

# USAG Team Handbook 2009-2010

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**Parent/Gymnast Acknowledgement - please sign and return**

# Part I: Introduction to the Triad Gymnastics Team

**Welcome to the Team!**

Triad Gymnastics would like to welcome your family to our club. If you are reading this team manual then your daughter has already impressed us with her gymnastics talent and potential. Through this team manual, we hope to give you more insight into how our program operates and answer many of your questions.

First, and most important, providing a fantastic gymnastics experience is what this club is all about. We are here for young children, many who have hopes and dreams of being the best they can be in life and in this sport. We are here to support them in that dream.

To make that dream come alive the gymnast, parents, and coaches must function as a TEAM.

After reading this manual, if you have any questions about any aspect of the program, please ASK! The coaching staff will be happy to provide you with any additional information or clarifications.

Once again, welcome to the Triad Gymnastics family. We are glad to have you as part of our TEAM.

## **Brief History of Triad Gymnastics and Team Directors**

Triad Gymnastics was opened in September 1997 by owners Donna and Tom Moretti. Girl's Team directors, Tom and Donna Moretti, each have extensive backgrounds in gymnastics. They coached together at World Cup Gymnastics in Westchester County, New York, where their level 5-10 athletes won several state, regional and national honors.

Tom, originally from Irvington, New York., has been coaching gymnastics since 1984. He was a Master Coach for many summers at Woodward Gymnastics Camp in Pennsylvania where he worked with several National and Olympic team members and coaches. Donna is originally from Des Moines and graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Fitness/Wellness. Donna has coached gymnastics since 1984 and is also a Level 10 judge and choreographer.

Donna and Tom's mentors were National coaches from China and Romania with whom they were privileged to work for several years in New York. Combining the best from both the Chinese and

Romanian systems with an understanding of American children, Donna and Tom are proud to offer a comprehensive training system which will enable each athlete to reach her gymnastics potential.

### **Safety**

Gymnastics is inherently a very dangerous sport. This fact combined with the high difficulty level many gymnasts at Triad will achieve only adds to the potential for injury. All parents must be fully aware of the risk involved in the sport of gymnastics. Speed, motion, height, flipping and the difficulty of the skill put our athletes in potentially life-threatening situations on a daily basis.

We at Triad Gymnastics are very aware of the 'potential danger' and will make every effort to achieve and maintain a safe environment for our athletes. We believe in spotting whenever there is a doubt as to the consistency of a skill. We believe in padding, matting and using any training devices designed to make learning as safe as possible.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to have an important positive impact on your child's future. We are not only committed to helping each child become the best gymnast she can possibly be, but also to helping her become a happy, healthy and responsible person.

### Competitive Gymnastics- What Does it Mean?

*The decision to enter competitive gymnastics is an important and exciting step in the life of your child!*

You are to be congratulated because you are taking the time to think through the consequences of team membership. Many parents are so thrilled when their child is asked to be on the team they do not take the time to assess what the consequences will be on the rest of their lives.

We believe that gymnastics is the greatest overall body conditioning activity in which your child could be involved. However, competitive gymnastics is a unique sport requiring the backing and support of the family for any gymnast to be successful. Therefore, when making the selection for team gymnasts, we also look closely at the team parents. Can they make a commitment to the program? This should not be a difficult or demanding task, only one that shows each family is interested in and committed to providing their child with a positive learning experience through the competitive aspect of women's gymnastics.[\[1\]](#)

### Gymnastics Goals

Does your daughter plan to make it to the Olympics, get a scholarship to college, or does she just enjoy the achievement of new skills and the companionship of other team members? Any of these may be valid reasons for joining the team, but it may be important to assess her goals in a shorter time frame, such as within the next six months to a year.

Talking to parents reveals that in many instances there is no agreement as to what the actual goal is regarding the child's gymnastics experience. The father may say, "I want her to be the best, win state championships!" while the mother says, "I just want her to enjoy herself" and the gymnast says, "I like to go to gym because my friends are there and we have a lot of fun working out." Which goal is the

coach supposed to follow? Also what about the goals the coach has for the team?

Gymnastics is a specialized sport that demands many hours of hard work and dedication. In this day and age teaching children to delay gratification for the attainment of a worthy ideal is all but impossible. Everything they see and hear on television they absorb and internalize as the way the world is supposed to be. If a 30-second commercial can get us to buy a product, a 30-minute sitcom or drama will surely sell us a lifestyle.

The problem with television is that it condenses what in the real world takes years of hard work and dedication to achieve. Please understand if your daughter says she wants to be on a gymnastics team, or go for the gold at the Olympics, that's great, but it will take lots of hard work and dedication to make it there. It certainly will not happen overnight.

#### Life Changes to Keep in Mind

- At the lower team levels, the number of hours of practice per week is relatively small. As your daughter progresses up the competitive ladder, the hours and days of workout will continue to grow.
- You will have to change your schedule to the extent that you are available to drive your gymnast to practice and pick her up.[\[2\]](#)
- There will be gym meets that consume a number of weekends during the competitive season.
- Homework will have to be done much more efficiently and with better study habits due to shorter periods of time available. *(It has been the experience of most coaches that students who are involved in a team program such as gymnastics tend to have good grades and are better at studying because they have learned to budget their time more effectively than their peers.)*
- Time management skills will become a necessity in all areas of your child's life *(and yours)*. Your daughter will have less time at home and less time to spend with friends outside the sphere of gymnastics influence.

