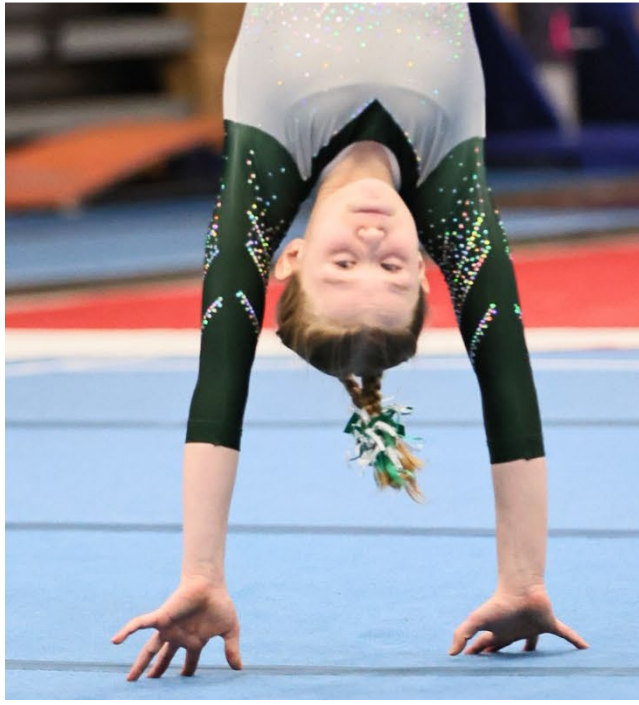




2023-24 Handbook



Competitive Team Gymnastics



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PART I

Introduction to Team

Welcome to the Team

The Oswegoland Park District welcomes you to the Oswego Gems. 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

Our staff is committed to assisting each gymnast in their pursuit of excellence in both, the sport of gymnastics and as an individual. We will encourage each gymnast to be genuine, empowered, mindful and self-confident.

Team Philosophy

While experiencing positive, safe, mentally and physically healthy training, each gymnast will be encouraged to have fun and celebrate their successes. 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, the 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 Selection

Team participation is by invitation only. Initial placement and subsequent advancement from one team level to the next is determined by the coaching staff. Remaining on the team will be determined by the athlete's work habits, coachability, commitment, 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. Depending on the individual's ability, gymnasts can spend 2-3 years in each 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: Experienced gymnasts entering 9th grade will train to be a high school gymnast. The focus will be on skill building, form, flexibility and conditioning. Gymnasts will not attend competitions, only train. Practice hours will be 6-9 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 fees.

Gymnast Expectations

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

- Bring a bag to each practice containing: water bottle, extra leo and a healthy snack.
- 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.
- Gymnasts 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.
- It is the coach's discretion when Gold will begin wearing 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. 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 can control; your attitude and your effort. Any behavior or attitude in a practice or a meet that hurts the team will be grounds for removal from practice or meet.
- 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.
- 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 their instructions. There is no place in the gym for discourteous and unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Treat your teammates with respect and kindness. Joining any activity that is hurtful to a teammate is destructive and distracts from achieving our goals.
- 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.
- If you want to watch practice, please remain in the lobby. Only gymnasts and coaches are permitted in the gym.
- 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.
- Parents will be sent an email to join our group on the Band App. This will be another location to find important information such as practice and competition schedules, uniform ordering, and notification of any emergency gym closings.
- 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 a parent. 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 Gem 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 with 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 the child will be suspended for the 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 the severity of the 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 the 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. We do not offer practice make-ups due to a conflict with other activities. Occasionally due to your child's or the team's participation in an outside meet, her training day may be missed.

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 but we understand vacations will occur. Gymnasts work on learning new skills and improving strength and flexibility throughout the season. Every effort should be made to maintain good attendance year-round. We encourage gymnasts to ask for a conditioning list if they are absent for an extended period of time.

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 a lack of conditioning.

Injuries and Medical Issues

Safety is always a top priority. 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 with the team.

- 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 the 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 leases, 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 canceled due to holidays, competitions, rest days after long competitions, inclement weather, etc. and this has already been calculated, as all budgeting is based on 47 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 of your choice: VISA, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover. This method of payment protects you from the additional cost of late fees.

