

# **Team Handbook 2018-2019**

**GCA OF CT**

***Welcome to the Team!!***

## *Welcome!*

First and foremost congratulations on your opportunity to be a part of the Competitive Team! We would like to welcome those families who are new to our Competition Team here at GCA. This team handbook will help to give each family more insight into our Competitive Team program. In order for the Team program to run properly with the safety of all athletes as well as the most rewarding gymnastics experience; we need for all gymnasts, coaches, and parents to function as a whole. Please read through our handbook in its entirety and let us know if you have any questions.

Once you and your family have reviewed the information, please sign the attached paperwork and return it to us on OR before the date specified. Failure to do this will result in the inability to participate until ALL paperwork has been submitted.

\*Be sure to use this Handbook as a resource for any questions that might come up throughout the season.\*

## *Mission*

Our MISSION here at GCA is to provide all athletes with a FUN and SAFE environment while working together to instill proper work ethic into each gymnast! Providing the proper coaching in all aspects of our sport allows for the success of each athlete while being able to enjoy the sport throughout their journey. We strive to help every gymnast that walks into our doors reach their goals and beyond. Not only will we give each athlete the best opportunity to excel in gymnastics, but we also hope to be role models for them outside of the gym. Gymnasts will learn how to work hard, set and achieve goals, take initiative, handle setbacks, conquer fear, and work cooperatively with coaches and teammates. Throughout their journey here at GCA they will show dedication, determination, proper work ethic, self-motivation, time management, sportsmanship, team spirit, leadership, respect, self-discipline, responsibility, independence, and so much more!

## *Behavior*

Gymnasts must always remember to be respectful of all teammates, coaches, parents, judges and other teams. This proper sportsmanship must be portrayed in competition as well as during practice. Competition is a big part of our everyday lives. Whether it is little or big, we all want to do our best in what we do! It is not about the score on the board, the medal on your neck, or the trophy you may or may not have. It is about how you did individually. Did YOU do your best? Did YOU portray proper sportsmanship throughout? Did YOU work hard leading up the competition? Etc...

A family's role in team gymnastics is essential to a successful team experience for each athlete. Please provide unconditional love, encouragement, and constant support to your young athlete. Do not compare your child to other athletes, for every gymnast is different and advances at her own pace.

Excellence in this sport will be fulfilled through personal achievements, NOT the achievements of others.

**\*REMEMBER TO BE GRACIOUS IN DEFEAT AND HUMBLE IN SUCCESS\***

## *Practice*

### ATTENDANCE

We expect that your daughter be at practice. The only way to get better, or reach our goals is by practicing. If there is a conflict with practice please notify the Team Director. Gymnasts should arrive on time for practice and be ready to go. If you are running late to practice, you must call/text or email to inform as well.

### FACILITY

Assisting with the breakdown, or placement of equipment is needed of all athletes before/during and after practice. It is important to keep our facility clean, tidy and safe. The use of equipment is a privilege. All athletes must respect that.

## ACADEMICS

We understand that academics come first. This being said, if your child needs to finish work, please have them come into practice and we will send them during a reasonable time to complete their school work.

## DISTRACTIONS

During practice, all cellphones must be placed in the team box. If a parent needs to reach their child, they may call the front desk.

Gymnasts must remain inside the gym during practice hours. Athletes will not be traveling out of the gym area unless they ask to use the bathroom.

Bring a water bottle to avoid trips to the water fountain.

If a parent must stay during their daughter's specified practice time, they may not be of any distraction toward the gymnasts.

## MISSED PRACTICES/MAKE-UPS

All athletes may only practice during their scheduled practice times. There will be no make-ups for personal absences or conflicts on alternate days or times. The schedule that is given is planned carefully and a lot of factors have to be taken into consideration. Unfortunately we cannot accommodate every individual family for personal conflicts. Tuition will not be changed due to a missed practice or personal conflict.

Practices may be changed or added at any time during the season with proper notice. If a practice is cancelled due to holidays, weather, scheduling, etc., make-up practices **may or may not** be added at the decision of the Team Director.

## PRIOR TO COMPETITION

There will be **NO ABSENCES ALLOWED THE WEEK BEFORE A COMPETITION!** In order to ensure that a gymnast is safe and ready to compete she needs to be at the practices leading up to a competition. The coach reserves the right to pull an athlete from a competition if they have missed practice prior to the competition.

