



Pikes Team Parent's Handbook

Revised 12/13/2011

Welcome to the PIKES Family,

First, I would like to welcome you to our family. The reason I say this; is because when you make a commitment to team, you really are joining a family. We will be going through a lot together and your child will make lifelong friends while creating life memories! Since your child will be spending so much time in the gym, I think it is important for you to understand what my philosophy is as a head coach.

Growing up my entire life in gymnastics, it has given me great perspective on how I run my team program. I wanted to take the good lessons and practices I was trained with and eliminate the bad ones. Gymnastics is one of the best sports in the world, but in the wrong hands it can be a very dark sport.

Gymnastics in California is extremely competitive; there are many gyms that will do anything to win: Homeschooling, motivating through fear and punishment, yelling and even constant weigh-ins are a norm.

We are not one of them!

Gymnastics Unlimited is about life experiences and so is the PIKES Team. Now believe me I am just as competitive as the next person but I believe in quality gymnastics, I do understand to win in the lower levels you must do the time! But my long term concern is for their future gymnastics. I believe in spending more time on harder skills and basics, setting the ground work for the higher levels.

Every sport studies peaking and we would like it to be at the end of their career, not at the beginning. When I was in level 6 compulsory, I was in last place at almost every single competition, but my coaches had taught me perseverance and to only pay attention to myself and not what other teammates are doing. That always stuck in my head and 7 years later I was the United States National Champion, Goodwill Games gold medalist and World Team member.

What we have to remember is gymnastics is a sport with young children doing a high level of athleticism. We want them to learn what hard work, commitment, perseverance, time management is, but have a childhood as well. When it is all said and done as coaches we are concerned about their well-being as a person and who they become as teenagers and adults when there gymnastics career is over.

On that note, to keep the gymnasts safe, I require an all-around score of two 36.00's to move up a level. Sometimes your child will take more than one season to move up a level and almost every child stays in a level more than once. Children all peak at different levels so as parents and coaches we must support their own pace and enjoy the ride. They will simply amaze you!

I believe in open communication with the parents. I do have many children on team so whenever you want to talk about how your child's progress, just schedule an appointment with me.

Thank you and welcome again to the PIKES team FAMILY!

PIKES Team Head Coach,

Vanessa Adler

TEAM HANDBOOK

Congratulations to all of you for being part of the Pikes Competitive Team. You have all shown the potential and desire to be part of this prestigious group. We welcome you. As you hopefully realize, being a Pike is a huge commitment; both time and financial. We ask that you read and understand all the expectations set forth in this handbook and make an informed decision about whether being a Pike is for you at this time.

By paying your tuition you are agreeing to the terms of this handbook.

Many of you have participated in our *Academy* . If you are new to the competitive aspect of the program, we would like to welcome you to this part of GU.

If you choose to be a Pike, if you commit to attending classes and to working as hard as you can, we will guarantee you excellent gymnastics training and progress. We will push you to your limits and beyond, while maintaining a positive learning environment. We will help you become better gymnasts and better people. You will learn life-long lessons in dedication, responsibility, respect, discipline, sacrifice and appreciation. You will have more poise, confidence and self-esteem.

Our Mission Statement

To provide a safe, fun and positive environment while, promoting creativity, fitness and inspiring students to achieve their goals. This will enrich the lives of our students and the community through the excellence in gymnastics.

Our Philosophy

**The children always come first.
We aim to develop in our students a positive self-esteem by instilling the values of good sportsmanship, self discipline, respect and accountability. Gymnastics Unlimited is committed**

to a standard of excellence and the values you can expect from each member of our staff is:

Safety is everyone's responsibility

Excellence and integrity

Quality education and training

Listening with results

“Teach children that they can achieve and they will remember the lessons for life.”

COMPETITIVE TEAM PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy for competitive teams is to develop gymnastics excellence during which time we also attempt to initiate a strong educational, ethical, and moral foundation that will carry over to “Life after Gymnastics.”

Competitive gymnasts are athletes who acquire and develop many valuable qualities that are inherent in this sport. These qualities include the following.

- ***Self-discipline*** – knowing what work has to be done in order to achieve a goal.
- ***Self-motivation*** – working hard because of want and need.
- ***Respect*** – for the sport of gymnastics, judges' teammates, and coaches.
- ***Sportsmanship*** – playing by the rules and learning to deal with failure only to make you stronger and learn how to win graciously.
- ***Dedication***
- ***Leadership***
- ***Concentration***
- ***Time management***
- ***Teamwork***
- ***Friendship***
- ***Gracefulness***
- ***Nutrition for healthy living***
- ***Physical fitness***

Gymnastics excellence means becoming the best you can be individually. Achieving this excellence takes setting goals,

both long term and short term, and an incredible amount of work to achieve those expectations. As a *GYMNASTICS UNLIMITED* team member you will be expected to strive to be the best you can be, recognizing the fact that...

“If it’s worth doing—do it right!”

QUESTIONS CONCERNING TEAM

- 1. Tuition and Team Fees – Lisa Eichman.**
- 2. Team questions, policy or concerns - Vanessa Adler, Head Coach.**
- 3. Gym issues, schedule or parent relations – Head Coach and Lisa Eichman**
- 4. GUF questions – Lisa Eichman**

Tuition Policy

Having a competitive team is expensive. Being a member of a competitive team is expensive. We can only hope that you all know that we try to provide the best possible for the least amount of your money possible. We have provided your girls with a high quality coaching staff and an exclusive training center. We shopped the competition and still remain the least expensive competitive program. We will continue to evaluate these costs and make changes as needed.

Tuition for Pikes members will be per the GU tuition schedule. Tuition for Pikes members is based on a 12- month, 48 week calendar year, regardless of how many hours of workouts they have during the year. Basically this is an annual tuition broken down to 12 payments to help make it easier for you to manage. The four additional weeks of instruction are used to compensate for gym closures due to holidays and competitions. If you look at the per hour rate of the classes, it should help make the fee more palatable. Approximately \$5 per hour is unheard of for this quality of training in this industry. The fees are heavily discounted already. Being these classes are discounted already,

there will be no pro-rations or makeups for missed classes. The entire monthly tuition is due each month regardless of missed days. This tuition reserves your spot on the team.

As a Pike member, you will be expected to pay your dues on or before the first workout of the month. Tuition paid after the last day of the previous month will cause your gymnast to not be in good standing. Pikes who have not paid outstanding tuition at the time of meet registration will not be registered for that meet. Please understand that this policy is for the benefit of those parents who pay on time.

Competitive Costs

As a Pike you will be expected to pay all costs associated with competition. These costs are not included in your tuition. The following is a list of those costs and all prices given are estimates.