Be warned, however, that once a child has developed a taste for the sport of gymnastics *(especially the*

*competitive aspect*) it is an addiction that can grow and become a part of your child for life!

### **Selection for Team**

Initial placement and subsequent advancement from one team level to the next will be determined by the Triad Gymnastics coaching staff. Where possible, objective measures of learning potential will be used. However subjective predictors such as courage, commitment, desire, 'coachability' and integrity will also be considered. In all cases a trial period of one or two months will be offered in order to assess the gymnasts' placement, readiness for training, parental support, and compatibility with the team.

Keep in mind that team participation is by invitation only. *Remaining on team is also by invitation only* and is dependant upon the athlete and parents' attitude and behavior, athlete work habits, and coachability.

### Competitive Team Philosophy

Competitive Team: Triad's competitive team consists of levels 4-10. These athletes train 11-25 hours per week and compete at several competitions per year. Please see the description of each level in the appendix. Our goal for competitive athletes is to help them go as far in gymnastics as their ability and desire will take them. Our team coaches will place gymnasts at the level where they can be happy, safe and confident. This means every gymnast must be able to perform the skills and routines required at a given level comfortably. The skills should not be at the edge of or beyond her ability level. We can never ask or expect our athletes to perform skills or routines in a competition which they cannot perform consistently in practice. Therefore, our gymnasts will compete at about 75-80% of their current skill level.

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### Moving from level to level

Moving up from one level to the next is decided by the coaches based upon scores from the meet season, attendance at workouts, skill level and the attitude of the gymnast. This decision will be made in the best interest of the child. As a gymnast moves up, her responsibility to workout and to participate in scheduled meets increases.

Although one criterion used to advance gymnasts from one level to the next are meet scores, gymnasts whose scores qualify them to move to the next higher level are not necessarily required to do so.

### Participation in other activities

We encourage young athletes to participate in other athletic activities along with gymnastics. Please speak to your child's coach if you have scheduling conflicts. We will try our best to help find a solution for your child. However, once your child has become a member of the Triad Team, she is NOT allowed to participate in gymnastics at another facility.

## **Part II: COMPETITIVE PROGRAM POLICIES**

<b>One Month Trial Phase</b>
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- All incoming competitive gymnasts will be interviewed and evaluated by the coaching staff concerning acceptance and placement in the competitive program.
- After evaluation new competitive gymnasts may be able to enroll for a period of one month on a trial basis, and then be re-evaluated at the end of the month concerning final acceptance.
- Parents of potential team members will be interviewed and informed of club policies and philosophies concerning the competitive program.

### **Team Guidelines**

The decision to join the Triad Gymnastics Team program is a big one and reflects a commitment to the

team for an entire year. Team members do not move on and off the team based on illness, injury, conflicts or the like. You are either on the team or not. Following are guidelines which all team members are expected to follow:

1. Each gymnast is required to attend all regularly scheduled workouts. Be on time to all workouts. That means on the floor ready to workout when your workout begins, not talking in the bathroom or hanging around out front. If for some reason you will be late or absent you are required to call the office and notify the coaches so that they may adjust the workout accordingly.
2. Proper workout attire is a must. A properly fitting leotard is the only acceptable workout attire. Tight fitting workout shorts will be allowed. No shirts are allowed. Hair should be appropriately tied so as not to interfere in any way during the workout. No jewelry, other than stud earrings, may be worn during the workout. For the courtesy of the coaches and other athletes, proper and appropriate hygiene is appreciated.
3. Work hard and try your best. This is all that we will ever ask of you and this is always what you should demand of yourself. Do not compare yourself with other gymnasts. You are all different and will advance at different rates. Only concern yourself with things that YOU can control which are YOUR ATTITUDE, YOUR EFFORT... YOUR GYMNASTICS!
4. No food, drink (except water bottles), or candy is permitted on the workout floor. All snacks must remain in the cubby area.
5. Gymnasts may not leave the workout or competition floor without the expressed permission of the coaching staff.
6. Alert your coach when your body is telling you to slow down or stop. If you are sick, on medication, or are injured we need to know, and you need to listen to your body. Pain is the body's way of telling you to stop. In addition, alert your coach if you have engaged in any strenuous activity prior to the start of practice.
7. Treat your coaches and teammates with respect. Be kind to those gymnasts younger than you are; do not hold yourself out as better than other gymnasts. **THERE IS NO PLACE IN THE GYM FOR RUDE OR BELITTling COMMENTS, DISPLAYS OF ANGER OR DISGUST, OR TALKING BACK TO COACHES OR OTHER ADULTS.**
8. Be honest. Cheating is the ugliest form of disrespect. It shows disrespect to your coaches, your parents, and, most importantly, to yourself. If you cannot or will not complete an assignment be honest about it.
9. Maintain a positive attitude when facing fears and frustrations. Gymnastics is the most

demanding and difficult of all sports. All athletes suffer setbacks, frustration, fear and defeat. Expect these things, learn from them, face them and overcome them. Set high goals and achieve them step by step.

