

Mojo Elite Team Handbook

Mojo Elite Gymnastics
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Welcome to the Mojo Elite Gymnastics Competitive Team. It is with great excitement that we begin a new year and a new competition season. We thank you for encouraging your daughters to participate in the beautiful sport of gymnastics and we thank you for giving us the opportunity to coach them.

This handbook has two purposes. First, it serves as a guide to help new parents and their daughters make the transition from recreational gymnastics to competitive team, and second, it is a reference book for all of our team rules, expectations and coaching philosophy.

Competitive Gymnastics

Mojo Elite Gymnastics is a member of USA Gymnastics, the national governing organization for the sport in the United States. USA Gymnastics sets the rules and policies that govern the sport and is responsible for selecting gymnasts to represent the USA in international competitions, world championships, Olympic Games, etc.

Within USA Women's Gymnastics there is the Junior Olympic Program and the Elite Program.

Elite Program

The athletes from this group can be selected for the National Team and for international competitions. They adhere to international competitive rules and standards. Becoming an elite gymnast requires an enormous commitment from athletes, families and coaches. Elite gymnasts train more than 20 hours per week.

Junior Olympic (J.O.) Program Overview (from USA-gymnastics.org)

The Junior Olympic program was developed with the belief that all athletes, regardless of their potential, must have a solid foundation of basic skills in order to advance safely. The program allows the gymnast to advance at her own pace, competing at more than one level in a year, if she so chooses.

The Women's Junior Olympic Program is divided into three major segments.

The Developmental Levels 1 through 3 may be used as a non-competitive and achievement-oriented program for use within a gym's pre-team program, or they may be used as an introductory/recreational competitive program. States may also offer State Championships for these levels.

The second part consists of Compulsory Levels 4 and 5. Both of these levels are progressive in nature, building upon the skills required at the previous level. Competitive opportunities are provided up to and including the USA Gymnastics State Championships. The third segment is Optional Levels 6-10. Levels 6-8 have difficulty restrictions, while Levels 9 and 10 have no restrictions in the skill choice.

Level 6 and 7 have competitive opportunities up to and including State Championships. Additional competitive opportunities are provided for Levels 8-10, with the Level 10 competitive season culminating at the Jr. Olympic National Championships, Level 9 at the Eastern or Western Championships and Level 8 at the Regional Championships.

X-cel Program

The Xcel Program is designed to offer a broad-based, affordable competitive experience outside the traditional Jr. Olympic (J.O.) Program. This program is ideal for beginning level gymnasts and those that have time commitments outside the gym. There are 5 levels offered in this program, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, and Diamond. Xcel routines allow for more flexibility with routine choreography and the ability to feature the athlete's strengths. Mojo Elite Xcel Bronze and Silver athletes will learn a standard routine that is unique to our facility. Individual elements of each routine will be modified for each athlete. Bronze and Silver athletes have the option of having a routine choreographed specifically for them for an extra fee.

Athletes that move into the Diamond level will have individual routines choreographed emphasizing their unique strengths and talents. Xcel competitors may be eligible to compete in State and Regional gymnastics meets.

Bronze – Level 2

In order to compete at the Bronze level, athletes must at least 5 years of age and be able to commit to practice 2 times per week, 2 hours per day. A strong foundation of basic technique is covered at this level and the first exposure to the importance of presentation at competition. Flexibility and strength are improved at this level, while still offering an opportunity to showcase newly acquired skills.

Silver – Level 3

In order to compete at the Silver level, athletes must be 6 years of age, and able to commit to 6 hours per week, 2 days, 3 hours each. The time spent in Level 3 is spent developing the strength, flexibility, body control, and skills needed to compete in level 4 or Xcel Gold. It is also a time of adjustment as the girls get used to the differences between recreational and competitive gymnastics. The training that the girls must do in order to perform difficult skills correctly and safely is often “boring”. A gymnast may spend 20 minutes at a time working on a body shape, conditioning exercises, etc. The “fun” part about being on the team is experiencing the satisfaction that comes with achieving a skill or performing a routine that the gymnast works so hard to perfect.

Gold through Diamond

In order to compete at these higher levels, athletes must be able to commit to 9 plus hours per week. To enter Gold level, athletes must be 7 years old, to enter Platinum level age 8, and Diamond age 9. Also, in order to move to Platinum or Diamond, athletes must have placed out of Gold with a 31.0 AA and have coach’s recommendation. Level 7 and 8 gymnasts that have competed in the traditional J.O. program, may compete at the Platinum or Diamond level. Level 9 gymnasts must enter the Diamond level.