Competitive Leos	\$125-150
Warm ups	\$225
Team Duffel Bag	\$50
USAG Registration	\$55
SoCal USAG Registration	\$20
Gymnast Entry Fees	\$45-125
Coaches Expenses	\$50-225
Team Fees	\$50-200
Congress	Fund Raise
Team Banquet	\$25-35

To assist with household budgets, you can expect the competitive costs to be around \$1,500 per year.

Definitions:

Competitive leos – custom leo worn at competitions

Warm up- custom warm up worn over leos

Team Duffel Bag – custom bag to hold gymnast's meet supplies

USAG Registration – annual membership dues payable to the USAG. This fee is required to participate at any USAG sanctioned meet.

SoCal USAG Registration – annual membership dues payable to the SoCalUSAG. This fee is required to participate at any SoCalUSAG meet.

Gymnast Entry Fee – The fee associated with registering a gymnast to participate at a gymnastics meet. This fee is paid per meet and per gymnast and is set by the host club. Generally a preliminary meet is around \$45, while some invitationals may cost up to \$125. Gymnast entry fees solely depend on the competition. Some offer more awards, themes and additional costs; hence the higher costs. This fee is collected by the GUF and paid to the host club through the GUF. These fees are never refundable as they are not within our control.

Coaches Expenses – These expenses are paid to the team coaches to compensate them for their time and reimburse them for mileage, food and lodging. This fee is per meet and per gymnast. It is set by GU. Generally these costs range from \$50-225. Coaches expenses solely depend on the location of the competition and how many gymnasts will be participating. Some meets require overnight stays and traveling long distances with fewer gymnasts: hence the higher costs. This fee is collected by the GUF and paid directly to the team coaches through the GUF. These fees are never refundable.

Team Fees – The fee associated with registering the entire team to participate at a competition. This fee is per meet and per level and is set by the host club. Team fees solely depend on the meet; offering trophies, plaques and banners. This fee is collected by the GUF and remitted to the host club through the GUF. These fees are never refundable.

With the exception of gymnast uniform costs, competitive fees are collected about 90 days prior to the competitive season. Generally, fees are collected on the installment basis starting in July. They usually collected in installments approximately 30 days apart. There will be exceptions to this if the Head Coach

deviates from the competitive calendar and participates in any “off-season” meets. Those meet fees will be collected on an as attended basis.

Congress – USAG Congress is an annual event held Nationally and Regionally. It is one of the prime forms of continuing education for gymnastics team coaches. The cost for this event is off set with the GUF fund raiser. In past years, the Pikes have sold candy bars. All Pikes are required to participate in this fund raiser.

Team Banquet – The team banquet is an annual celebration of the past season’s accomplishments and a way to welcome new Pikes to the team. Only active Pikes are invited with their families. The event is held off site usually in May.

Role of the GUF

The Gymnastics Unlimited Foundation (GUF) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.

The GUF is involved in several community activities. In relation to the Pikes the GUF’s role is to allow the team an avenue to pay the competitive costs through a tax deductible vehicle. Only the competitive costs associated with competition are accepted by the GUF. You will receive a donation letter in late January representing all monies paid to the GUF by you for the previous year for your taxes. Being that the GUF is a separate entity from GU, we can only accept cash or checks. Accepting credit cards is cost prohibitive.

Unlike a PTA or Parent-Booster Club, the GUF is not a membership organization. The GUF is run by a Board of Directors who make all decisions for the organization. The GUF has several funds in addition to the team fund: for example a general fund and a scholarship fund.

YEARLY COMPETITIVE CALENDAR

■ JUNE

Schedule floor choreography – optional
Have floor music created – optional

■ **JULY**

Meet packet received – coaches choose meets
Set up competitive calendar – compulsory and optional
Floor choreography – optional
Start In-House meets – compulsory
Pre-season meeting – compulsory

■ **AUGUST**

Competition begins – compulsory

■ **SEPTEMBER**

■ **OCTOBER**

Pre-season meeting – optional

■ **NOVEMBER**

Competition ends – compulsory
New compulsory move-up meeting

■ **DECEMBER**

Competition begins – optional

■ **JANUARY**

■ **FEBRUARY**

■ **MARCH**

End of competition – Level 7
End of season meeting – Level 7

■ **APRIL**

End of competition – Level 8 & 9
End of season meeting – Level 8 & 9
Team Banquet

■ **MAY**

End of competition – Level 10

**End of season meeting – Level 10
Look for floor music – optional**

LEVEL DETERMINATION

The *Gymnastics Unlimited* staff determines when and what level to compete each athlete based on the following guidelines. One major factor is safety. Gymnastics can be very dangerous.

- 1. Consistent safe performance in the gym is essential before we allow routines in a competition setting. Consistency is shown within several weeks of time. The coaching staff determines the safety of the athlete.**
- 2. Is the child going to feel good about their performance and have a shot at a reward for their efforts? Whether we want them to or not they will compare themselves to others. Self-esteem is a most fragile and important factor to years of progress. This is a difficult choice sometimes, as we do not really know what the other 100 Southern California teams are going to put on the floor.**
- 3. Another important factor is our own standards of quality, which is usually higher than the average club. To move a gymnast up we look at what and how the skills are being performed, the work ethic and desire of each gymnast. The gymnast must prove to us that they can be successful at the next level. This again is an educated judgment call from the coaching staff.**

Promotion Policy and Eligibility to Compete

This policy is to give you and your gymnast the knowledge they need to know in order to move to the next competitive level as a Pike through USAG standards.

The following are the requirements which must be met before your gymnast can proceed to the next level as a Pike:

- They must complete their entire Pike's accomplishment chart for their current level with the exception of the upper level skills.**

- They must have two 35's and one 36 or above for the current season.
- They must be able to execute all of the skills for the next level they are moving to with the correct form.
- They also must be able to receive an all-around score that would qualify them for the state championships in a mock meet with guest judges in order to compete in that level at competition. (scores vary depending on different levels)
- You must be in good standing with tuition and competition fee payments; no money owed to the gym.
- Final promotion to the next level is decided by the Head Coach. Her decision is final.

Your gymnast's eligibility to compete may change throughout the competitive season if:

- If competition or tuition expenses are not being received.
 - They lose a skill in their routine because of fear or other possible reasons. If this happens, EVEN the day before a meet, your child will not be able to compete at the competition and there will be no reimbursement of meet expenses. Once your gymnast has their skill back they will be allowed to continue with the meet season after an evaluation and decision has been decided by the Head Coach.