10. NO TEAM MEMBER IS ALLOWED TO USE ALCOHOL OR DRUGS OR TO SMOKE!  
We spend many hours together trying to be the best we can be. All of that work is a complete waste of time if an athlete uses drugs or alcohol.

### **Water Bottle**

Each **competitive** level (4-10) gymnast may bring a non-breakable plastic water bottle with a cap to practice and keep it with them every day. The water bottle should be labeled with the athlete's name. **Please bring only water as sports drinks tend to make a sticky mess in the gym.**

### **Nutrition Break**

In order to help control blood sugar levels, a nutrition break will be provided during practices that last longer than three and a half hours. The types of food that should be consumed at that time include: fruit, nonfat crackers, juice, pretzels and other nutritious and low-fat snacks. Never bring candy, soda or other sugared foods.

<b>Parent Commitment</b>
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1. Make sure gymnast attends all regularly scheduled workouts, meets and special functions. If your child must miss a workout for any reason, please leave us a note or call the office.
2. Communicate with the coaches regarding any problems. We are in business to serve you and your child. Your thoughts are important to us. COMPLAINING TO OTHER PARENTS CANNOT SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM, NOR CAN WE SOLVE THEM IF WE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THEM. We feel that the support of our team parents is important for team morale and unity. We will come to you if we hear that you have been making negative comments regarding the team program. Please come to us first if you have concerns!
3. Check the bulletin board and your **e-mail** regularly to stay current with team activities. Please give us as many e-mail addresses as you like!
4. A representative from each competitive team member's family is required to volunteer for at least four sessions at every invitational, state or regional level competition hosted by Triad Gymnastics.

5. Ensure that your child gets enough sleep, proper nutrition, gets to and from the gym on time and has proper clothing and equipment.
6. Provide unconditional love, encouragement and support to your young athlete. Please do not compare your child with other athletes. Each athlete is different with differing strengths and weaknesses. It is unfair to you and your child to compare her to another athlete. Rather, try to look for the progress your child is making in gymnastics and celebrate it!
7. Please do not coach your child. Your comments detract from what the coach is doing by giving the gymnast another thing to think about; it interferes with the development of the coach/athlete relationship which is critical for long-term success.
8. Please stay in the waiting area and out of the gym while waiting for your child. Parents are welcome to stay for the first or last 30 minutes of workout, but please do not stay for an entire workout.
9. Please let a coach know before practice if you think your child might have a problem due to illness, medication or injury.
10. Please attend team parent meetings which will be held two or three times per year. The meetings are an opportunity for coaches to communicate detailed information with plenty of time for questions and answers.

Although this section has focused on gym policies, the coaching staff believes that **the order of importance always needs to be family, education, and then gymnastics**. If you choose to be a member of our program, we make the assumption that you have allowed appropriate time for family functions and that your child's study habits and schoolwork is of exemplary quality.

We do not advocate the use of this statement as an excuse for coming late to workouts, missing practices, etc. As with all things in life, it is your responsibility to fulfill your commitments. If you are unable to make the commitment this program requires, we can place you in another program that fits your needs better.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

The rules and policies which govern the gymnasts and their parents have been outlined here in the Girl's Team Handbook. In the event that there is an ongoing pattern of disruption or there are major rule infractions, it may become necessary to impose some disciplinary action in an attempt to improve the situation.

The list and procedures noted below are not intended to be all-inclusive. They are presented as an expression of our beliefs as to what disciplinary actions are necessary and appropriate. We will treat all of our gymnasts and gym parents as individuals and will seek to impose the most effective disciplinary actions based on each unique set of circumstances.

1. The gymnast may not be permitted to rotate with her group at the designated time. She will have to stay and finish or repeat an assignment on a particular piece of equipment.
2. The gymnast may be asked to sit and watch. Or the gymnast may be given appropriate conditioning to perform which will help focus their attention and build strength to accomplish the task at hand.
3. The gymnast may be asked to leave the gym and go home early.
4. The coach may request a meeting with a parent.
5. The gymnast may be suspended from the team for one or more days or may be scratched from a competition. Please note that if the gymnast is suspended from a competition due to poor attendance, a poor work ethic or a negative attitude, the entry fee is nonrefundable.
6. The gymnast may be asked to leave the program if we cannot get her to conform her behavior to the expectations of the team, the coach, or the gym.

The first three items on the above list are fairly common and we will not generally communicate these disciplinary actions to the parent of the gymnast. The development of the coach/gymnast relationship is paramount. We cannot and will not run to the parents every time we have a problem. We will attempt to build our own relationships with our athletes. Those relationships are built on time shared, belief in the same dreams and values, work performed together and the emotional ups and downs that are part of all important ventures. The fourth item, requesting a conference, signifies a need to work outside the coach/athlete relationship. In this instance, we need your help to overcome a challenge that is too large for us to accomplish on our own.

The final two items on the list are reserved for the most serious violations of our rules and policies. They are seldom used. They are reserved primarily for times when there is an ongoing problem with disruption and disrespect within the gym that has proven resistant to improvement. We will not let the bad attitude of one gymnast bring down the spirit and work ethic of an entire group.