If you do not choose auto-charge, you are responsible for making your payment on or before the tenth of each month. Monthly bills are not mailed; an email reminder will be sent approximately ten days prior to the due date. A payment received six days or more after the due date will result in a \$25 late fee being charged to your account.

If you cannot make a payment on time, you can avoid the late fee by contacting the Park District's billing department at 630.554.1010 prior to the scheduled due date. You will be asked to make an alternate payment plan, and if that plan is honored the late fee will not be charged.

When a scheduled payment has not been made fifteen days after the date it was due, and you have not contacted the billing department to make alternate payment plans, your child will be withdrawn from the program.

Notice of intent to cancel enrollment on the 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: The Athlete card must be purchased by the parent before the gymnast can be registered for competitions. Purchasing instructions will be emailed to parents in August.

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 July. The leotard fee can range from \$200-\$250. Black capri leggings are also required but can be purchased anywhere you choose. Your gymnast is able to wear plain, black shorts over the leo during competitions. The shorts need to be knee-length or shorter.

Meet Scheduling

In September, 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 Band app.

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. Meets can be scheduled anytime between Friday at 8am to Sunday at 10pm.

Gymnast Selection Criteria for Meet Invitations

Meets should be a positive experience and therefore the coaches based on the following criteria make gymnast selection very carefully:

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, the coaching staff will make this decision.
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 meet fees include four regular season meets with State being an additional charge. Diamonds are eligible to qualify for Regional meet, which will be an additional cost.

Meet fees will be split into three installments, the first being due on September 20th. If you are unable to make your payment on time, you can avoid the \$25 late fee by contacting the District's billing department at 630.554.1010 prior to the due date to arrange for alternative payment options.

Meet fee refunds will not be given after October 31st. A possible 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 the cancelation policy prior to making the reservation so you don't have an issue canceling the days you won't need.

Scoring at Meets

Scoring at a gymnastics competition is not the easiest thing to understand. This is a very subjective sport and all judges are different. 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 on how hard or easy the judge is. 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 Items that the judges can deduct for:

- Falling
- Stopping (if it is not supposed to in the routine)
- Bent Arms or legs
- Flexed Feet
- Spotting
- Not performing a skill
- Performing a skill not allowed at that level

Those are just to name a few!

Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts

- Athletes should arrive at the competition site 10 – 15 minutes before open stretch is scheduled to begin. Athletes should be in uniform and well-groomed and report to their coach at the beginning of scheduled open stretch time.
- Athletes must remain in the designated competition area throughout the course of warm-ups and competition and obey all warm-up regulations and procedures.
- Keep a positive attitude during competition and try not to dwell on scores. Reach for a personal best for each meet.
- 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 that contains at least a bottle of water, small snack, grips (if recommended by coach). The bag should be large enough to hold all of their belongings during meets.
- Athletes will stay for awards dressed in the team warm-ups. Most meets have a formal system for presenting awards. As a participating athlete, you have an obligation to stay for the entire award ceremony and to accept any award presented to you with courtesy and gratitude.
- 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 our 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 from not only your gymnast but also the team score as well for failure to follow these rules.
- Gymnasts must remain with the coach during the meet. Parents, friends, and/or relatives of the gymnast are prohibited from entering in the competition area. Judges can remove your gymnast from the meet for an 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.
- Flash photography is not 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 Coaching Staff

Gymnastics Supervisor

Jen McFall 630.554.4061 jmcfall@oswegolandpd.org

Gymnastics Billing

Sarah Connolly 630.554.4064 sconnolly@oswegolandpd.org

Director of Recreation

Tom Betsinger 630.554.4460 tbetsinger@oswegolandpd.org

Coaching Staff

Brieanne Tingley 630.554.4456 btingley@oswegolandpd.org
Grace Fiduccia gfiduccia@oswegolandpd.org

Background Checks

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

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.

Safe Sport

All Adult Participants who have regular contact and/ or authority over any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor must complete and pass a background check and U110: U.S. Center for SafeSport Core Course Training before contact with any minor athlete.

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 visit <https://usagym.org/pages/education/safesport/>. A

copy of the policy is located in Jen McFall's office.