“Skills dictate the level”

Our promotion policy is based on skill progression, core testing results, attendance, behavior, motivation, parental support and mental ability. This is where the trust in your coaches is very important. We respect all of our athletes and do not show favoritism to any of them. We do, however, treat them as individuals. They most likely will be coached differently, as all people are different and require different techniques to help each athlete reach their goals. *Our goal for your child is to help*

them be the best that their potential and desire will allow them to be. We give 100% to each child in hope that this will happen.

LEVELS OF COMPETITION

Gymnastics Unlimited is a member club and competes in the ***USA Gymnastics*** program. Its main offices are located in Indianapolis, Indiana, and are responsible for the administration of all gymnastics in the United States. ***USA Gymnastics*** is responsible for producing the competitive structure, along with its rules and regulations, which guides the athletes that represent our country in international competitions. Included in this responsibility is the development of the age group programs that direct our gymnasts from the beginning stages.

There are 11 levels to the ***USA Gymnastics Women's Program***. According to the ***USAG*** organization, Levels 1-4 are levels that center on teaching the basic core skills for each of the four Olympic Events. Their development consists of doing routines that involve the fundamentals of body positions, foot positions, and basic gymnastic skills.

COMPETITIVE GYMNASTICS

Sanctioned is another word for "registered" with the ***USAG*** office. The athlete pays a fee and receives a membership card and subscription to a gymnastics magazine. All competitors Level 4 - Elite must be registered with the ***USAG*** office.

Competitive gymnastics has compulsory routines and optional routines. The ***USAG*** office gives compulsory routines to us. They are written in the Compulsory Book with exactness of text and specific guidelines that we **MUST** follow. This covers all levels from 1 up to and including 6. Optional routines are individual and different from one another, but have to meet specific guidelines given to us by the ***FIG*** and ***USAG***. These levels are 7 through 10. Please see the section entitled ***Gymnastics Tips for Team Parents*** for a further explanation of the Elite program.

Competitions Hosted by GU

We will host one (1) or more invitational meets per year in our facility. We require each family to donate their time, energy and TALENTS to making these competitions a success. Typically, each family will be asked to work one session (approximately 3-4 hours) at each meet. There are a VARIETY of tasks that one can do to help with the meet from paper work to timing events. We will help you. Private clubs are responsible for hosting these meets so that the sport of competitive gymnastics will exist in our state and in our nation. Without parents helping out there would be no competitions. By hosting local meets this enables your friends and relatives to see your athlete perform without the expense of travel. In order to encourage volunteers, GU will assess \$100 penalty to any Pike family who does not have at least one family member volunteer at each hosted meet. This includes all Pikes (Optionals included).

Competition

Invitational: Meets that our coaching staff chooses to go to through out the year. Usually these meets have a good reputation for awards and equipment.

State Meet: Championship Meet held in the State for all competitors that have scored the qualifying score to attend. This is the final meet (at the state level) of their season in order to determine the “Best of the Best” in the state.

Regional Championships: Championship Meets for Level’s 8-10. This meet is within our Regional area, which includes 4 states. Those are California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah. This is the final competition of the season for Level 8. It is also a qualification point for Level 9 and 10 for their respective National Championship.

Eastern & Western Nationals: Championship Meet for Level 9. This meet is held as a final meet for Level 9’s. It involves the Eastern or Western regions of the country. Level 9 therefore

compete against half of the United States. We are obviously in the Western half.

National Championships: Championship Meet for Level 10. This meet involves the whole United States. It is the final meet of the Junior Olympic season.

- **PAYMENTS** are required in order to participate in meets. We will send you the information as quickly as we receive it. Entry fees and coaches expenses will be requested directly from the parent. No entries will be accepted past the deadline unless there is a family emergency that prevented you from coming by the gym. If this happens, please call us so we can enter your child in the meet. We cannot do so after the meet director's deadline has passed. If your child does not have workout on the day of the deadline then please send money in early. A meet director sets the deadlines so they know the number of participants they have competing. This is when awards are ordered and competitive sessions are set. They then send each participating club a schedule and we e-mail the schedule to you as soon as the meets have been selected. Please check your e-mail daily, as this is our communication with you. Meet directors **DO NOT** refund money on entries regardless of circumstance.

QUALIFYING to CHAMPIONSHIPS

In Levels 1 – 3 there is no qualifying score in order to move from one level to the next. However, there is a list of requirements on each skill that must be achieved in order for the *Skill Evaluator* to pass them through the skill and also through the level.

In Levels 4 through 10, the qualifying score to attend the State Meet is voted upon by the State Board prior to the competitive season.

In order for a Level 8, 9 or 10 gymnast to attend Regional Championships, they must score a 34.00 All Around (or better) in the State Meet.

In order for a Level 9 gymnast to attend the East/West National Championships, they must be predetermined percentage of qualifiers in their age group at the Regional Championship, with gymnasts competing from 5 states or regions.

In order for a Level 10 gymnast to attend the JO National Championships, they must be one of the top 14 in their age group at the Regional Championship.

Compulsory Competition

There are three competitive compulsory levels that the *USA Gymnastics* (national governing body for gymnastics in America) puts together. These are Levels 4, 5 and 6.

At *Gymnastics Unlimited* we choose to call our level 4 gymnasts “team” when they are preparing to compete at that level. We attempt to make level 4 as performance oriented as possible. This is because we do not want to subject our first time competitors to the high pressures of gymnastics meets in Southern California. We want to teach them to enjoy and perform at meets with the major emphasis on basic training.

Our team members start competing with the hundreds of other gymnasts in our area. They compete in age categories with meets that last 10 to 12 hours. These meets are broken up into sessions so that no single gymnast should be on the floor no more than 5 hours. The average is 3 to 4 hours. In Southern California, the coaches put together two seasons for the compulsory gymnast. This usually consists of two or three preliminary meets to qualify by score to the sectional meet. At the sectional meet you need a score to qualify to the state championships. This is as far as a level 4, 5 & 6 gymnast can go. Other meets might include invitational or smaller dual meets. On a preliminary weekend there might be 4 to 5 meets going on with over 400 gymnasts in each meet.

There are very easy qualification scores (from the national office) to move from one level to another. Thus we set our own standards. Another more damaging problem is there are no maximum scores or move up policies. If a coach felt like it they could compete a team of girls at level 6 for their entire career. This is not likely but, holding gymnasts back for the purpose of looking good as a team is very common in Southern California. So it is not uncommon to have gymnasts with 3 & 4 years at one level compete with first year girls. We do not want to paint a horror story and this is somewhat buffered by the age categories and the novice level. Each season is unpredictable and some seasons are not as bad as others.