It is also possible that a gymnast will have to leave our program because of the actions or inaction of her parents. While we never want to punish a child for the actions of her parent(s), we will not tolerate parents who, by their words and actions, do not support the policies and values of our team program.

<b>Emergency Procedures</b>
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In the unlikely event of a **medical emergency** involving your child, the following procedure will be followed:

- A. Emergency first aid will be administered, including requesting of emergency medical technicians and an ambulance if needed.
- B. You will be contacted using the emergency contact information you provided in the annual team registration packet. Your instructions will then be followed.
- C. In the event we are unable to make contact with a parent, we will attempt to contact the medical staff and hospital you indicated as a preference in your annual team registration packet.

### **Inclement Weather Procedures**

Triad will make every effort to remain open. All team members should check the website or call Triad to check for special announcements on the voice mail if you are unsure whether practice will be held due to inclement weather.

<b>Financial Policies</b>
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Your child's involvement in gymnastics will cost you time, money and effort. The athletes train in a large and well-equipped gym under the direction of an educated, experienced and professional staff. The overhead incurred in running a large gymnastics club includes: rent, utilities, insurance, taxes, and supplies, in addition to wages and equipment.

The coaches spend an enormous amount of time planning, training, traveling and supporting the gymnasts in addition to the time they spend actively coaching. Further, the coaches meet with parents and gymnasts, return phone calls, set up competitions, work to maintain and improve the facility and organize and administer the competitive program. It is impossible and unreasonable to think that this facility and the staff who train the gymnasts can operate without adequate funding.

Team tuition is based on approximately 48 weeks of training per year. You will receive a list of planned gym closings at the start of the team year (June). Additional non-workout days are factored into the yearly plan. These may include days missed when coaches are out of town for competitions, days missed because of inclement weather, or additional vacation days.

Tuition Policies:

- ◆ The competitive program tuition is determined on a yearly basis; however, payments may be made on a monthly schedule. Tuition paid by the seventh of the month will receive a \$5

discount. The tuition discount date is firm. If you make special arrangements to pay after the seventh, or if you break payments up into two or three payments each month, then the discount is not available. If you are out of town, sick or otherwise unable to get into the gym, then you can mail the check postmarked by the seventh or you can call in with your credit card. Competitive program accounts must be current and paid in full to enable your gymnast to participate in the competitive season.

- ◆ Any unpaid balance which is 30 days overdue may terminate your child's participation in any competitions or special gym activities. Any unpaid balance which is 60 days overdue may terminate your child's participation in any gym practice or function.

In addition, there will be a \$20.00 late fee assessed for tuition which remains unpaid for one month and an additional \$20.00 will be assessed for each additional month until tuition is paid in full.

- ◆ Notice of intent to cancel enrollment must be made in person and then 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.
- ◆ There are no make-ups, discounts, or prorated accounts due to absence of any nature. The competitive program is already greatly discounted in comparison to other club programs and is in fact effectively subsidized by the class programs.
- ◆ 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. There is no reduction in tuition until the total amount of time missed exceeds one month and then only if the gymnast cannot participate in workouts in any way. At that time, the tuition may be adjusted depending on the circumstances. Any gymnast who is out for one month or more and requests a tuition reduction must present a return to activity release signed by their doctor.

<b>Additional Fees for Team Gymnasts</b>
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Uniforms and Apparel: All the gymnasts will have a team uniform consisting of a leotard, warm-up suit and Triad Team bag (available at Triad) and black flip flop sandals (not provided by Triad).

**USAG Athlete Membership Fee:** This is required to compete in USAG sanctioned events. The cost is approximately \$45/year.

**Floor Choreography:** Optional level gymnasts will need floor routines choreographed by Donna. Routines range in price from **\$200 to \$250 per routine**. These routines will remain the property of Donna Moretti and Triad Gymnastics.

**Team Surcharge:** This annual surcharge is required of athletes who have scheduled workouts that total ten or more hours per week. This surcharge will help to defray the expenses incurred by the team program. These expenses include but are not limited to equipment, coaches' salaries and meet expenses, and use of gym space. The team surcharge is non-refundable. Amounts paid to date will not be returned if an athlete leaves the team program for any reason during the year.

The amounts and due dates for the team surcharge are as follows:

<u>Training Time</u>	<u>Annual Team Surcharge</u>	<u>Due Dates</u>
Elite	\$2250	\$450.00 due July 1 \$450.00 due September
1		
		\$450.00 due December
1		
		\$450.00 due March 1
		\$450.00 due May 1
Levels 9 and 10	\$1750	\$437.50 due July
1		
		\$437.50 due September
1		

1

\$437.50 due December

\$437.50 due March 1

Levels 6, 7 and 8

\$1200

\$300 due July 1

\$300 due September 1

\$300 due December 1

\$300 due March 1

Levels 4 and 5

\$600

\$200 due July 1

\$200 due September 1

\$200 due December 1

<b>Private Lessons</b>
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Private lessons may be scheduled with any of your child's team coaches. The current price falls between \$40 **and \$70/hr.** The maximum number of students who can take a private lesson at one time is three. At all times the normally scheduled classes and events in the gym take priority over any private lesson. All team members taking private lessons must be current on their tuition and any other financial obligation to Triad Gymnastics.