Is competitive gymnastics right for my child?

The benefits of gymnastics training are life-long. Your child will develop confidence in herself and her capabilities. She will learn that success comes from hard work and discipline. She will learn to manage her time as she balances schoolwork and practice. He/she will be poised under pressure. After hundreds and hundreds of tries, he/she will make her kip (or back handspring, etc.) and her smile will show you that it was worth all of the sweat and effort. However, along with all of the benefits of gymnastics, there is also a large amount of sacrifice. There will be days you do not eat dinner together as a family. There will be sore muscles, ripped hands, early morning competitions, hard practices, frustration and lots of time spent in the gym. You must weigh all of the factors and decide if competitive gymnastics is right for your daughter and your family.

Team Structure

Who we are

Mojo Elite Gymnastics Team coaches LOVE gymnastics. For us, coaching is the career we have chosen. We pour most of our waking energy into thinking about gymnastics, planning our practices, analyzing gymnastics videos, thinking of new drills, etc. We communicate, we respect each other, and we strive to combine our strengths and our knowledge in a way that will help each gymnast be the best he/she can be.

Team Mission Statement

Mojo Elite Gymnastics strives to help children reach their full gymnastics potential through a program that not only teaches safe and technically sound gymnastics, but also instills confidence, promotes fitness, and demonstrates a commitment to healthy child development.

We achieve this through:

- Emphasizing technically correct fundamentals
- A detailed and intense strength and conditioning program
- Positive reinforcement in a disciplined atmosphere
- Mutual respect and open communication with parents/gymnasts

Selection

Generally, the team coaches will select children from our recreation program and invite them to join the competitive team. Their selection is based on physical talent (strength, flexibility, body coordination) and personality/work ethic. Sometimes, less physically talented athletes (who are determined to do well) are more successful because they work harder to achieve the skills that come easily to athletes that are more talented. Additional considerations are the athlete's ability to commit to the time required for Xcel or the J.O. Program.

Moving through the levels

USAG has set minimum place out scores; however, it is up to our head coach to determine an athlete's readiness to pass to the next level. Decisions about level progression are based on strength, flexibility, coordination, personal effort, and maturity. Through Level 8, it is normal for a child to progress through one level per year. If your child is having significant difficulty within a level, we may ask her to remain in her current level for another competitive season. Similarly, if a child is progressing more quickly than normal, we may recommend moving through two levels in one year.

Practice

It is vitally important that we use utilize every moment spent in the gym.

Being on time and ready to practice

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to be on time to practice. Much of our conditioning and injury prevention exercises take place at the beginning of practice. Therefore, lateness, especially on a regular basis, is extremely detrimental to a gymnast's training and may slow her progress towards the next level. Being on time means arriving at the gym with enough time to go to the bathroom, do hair, eat a snack, etc. before line-up.

When is it OK to miss practice?

Besides the obvious (weddings, funerals, sickness, etc.) it is OK to miss practice for things like family vacations, special events and homework! We frequently remind the girls that school comes before gymnastics. If they have a big project to finish, or an exam to study for, they should ALWAYS stay home (or leave the gym a little early) and do that first. Also, if there is a birthday party, or a dance, please miss practice to attend those events. We want the girls to have balanced lives and they should not feel like they can never miss a day of gymnastics. That said, missing practice SHOULD NOT be a regular occurrence. If you are going to miss practice, please call the gym or inform the coaches in advance.

Preparing for practice

Being prepared for practice will help a gymnast to utilize all of her time spent in the gym. The following items should be with them at every workout.

1. Leotard (leggings or shorts may be worn, but no baggy shorts)
2. Grips and wristbands, athletic tape (please mark clearly for identification)
3. Personal water bottle (no sharing or liquids other than water)
4. Leggings or sweatpants and sweatshirt or warm top (for cold months)
5. Extra hair elastic/clips (hair up neatly and securely so it will stay up for the entire practice)

Summer Practice

After one year on the team or pre-team, summer practices are **REQUIRED**. We know that girls will leave for family vacations, etc. but we expect that they will be at practice for the majority of the summer. Specific information regarding practice times and fees will be distributed near the end of the school year. Team is a yearly obligation; monthly tuition is due to secure your child's space regardless if you are in practice or not.

