



Healthy Gymnastics.
Healthy Competition.
Healthy Kids.



Dikes

Team Parents Handbook

Revised April 2014



WELCOME!

To the Parents:

Most parents have one thing in common: They want the best for their children. Whether they're considering what school a child should attend, or choosing extracurricular activities and sports, parents seek decisions that will help their children grow strong and healthy, becoming physically, mentally and socially well-rounded, in a safe environment.

At Gymnastics Unlimited, that's exactly what we want for every child who comes through our doors and steps onto our gym floor. It's a philosophy we apply to all of our programs. With this in mind, we've adopted the USAIGC model for our Pikes girls gymnastics team, as the USAIGC model is consistent with our overall philosophy on youth gymnastics.

The Pikes compete in meets against other USAIGC clubs, and the team and its coaches are grounded in healthy physical, social and mental development of all participants. While some other programs may seek to produce the next Olympian — whatever the costs — we seek to produce fond memories of doing your best, learning, competing and thriving in the camaraderie of a team.

Our goal for every Pike is to create a positive experience that's a valuable part of a child's growth into a happy, healthy, well-rounded adult. We look forward to taking this journey with you and your child!

To the Gymnast:

Congratulations on being part of the Pikes Competitive Team! You have shown the potential and desire to join this prestigious group. We welcome you! As you probably know, being a Pike is a big commitment. We ask you to join your parents in reading and understanding the expectations described in this handbook so you can understand what it takes to make being a Pike a great experience for you and your teammates.

Many of you have participated in our Academy. If you are new to the competitive aspect of the program, we welcome you to this part of GU. If you choose to be a Pike, if you commit to attending classes and 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 a better gymnast and a better person. You will learn life-long lessons in dedication, responsibility, respect, discipline, sacrifice and appreciation. You will have more poise, confidence and self-esteem.

And, you will have fun and build friendships that can last well beyond gymnastics!

— **Gymnastics Unlimited**



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Our Mission

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

Our Philosophy

Overall: The children always come first. We aim to develop 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 include:

- 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 Teams: Our philosophy for competitive teams is to develop gymnastics excellence and initiate a strong educational, ethical, and moral foundation that will carry over to “Life after Gymnastics.”

Competitive gymnasts develop many valuable qualities inherent in this sport. These qualities include:

- Self-discipline – knowing what work has to be done 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 it takes setting goals, both long-term and short-term, and hard work. As a Pike you will strive to be the best you can be, recognizing the fact that: “If it's worth doing — it's worth doing right!”

Policies and Costs

Tuition Policy

Running a competitive team is expensive, and being a member of a competitive team is expensive. We strive to provide you the best possible experience for the lowest cost possible without sacrificing quality. We provide the girls with a high-quality coaching staff. We shopped the competition and still remain the least expensive competitive program. We continuously evaluate costs and make changes as needed.

Tuition for Pikes will be per the GU tuition schedule, 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 compensate for gym closures due to holidays and competitions. If you consider the hourly rate of the classes, it should make the fee more palatable: Approximately \$6 per hour is an unrivaled price for this level of quality gymnastics training. Since the fees 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.

You will be expected to pre-pay your tuition on or before the last day of the month for the following month's training. 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.

Competitive Costs

As a Pike you will be expected to pay all costs associated with competition. These costs are not included in your tuition. Among them are:

- Competitive Leos
- Team Duffel Bag
- Gymnast Entry Fees
- Team Fees
- Warm ups
- USAIGC Registration
- Coaches' Expenses
- Team Banquet

To assist with household budgets, you can expect the competitive costs to be around \$2,200 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
- **USAIGC Registration:** Annual membership dues payable to the USAIGC. This fee is required to participate at any USAIGC sanctioned meet.