### Part III: Competitive Season Information

Triad Gymnastics sets a high priority on rewarding the effort and accomplishments of our gymnasts by providing them with an opportunity to participate in great competitions in exciting places. Traveling is a reward for the athletes' efforts, a motivation for continued excellence and an educational opportunity.

Triad's team gymnasts participate in the Junior Olympic program, which was developed by USA Gymnastics, the governing body for gymnastics in the United States. This program consists of ten levels of progressive gymnastics skills and routines for girls.

Female gymnasts compete on four events. These events (in Olympic Order) are: vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise.

## **Meet scheduling**

At the beginning of each season (August or January), a preliminary schedule of meet locations and dates will be handed out to the gymnasts. Meets may be added, changed, or canceled.

## **Meet information sheet**

Four to six weeks before a competition, eligible gymnasts will receive a meet information sheet that includes meet location, projected costs and fee due dates and host hotel information (if needed).

**Gymnasts invited to a meet will be given only one notice regarding fees and due dates. No other reminders will be given.**

Host clubs will set a deadline for meet entries. After this date the host club will set the final meet schedule depending on the number of entrants. It is not uncommon for host clubs to send out final meet information late or make last minute changes. Information in many instances is not received until a few days before a competition. It is a good idea to clear the whole weekend of a meet on the chance that there will be last minute changes that could conflict with your previous plans.

<b>The Meet Takes How Long?</b>
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The average meet can take as little as three and a half hours or as long as six hours. Some competitions that began back in the 80's are still not finished! All right, that is an exaggeration, but I suggest that you bring reading material or some other project with you to help pass the time while at one of your child's competitions.

Most competitions run in a format similar to the one listed below.

**Open Warm Up** – Usually a half-hour long. This time is for general stretching and getting equipment settings specific to the gymnast.

**Timed Warm Up** - Every gymnast present warms up on each of the apparatus. This procedure can take from an hour to an hour and a half, sometimes more.

**March In** – All the gymnasts line up and march in to the gym to be presented to the audience and judges; the National Anthem is usually played. This takes about ten to fifteen minutes.

**Competition** – The gymnasts now actually compete and receive scores from the judges at each event. This may take an hour and a half to two hours to complete. It will take longer if it is an optional meet and one touch warm ups are necessary.

**Awards** – If the organization running the meet is on the ball, you may only have to wait five to ten minutes before the awards are handed out. It has been known to take significantly longer to get the awards ready. Once they are prepared, it can take from fifteen minutes to half an hour to hand out the awards.

*Are you sure you brought enough to read?*

### **Requirements for Competitive Eligibility**

1. USA Gymnastics athlete membership. Annual membership is approximately \$45. The athlete should be prepared to show her membership card at all sanctioned meets. The athlete number and card are obtained each year prior to the competitive season. The Triad office will distribute information each year about USAG membership.
2. Gymnasts must be current on all Triad financial obligations.
3. A representative from each competitive team member's family is required to volunteer for at least four sessions at every USAG invitational, state, or regional level competition hosted by Triad Gymnastics. This does not include practice meets.
4. Attendance: missed practices can mean missed competitive opportunities.
5. Athletes must be physically, emotionally and mentally prepared for competition. The coaching staff will determine when each athlete is competition-ready and relay this information to the parent.

<b>Gymnast Selection Criteria for Meet Invitations</b>
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All gymnasts do not go to every meet. Meets should be a positive experience and therefore gymnast selection is made very carefully. Coaches make the decision on giving meet invitations based on the following criteria:

1. **Eligibility** - Gymnast must have all necessary fees paid, be current on tuition and be considered an active and eligible gymnast.

3. **Performance Level** –

**At level 4, every gymnast must score a 35.00 in the all around at least twice OR be proficient in level 5 skills in order to compete at level 5.**

**At level 5, every gymnast must score a 36.00 in the all around at least twice OR be proficient in level 6 skills in order to compete at level 6.**

**We do understand that score can be subjective, and we don't want kids or parents to base success or failure solely on score. However, we do feel that it is important to show mastery of skills and scores are one indication of this. We will take into consideration what each athlete scored last season and this policy will take effect at the start of the next competition season. We will determine levels for each gymnast at the beginning of June.**

Mastery of skills is based on performance in workouts. A gymnast will not be sent to a meet unless she can 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 will be made by the coaching staff and will largely be determined by athlete's attendance, attitude and effort in workouts.

3. **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.

Arriving late and leaving early may seem insignificant at first glance; however, gymnasts arriving late tend to miss warm ups and conditioning. Gymnasts leaving early not only miss part of an event rotation, but also end of workout stretch. This lack of preparation becomes obvious at competition season. The gymnast's routines will be fair to middling at best. The concept of "*it's not what you do, but how you do it*" is the overriding principle in making a determination whether a gymnast in this circumstance will compete. No coach would willingly send a gymnast into a competition knowing the gymnast is not prepared to do her best. The child would have an unsuccessful experience, which could shatter her self-confidence and ruin the competitive experience.

**Gymnasts must have perfect attendance the week prior to a meet. Missed practices could result in a gymnast being removed from competition.** Please see coaches well in advance regarding extenuating circumstances.