COMPETITIVE SEASON

Each year our coaches plan the competitive season. The decision of which meets *Gymnastics Unlimited* will attend is based on many aspects. To name a few: timing of championships, quality of competition (i.e. who's attending, equipment, meet format, etc.), peaking our athletes at the proper time, location and past experiences. Based on our staff's experience, the appropriate competitive schedule for the team will be chosen. Parents are not permitted to "pick and choose" which meets their child will attend. By doing so, the athlete will not benefit from the correct progressive competitive schedule. Therefore, all meets are mandatory.

COMPETITIVE READINESS

1. Everyone on the competitive team is allowed to compete (even if only on a few events) at any "In-House" meet. These are normally pre-season meets that assist our athletes in understanding their individual scores. Safety is the only factor involved in the decision of not allowing someone to compete.
2. During the normal competitive season, safety is our number one concern. To be considered eligible for competition, it is required that each gymnast is able to safely execute ALL of their required elements on all four events. Being prepared for competition

also includes: skill level, competitive readiness, physical and mental ability.

3. All injured athletes are considered on a case-by-case basis. If an athlete has met up with the requirements but then suffers an injury, as long as safety is not an issue, she will be allowed to compete on whatever event(s) she is ready.
4. The coaching staff of *Gymnastics Unlimited* reserves the right to scratch any athlete at any time from any event or meet based on safety, discipline or financial issues. Please note that mental readiness may also be a factor in safety.

Our team requirements are a guideline for our staff to base decisions of competitive readiness. The staff also considers each athlete's ability to score at least a 8.0 at compulsory levels and 8.0 at optional levels in order for them to continue competition. A complete team uniform is also required.


Lastly, athlete attendance (specifically during the two week prior to a competition) is mandatory. Generally the final workout before a meet is shortened or cancelled to provide adequate time for rest and travel for the competition.

Attendance Policies

Gymnastics Unlimited guarantees that your gymnast will improve in their skill level if they attend their entire practice on a regular and consistent basis.

Attendance is an extremely large part of the sport of gymnastics. It is very important that our gymnasts and their parents take their commitment as a Pike seriously.

Good attendance is essential for the progress and safety of your gymnast.

-  **It is very important that your gymnast is ON TIME for practice. If your gymnast is walking in the door right when practice is starting they are being put at risk for injury because they are not completing their entire warm-up. This is a great concern to the coaches at Gymnastics Unlimited**

- and they will not be held responsible for injury because a gymnast failed to be on time and fulfill their warm up requirements.
- An excused absence consists of a doctor appointment, family emergency, illness, injury, or school function, etc. A parent or guardian **MUST** notify the gym **BEFORE** the missed practice. They can do this by calling the Rye Canyon gym at 702-9294 and leaving a message on the *machine* or with a *coach*. Unless, emergency circumstances don't permit a call ahead of time. Please contain the reason for your child missing practice in your message.
 - We understand the need of family time such as vacations. It would be to the benefit of your gymnast if you could try your best to schedule vacations during your gymnasts off season. This is so your gymnast is not missing crucial practices before a competition.
 - Having excessive absences and coming late to practices will result in consequences for your gymnast. Your gymnast will not be progressing at the same rate as the rest of their teammates and they will be putting themselves at *risk for competing as a Pike*. If your child doesn't have their skills they will not be able to compete. This is a problem we don't wish upon any gymnast; but if they fail to take their attendance seriously they will inevitably suffer.
 - If your gymnast is injured or severely ill a parent or guardian needs to contact the head coach and write out an altered workout schedule. This schedule will be carried out until the gymnast is back to normal health.
 - If your gymnast misses practice excessively in the weeks before a competition for any reason, except illness or injury or practice has been cancelled, it will be at the discretion of the team coaches if your child will be able to compete at their competition. It is very important that your gymnast attends all of their practices before a competition.

MANDATORY ATTIRE

Uniform requirements are mandatory for each athlete to participate in competitive team. All competitive attire is chosen

by *GU Team Staff*. Parents have 30 days to order a competitive jacket and pants once their athlete becomes an official team member.

Level 4-10

Required 1 competitive leotard
1 competitive jacket
1 competitive pants
1 team bag
1 pair of ballet slippers
1 exhibition leotard (tank)

PIKES Required Locker Supply List

Light, healthy snack
2 water bottles
Hair bands/ scrunchies
First aid tape
Band aids
Nail clippers
Sports tape
Pre-wrap
Cuticle clippers
Hair brush

Recommended Items

Grips-Levels 5 and up
Extra leo
Shorts

CHOREOGRAPHY

Gymnastics Unlimited will provide an optional routine for each level 7 or higher athlete on the team for bars. Beam routines may require a private session with the coach or a professional choreographer or may, at the coach's discretion, be choreographed during workout. However, parents will need to pay a provided choreographer for the floor routine. *Gymnastics*

Unlimited staff will select qualified choreographers for any and all new routines. The cost (\$250 - \$750) of the optional floor routine, choreography and/or music is the sole responsibility of the parents. It is the coach's discretion to have "first year" optional gymnasts use proven routines.

The following policies are directed to the athletes as they will be held responsible.

GENERAL WORKOUT POLICIES

As a *Pike*, I will do the best of my abilities, follow and respect the policies for as long as I am a member. I will remember that my coaches, parents, and teammates all put forth effort to help me reach my potential as a gymnast.

- 1. To be a gymnast is special and requires much dedication and effort. As (or when) I become a *Pike*, I must accept the challenge for the duration. Also realizing that in sports there will be ups and downs. I will do my best not to let myself down.**
- 2. The start of my workout must be on time and with the frame of mind that I am here to learn and progress as a gymnast. If I arrive late the need to complete the warm-up correctly without disturbing the other gymnast this needs to be my first concern.**
- 3. When my coach for the event that I am on gives me permission to leave that event then, and only then can I leave to rotate, get a drink or take care of any workout business.**
 - a. When rotating from event to event you may go to your locker to return or take out workout equipment only.**
 - b. When rotating you may also get a drink of water or juice. Sugar drinks are not acceptable.**
 - c. Bathroom breaks, emergency phone calls or anything that takes more than a few seconds must get permission from a coach.**
- 4. Working on an off night can make up missing gym but not being part of my group workout will cause problems. I will call to let my coaches know what the reasons for my missing gym are.**

5. I will choose a locker to keep my workout equipment and any personal items that I might need. I will make sure the locker stays clean.
6. Only relatives are allowed into the gym to watch. Conversations or interaction with family members during workout is not permitted. The only exception to this rule is by permission from a coach. This includes making and receiving phone calls. (Messages will be passed by coaches)
7. If my coach feels I am not putting effort into my workout or I express any form of disrespect for what I have been asked to do my coach will have the option to sit me out of workout for a prescribed amount of time. I will be allowed to return to that event only if I accept the responsibility to make a change.
8. If I am sick or injured I need to communicate with my coaches so I can still accomplish something during workout. This is one of the best times to work on any weakness area I might have. Normally some form of conditioning or stretching can be done. If I am not accomplishing anything I will be asked to leave.
9. The only attire that is acceptable is a leotard with short tights if you desire. No jewelry is allowed. Street clothes should be worn to and from gym especially in winter.
10. As a gymnast and athlete good nutrition is very important. It is at least necessary to follow the common rules of low sugar and low fat. The coaches will provide verbal and written information to help each gymnast learn how to eat healthy.
11. A good attitude towards other gymnast and staff members is very important. This includes SUPPORT and RESPECT.

