which you have control your attitude and your effort.
- Alert your coach when your body is telling you to slow down or stop. If you are sick, on medication, or injured, we need to know. Pain is the body’s way of telling you to stop.
- Treat your coaches with respect. Your coach wants you to succeed and to be safe, in order to do so it is important to follow his or her instructions. There is no place in the gym for discourteous and unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Treat your teammates with respect and kindness. Joining in any activity that is hurtful to a teammate is destructive and distracts from achieving our goals.
- Be honest. Cheating is disrespectful to your coaches, your parents, and most importantly to yourself. If you cannot or will not complete a task, be honest about it.
- Maintain a positive attitude when facing fears and frustrations. Gymnastics is demanding and difficult. All athletes suffer setbacks, frustration, fear, and defeat. Expect and learn from these situations in order to overcome them. Set high goals and achieve them step-by-step.
Parent Expectations

A family’s role in team gymnastics is key to a successful team experience.

• Check e-mail regularly to stay current with team activities. E-mail is our first form of communication. Please give us as many e-mail addresses as you like.

• There are to be no parents walking in the gym during practice. Not only can this be unsafe but it takes time away from coaching. If you need to speak with your child’s coach, please leave a note with staff at the front desk, call 630.554.4061, or email Jen McFall at jmcfall@oswegolandpd.org to arrange a time to talk.

• If you have a question or concern about a coach, a safety issue, or a policy, please speak to your child’s coach first. If he or she is unable to resolve the issue, you will be referred to the Gymnastic Supervisor.

• Let us know if your child will miss practice by calling 630.554.4061 or emailing Jen McFall at jmcfall@oswegolandpd.org.

• Parents will be registered each season for the Remind system. During inclement weather, the Oswegoland Park District will make every effort to remain open. If practice must be canceled, this is how you will be notified.

• Behavior of the parents is a reflection on our gym’s reputation as well as on our gymnasts. Derogatory comments about any program or coaches made during meets or in the lobby will not be tolerated. It is possible that a gymnast will be asked to leave our program because of the actions or inactions of her parents. While we never want to punish a child for the actions of parents, we will not tolerate parents who by their words or actions do not support the policies and values of our team program.

• Please maintain integrity in your social media posts regarding Team Oswego gymnasts, coaches and host gyms. We have made valuable relationships in the gymnastic community and do not want them tarnished in any way. Also be mindful when posting photos of other children. Some parents do not approve of their children being on social media in any form.
Behavior Policy

It is the goal of the Oswegoland Park District to provide each program participant an environment that is safe and secure, therefore, every participant is expected to treat other participants and Park District staff, volunteers, equipment, and facilities with respect.

If the expectations outlined on the proceeding pages are not met: the following guidelines will be used.

- Harming or endangering oneself
- Intentional misuse of equipment
- Failing to follow verbal instructions meant to ensure safety
- Intentional/avoidable damage to property or equipment
- Theft
- Harming others, such as, but not limited to:
  - Throwing objects at or near others
  - Fighting, hitting, biting or kicking others
  - Verbally or non-verbally abusing others, i.e., name calling, taunting, bullying, etc. reflective of misbehavior
- Using inappropriate language
- Exhibiting behavior that undermines the authority of Park District staff and/or volunteers

**NOTE:** Any behavior that endangers the participants or others may result in action up to and including permanent suspension from the Park District program.

If unacceptable behavior occurs, the Park District staff or volunteers will follow the guidelines listed below:

1. A verbal warning will be given to the participant
2. A verbal warning will be given, the participant will be required to refocus before returning to practice and their parent will be contacted.
3. If unacceptable behavior occurs a third time, a parent will be contacted again, and child will be suspended for remainder of the day and one (1) day suspension.
4. If unacceptable behavior occurs after one (1) day suspension, a meeting with the coach, gymnast, parents and supervisor will occur to determine the child’s future in the program.

Steps may be eliminated based on severity of offense at the discretion of the gymnastic supervisor.
Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Our competitive team program is structured so that each group receives the conditioning and event training needed each week of practice. When a gymnast misses a practice, she misses training that is necessary to become a strong, flexible, well trained athlete.