4. **Attitude** - A positive attitude and showing respect to coaches and teammates is important. Gymnasts must be emotionally ready for the competitive arena.

#### **Participation in Scheduled Meets**

All team gymnasts should make every effort to compete in all meets to which they are invited during their regular season. On occasion, a meet will be scheduled at the last minute. In this case, gymnasts will not be expected to compete.

Gymnasts who are unable to attend a scheduled meet should contact the coach as soon as possible. Please provide written notice if you are choosing not to attend a competition. Gymnasts canceling or becoming ineligible may be subject to loss of moneys already spent on entry fees and travel arrangements.

Meets have different meanings and the training for each will differ accordingly. In some meets in the early part of the season the focus may only be on **gaining competitive experience and developing confidence**. The goal is for the athletes to get their feet wet and familiarize themselves with competition.

Another meet might be used to earn a **qualifying score**. The athlete may be trying to qualify to a state, regional or national level competition. The goal here is to exhibit more polish and consistency.

**Mobility meets** are set up for a gymnast to obtain a specific score so she can move to the next competitive level. The coach may not be focusing on awards in such a meet.

Finally, there is the meet in which everyone hopes the coach and gymnast will pull out all the stops - **Championship Meets** (could be States, Regionals or Nationals), where everyone hopes their efforts from the past year will culminate in success.

<b>Meet fees and travel expenses</b>
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Each gymnast is responsible for paying her own meet fees. These fees will vary depending on the type of meet (*I.E. local qualifying meet, invitational or state meet*). Meet fees are generally between **\$45.00**

**and \$100.00.** Each gymnast is responsible for her own transportation to the competition, hotel (*if needed*), and restaurants.

**Gymnasts will be entered into a meet unless Triad is given advanced notice that a gymnast won't be attending. If no notice is given, you are responsible for the fee.**

**Each family is also responsible for travel expenses to and from each meet. In cases of a group travel meet (optionals), you are responsible for your share of the hotel, car, gas, etc. If after you have been entered and travel arrangements have been made, you are unable to attend, you are still responsible for your portion of the expenses.**

Admission is charged to spectators at meets.

#### Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts

- ◆ Athletes should arrive at the competition site **at least 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.
- ◆ Each athlete should accept her place in the line-up and the scores she receives with dignity and without criticism. There is no place for crying and uncontrolled emotions during gymnastics' meets. Athletes cannot control the scores they get nor can they control the performances of any other gymnast. Athletes can only control their own performance.

\* NOTE TO ATHLETES: If you do not do your best and receive a disappointing score, ask your coach about it when the meet is over. If you make mistakes and are disappointed in your performance, do not make matters worse by becoming emotional and jeopardizing your chances for good performances on upcoming events. Remember, too, that you are part of a team. The team needs you to be in control and ready to perform. They do not need you bringing the spirit of the entire team down by wailing and whimpering.

- ◆ The gymnasts should not keep track of their event scores, all-around scores or placement during the competition. Parents and coaches will keep track of those things. Athletes' concentration should center on their performance. There will be plenty of time to review scores later.
- ◆ Gymnasts should be prepared to assist the coach with boards, mats, bar settings etc. during the meet.

- ◆ 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 the meet.
- ◆ Athletes should stay with the team until competition is over and the coach releases them. Once a gymnast has entered the competition area there should be no contact between the gymnast and her parents unless there is an emergency.
- ◆ Athletes should stay for awards dressed in the Triad warm-up suit. Most meets have a formal system for presenting awards. As a participating athlete you have an obligation to stay for all the awards and to accept any award presented to you with courtesy and gratitude. It is customary to accept awards with a firm handshake and a warm smile. Congratulate and shake hands with the other athletes as well. Remember that you are not just representing yourself; you are acting as a representative of Triad Gymnastics as well.
- ◆ If you are staying to watch another teammate compete or you have arrived early for warm ups, stay seated in the bleachers do not to wander out onto the competition floor.

#### **Meet Etiquette for Parents**

1. Team Spirit is a big help.... Wear the team colors, or better yet one of our club t-shirts.
2. Please show proper respect to all Officials and Coaches at every competition. They are all there for one reason, to support your child's interest in gymnastics. Under no circumstance should you attempt to contact any official on the competition floor during or after the meet (*judges, score keepers, etc.*) If you have any questions regarding the meet or your child's scores you must contact your coach. Even the coach is not allowed to approach the judges regarding routines or scores during the meet, but must submit an inquiry through the Meet Director. Points could be deducted not only from your gymnast but the team score as well for failure to follow these rules.
4. Please show proper respect to all competitors. You NEVER KNOW who is sitting near you (*I.E. parents of the gymnast you just made a remark about*).
5. Once a gymnast has walked into the competition area for warm-up, they **ARE NOT ALLOWED** to talk or have contact with her parents until the competition is over. This has less to do with control than it does with FOCUS. Any distraction could disturb the focus necessary to have a successful routine. The coach's job at the meet is to monitor the gymnast's condition and teach her to respond appropriately. If the gymnast is too excited, the coach calms her down. If the gymnast is too

complacent, the coach pumps her up and motivates her to do her best. The emotional dynamic is fluid in a competition. An excellent vault score may cause a gymnast to be over-confident. A terrible bar routine may actually provide an educational moment. At these times, the gymnast needs to focus on her coach's advice, not distractions from off the competitive floor.