COMPETITION POLICIES

1. All gymnasts should support other team members at all times.
 - a. Members of a level who are not competing should make a great effort to attend all meets of the same

- level. This is for team support and personal knowledge.
- b. A competing gymnast with a problem is expected not to let their problem affect other gymnasts. Keep it between you and the coaches.
 - c. A positive go-for-it attitude must be present before stepping into the gym.
2. Gymnasts must enter the competition with the goal to perform their routines to the best of their ability.
- a. The gymnast will consume no sugar or junk food at least 24 hours before the competition. No food except fresh fruit or pure juice is to be eaten within 30 minutes of warm ups.
 - b. The gymnast is to keep their focus on the meet. No speaking to anyone in the stands without permission from their coach. Always ask permission from a coach before leaving the team group or your assigned placement. This includes water and bathroom breaks.
 - c. The gymnasts must be respectful of all judges and coaches no matter how your routine is performed or what has happened. The gymnast will always present themselves properly to the judges. After dismounting, the athlete must report to that event's coach first.
3. A gymnast's personal responsibilities are to:
- a. Make sure you have all personal equipment with you at the meet.
 - b. Optional gymnasts should bring an extra copy of their music (cassette tape and CD) and a spare pair of grips.
 - c. ALWAYS arrive 15 minutes to ½ hour before the open warm-ups. Late arrival because of traffic or getting lost will make it VERY difficult for physical and mental preparation. Each gymnast only receives four 1-minute blocks of time throughout the warm-ups.
 - d. Cosmetic or hair preparation is to be completed by your parents or the team mom BEFORE the warm-ups start.
 - e. When awards are presented, you will remain in your competition attire with NO extras until awards are

finished. When receiving an award, stand with your feet together and stand tall.

- f. Show appreciation to other gymnasts, coaches, meet directors and anyone else who helped support you during the meet.

Meet Etiquette

- Arrive at the meet site early – about 20 minutes before open stretch is about to begin.
- When you arrive at the meet, smile and say hello to everyone you meet.
- Strive to be part of the friendliest team at the meet.
- Clap for all good performances.
- Stay off of equipment except during officially designated warm-up periods.
- Encourage and compliment any gymnast you meet.
- March to all events and present as a team to the head judge.
- Wear warm-ups properly and carry team bag. Do not tie your jackets around your waist or shoulders.
- Respect any rules about food or drink in the gym.
- Show sportsmanlike behavior at all times. Accept your place in line-up and your scores with dignity.
- ABSOLUTELY no use of profanity or harsh slang language is allowed while competing as part of the GU team.
- Do not allow the use of flash photography.
- If acceptable with even coach cheer on bars, floor, and vault. Please refrain from cheering on beam.

- Hug, shake hands, or congratulate all team members after their routines.
- Be courteous, respectful, and polite to all meet officials, hosts, competitors and coaches.
- Congratulate opponents on whatever good skills they display and for good performances.
- Gymnasts should stay for awards regardless of whether they win or not to support their teammates.
- Congratulate coaches on their team, individual gymnasts, or well coached events.
- Thank host coach and/or team before leaving.

TEMPERAMENT

What works best with one individual does not necessarily work best for another individual. This is why our rules and policies are guidelines. We do expect that each individual work hard each day and work through their frustrations and failures just as we expect them to appreciate their successes. We give incentives for setting and achieving goals as well as constructive criticism. We know that we must correct mistakes in order to build a better gymnastic foundation, but we also know that we must encourage with praise.

If at any time there is a problem with your gymnast, call and set up an appointment with one of her coaches. We cannot emphasize enough that “communication” is the key to success between parent, gymnast and coach. We try to criticize in a healthy and positive manner, however sometimes we fail out of frustration. Let us know if we are doing something wrong with your gymnast. You may have a key to a door we have not yet turned.

REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS AS A TEAM MEMBER AND A TEAM PARENT



GENERAL RULES OF BEHAVIOR

- **RESPECT** to all coaches, judges, parents, teammates, and opponents at all times.
- **COOPERATION** with all coaches, judges, parents, teammates, and opponents at all times.
- **ANY USE OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO OR ILLEGAL DRUGS** by a gymnast will result in immediate dismissal from the team. If there is a need to take prescription or over the counter drugs on a temporary or long-term basis, we are to be made aware of this in writing. **NO** medicine will be given out at the gym. You may send your child's medicine to be kept in her possession. We will allow her to take it when a permission slip is returned to us.

APPROPRIATE APPAREL MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES!

WORKOUT GEAR: Leotard, hair up, extra hair things in case yours breaks, grips and wristbands, wrist supports, etc. **NO** loose clothing during workout. **NO** two-piece leotards can be worn to practice.

COMPETITION WEAR: Uniform requirements are mandatory to participate as a competitive team member.

GYMNAST'S GUIDELINES DURING COMPETITIONS

- Gymnast will be expected to perform in meets to the best of their abilities.
- Gymnast shall always arrive at the assigned times as given to either the parents or the gymnast.
- Gymnast shall be prepared and informed at all times about meets, times, and locations, etc.