Absences: If a gymnast is going to miss practice, please call the gym at 630.554.4061 or send an email to jmcfall@oswegolandpd.org. A gymnast must attend every practice scheduled during the two weeks prior to a competition weekend or she may not be allowed to compete in that meet. If your child is unable to train due to a conflict with other activities, Team Oswego will not offer make-up classes. Occasionally due to your child’s or the team’s participation in an outside meet, her training day may be missed. Five credit days have been considered when calculating fees to compensate for such an occasion.

Tardiness: Attendance involves arriving on time and staying for the entire practice. The warm-up routine helps prevent injury and must be completed despite a gymnast’s late arrival. Prior arrangements must be made with the coach if a gymnast needs to leave early. Gymnasts who habitually arrive late and leave early from practice will have trouble performing to their highest potential at meets.

Vacations: The sport of gymnastics is a year-round commitment. We understand summer is a busy vacation time, so we encourage gymnasts to ask for a conditioning list if they are absent. Gymnasts continue to work on learning new skills and improving strength and flexibility during the non-competitive season when there is less pressure. Every effort should be made to maintain good attendance year round.

Excessive Absences: There are NO refunds for excessive absences nor are there pro-rated prices for monthly fees due to excessive absences other than medical. Continual absences will result in a meeting with parents and the gymnast with coaches. Gymnasts who miss more than four weeks of practice may be asked to work out and compete at a lower level or return to the recreation program. This policy is recommended by USAG to prevent injuries to a gymnast that may be caused by lack of conditioning.
Injuries and Medical Issues

Safety is always top priority. Recreational programs and activities are intended to challenge and engage the physical, mental, and emotional resources of each participant. Despite having proper preparation, instruction, conditioning, and equipment, there is still a risk of serious injury when participating in gymnastics. Parents and gymnasts must understand the potential risk for injury involved with indoor recreational programs. Although preventative measures are taken to avoid injuries, it is impossible for the Oswegoland Park District to guarantee absolute safety. All team participants must sign a waiver & release form before participating in Team Oswego Gymnastics.

- Injured gymnasts are expected to participate in practice and gym activities to the extent possible. It is often possible to work around injuries and to turn a difficult time into something positive by increased work on flexibility, strength, specific events, or skills.
- Full monthly payment must be paid during injury. Your account may be adjusted for time missed once the gymnast is released to return to full practice.
- Any gymnast who is out for one week or more must present a “return to activity” release signed by his or her doctor in order to return to practice.
- If a gymnast is released from the doctor within 4 weeks of a meet, the coaches will determine if the child still competes in the meet.
- A gymnast must be released to full activity before the meet check request is submitted to finance in order to participate in any state, regional or national meet.
- If a gymnast will miss practice or is unable to remain on team due to injury, please contact Jen McFall at 630.554.4061 or jmcfall@oswegolandpd.org.

Gymnasts with any special needs due to medical conditions, for example, asthma, must be responsible enough to be able to take care of those needs themselves or must have a parent/guardian present to assist them with those medical needs. All medical conditions should be marked on the gymnast’s team paperwork as indicated.

Emergency Procedures

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency involving your child, the Oswegoland Park District has in place the following procedure:

1. Emergency first aid will be administered, including a call to 911 if necessary.
2. You will be contacted using the emergency contact information provided.
Financial Policy

Your child’s involvement in gymnastics is a commitment of time, effort, and money. The athletes train in a large and well-equipped gym under the direction of educated, experienced, and professional staff. In addition to wages and equipment, the overhead incurred in running a large gymnastics program includes lease, utilities, insurance, supplies, and administrative costs. All of these factors are taken into consideration when calculating the yearly tuition fee. You can expect to have a small number of practices cancelled due to holidays, competitions, rest days after long competitions, inclement weather, etc. and this has already been calculated in, as all budgeting is based on 48 weeks of training.