As coaches, we know that you mean well with your comments, but they may not be appropriate for the long-term training of your gymnast. If you have any questions about what happens at a meet, talk to the coach after you have returned to your gym and you have had time to reflect.

6. In any competition, parents, friends, and relatives of the gymnast **ARE NOT ALLOWED** onto the competitive floor. **YOU MUST** remain in the spectator's area along with all other relatives and friends. Your child could be immediately scratched from the meet if a parent is in the competitor's area.

7. In case of injury during warm-up or competition, **YOU MUST** stay in the spectator area until your coach flags you onto the floor.

8. **DO NOT** coach your child. Coaches should coach, everyone else should encourage. Injury may result from changing the gymnast's focus away from the coach's technique. Even the most helpful comment from you could have disastrous consequences.

9. **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY** is permitted during a meet. The sudden flash of light could cause a gymnast to be injured. Check out your camera in advance. Many cameras come with an automatic flash that will go off if it detects low light levels. If you cannot manually disable this device, please do not take pictures during the competition.

10. On the day of competition your child should eat a well-balanced meal about three hours prior to the actual competition. This energy will carry them through the entire competition. If necessary, a gymnast may carry fruit juices and pieces of fruit in their gym bag to curb hunger pangs.

11. 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 their teammates.

<b>Expectations</b>
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Problems occur when a parent expects too much from an athlete who is new to the competitive arena. (*New is defined as having only competed for two or three years.*) It takes a number of years of quality competition for a gymnast to develop the poise and grace to continuously take top honors in a gymnastics competition.

Some parents seem to have developed their own system of evaluating the scores their children earn during a gymnastics competition. When their child earns a 9.00 or better in the meet, the parents tend to walk around with the look and attitude *"YES, my kid is hot!"* If their child receives an 8.00, the parents are still happy and feel their child is a very good competitor; however, if a child gets a mark around a 7.00, the parents start to wonder what needs to be fixed in the routine or why the coach doesn't pay more attention to their child. As the scores get lower than 7.00, the gymnast's parents hide in the bleachers and hope that no one they know will see them.

Obviously this is an over-simplification of what happens and not all parents react in this manner. The key is to recognize when your child is working up to her potential. If she completes all her skills for the first time, without a fall, that is a winning routine regardless of what score she receives. Comments from you should be congratulatory and positive. No mention should be made at that time of what she can do better, that would lessen the effect of this "victory" for her. The week after the meet your daughter's coach will go over those elements that need work and congratulate her on the elements she competed correctly.

**Any score she receives during a competition is no reflection on you as parent.** There is no reason for you to feel embarrassed if your child is having a bad meet. Everyone has good days and bad days and it is how she learns to react to them that illustrates her development as a competitor.

Remember that a score given to your child in a gymnastics competition is an evaluation of one single performance, not an evaluation of the child.

### **Some Guidelines for Parents Feeling Stress**

We know that you are excited about your child's participation in gymnastics and want her to be successful, but as a parent you actually have the least amount of control over your gymnast's performance. This combination of high emotional stake in the performance with little or no direct control over the outcome can produce stress and can lead to some bizarre behavior.

**Danger Signs:** Watch for these. If you recognize yourself in these descriptions, you probably need to reevaluate your actions, your role, and your attitudes.

\*Wanting to observe every practice intently.

\*Praising or punishing your child for what you see during observations of workout.

\*Finding your sense of worth and happiness dependent on the success of your gymnast.

\*Constantly comparing your child and her progress to others in the group, on the team or in competition.

\*Verbally abusing the gym, the coaches, and the program while still placing your child under their control.

Inappropriate Comments

“You finally beat Sally”

“How many (current difficult skill) did you make today?”

“I’ll give you \$20 if you win today”

“That judge always scores you low”

“I cannot believe they moved Sally up and not you!”

Appropriate Comments

“You scored your highest yet!”

"How was practice?"

“Do your best and have fun”

“Work hard and next time you’ll do

better.”

“As long as you are happy, safe, and progressing, I’m happy.”

**Appendix**

**Glossary of gymnastic terms**

**AAU** - American Athletic Union

**ACTIVE** - A gymnast in good standing who is current in payment of Triad Gymnastics fees and Booster Club fees, and attends all regularly scheduled training sessions.

**ALL AROUND SCORE** - A gymnast's total score from all events (I.E. vault, bars, beam, and floor).

**BOOSTER CLUB** - A non-profit club involved in furthering the participation of young people in the sport of gymnastics and defraying the costs of the competitive gymnastics team at Triad Gymnastics.

**COMPULSORY ROUTINES** - A series of skills on each event that are put together with clearly marked timing, amplitude, and body position. The USAG develops a set of routines for Levels 4, 5, 6. All gymnasts compete using the routines developed by USA Gymnastics.

**ELIGIBLE** - an active gymnast, current with USAG, club, and Booster fees, who, with coaches' approval, may participate in all activities including meets and exhibitions,.

**INACTIVE** - A gymnast who has officially dropped or voluntarily chosen not to compete, or whose Triad Gymnastics fees are 30 days delinquent.