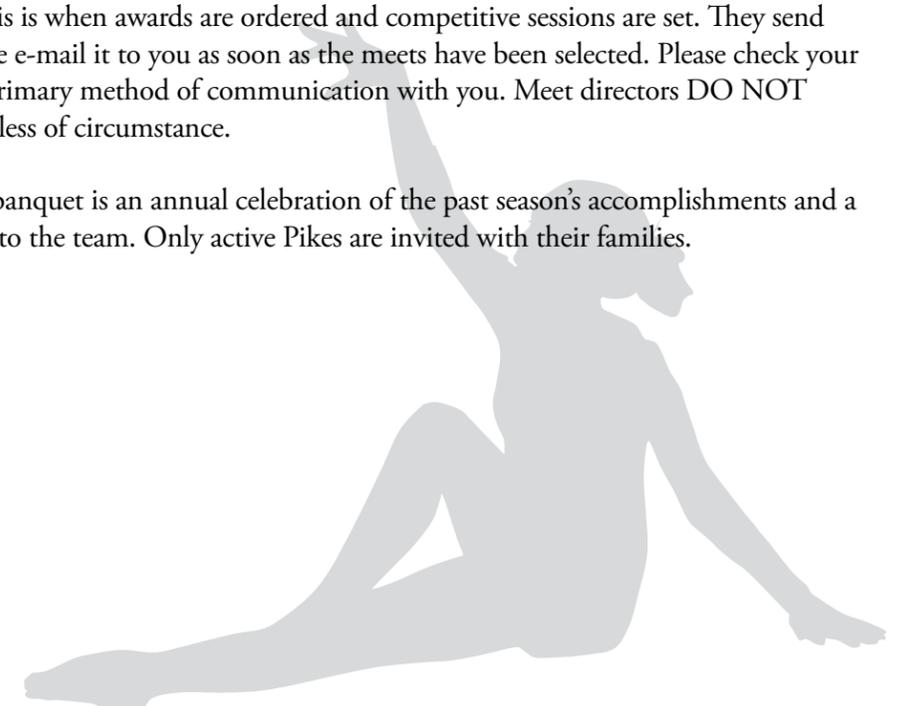
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- **Gymnast Entry Fee:** The fee to register a gymnast to participate at a meet. This fee is paid per meet, per gymnast and is set by the host club. Gymnast entry fees depend on the competition. Some offer more awards, themes and additional costs — hence higher fees. This fee is paid to the host club. **These fees are never refundable.**
- **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. 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, higher costs. **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 and covers costs including trophies, plaques and banners. **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 an installment basis, with installments about 30 days apart. There will be exceptions to this if the team deviates from the competitive calendar and participates in any "off-season" meets. Those meet fees will be collected on an as-attended basis.

Payments are required to participate in meets. We 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. If this happens, please call us so we can enter your child in the meet. We cannot do so after the meet's deadline. If your child does not have workout on the day of the deadline, please send money early. A meet director sets the deadlines so they know the number of participants. This is when awards are ordered and competitive sessions are set. They send each club a schedule and we e-mail it to you as soon as the meets have been selected. Please check your e-mail daily, as this is our primary method of communication with you. Meet directors DO NOT refund entry money, regardless of circumstance.

- **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.



Competition and Levels

Level Determination

The Gymnastics Unlimited staff determines when and what level to compete each athlete in, 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 competition. 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 Southern California teams are going to put on the floor.
3. Another important factor is our own standards of quality, which are 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 you need in order to move to the next competitive level as a Pike through USAIGC standards. The following requirements 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 score an average of 35.5 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 fees; no money owed to gym.

Final promotion to the next level is decided by GU.

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

- Competition or tuition expenses have not been 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 competitive fees. Once your gymnast has their skill back they will be allowed to continue with the meet season after an evaluation and decision by GU.

"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 trust in your coaches is very important. We respect all of our athletes and do not show favoritism to any. 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 children 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.

Competitions Hosted by GU

We may 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 one can do to help with the meet, from paperwork to timing events. We will help you. Private clubs are responsible for hosting these meets so competitive gymnastics will exist in our state and nation. Without parents helping out, there would be no competitions. Hosting local meets enables your friends and relatives to see your athlete perform without the expense of travel. In order to encourage volunteers, GU will assess a \$100 penalty to any Pike family that does not have at least one family member volunteer at each hosted meet. This includes all Pikes.

Qualifying to Championships

The qualifying score to attend the State Meet is voted upon by the State Board prior to the competitive season.

Competitive Season

Each year GU plans the competitive season. The decision of which meets Gymnastics Unlimited will attend is based on many factors. 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. If that were done, the athlete would 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 No. 1 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 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) for which 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 an 8.0 in order for them to compete. A complete team uniform is also required. Lastly, athlete attendance (specifically during the two weeks 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.

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 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 the coach. Always ask permission from a coach before leaving the team group or your assigned placement. This includes water and bathroom breaks.
 - c. 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 (flash drive 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 tall, with your feet together.
 - f. Show appreciation to other gymnasts, coaches, meet directors and anyone else who helped support you during the meet.

Mandatory Attire

Uniform requirements are mandatory for each athlete. All competitive attire is chosen by GU.

Required:

1 competitive leotard	1 competitive jacket	1 competitive pants
1 team bag	1 exhibition leotard (tank)	

PIKES Required Bag List:

Light, healthy snack	2 water bottles	Hair bands/scrunches
First aid tape	Band-Aids	Nail clippers
Sports tape	Pre-wrap	Cuticle clippers
Hair brush	<i>Recommended Items:</i> Grips, extra leo and shorts	

Meet Etiquette

- Arrive at the meet site early – about 20 minutes before open stretch is about to begin.
- When you arrive, 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.
- Do not allow the use of flash photography.
- If acceptable with every 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, to support their teammates.
- Congratulate coaches on their team, individual gymnasts, or well coached events.
- Thank host coach and/or team before leaving.



General Workout Policies

As a Pike, I will do the best of my abilities, and 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 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 gymnasts 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 cubby 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 require permission from a coach.
4. Working out 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. 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.)
6. 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 only if I accept the responsibility to make a change.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. A good attitude toward other gymnasts and staff members is very important. This includes SUPPORT and RESPECT.