Competition

We require competitive team members to attend **ALL** meets on the schedule. Please see Mindy if you have a scheduling conflict.

Notes for competitions

- Hair should be in a bun or ponytail.
- No nail polish
- Only one pair of stud earrings
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm up time
- No parents allowed on the competition floor
- No gymnasts allowed in the stands during the competition

The Complete Athlete

In the gym we strive to develop the most complete gymnasts possible. Meaning, our training revolves around learning a wide variety of basic skills, developing optimal strength and flexibility, and correcting individual physical weaknesses/imbbalances. But that is only of part of the picture.

Physical

As parent/guardian of your child, it is your responsibility to alert coaching staff if you feel your child may not be at full capability to practice. This includes but is not limited to sickness and/or injury. If you feel your child cannot continue to participate in a practice for any reason alert a staff member immediately. Please keep in mind that practice is vital, so it is important to allow your child to do as much as possible. Also see sick and injury policies below.

Nutrition

Without proper nutrients, the full affects of training cannot be realized. A gymnasts food choices, as well as *when* and *what* to eat, are as important as her training. Training without good nutrition (or good nutrition without training) will yield poor results. The book below is highly recommended for all team and pre-team families.

Found online at: www.sportsmenus.com

Mental Readiness

In addition to having optimal nutrition, an athlete must be mentally prepared to handle the pressure of competition and the daily challenges of training. All team and pre-team members should purchase a copy of Mark Gibson's *Going for It! The Gym Bag Companion for Living Your Dreams*. www.gfigymnastics.com

Administrative

Gymnastics is expensive. We make an effort to keep costs down by competing locally whenever possible, and billing each athlete for coaches' expenses and meet fees as they are incurred/due. Once a year, there is a registration fee. (2017 = \$60)

Monthly Fees

Monthly tuition is due before the first of every month. Please make checks payable to Mojo Elite Gymnastics. A \$5 late fee is charged if payment is not received by the first.

Bronze – level 2, should practice 4-6 hours per week.

Silver – Level 3, should practice 9-12 hours per week.

Level 4-7 should practice a minimum of 16 hours per week

Level 8-10 should practice 20-24 hours per week

General Supply – athletic tape, pre-wrap, etc. \$5

Team Account

The team account is a separate operating account for the expenses incurred by the team. Competition entry fees, coaches' travel expenses, uniform orders, etc. are paid through the team account. Additionally, families may make individual deposits throughout the year. Every team member has their own individual team account.

Entry fees

Entry fees are required by the host gyms in advance. We will post entry fee due dates on the team board and send via email. We will bill your account for the entry fee so we can send in our reservation before the due date. We will not enter an athlete in a meet if their entry fee is not paid by the due date.

Coach's fees

Each coach is paid \$60/meet session. Salaried coaches will not receive a meet rate, but there may be a fee to cover coaches' expenses to cover regular classes in the gym. Coaches are reimbursed for gas mileage, tolls, hotel, and meals. Estimated coaches' expenses are assessed before each meet and charged to the athlete. If there are any discrepancies, the coach will be reimbursed for expenses and the difference will be split evenly among participating team members.

Communication

Announcements and information will be distributed in four ways: verbally from the coaching staff, a flyer sent home, on the team board and through email. If practice is cancelled due to bad weather there will be a message on the gym phone, and posted on our website. If you need to speak with any of the coaches regarding your daughter's workouts, etc., please set up an appointment or wait until after practice. All team and competition information will come from Mindy. If you have any questions regarding any details about competitions, etc., please contact Mindy.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mojo-Elite-Gymnastics-Training-Center/385549871508168?ref=hl>

Mojo Website: www.mojogymnastics.com

General Information Email: info@mojogymnastics.com

Gym number: 850-733-3547

Mindy's Email: mindy@mojogymnastics.com

Mindy's Cell: 850-760-7997

Fundraising

Every year we will do fundraisers to help families cover the costs of meets, uniforms, etc. Participation is optional. Funds raised by the large group fundraisers will go into the General Team Account to be used for coaches expenses and when available, for team uniform expenses. In addition to the General Team Account, every family has an individual sub-account in which funds will be reserved for the athletes' individual expenses. Smaller fundraisers will have profits divided among the participating families and placed in their individual team accounts.

USAG Membership

You must have a USAG membership in order to compete. All competing gymnasts will be billed at the beginning of the school year to renew their current or get their new membership. Currently, USAG charges \$54 annually. Xcel intro memberships are \$15.