Team tuition is calculated on a yearly basis which will be divided into 11 payments. Those payments are due on the tenth day of the month. You have the opportunity to complete an Auto-Charge Authorization form that allows the Park District to charge your monthly payments on the date due to the credit card or checking account. This method of payment protects you from the additional cost of late fees.

On the 13th of the month, a $25 late fee will be charged to your account. If you cannot make the payment on time, you can avoid the late fee by contacting the Park District’s billing department @ 630.554.4443 prior to the due date to make an alternate payment plan. If that plan is honored, you will not be charged the late fee. If a payment has not been received five (5) days after the due date, and you have not contacted the billing department, your child’s participation may be disrupted. The third time your account is past due, automatic payments will be required to continue in the program.

Notice of intent to cancel enrollment on team must be made in 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.

Divorce or Separation

The custodial parent is responsible for making payments on time, and will be held accountable to pay all past due and late charges. The custodial parent will receive all bills and tax statements.

Additional Fees for Team Gymnasts

Team Fee: A non-refundable Team Fee of $50 will be due at the time of registration.

USAG competition card: Introductory Athlete (Silver team) or Athlete (Gold, Platinum & Diamond) The card must be purchased by the parent before gymnast can be registered for competitions. Purchasing instructions will be given out prior to competitions beginning.

Uniforms: Team uniforms can change from season to season but we do try to keep ours for 2-3 years. Gymnasts’ team uniform includes a leotard and a t-shirt. Gymnasts will be fitted in August. The uniform fee can range from $150-$250 and
need to be paid before you receive the uniform. Black leggings are also required but can be purchased anywhere you choose.
PART III Competitive Season Information

Meet Scheduling
At the beginning of each season, preliminary meet information will be sent via e-mail. Additional meets, changes, and cancellations will also be communicated by email, on our website, and on the bulletin board in the lobby at Boulder Point.

Host clubs set deadlines for meet entries. After this date the host club will set the final meet schedule depending on the number of entries. Typically, the day and session times are not received until a week before the meet. It is not appropriate to call a host gym to see if they have posted this information, please let our office handle communications. Competition days or times are subject to change, by the host gym, at any time before the meet. Please keep this in mind when you receive this season’s meet schedule.

Gymnast Selection Criteria for Meet Invitations
Meets should be a positive experience and therefore gymnast selection is made very carefully by the coaches based on the following criteria:

1. **Performance** – Mastery of skills is based on performance in workouts. In general, gymnasts should be able to perform all required skills at the time the entry fee is due. Gymnasts who are new to a level may be allowed to enter a meet even if they are not prepared on all four events; however, this decision is made by the coaching staff.

2. **Attendance** – Gymnasts missing an excessive number of practices may not be selected for competition. The same could be true for gymnasts that consistently arrive late or leave early from workouts.

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

4. **Eligibility** – Gymnast must have all necessary fees paid, be current on tuition, and be considered active and eligible.
Meet Fees and Travel Expenses

Xcel Silver meet fees include three regular season meets as well as the state meet. Xcel Gold, Platinum and Diamond fees include four regular season meets with state being an additional charge. Xcel Gold, Platinum and Diamond are eligible to qualify for Regional meet which will be an additional cost.

Meet fees will be split into four installments, the first being due on Aug 20. You have the opportunity to complete an Auto-Charge Authorization form that allows the Park District to charge your meet fees on the date due to the credit card or checking account. This method of payment protects you from the additional cost of late fees.

On the 23rd of the month, a $25 late fee will be charged to your account. If you cannot make the payment on time, you can avoid the late fee by contacting the Park District’s billing department @ 630.554.4443 prior to the due date to make an alternate payment plan. If that plan is honored, you will not be charged the late fee. If a payment has not been received five (5) days after the due date, and you have not contacted the billing department, your child’s participation may be disrupted. The third time your account is past due, automatic payments will be required to continue in the program.

Meet fee refunds will not be given after October 31st. With the host gym’s permission, an exception can be made when a doctor’s note prohibits the athlete from participating due to medical reasons. Gymnasts who are unable to attend a scheduled meet should contact the gym office as soon as possible. Once payment has been submitted to the host gym, meet fees are non-refundable.

