

GYMNASTICS ★ DANCE ★ CHEER



Competitive Team Handbook

For Parents & Athletes

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Welcome to the Jacksonville 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 classes to our competitive team, and second, it is a reference book for all of our team rules, expectations, and coaching philosophy.

Philosophy of our Program

To provide mental and physical readiness for competition through positive reinforcement and encouragement. We also hope that your child will learn self-esteem, self-motivation, self-discipline, dedication, determination, work ethic, time management, teamwork, team spirit, leadership, sportsmanship, and respect for others.

Safety

Gymnastics, as with most sports has potential for injury. We are aware of this and will make every effort to maintain a safe environment for our athletes. We believe in proper progressions and lead-ups for more advanced skills. We believe in providing the proper equipment and training devices designed to make learning as safe as possible. The number of hours required for each training group allows them the numbers and proper conditioning to minimize the athletes' risk for injury.

Invitations to our Team-

- Athletes transferring to our team from another team program will be evaluated by our team's coaching staff and will be placed in the appropriate training level.
- Athletes selected from our developmental recreational programs will be evaluated and placed in the proper training level.

Criteria under consideration by the coaches when moving athletes to the next level:

- 1. Physical Preparedness:**
An assessment is made of strength, flexibility, endurance, agility, and quickness.
- 2. Emotional and Physical Readiness:**
These attributes are observable in a subjective way, as opposed to an objective manner. They readily indicate the child's ability to overcome reasonable fears and to make quick yet sound judgments, and their self-motivation and dedication to achieving their goals.
- 3. Present Skill Level:**
By asking them to have acquired the skills needed in the next level routines before being considered to move up. By looking at this, we can project your skill and routine readiness for the coming competitive season.
- 4. Previous Meet Season:**
Have completed the previous meet season successfully.

All skills will be evaluated and must be attained by **August 1st** to move to the next competitive level.

By combining all the above factors plus our day-to-day experiences with that child, we can pretty well determine at what level they will be most successful. We have always believed that to be successful at competitions, one must train at 100% and be able to compete at 80%. **It is important to remember that we must train at the level we want to be, not necessarily the level that we are currently at.**

Respect For JAX

Everyone shows respect in the way that they act. The following actions show respect and are expected of a member of the JAX team.

- Athletes shall attend all practices, competitions, and special events.
- Parents shall let the coaches know via the Team App if their gymnast cannot attend their workout.
- Athletes shall arrive on time and stay until practice is over.
- Athletes shall come into the gym with a smile on their faces. We ask that each gymnast work hard with a great attitude and try their best at every workout- that is all we expect.
- Athletes and parents shall treat other gymnasts and parents respectfully: be kind to all your teammates, and do not hold yourself out as better than other gymnasts. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses.
- Athletes, if leaving practice early for any reason, must ask for permission from their coach first before leaving. No leaving an event during practice. Bathroom and water breaks should be taken in between rotations. The main reason is so that your coaches always know where you are.
- Parents and athletes should always act in a way that shows your respect for yourself and the gym. We want the gym to be happy and motivating- there is no place for rude comments, displays of anger, or talking back to coaches or other adults.
- Athletes shall tell your coach when your body is telling you to stop or slow down. If you are sick, on medication, or injured, we need to know. If your body is hurting and causing you not to be able to practice fully, you will be asked to go to the doctor and bring back a doctor's note for us to keep on file before you are allowed to fully participate in practice again.
- Athletes should provide their bodies with proper food and drink at all times.
- Athletes should always wait inside JAX for their ride. Parents need to always know what time workouts are over and pick up the athlete promptly. Parents, please arrive at least five minutes early to pick up your child. During the season, coaches may run a couple of minutes over on practice, so, please do not rush coaches or ask to pull your child early.
- Every athlete will wear a leotard to train in every day. No t-shirts are allowed during training. Athletes must be on the floor ready to train in a leotard (shorts optional) with hair pulled back. No jewelry allowed. (exception: stud earrings).
- NO CELL PHONES TO BE USED DURING PRACTICE HOURS. Cell phones are to be placed in the cell phone holder and can not stay in the locker room.

Season Rules

During the season, athletes are expected to attend every practice.