- Gymnasts must stay with the team once they arrive at a competition. The team will stay together until the coach lets them go with their parents or guardian.
- No one is allowed in the competitive area except *USAG* members: coaches, judges, and gymnasts.
- Gymnast should report to the meet in the team outfit as described by coach. For girls, her hair should be up neatly with long hair pulled up out of the face. If you have a question or need help with your child's hair, then please talk to a coach prior to the meet date.
- While the gymnast is in competition, they can only wear one set of studded earrings. Gymnasts are not allowed to have double or triple piercing in their ears. A deduction of 0.1 will be assessed at each event for more than one piercing.
- Receive and accept scores given without hostility or protest.
- Conform to the regulations set up by the meet director. Upon violating rules, a gymnast is warned once by the meet referee. If a second violation occurs, the athlete will be told that their right to continue competing will be terminated.
- Gymnast is to remain seated at all times while not performing unless instructed differently by the coach.
- Be ready to compete as soon as the judge signals. If competition does not begin 30 seconds after she is signaled, competition is terminated.
- When traveling and representing *GYMNASTICS UNLIMITED*, gymnasts are expected to act in a well-mannered and well-disciplined manner. Remember gymnasts represent not only their gym, but also their parents and the sport itself. Make this image one of pride.
- When traveling, the attending coach is the head of the delegation and responsible for decisions concerning agenda while traveling.
- Each gymnast is responsible for knowing their board setting, bar setting, and any other information pertinent to their competition. Optional gymnasts need to know their vault number. Girls need to have a copy of their floor music.
- Girls' parents are required to have a back-up cassette of their child's music at every meet.
- Gymnasts are required to say and attend the award's ceremony. It is in poor taste to get up and leave while there are other athletes that need to get their awards. This shows

good sportsmanship. (If you are late for a flight, then you may leave as soon as you are finished competing.)

- Always remember the most important person you represent is yourself. In a sport where some objectivity is important in the evaluation your performance, any impression you give to anyone at any time can affect your performance scores.
- A good night's sleep along with a good meal will always help in the next day's performance. Try and keep the gymnast on as normal a schedule as possible. If they are used to going to bed at 9:00, then don't make them go to bed at 8:00 to "get extra rest". On the other hand, don't let her stay up later than normal because she has a late competition time.

PARENTS ROLE DURING COMPETITIONS

- The audience can only sit in the area designated for the public.
- The spectators shall not disturb the order of the meet, its competitors, or its officials.
- The use of flash photography is **DANGEROUS** and is prohibited by the *USAG* rules.
- Accept received scores for your child as well as others without criticism. If you have a question, write it down and talk to the coach about it in a conference. Do not ask the coach that day to explain your child's scores.
- Plan on attending the awards ceremony for your child. Pictures can be taken at this time.
- Remind your gymnast to stay with her team until awards are completed and their coach has released them to go with you.
- Bring your gymnast to the meet at the time your coach instructs you or according to meet information that you receive. **DO NOT** call the private clubs in order to attain meet information. Please ask your child's coach.
- Give positive and appropriate support during the competition for all teammates. Applause works well! We are very **TEAM** orientated and we expect our athletes to cheer for each other in all meets and practices. The parents can set a good example by doing this in the stands! Parents will also refrain from loud cheering or any negative behavior that results in a distraction of the competition.

- When making comments during competitions, please be aware of the people around you. How any part of our program is seen, will be how our entire program is viewed. Be positive about our competitors; if they look good then appreciate their talents. If they look bad, be sympathetic. They might be having a bad day. **DO NOT CRITICIZE** your club or its coaches in the stands. It makes you have a bad image as well as us.
- Parents need to exhibit self-control and calmness in case of a fall or injury. All meets are required to have some type of medical personnel on site. You will be called for if you are needed. You will be asked to stay with your child if the degree of injury requires a trip to the hospital. This is why we ask that at each meet an adult be present with each gymnast. The exception to this is out of state meets. If you cannot attend any meet, you can send someone else to care for your child, but you must send proof on Insurance and a signed notarized release form.
- Be proud of your gymnast and your club. We are!

POLICIES FOR TRAVEL

Parents are normally expected to take their children to all competitions. In the event of the athletes traveling with the coaches, these policies will be in effect.

1. When the gymnast travels to a meet as a team member they must stay with the group at all times. Only if it is impossible to follow the schedule, permission to deviate from the plan can only be made through the head coach.
2. Parents may be asked to help in some situations such as transporting gymnasts. Team moms are the first in line for such duties. The head coach coordinates all duties. As a parent helper, you must communicate everything to and from the coaches. This includes any amount of time from the group. Bathroom, other room visits, etc. etc.
3. The gymnasts need to follow all plans and directives from the coaching staff. The competition policies should be reviewed. Any personal problem or concern needs to be directed to the head coach. If any

assistance is needed from the team moms, the head coach will decide how and when.

4. The gymnasts need to make sure everything that is needed for competition is with them. Personal responsibility for staying on time and organized is on the gymnast. Bring a watch!
5. The head coach will set up eating arrangements. Restaurants will be chosen for food selection and timing. Gymnasts will be expected to follow our eating guidelines. Parents MAY join the group for meals.
6. The head coach has the control to remove a gymnast from the meet at any time.
7. The parents need to leave any and all coaching to the coaches. Any concerns with your child need to be directed through the head coach.

The gymnasts, coaches and parents traveling together represent *Gymnastics Unlimited*. Anyone wearing anything that relates to this business or team will be expected to uphold our respected reputation.

EATING GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES

- Gymnastics is an anaerobic sport meaning that calories are burned at a very slow rate during training. Thus eating properly to keep the gymnast physically fit is a very important tool.
- Experts suggest that the meal structure is to be about four to five small meals per day.
- One to two meals per day should be designated as the protein meal. This should be in the first half of the day. Low fat protein such as fish, poultry, Tofu and low fat dairy products would be great to include.
- Then another two to three carbohydrate meals consisting of grain products such as breads, cereals, pastas plus

vegetables and fruit. Dairy products such as butter and cheese should not be included in these meals.

- If possible, athletes should eat a piece of fruit or drink fruit juice directly after gym.
- Planning and preparation are necessary. Pre cut vegetables and fruit can be prepared on the weekend. Low fat breads and cereals should be available at all times. It would be impossible to rely on fast food chains to supply the needed meals throughout the week.
- Workout times that exceed 3 hours should have a fruit or sport drink available for once or twice during the workout.
- General thoughts:
 - Fried food and (what we call) non-purpose food such as soda and junk food should be understood as unhealthy. Athletes should know about the food on their plate. They should read the labels and find out what they are really eating.
 - Athletes should treat themselves to junk food as a reward and not an everyday necessity.

Outside Classes Policy

Due to the nature of the sport of gymnastics, GU does not allow any Pike to take any outside classes (this includes classes offered at Constellation) or private lessons with any coach other than a Pike Team coach. Any violation to this policy will be subject to the gymnast's termination.

The 10 Commandments for Gymnastics Parents:

Thou shall not impose your ambitions on thy child.
Remember that gymnastics is your child's activity and they will progress at their own speed. It can never be a positive thing when a parent forces a child to do a sport they don't want to do. The best part about gymnastics is that it doesn't matter whether

they finish first or last, rather the wonderful lessons they will learn as they strive to be their best.