**INELIGIBLE** - A gymnast who is not current with the Booster Club, Triad fees, or USAG fees, has had some disciplinary problems, or is considered not ready by the coach.

**INVITATIONAL MEET** - A meet, usually with a specific theme, hosted by any gymnastics club. The scores obtained at these meets may serve to qualify an athlete for state championships. Scores may also be used to move a gymnast from one level to the next.

**MOBILITY SCORE** – The score needed to move from one competitive level to the next. For example, a score of 31.00 all round may be needed to move from Level 4 to Level 5. The mobility score should not be confused with a “qualifying score” even if they are numerically the same.

**OPTIONAL ROUTINES** - Routines developed and choreographed by the coaches for each gymnast to be used primarily<sup>[3]</sup> in levels 7, 8, 9, 10, & Elite. The routines will be individualized for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty.

**QUALIFYING SCORE** – The all around score (total of vault, bars, beam, and floor) needed for entry into the state competition. Normally this score is determined by USA Gymnastics, but in some cases may be changed according to a particular state or region's needs.

**STATE MEET** - In most cases, the season finale, where qualified gymnasts compete with other gymnasts throughout the state. Higher level gymnasts may go on to compete in regional or national level competitions.

## **USAG - USA Gymnastics**

### **Description of USAG Junior Olympic Levels**

Levels 1-3: These are developmental levels and they have not been designed with competition in mind. Mastery of these skills must be certified by a USA Gymnastics skill evaluator.

Level 4: This is an entry-level competitive level. Compulsory routines are competed on all four events. Compulsory means that all gymnasts at this level compete the same exact routines. The gymnast must have reached her 6<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to participate at level 4. At Triad Gymnastics this level works out 10-12 hours per week

Level 5: This is also a beginning compulsory level. These routines are designed to help gymnasts develop required skills and technique. The gymnast must have reached her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday to participate. A Certified Skill Evaluator must verify that levels 1-4 have been completed. At Triad Gymnastics this level works out 12 hours per week

Level 6: This is a compulsory level very similar to level 5 but with slightly more difficult skills. The gymnast must have reached her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday to participate. At Triad Gymnastics this level works out 12-16 hours per week

Level 7: This is a compulsory/optional level. The gymnasts create their own routines but must include certain compulsory elements. The gymnast must have reached her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday to participate. Triad Level 7 athletes work-out 16-20 hours per week.

Level 8: This is a beginning optional level, which means the gymnasts make up their own routines meeting specific difficulty requirements. Competition is at the local, state and regional levels. The gymnast must have reached her 8<sup>th</sup> birthday to participate. Triad Level 8 athletes work-out 16-20 hours per week.

Level 9: This is an intermediate optional level. Gymnasts are allowed to do more difficult skills with

some restrictions. These gymnasts spend 20 or more hours per week at Triad.

Level 10: This is the highest level in the USAG Junior Olympic age group program. It is an advanced optional level. Gymnasts are allowed to compete any skills with no restrictions. These gymnasts will workout at Triad for 20 or more hours per week.

Elite: This is the top level in gymnastics. Perhaps 1% of all gymnasts compete at this level. Gymnasts compete up to the National and International level and hope to represent the USA in International competitions including the Olympics. These gymnasts will workout at Triad for 20 or more hours per week.

TOP: The TOP program is a separate branch of Triad's team program. TOP stands for Talent Opportunity Program and is part of USA Gymnastics' Elite level program. This is an extremely challenging program in which the athletes participate in a series of physical abilities and skills tests at the regional and national level. Selection for the TOP program is based on the athlete's age, ability and goals in gymnastics. While only a small number of team members will participate in the TOP program we feel the coaches' education provided through this program is invaluable to our entire team program.

### **College Bound Athletes**

The Triad coaches will assist every college bound athlete in locating a college of their choice. We will work with parents to help meet NCAA requirements for recruitment. Colleges seek out the best private club athletes in the state and in the country, and Tom and Donna have had a great deal of success in helping graduating seniors find a place at college.

It is important to build a gymnastics video library during the high school years. Most colleges do at least part of their scouting using videos. During the spring of the junior year and the following summer we will help with the video by filming during practice and featuring work in progress to show off the athlete's best skills.

Of course the very best thing an athlete can do to help herself is to maintain good grades and score well on both the ACT and the SAT. Even the best gymnasts will fall short of their college goals if their grades and test scores are low.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you for taking the time to read this team handbook. We take great pride in our team program and look forward to giving your child a wonderfully positive athletic experience!

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have received and read this handbook.

Detach at dotted line and hand in the bottom part of this page to the Triad office.

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<b>Parent / Gymnast Acknowledgement</b>
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I have read the document titled "Triad Team Handbook!" from cover to cover and understand and agree to the guidelines set forth.

I also understand that the policies and procedures may change throughout the year. Modifications to this document may be made via letters or communications from the Team Coach and /or Gym Director.

Should I have any questions regarding any policies or procedures, I understand that I should contact the Gym Director for the appropriate answers.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Gymnast Signature

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Date

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[1] If you are joining the team at one of the entry levels, familiarizing yourself with this information will prepare you for the future as your child develops her gymnastics proficiency and competitive success.

[2] You may want to start a carpool with other team parents.