Uniform

Competitive team members need a competition leotard, warm ups, and team bag. These are ordered well in advance of the competition season as they often take months to arrive. The estimated cost of the full uniform is \$400 per athlete. We will be keeping the same uniform for three years to offset the cost.

Thanksgiving and Winter break schedule

We will post workout schedules for holidays on the team board as soon as they are planned.

Competition Schedule

A competition schedule will be posted on the team board, our website, and will be emailed to all team parents. If you would like to check on state meets you can look on the Florida USAG website.

Competition Expectations

Frequency

We will compete in approximately four meets per season. If your child qualifies for State, Regional, or National meets, these will be in addition to the four pre-scheduled meets. We will try to enter meets within a 3-5 hour drive; however, we may have one special meet per year that is slightly farther, such as Disney. We will likely have a summer in-house meet to offer new athletes an opportunity to compete in a "safe" environment, and offer other athletes the opportunity to place out of a level as needed.

Arrival

You need to arrive to the meet in **FULL COMPETITION ATTIRE** a minimum of 15 minutes early. (competition leotard, warm-ups, **NO** nail polish, etc.) Coaches have hectic schedules and are extremely busy with last minute details. **DO NOT** expect them to keep track of your child's items. When your child is dropped off ensure all important items stay with parents. Remember, coaches and gym staff are **NOT** responsible for any lost or forgotten items.

Facility/Practices

Gym Rules

Please be extremely careful in the parking lot. Drive very slowly and carefully as there are ~~dit~~ and lots of activity in and around the area. Please avoid stopping anywhere other than an actual parking space for lengthy periods of time or blocking traffic. There is additional parking in the grassy area next to the paved parking area. Please do not bring any ~~valis~~ to the facility. Mojo and its employees are not responsible for any theft or damage to personal property or unattended items.

Viewing Area

All parents, friends, and family members should remain in the viewing area or in the lobby during practices. Please refrain from “coaching” or otherwise distracting athletes or coaches during practices. Parents and spectators must remain seated in the chairs provided, so that others’ viewing is not blocked. If parents wish to bring younger siblings to watch, please make sure they are under your constant supervision and are not being excessively noisy or distracting to other spectators or anyone in the main gym. Please remember that the viewing area is for all parents of students. We ask that you are courteous and allow other programs some of the seats closest to the gym floor.

No athletes are allowed on any equipment or in the gym before or after his or her class/practice. (Please note if your child arrives more than 15 minutes early, they will be required to sit in the observation area.) The equipment is for use by athletes during their instructional time. No athlete may use any equipment unless an instructor is present and is actively supervising the athlete. Some of the equipment can be very dangerous, particularly if used improperly.

Practices

Practices are incredibly important and necessary for the athletes to learn new skills and condition. While we try to keep to a normal schedule, additional practices may be called.

Once the leotard orders are filled, it will be your responsibility to keep up with the practice and competition leotards. If one is lost, you will be billed for a new one. If a particular leotard needs to be worn, you will be notified via email and the team board.

Any additional clothing items (warm ups, grips, etc.), cell phones, school bags, or gym bags must be taken into the gym and stored in the appropriate areas. Please do not bring these items out into the main gym near the spring floors. Cell phones must be turned off when practice starts and remain off throughout the practice.

Water bottles will also be **REQUIRED** at practice. So, please know that you are expected to send your athlete with some kind of water or clear beverage for them to make it through practice.

Withholding a child from practice (or a meet) should never be used as a form of punishment. You are not only punishing your child but every other team member, coach, and parent on that team. If this is ever in question or occurs, the athlete can be automatically removed from the team permanently without discussion. Remember that there are **NO** refunds for dismissal from team.

We will do our best to work with extracurricular activities. However, if the coach of the extracurricular activity refuses to work with us, you may have to make a choice.

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I have received, read, and understand the information described in the Mojo Elite Team Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies and guidelines of Mojo Elite Gymnastics to ensure a healthy, positive, and productive experience for my child. I understand failure to do so may result in the removal of my child from the team program.

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

I have read and will abide by the guidelines described in the Mojo Elite Team Handbook. I will arrive mentally and physically ready for workout. I will have all of my equipment necessary for practice including water bottle and grips. I understand that it is my responsibility to be prepared, not the responsibility of my parents.

Athlete Name: _____

Athlete Signature: _____

Date: _____