If an athlete misses a workout 1 week prior to a competition, the coaching staff may decide not to allow the athlete to compete in the upcoming competition. If an athlete misses a practice 1 week prior to competition due to sickness, the athlete must bring in a doctor's note. Also, if an athlete is not able to successfully train her routines and complete assignments given by coaches with respect and a good attitude in the gym at least 1 week prior to a competition date, the coaching staff may decide to do one of the following:

- Scratch the athlete from the competition.
- Allow the athlete to compete only in the events that she has been able to complete routines on in the gym.
- If an athlete chooses to not attempt a skill in the competition warm-up, then the athlete will be scratched from that event.

Travel to meets should not be planned until the practice schedule for the week of the meet has been released. Athletes are required to attend all practices.

If an athlete is not on the floor by the time the competition begins, then the athlete will be scratched from the competition.

Athletes will not be allowed to leave practice early the week of a meet. In many cases, they will be released late.

ALL athletes will be required to attend all competitions scheduled for the season. If an athlete misses a competition without receiving permission from the coaching staff at the beginning of the season, then the athlete will not be re-invited the following season to the JAX team.

All Optional level athletes will be required to attend State, Regional, and National competitions if they qualify.

Team Travel Meet- Optional Level athletes will have at least one big travel meet a year in addition to Regionals and Nationals. All athletes and parents will be required to travel on the schedule set by coaches and travel in the attire set by coaches. Athletes should not leave earlier than the last practice scheduled. Big travel meets can be somewhat of a distraction to the athletes, so a few rules have been set in place to keep the athletes focused on why they are at the competition:

- No staying out late the night before a competition.
- No going out and seeing the sites the morning or afternoon before a competition.
- We strongly recommend not excessively walking the day before a competition.
- No swimming the night before or the day of the competition.

We understand you want to see the sites and will allow time for these activities, but we go on big travel meets for one reason, to compete!

Competition Rules for Athletes

- Arrive at the competition 15 minutes before the scheduled stretch time.
- Hair should be neatly pulled back. Straight ponytails may only be worn as long as your hair does not hang below the bottom of your neck. Coaches reserve the right to require a specific hairstyle for competitions to ensure a clean look on the competitive floor.
- Athletes will wear a JAX team leotard at all competitions. No fingernail polish, glitter, or jewelry other than small stud earrings are allowed on the competitive floor. Sports bras and briefs may not show; including matching ones.
- When an athlete arrives at the competition, she should report to the coaches immediately.
- Athletes will always cheer for their teammates and be courteous to gymnasts from other teams.
- Any athletes displaying a bad attitude or disrespect on the competition floor will be asked to leave the competition floor and sit with their parents and watch their team for the rest of the competition.
- All athletes at every competition are required to stay for the entire awards ceremony following the competition. Athletes are required to wear their team warm-ups and shoes with the team leotard. During the awards ceremony, athletes are expected to be respectful of the process and stand correctly on the podium.
- Optional level athletes should always have an extra set of grips. Athletes that require taping should bring pre-wrap and tape with their gym bag and allow for taping time before the required start time.

Communication

Please email jaxgym@gmail.com if you have a problem or a concern. The team coordinator will schedule a meeting for you with the coaches to determine the best course of action to solve the problem. Complaining to the other parents cannot solve your problem, nor can we solve the problem if we do not know about it. If you have enough respect for us to allow us to spend so much time with your child and to play a large role in your child's life, please respect us enough to know that we have your child's best interest at heart.

Communication in the gym can be challenging- we work hard to send home notices, schedule changes, and meet information to you in a timely manner. Please check your email and Team App often; this will be our primary mode of communication. Download the Team App.

Special problems- if your child is having problems in school with low grades or there is a special activity that she needs to attend and she will be missing practices, please let us know what is going on and why your child will be missing practices. Please understand that missing practices may affect the progress of your child and everyone needs to accept this possibility. There are no make-up classes for team practices.

Rules and Policies for Parents

The parents are as much a part of our team as the athletes and coaches! Success is a triangle: athletes, parents, and coaches on each point. We all have to be supportive, on the same page, and strive for the same goal. We encourage all of our parents to attend every competition and to be involved in our program. As parents, you should be aware that as a member of our team, you are representing JAX too! With that in mind, a few guidelines for parents during competitions and in the gym are in order