## INJURY

If you have an injury we still expect you to be at practice. It is important to watch what's happening at practice, and/or condition the areas that are not injured. If your doctor insists that you refrain from activity due to an injury, please bring a written note from your doctor informing us how long you will be out and when you are allowed back to activity.

If a gymnast is experiencing pain while training, they should stop and alert a coach. **\*PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR COACHES IMMEDIATELY IF AN INJURY OCCURS!\*** This is the body's way of saying enough is enough, continuing use may only cause injury further. The coaches will do their best to accommodate the children through the best alternative to practicing while not causing more stress to the possible injured area.

- Proper care to an Injury
  - **REST:** It is important that if the athlete is injured she rests and stays off the injured area; please do not push it by doing gymnastics at home!
  - **ICE:** Ice for 20 minutes on/20 minutes off as many times as possible within the first 48 hour window of the occurrence of the injury. If this is a progressive injury look to ice at least 3 times daily. This can help cut the healing process down to almost half!
  - **COMPRESS:** if needed wear compression
  - **ELEVATE:** elevate the injured area above the heart to help keep the swelling down
  - **COMMUNICATE:** allow the proper communication to the coach through both the athlete as well as parent

## *Discipline Procedures*

If any unacceptable behavior or distracting behavior of any sort occurs the staff will follow these guidelines:

1. A verbal warning will be given
2. A second verbal warning with a possible "time-out" from practice
3. If a third occurrence happens, we will need to have a sit down parent meeting

## *Nutrition*

No gum, candy, or sodas are permitted in the gym area or in competition. Water and Gatorade are allowable drinks during practice and competitions. Please only pack your child with nutrient dense snacks for practice AND competitions, such as, fruit, yogurt, granola bars, etc. No junk food, i.e., chips, candy, cookies, etc.

In order to allow for the best possible performance, we need to properly fuel.

Gymnasts MUST clean up after themselves. If there are wrappers, garbage, etc. left around in the gym, food will no longer be allowed in the gym.

## *Competitions*

### How long do they typically last?

The average competition will run anywhere from 3-4 hours from start to finish including awards. There is always a warm-up, national anthem, competition of all four events, followed by award ceremony. All gymnasts must remain with their team until the full competition is over, regardless of whether they have finished.

### Parents responsibility for competitions:

It is important that the athletes be on time to a competition. Gymnasts should inside the gym with their coach and ready to go no later than 20 minutes prior to competition start time. To allow for their best performance, athletes should not be concerned about rushing to get caught up

- Admission is charged for all spectators at most competitions, this varies depending on the size of the competition.

### During Competitions

Parents/spectators may not communicate with the gymnasts, coaches or meet officials during any part of warm-up or competition. Be considerate for all athletes and do not speak negatively of anyone. Be sure to cheer on ALL athletes. There will be no parents on the competition floor at any point. If you have questions, please contact your coach outside of the competition area. No flash photography or video camera light is permitted during a competition. All gymnasts are expected to stay until the end of awards whether they are receiving an award or not. They need to show respect for everyone – especially their own teammates. Improper sportsmanship will result in the dismissal of that competition as well as possible future competitions.

**\*Please do not contact the host meet to obtain any sort of information regarding competition time, and/or refunds at any point. We do our best to get the information out as soon as possible to each family. The host gym CANNOT refund anyone either.\***

## ***Payments***

### **MONTHLY TUITION**

Being a part of a team means commitment. We require a 10 month agreement while in our program. The only way to break the agreement is if you move out of the state. During the 2 month summer period, we require payment in order to stay placed on the team. This being said, the team commitment ends up being year round. We cannot hold spots for your daughter. Understanding that everyone goes away for the summer at certain points, you must still commit to paying for at least 5 of the 7 weeks or 6 of the 8 weeks that the summer is made up of. If your daughter will be away for the whole summer and you would not like to commit to team, we cannot guarantee her spot when she comes home.

Monthly payments will be billed on the 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> of every month. GCA charges an annual family registration fee of \$45.

### **USAG MEMBERSHIP**

Prior to competition season, your daughter will need to become a USAG member in order to be entered into competitions. This is an annual fee of \$59 and is required for placement into competitions.