Thou shall be supportive no matter what.

There is only one question to ask your child, “Did you have fun?” If meets and practice are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

Thou shall not coach thy child.

You have taken your child to a professional coach; do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your role is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. You should not offer advice on technique or skill selection. That is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent the gymnast/coach bond from forming.

Thou shall only have positive things to say at competition.

If you are going to attend a gymnastic meet, you should cheer and applaud. Never criticize your child, teammates, or their coaches.

Thou shall acknowledge thy child’s fears.

It is normal human reaction for a child to be scared when attempting new skills or competing. Do not yell or belittle your child. Just assure them that their coach would not have them attempt the skill or put them in the competition if they were not ready for it.

Thou shall not criticize the judges.

There is much more to judging than you think and each judge has had to test to do what he or she does. There are many routine requirements that the general spectators are unaware of, which factor into the final score. No one is perfect, but it is without question that he judges know more than you do.

Honor thy child’s coach.

The bond between child and coach is a special one, and one that contributes to your child’s success as well as enjoyment. Do not criticize their coach on their presence because it will only add to the many distractions they must already deal with during their gymnastics training and performance.

Thou shall not jump from club to club.

The floor exercise carpet always seems to be bluer at another gym. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from gym to gym are often ostracized by teammates they leave behind. Often times, gymnasts who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the “bluer carpet.” However, one club will not please everyone and you need to find the club where you fit best.

Thou shall have other goals besides winning.

Encourage your child to do their best. Giving an honest effort no matter what the outcome is much more important than winning.

Thou shall not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

There are 55,000 athletes participating in competitive gymnastics. There are only 7 spots on the Olympic team every four years. Your child’s odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in 114,350. You can understand how difficult it is to become an Olympian, as the odds are you are not one yourself, even though that may have been your goal as a child. Olympic dreams are nice, but gymnastics is much more than Olympics. Gymnastics teaches so many virtues while building self-esteem, life-long friendships and much, much more. Most Olympian will tell you that these intangibles far out weigh any medal they have won. Gymnastics builds good people and you should be happy that your child wants to participate.

Should I Watch My Child in the Gym?

There is always the question as to whether parents should watch their gymnast practice or not. At the preschool and lower levels, the short class time it naturally results in higher percentage of parental viewer. This percentage decreases to almost zero at the upper team levels. But what is the “right” thing to do?

Should be allowed but discouraged.

Coaches are universally convinced that it is usually best if parents don’t watch their children every class period. Some

gyms go as far as banning parent viewing of team and pre-team programs. There are legitimate reasons to do this, but we believe it is best to allow parent viewing at any time, while discouraging it for the benefit of the child's advancement.

Want practice time, not always a performance.

Some gymnasts feel extra pressure to perform for or in the presence of their parents and do not progress as well under that pressure. If parents are constantly in attendance, your gymnast may be constantly performing as opposed to the more relaxed, progressive state of practicing. Coaches need to be able to control this balance of pressure and relaxation and the presence of parents can complicate that.

Don't try to coach your child.

Children are often distracted and pay attention to their parents instead of the coach, when parents are in the gym. This happens at all levels of the sport from preschool to team. Parents sometimes try to do their own brand of coaching from the sidelines which distracts the gymnasts, complicates and slows the coaching process and even may be dangerous. A parent who coaches their child to point their toes, when a coach is emphasizing summersault rotation could be distracting the gymnast from a safety point of view.

Leave it to the Pros.

Gymnastics is a very complicated sport and constantly evolving. It is a full time job just to keep up with the rule changes. Even parents who were gymnasts will find their knowledge limited. Coaching is best left to the professionals, especially at the team level. While gymnasts are paying attention to signals from their parents, they are unable to absorb important feedback and information from the coach.

Watching class vs. Watching team practice.

It is much more understandable if parents of preschool and recreational class gymnasts watch their gymnasts whole practice. Since they are likely only there for about an hour, it can be a waste of time to drive back home right away. Watching an entire team practice or practice or the majority of it (most

parents don't have the time) however, it is much more likely to be a bad idea.

Watch is they ask.

While there may be instances where it is not true, in general, it is a good idea to watch your child do gymnastics if they ask that you do. Try to understand the reason (the underlying need) they want you to watch. They may have the desire to share something that is important to them with you. You might not want to miss this opportunity.

Observe regularly but in intervals.

Parents will find it easier to see progress if they observe at regular intervals, rather than everyday. Step by step process, even on a daily basis, is not as dramatic a viewing progress on a monthly basis.

Insist on viewing privileges.

In this day and age, it seems more appropriate that any gym be open to parents if they should desire it for any reason. Some parents schedules may preclude viewing their gymnasts during normally scheduled viewing times. Parents should also be able to observe the safety and well-being of their children at any time.

Watch every meet.

Meets are a great way to view your child's progress. You want to go watch every meet that you can. The spacing between meets provides a natural progression your gymnast will be making and you will most likely and should see individual progress from meet to meet. First look for your child's personal progress not medals. Progress is more important.

Do what is best for your child's progress.

Parents should remember that their gymnasts progress is likely to be faster if they do not view too often. Viewing once a week or bi-monthly is an acceptable amount, either during formal situations or in their regular practice time.

Abbreviations and Definitions

FIG – International Gymnastics Federation

The *FIG* is the governing body of gymnastics for all countries.

USAG – United States of America Gymnastics

All gymnasts, coaches, judges and officials must be a member of *USAG* before they can be on the competitive arena or equipment at any sanctioned event. (This includes meets and clinics.)

VT – Vault

UB – Uneven parallel bars

BB – Balance beam

FX – Floor exercise

AA – All around score

The sum total of all the events added together.

Olympic Order –

Event rotations at a meet are usually done in Olympic order (above). So if you start competition on *BB*, your rotation will continue as *FX*, *VT*, *UB*. If you start on *UB*, your rotation will continue as *BB*, *FX*, *VT*.

JO – Junior Olympic

The Junior Olympic Program is generally the competitive program in the United States. It consists of competitive levels ranging from Level 4 to Level 10. Levels 1 through 3 are non-competitive but are used within each gymnastics club as “testing” for younger and pre-competitive gymnasts.