- Once the athlete enters the gym, they are ours and once they leave the gym they are yours.
- Cheer loud and proud for all of the members of our team and for any good performances that you see.
- Promote JAX in every way that you feel is appropriate: t-shirts, banners, and cheers- but never speak negatively about another club, coach, gymnast, or judge. We realize that from time to time, you will hear other parents speak poorly about our team, but just keep in mind that the misinformation that they have is often coming from frustration. Ignore it and never stoop down to that level!
- Under NO circumstances is a parent ever to approach a judge or any other meet official before, during, or after a competition!
- Under USAG rules, only USAG professional members, judges, and persons assigned to assist with the competition are allowed on the competitive floor. At no time should parents be on the competitive floor unless otherwise instructed by one of our coaches.
- Please do not contact or talk to your gymnast once they are on the competitive floor or practice gym floor. We want them to focus all of their energy on the competition or practice with as few distractions as possible. After the meet or practice is over, they will come to see you.
- In case of an injury during the competition, please wait for your coach to give some indication that you should come onto the competition floor. In most cases, the injury will be relatively minor and the coach and /or trainers will take care of it. Your daughter will continue her competition and she will need to maintain her focus. In case of a more serious injury, the coach will come to find you.
- Please get your child to the competition on time! Not only is it upsetting to the coaches, but it also creates unnecessary anxiety for your child in an already stressful situation.
- **Do not coach your child-** when a parent starts to coach their child, they interfere with the very performance they are trying to improve. Please let the coaches do their job in the gym and on the competition floor. In addition to confusing the child as to who they should listen to, it also interferes with the development of the coach/athlete bond which is critical to any long-term success in this sport. Finally, do you think the coaches do not notice that your child's legs are bent? Of course, they notice and will, at the appropriate time, make the child aware of their error.
- At no time should any parent enter the gym for any reason. If the coach needs you, they will come to find you. If your child has to leave early, we will send them to you. If you have questions or want to talk to the coaches, please wait until after practice. If you have a question for us, please ask us before or after practices. We take our jobs seriously and feel we cannot give your child our best if we are distracted!
- If at all possible, schedule appointments (medical or school) outside of practice times.
- Private lessons may only be done with the athletes' primary coach unless permission is given.
- We host the largest gym meet in the state. We are unable to do this without our parent volunteers. All parents/guardians are asked to volunteer in some capacity. There will be a \$50 set-up/tear-down fee for every gymnast. If you volunteer for either the set-up or tear-down, the fee will be waived. Your card on file will be drafted on Monday, February 12, 2024, if you do not show up. Please remember to sign in and sign out so that you get credit for set-up/tear down.

Team tuition is a commitment for a full year- the decision to join the JAX team is a big one and reflects a commitment to the team for the entire year. Team members do not move on and off the team based on illness, conflicts, vacations, or the like. You are either on the team or not. Team tuition is based on this and that is why there are no discounts for missed workouts. Tuition is based on 48 weeks per year. Since tuition is paid monthly and not every 4 weeks, there are 4 weeks every year that you are not paying for. The gym will be closed on Holidays, when we have competitions in our gym, when the coaching staff is away at certain competitions or clinics, and for any other reason that we feel it is necessary to cancel workouts. There will be no discounts for these days off; we will do everything possible to provide makeup classes but cannot guarantee it. Remember, tuition is based on 48 weeks per year.

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month; a late fee will be applied on the 10th of each month. Tuition is a commitment for 1 full year once a group has been started.

Your team packet includes a calendar outlining holidays and vacation time that the team program will be canceled. Please try to schedule vacations and trips during our scheduled off times.

Injured Athletes

Injured athletes are expected to participate in practice to the extent medically possible. Athletes requiring alternative practices should also consult a physician for treatment. Please remember that a family practice physician does not see sports-related injuries on a day-to-day basis, and in many cases, a sports orthopedist will need to be consulted. In any case in which an athlete is unable to participate in practice due to an injury, a medical release will be required for them to return to full practice. Injured athletes will be required to attend all practices and will be expected to complete specialized injury assignments until a medical release is obtained. 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 specific skills. There is no reduction in tuition.

Inclement Weather Policy

At various times throughout the year, inclement weather may force the closing of our recreational gymnastics program and the schools in the area. In most of these cases, there is a window of time during the day that the weather will allow us to schedule a modified practice. We will schedule these practices and ask that all parents and athletes make a determination of their ability to make it to and from practice. These practices are never mandatory but encouraged if the athletes and parents feel safe making the trip. These practice changes will be sent in an email by the team coordinator and through the Team App. Keep in mind that if the gym closes recreational classes, you will receive a message from the gym email closing the gym- look for a message from the competitive program.