Gymnasts are responsible for their own transportation to and from competitions, hotel reservations if needed, and any food. We suggest reserving any hotel rooms needed, for the whole weekend, as soon as you can. You’ll receive the exact competition day and time in plenty of time to cancel the days not needed. If you use a service like Expedia, make sure to check cancelation policy prior to making the reservation so you don’t have an issue cancelling the days you won’t need.

Scoring at Meets

Scoring at a gymnastics competition is not the easiest thing to understand. Your gymnast’s scores from meet to meet can vary greatly, even if the routine they perform is similar. It is very hard to compare scores from meet to meet since it can vary due to the different judging styles. It is better to focus on your gymnast’s performance and if they improved. Once the gymnast starts her routines judges will make sure all of the skill requirements are fulfilled then begin deducting tenths for errors.

Examples of a few items that the judge can deduct for:

- Falling
- Stopping (if it is not supposed to in the routine)
- Bent Arms or legs
Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts

• Athletes should arrive in uniform 10 – 15 minutes before open stretch is scheduled to begin.

• Athletes must remain in the designated competition area throughout the course of warm-ups and competition and obey all warm-up regulations and procedures.

• Gymnasts, if you receive a disappointing score, talk your coach about it when the meet is over. Try your best to focus on your upcoming events.

• Gymnasts should be prepared to assist the coach with boards, mats, bar settings, etc. during meets.

• 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 meets.

• Athletes should stay with the team until awards are over and the coach releases them. Team Oswego warm-ups should be worn for the awards ceremony.

• If you are staying to watch another teammate compete or if you have arrived early for warm-ups, stay seated in the bleachers until it is time for you to come onto the competition floor.

Meet Etiquette for Parents

• Team spirit is strongly encouraged. Please be sure to cheer for all Team Oswego gymnasts.

• 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 (judges, score keepers, etc.). Points can be deducted not only from your gymnast but the team score as well for failure to follow these rules.

• Once gymnasts have walked into the competition area for warm-up, they are not allowed to talk to or have contact with the parents until the competition is over. Parents, friends, and/or relatives of the gymnast are not allowed onto the competitive floor under any circumstances. Your child could be removed from the meet as a result of infraction of this rule.

• In case of injury during warm-up or competition, you must stay in the spectator area until your coach flags you onto the floor.
• No flash photography is permitted during a meet. The sudden flash of light could cause a gymnast to be injured. Please check your camera in advance. This applies to power lights on video cameras as well.

• 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 teammates.
Team Oswego Coaching Staff

Gymnastics Supervisor
Jen McFall 630.554.4061 jmcfall@oswegolandpd.org
Team Coaches 630.554.4456

Please leave a message with your name, number, and time you can be reached.

Gymnastics Billing
Susan Lipnick 630.554.4443 slipnick@oswegolandpd.org

Director of Recreation
Tom Betsinger 630.554.4460 tbetsinger@oswegolandpd.org

Background Checks
USA Gymnastics requires background screening on all USA Gymnastics Professional Members as they apply for, or renew membership.

USA Gymnastics mandates criminal background screening on all USA Gymnastics Professional and Instructor members over the age of 18. This process also includes all USA Gymnastics employees and Board members.

USA Gymnastics in partnership with the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) conducts the criminal background screening program. Through NCSI, all professional/instructor members complete a criminal background check that screens for previous criminal behavior which may be inappropriate for contact with children. Screening covers criminal background, sex offender registry and identity verification.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport was created by the United States Olympic Committee in March 2017 as a wholly independent body to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct in Olympic National Governing Bodies. The U.S. Center for SafeSport has exclusive jurisdiction over sexual misconduct allegations, which means USA Gymnastics and its members report any allegations of sexual misconduct they become aware of to the Center for investigation and resolution. To find out more on USA Gymnastics safe sport initiatives please visit usagym.org/SafeSport.”