### **COMPETITION FEES**

Competition payments will be charged 60-90 days prior to the competition. You will not be able to get refunded once this amount has been charged to your account. There will be no exceptions. If there is a conflict of any sort, please allow enough time to let the Team Director know to avoid any unwanted charges. Each competition fee will be based on the competition schedule given at the beginning of season. With every charge it will tell you the date that it will be taken from your personal account.

All athletes will be entered into the listed competitions. We expect that you be at all competitions. If there is a conflict, i.e., family, school, vacations, during a listed competition, please let us know. Please return the paperwork attached stating exactly which competition will be of conflict to avoid fees.

If there is an away competition, which requires a flight, you may opt out. We will need the returned paperwork whether you will be attending or not.

All away competitions will require a meet fee as well as a coaches expenses fee. This coach expense will be divided by the total amount of gymnasts going to the competition to pay for the total expenses of the coaches attending.

### APPAREL FEES

Apparel payments will be charged on or around the date at which your children receive their full uniforms. We will allow notice before the charge is made. These fees are based off what is needed to fully outfit each athlete. We will be changing leotard/warm-up styles every 2-3 years.

We do our best to let our families know all of the fees associated with being a part of our competitive team. We also understand competitive gymnastics is a big financial commitment and we like to give our families an estimate of all of the fees associated with being on team so everyone can plan accordingly.

### ***Refunds***

Tuition is paid regardless of attendance. This pays for your daughter's spot on the team. Competition fees may not be refunded at any point after the charge has been made. You enter each competition aware that it may be on ANY of the dates throughout the slotted weekend. If something comes up, we cannot refund you. If a competition runs during school and your daughter cannot miss school, we cannot refund you. If your daughter gets injured and the competition has already been charged, we cannot refund you.

Please do not contact the meet director under any circumstance to ask for a refund, they cannot do so either.

### ***Placement***

The coaches will decide where each athlete is placed for the season. This is based off of where they can be happy, safe, and confident. This means that every gymnast must be able to perform the skills and routines required at her level comfortably. If we believe that she belongs somewhere, please respect that. It is our job to have the success of each gymnast in mind at all times. Each athlete should enter a competition with the utmost confidence in herself. If at any point we do not believe an athlete is showing readiness before a competition, we may keep them out of any and all events for the safety of themselves as well as the staff.



Our job as coaches is to provide proper progressions to allow for movement between levels. This DOES NOT mean that every gymnast will move to a new level each year. All athletes are different and move at different paces. Please respect that we are doing our best to help each individual move at THEIR correct pace.

Gymnastics placements are NOT like school. We simply cannot move up a level every single year, because then we would all be level 10 by age 12. As the goal is for a high level, we all move at different paces. Repeating levels is common and important, especially in the lower levels. Mastering skills takes time, the higher the level an athlete goes, the more time it may take to gain those new skills. Coaches will be the determining factor as to when and where each athlete will be placed for the competition season. We strive to place each gymnast in the proper setting where she not only can feel confident, but also be successful. If there is a case they may need to stay/repeat a level for multiple season while working on the proper mechanics and execution of new skills, please do not question this decision.

If there is a case that we move the gymnast earlier then they might be ready on all events, they may not compete on an apparatus. Of course we wish to compete them on all events and will do our best with each athlete to get there.

### ***Understanding Our SPORT***

The development of a competitive gymnast in total is very intricate. This being said, it is important to understand and appreciate what goes into the development of a competitive athlete, as well as recognizing all the elements that make up their training.

These make up four focuses; strength, flexibility, discipline and skill.

#### Strength –

Developing strength in all aspects is necessary for ALL athletes. Gymnasts not only need to work physically on their strength, but also mentally. In order to be safe in what they do, we as a training facility must implement the proper development in strength both physically and mentally for our athletes. If the athlete has the strength, their skills will become much easier. We will move them to certain strength development based off of where they are, and where they might need to be.

Movements are continually changed in order to allow for the proper development. Gymnasts might

come home sore, this is okay, their strength is more important than their skill. As well as important for injury prevention! Mentally, we will provide each athlete with the most encouragement possible. Developing this takes time and reassurance.