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 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.

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It is very important that your gymnast is **on time** for practice. If your gymnast is walking in the door right as 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, unless emergency circumstances don't permit a call ahead of time. Please include the reason for your child missing practice in your message.

We understand the need for 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 gymnast's 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. Your gymnast will not progress at the same rate as the rest of the team and they will put themselves at risk for competing as a Pike. If your child doesn't have their skills they will not be able to compete. We don't wish this 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 gym and the coaching staff can write out an altered workout schedule to be used 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 if 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 practices before a competition.

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 recreational classes offered at GU) or private lessons with any coach other than a Pike Team coach. Any violation of this policy will be subject to the gymnast's termination from the team.

Temperament

What works best with one individual does not necessarily work best for another. 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 we must correct mistakes in order to build a better gymnastic foundation, but we also know 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 that is not likely to work well 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 clips/bands in case yours break, grips and wristbands, wrist supports, etc. NO loose clothing during workout. NO two-piece leotards can be worn to practice.
- **COMPETITION WEAR:** Team-designated uniforms are mandatory.

Gymnast's Guidelines During Competitions

- Gymnast will be expected to perform 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 USAIGC members: coaches, judges, and gymnasts.
- Gymnast should report to the meet in the team outfit as described by coach. 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 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 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 the Pikes and Gymnastics Unlimited, gymnasts are expected to act in a well-disciplined manner. Remember, gymnasts represent not only their gym, but also their parents and the sport itself. Make this image one of pride.

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- When traveling, the attending coach is the head of the delegation and responsible for decisions concerning agenda.
- 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 backup of their child's music at every meet.
- Gymnasts are required to stay and attend the awards ceremony. It is in poor taste to get up and leave while there are other athletes who need to get their awards. Staying shows good sportsmanship. (If you are late for a flight, you may leave as soon as you are finished competing, but inform your coach.)
- Always remember the most important person you represent is yourself. In a sport where some subjectivity is inherent in the evaluation of your performance, any impression you give can affect your scores.
- A good night's sleep along with a good meal will always help in the next day's performance. Keep the gymnast on as normal a schedule as possible. If they are used to going to bed at 9, don't make them go to bed at 8 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.
- Flash photography is DANGEROUS and is prohibited by USAIGC rules.
- Accept scores for your child and 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 the 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 you receive. DO NOT call the clubs to obtain meet information. Please ask your child's coach.
- Give positive and appropriate support for all teammates. Applause works well! We are very TEAM oriented and 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.
- 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 calm 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 of 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 may be obtained through the 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 coach coordinates all duties. As a parent helper, you must communicate everything with the coaches. This includes any amount of time from the group. Bathroom, other room visits, 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 coach. If any assistance is needed from the team moms, the coach will decide how and when.
4. The gymnasts need to make sure everything needed for competition is with them. Personal responsibility for staying on time and organized is on the gymnast. Bring a watch!
5. The 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 coach has the option 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 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 are great to include.
- 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.

The 10 Commandments for Gymnastics Parents

- I. **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 it doesn't matter whether they finish first or last, rather the wonderful lessons they will learn as they strive to be their best.
- II. **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.
- III. **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.
- IV. **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.
- V. **Thou shall acknowledge thy child's fears.** It is a normal 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.
- VI. **Thou shall not criticize the judges.** There is much more to judging than you think and each judge has had to pass tests 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 the judges know more than you do.
- VII. **Honor thy child's coach.** The bond between child and coach is a special one, and it contributes to your child's success as well as enjoyment. Do not criticize the coach in their presence because it will only add to the many distractions they must already deal with during training and performance.
- VIII. **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, 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.
- IX. **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.
- X. **Thou shall not expect thy child to become an Olympian.** There are 55,000 athletes participating in competitive gymnastics. There are only seven 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 Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh 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. At the pre-school and lower levels, the short class time naturally results in a higher percentage of parental viewers. 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.

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 gymnast's 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 the majority of it (most parents don't have the time), however, is much more likely to be a bad idea.

Watch if 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.

(Continued)

Observe regularly but in intervals.

Parents will find it easier to see progress if they observe at regular intervals, rather than every day. Step-by-step process, even on a daily basis, is not as dramatic as 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 gymnast's 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.
- **USAIGC:** United States Association of Independent Gymnastics Clubs. All gymnasts, coaches, judges and officials must be a member of USAIGC 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.
- **American Games, Goodwill Games, World Championships and the Olympic Games.**
- **Safety Certification:** Safety Certification is a USAIGC requirement for all meet directors, judges and coaches who participate in any sanctioned USAIGC event. To become certified, one must attend a course offered by the USAG and pass a written test.
- **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.



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 also 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. Your input is appreciated. This program is designed to provide what we feel is best for a program that balances competition with the overall health, growth and positive development of the gymnast.

Healthy Gymnastics. Healthy Competition. Healthy Kids!





Pikes

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