Elite –

The Elite program is simply what it describes – the top athletes in this sport. The Elite program is governed by the *USAG* in this country, and the *FIG* during international competition. There are basically two (2) different levels within the Elite program. National Level Elite Gymnasts consist of three (3) age groups (children, juniors and seniors) and International Level Elite Gymnasts consist of two (2) age groups (juniors and seniors). The difference between the two levels is basically that International Elite gymnasts have much higher standards and if ranked high

enough, may be selected to represent the United States during international competitions such as the Pan American Games, Goodwill Games, World Championships and the Olympic Games.

TOP –

The Talent Opportunity Program was designed by the **USAG** to identify young and talented gymnasts within the United States in hopes of training their coaches to help them achieve Elite status. This program also aids the gymnast in becoming better acquainted with the Elite program. In a way, **TOP** is a pre-Elite program.

Code of Points –

The **Code of Points** is published by the **FIG** and is considered the “Bible of Gymnastics” since it is used in every competitive gymnastics club in the world. It includes the rules for international competition and a nearly complete list of recognized skills for such competitions. The JO program uses a modified version of the **Code of Points** however; all Elite gymnasts must use the regular version.

USAG Rules and Policies –

This is the “rule book” used for all sanctioned competitive events within the JO and Elite programs for the United States gymnasts. It is published by the **USAG** once every year.

Safety Certification –

Safety Certification is a **USAG** requirement for all meet directors, judges and coaches that participate in any sanctioned **USAG** event. To become certified, one must attend a course offered by the **USAG** and pass a written test.

Congress –

Coaches’ Congress is a yearly event held Nationally, Regionally and sometimes within individual States. It is a gathering of coaches brought together for sharing of information, teaching techniques and ideas. Coaches’

Congress is considered to be one of the prime forms of education for gymnastic coaches.

Rips –

Rips are common in the sport of gymnastics. It is a normally a small tear of skin from the hand and is generally an uneven bar related minor injury. There are several treatments for rips, but the gymnasts are strongly urged to seek this treatment from their coaches. Basically, the tear should be trimmed of “hanging skin” and kept clean and moist during the healing process. Antibiotic ointments (such as Neosporin®) should not be used.

Competitions (Meets)

JO Program

Local and Dual Meets –

These meets occur when another team or teams compete against one another. This makes the meet a sanctioned *USAG* meet and will count toward qualifying for a sectional meet. To participate in a sectional meet, gymnasts must meet a qualifying score (stated below).

Sectional Meets –

Gymnasts getting a minimum qualifying score (stated below) in a local/dual meet will qualify to compete at the sectional meets. There are three or four sectional meets per level during a season where the gymnast has a chance to qualify for the State Championship. Once the gymnast gets a qualifying score at a sectional meet, the decision to go to another sectional meet is up to the coaches. A gymnast not yet qualified is guaranteed a spot in sectional meets; previously qualified gymnasts may be "bumped" from a sectional meet.

State Championships –

A gymnast that has had a qualifying score at a sectional meet (stated below) will compete within their age group and level at the State Championship. The gymnast will compete in their age group at the time of the meet. For example, if a Level 5 gymnast is competing as an 8 year

old during the whole season but turns 9 years old on the day of the State Championship meet, she will be competing in the 9 year old age group. For State Championships, you may have to get a hotel room due to the location of the meet. Check the bulletin board for names of facilities and times for making reservations.

Regional Championships (Level 8 and above) –

Gymnasts must qualify (stated below) to Regional Championships from the State Championship meet. Depending on the Level, either a “cut off” score or number of gymnasts will be used to determine qualification. For Regional Championships, expect to travel and have a hotel reservation planned.

National Championships (Level 9 and 10) –

Gymnasts must qualify (stated below) to National Championships from the Regional Championship meet. At this level, only a “cut off” number of competitors is used per age group for qualification. For National Championships (or Level 9 East/West Championship) expect to travel by air.

Elite Program

Elite Testing –

The Elite testing is basically the “compulsory” routines used by the Elite program. Depending on the Elite level and age group of the gymnast, the testing may need to be completed yearly. To qualify for the testing, a gymnast must have competed in either the JO Level 9 or 10 Regional Championship (during that season) or above. The testing is usually held in conjunction with either a Regional Elite Qualifier (Zones) or a Regional Elite Clinic.

Regional Qualifier (Zones) –

A gymnast must pass the Elite Testing in order to compete the optional portion of her Elite qualification status. “Zone” meets are used to qualify to either the Classic Meets or the Challenge Meets.

Classics and Challenges –

Depending on what Elite level a gymnast has chosen, Classic and Challenge meets serve as a qualification for either the USA Championships or the National Gymnastics Festival. Once a gymnast has competed on her first event at one of these meets, she is finally considered an Elite gymnast and may not move back into the JO program during that season.

USA Championships and National Gymnastics Festival –

This is the real thing. Top qualifiers in these meets are placed on the National Team and generally receive “assignments” to represent the United States. These assignments could include the Olympic Games or the World Championships. The National Team members also receive special training camps with the National Staff, visitations to their own gyms by the National Staff and official USA apparel (team leotard and warm up suit).

Talent Opportunity Program (TOP)

The Talent Opportunity Program is an identification system, which is implemented under the direction of the Elite Program Committee. Its purpose is to assist the coach in early identification of potentially talented athletes and to nurture and assist in the development of these athletes and their coaches. The age limitations for this program are that a gymnast must be between 7 and 12 years old.

The program tests two primary areas of development:

- Physical abilities (strength and flexibility)
- Skills (modified Elite testing)

There are basically two steps in the TOP system. Regional testing (physical ability testing only) normally takes place by July and National testing takes place in October every year. All athletes who test at the National level are qualified to take part in the normal Elite testing under special rules. Until they are “age eligible” they only test the compulsories and optional routines for “start value”. Top qualifiers at the National test get a training

camp and become part of the *TOP* National Training Squad (basically the USA Team for this age).

The Reward

Pikes members are giving more and in return, getting more – more instruction, more gym time, more attention and more competition time. Their reward for hard work and commitment will hopefully not only be the quality gymnasts they will have the opportunity to become, but the self-esteem they will gain from their accomplishments, the relationships they will build, and the life-long lessons they will learn. They will stand out whenever they are doing gymnastics. They will stand out on their own. They will become better women overall.

In closing, we would again like to congratulate you on your success. Please be certain you have weighed all aspects of being a Pike before making your final decision. We know it as an excellent program, but it may not be for everyone, and the beauty of Gymnastics Unlimited is the staff, desire, curriculum, and the facility to offer a variety of classes, programs, levels, styles and everything else to accommodate anyone who wants to be a gymnast. We hope to have the opportunity to work with you this year. PLEASE discuss with us any concerns or questions you have. We are attempting to cater this program to what we feel is best for an intensive beneficial program. Your input is appreciated.