### Flexibility –

This goes hand in hand with our strength development. If a gymnast is strong but immobile, it will be hard for her, and visa versa. Being able to pass through certain ranges of motion in our sport is very important for proper mechanics as well as safety. It is also each athlete's job to work these flexibility aspects at home as often as they can! It is like the homework of their sport 😊

### Discipline –

Showing this is difficult at first for the younger athletes. As we work all areas, we need to work on our discipline. This will allow for improvement and safety. Not only is it the athlete's job to stay focused the best they can in order to gain proper mechanics, as well as best performance; but it is also important for their safety and the safety of others.

### Skill –

Basics are first and foremost. When a gymnast shows the ability to move properly through a basic movement, it is then the coaches job to allow them to move forward. New skills will be worked after basics are mastered. Basics are the building blocks to our sport. Please do not question anything if a coach spends time working on basic skills.

**Without the first 3 elements of strength, flexibility, and discipline, the skills will NOT come!**

## *Expectations*

### Athletes:

The way you act in the gym reflects the respect you have for yourself, your teammates, and your gym. Athletes are expected to

- Work hard and do your best
- Be ready to go at the start of workout
  - Hair pulled back, leotard on, water bottle ready, equipment away
- Always have your grips on you
  - If you have grips, have a second pair ready at all times – in case one breaks

- Ask permission to leave the gym, such as for use of the bathroom – coaches must know where the children are at all times
- Be respectful at all times
  - Talking back to coaches or other adults will NOT be permitted
- Honesty
  - DO NOT CHEAT ...the only way to get better is by correctly doing all movements, and the amounts prescribed, if you cheat, you are only cheating yourself.
- Safety
  - Make sure the apparatus you are on is safe. There should be mats in the correct spots and equipment that does not belong should be out of the way.
- If your ride is not there when practice ends – you must wait inside for your ride to come pick you up
- Be POSITIVE
  - A positive mind/attitude can achieve anything!
- ***Do not worry about the other girls in your workout/what they might be doing*** → your only concern should be YOURSELF!

### ***Expectations Continued...***

#### Parents:

- Pay tuition and fees on time
- Show respect for everyone
- Please do not speak with your daughter during practice, it is important that she stays focus and inside the gym
- Independency
  - We want for the athletes to be as independent in our sport as possible. If you can leave during practice, please do so. If you cannot, please do not distract the athletes in any way.
- If there is a concern/problem, please contact the Team Director
- Be on time to drop off your child → it is important that they get the most out of their workout
- Be on time to pick up your child

- Be encouraging – *do NOT compare your child to another, everyone is different*
- If you have any questions or concerns that regard the gym or your daughter – please contact the Team Director. Under no circumstances should a coach get a call on their personal phone

### ***Volunteer Work***

The backbone of every successful gymnastics team is our parent support. We expect that all families help out and contribute in some way to our gymnastics program. We will be looking into volunteer work to be done throughout the season. Every year we host a gymnastics competition. The most amount of help we can get here is key to running a great competition. Please keep this weekend available to be able to be a part of GCA's Competition Team

### ***Events***

#### **FOR THE KIDS!**

It will be a new tradition to host some fun events during the season to accompany our training. Some will include a holiday party, end of season party/banquet, summer gathering, etc. These are important for team bonding. More information on these will be given throughout the season.

#### **FOR THE PARENTS!**

##### ***Mandatory Team Parent Meeting***

Every year we will have a Team Parent Meeting. During the meeting we will provide insight on the upcoming season, review the team handbook, practice and competition schedules, and upcoming events.

### ***Grips***

It is important that every athlete develop the strength in their hands as well as their forearms before getting grips. All gymnasts are required to get permission to wear grips before getting them.

## WHERE TO GET GRIPS

Gymsupply.com – uneven bar gymnastics grips – sizing is on website

All gymnasts should have a second pair of grips handy in case something happens to their original pair.

## RIPS

In our sport, we should expect rips from time to time. We expect the gymnasts to still do bars when they have a rip. The coach will properly protect them and will make the decision as to whether they will continue through their bar rotation or not.

- Proper care to a Rip:
  - Before bed apply ointment
    - Neosporin, Vitamin E
  - Hand Lotion/Aloe Vera can help to heal a rip

\*Trimming the calluses here and there is needed in order to help prevent more ripping.\*

If you have any questions, comments, concerns, etc. Please feel free to contact the Team Director:

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