Other Fees

- Private Lessons - These are optional lessons and the gym does not require private lessons. **All private lessons must be set up through your gymnast's current level team coach.** If your child's current coach is unavailable for private lessons, she will put a different coach in touch with you to assist in private lessons. Private lessons with a different coach **MUST** be approved by your gymnast's current level team coach. Coaches' fees for the lesson will be paid per half hour and payment is due at the time of the lesson. Private lessons for team girls are set at \$30/ ½ hour and \$50/hour. Lessons will only be scheduled when the coaches do not have workouts or classes. Private lessons are not a substitute for missed workouts. Private lessons will only be scheduled for athletes who are current on their tuition. Also, all private lessons conducted for athletes must be provided by certified JAX team coaches.
- Optional Floor and Beam Routines- When the athletes move into level 6 or above and XCEL, they will need floor and beam routines. A choreographer will be picked for the athletes and fees need to be paid to the gym before the choreography is scheduled. Fees will vary depending on the choreographer used and the event. Choreography from our JAX coaches for floor and beam will be \$135. Optional floor music will be selected by the athlete's floor coach. A music fee of \$65 will be assessed upon the selection of the athletes' music. The athlete's floor and beam coach will determine when new routines are needed. In most cases, athletes will use their routines for two years.
- Competition Expenses: competition entry fees are usually between \$85 and \$145 per competition. Any unpaid fees will result in your athlete not being entered into the competition. Any questions regarding payments or meet fees should be referred to Coach Laurel.
- Equipment: Grips, tape, pre-wrap, wristbands, and braces of any kind are all additional expenses that you may incur throughout the year. Additional individual equipment may be required by the coaches of your athletes' program such as thera-bands, weights, etc.
- Summer Team Camps: Our athletes may attend summer camps if they want; however, there are a few things to keep in mind:
 - Most camps are for fun. Do not expect your child to pick up a lot of new skills at a camp.
 - Team tuition is still due to JAX even when you are at a camp.
 - Attending more than one week of a camp could hinder skill development since they will miss workouts at our gym.
 - JAX Gym has an Annual Summer Team Camp that is **mandatory** for all team members. They are also **required** to order the Camp Leotard Attire Package.
- Apparel: Team athletes are required to order the competition attire package that will include a competition leotard, warm-up pants, warm-up jackets, backpack, and other items. The competition leotards are sized to be fitted and tight to maximize the gymnasts' lines and performance. Apparel is fitted once a year in the summer.

Athlete Expectations

- Athletes will attend all practices, competitions, and special events.
- Athletes should arrive on time and stay until practice is over.
- Athletes will come into the gym with a smile on their faces.
- Athletes will work their hardest with a great attitude at every practice.
- Athletes will treat other athletes with respect.
- Athletes will always act in a way that shows respect for themselves and the gym.
- Athletes will always show respect to their coaches. Talking back, eye-rolling, rude comments, not answering questions or any other sign of disrespect will not be tolerated.
- Athletes will tell your coach when your body is telling you to stop or slow down. (If it is something that requires special assignments, the athlete will be asked to see a doctor and will not be allowed to rejoin full practice without a release form from the doctor).
- Athletes will provide their body with proper food and drink at all times.
- Athletes will always wait inside JAX for their ride.
- Athletes will wear only a leotard and shorts to train in every day with hair pulled back out of their face. No jewelry. (except stud earrings).
- Athletes will be on the floor on time.
- Athletes should be in the gym 5 minutes early ready to start warming up and stretching.
- No cell phones to be used during practice hours.
- Athletes requiring taping should be in practice early and taped before practice begins.
- Athletes showing any sign of disrespect or lack of effort will be asked to join another group, be finished with practice, or leave the gym.
- Athletes should encourage each other.
- Athletes should understand that when given corrections, coaches are not being mean, they are trying to help you reach your goals.
- If an athlete has a question, concern, or needs to talk it needs to be done before practice starts or after practice ends.
- Athletes need to make sure they represent themselves nicely inside the gym as well as outside the gym. No bullying will be tolerated.
- When at a competition, athletes are expected to be on time with their leotard and warm-ups on, on the mat, and focused 15 minutes before the competition starts.
- Any athlete showing a bad attitude or disrespect during a competition will be asked to leave the competition floor but will have to stay and watch the rest of her team.
- Athletes will stay for the entire awards ceremony.
- Athletes will stand on the awards stand correctly with their leotard pulled up, warm-ups, and shoes on, with a good attitude, regardless of placement.
- During the awards ceremony, athletes will be respectful of all other athletes. No laying down, goofing off, or being loud.
- Athletes refusing to try what a coach has asked them to do will be asked to leave the practice.
- Athletes will finish every assignment each day before being permitted to leave the practice.