

Nashville Gymnastics Training Center

# Team Handbook

2013-2014 Competitive Season



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**Team Handbook**

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## Introduction

Nashville Gymnastics Gymnastics Training Center would like to welcome you and your family to our competitive gymnastics program. You are about to embark on a very exciting journey. Through this handbook, we hope to give you more insight into how our program works. Please read it carefully; it will answer most of the questions that you have about the NGTC team. After reading this handbook, if you have any unanswered questions about any aspect of our program, please feel free to ASK! The coaching staff will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Why competitive gymnastics? Gymnastics is the greatest overall body conditioning activity in which you can have your child involved. Some of the physical attributes that you will find developing in your young gymnast will be: strength, flexibility, kinesthetic awareness, muscular control, muscular endurance, coordination, timing, explosive power, balance and grace.

Some of the mental attributes that we hope to develop in each gymnast are: positive thinking and self-image, self-motivation, patience, goal setting, courage and enjoyment. Competitive gymnastics will give your child a stage on which she will develop her confidence, poise, individuality, mental and physical discipline, determination and appreciation for dedicated effort and self-respect.

Competitive gymnastics demands total dedication, complete commitment and a desire to be the best you can be. The athletic skills and physical fitness one develops in gymnastics no doubt stay with many competitors long after they have retired from the sport. However, it is the mental soundness that gymnasts develop, their “intellectual fitness”, that is of the greatest value.

As part of our commitment to the gymnasts and their parents, we are providing you with this handbook on team expectations, policies and financial obligations. We, in turn, require each gymnast to have on file a Team Contract signed by the gymnast and their parents or legal guardians acknowledging that they have read these policies, understand them and agree to abide by them. The Team Contract is located at the back of this handbook. If, after discussing the commitments and obligations described in this handbook, you and your daughter decide to accept the invitation to join the team, you will need to execute the contract and return it to either Coach Justine or Coach Stephanie.

Gymnastics is a sport of opportunity. Each gymnast at NGTC is given the same opportunity. What they do with it is their choice. We look forward to the unique opportunities working with your child will present.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a safe, positive and effective environment conducive to the proper development of all competitive gymnasts. Proper development means that each girl is working at her personal best and developing into a trustworthy, respectful, disciplined gymnast who is confident of the talents and abilities that were given her.

## Team Policies and Philosophies

### Team Placement

Placement on the NGTC Team is by invitation only. The team is an exclusive group of gymnasts selected by the coaches to participate in the team program. Participation is a privilege and an honor, not a right.

During the compulsory season, gymnasts may compete at either Level 4 or 5. During the optional season, gymnasts below Level 6 may compete in the Xcel program at the Xcel Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum or Diamond level. Optional gymnasts compete at either Level 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10.

The NGTC coaching staff will determine the placement of each gymnast and subsequent advancement from one level to another or from one group to another. Each individual is different and, therefore, not all will advance at the same rate. It is not uncommon for a gymnast to compete at one level for a number of seasons until they are ready to move to the next level. NGTC believes in quality advancement, not fast advancement. The coaches' goals are to create success, self-esteem, pride, discipline and readiness for each gymnast.

### Attendance

Gymnastics is a very serious and potentially dangerous sport. A consistent regimen is required to help maintain safety in the program. NGTC believes in 100% commitment from all team gymnasts. Regular attendance and on time arrival is **required** to ensure the safe development of the gymnasts. The team program is not for everyone, but those who commit to it will achieve their personal best. The coaches reserve the right to remove a gymnast from the team based on continual poor attendance, attitude or work ethic.

Parents should notify the coaches if practice will be missed for sickness, excessive homework or extensive injuries. Please call and let a coach know when your child will be absent. We worry about our kids!

During the competitive season, social activities and other sports are not excused absences and should not regularly interfere with practices. Social activities or other sports are not excuses for missing a scheduled competition. During the non-competitive season, gymnasts should maintain consistent workout attendance so they can progress and to prepare them for the upcoming season. Failure to attend the required number of practice hours on a regular basis will result in a verbal warning from the coaches. If the absences continue, the coaches will meet with the gymnast and her parents. If the problem remains unresolved, continued participation on the team is in jeopardy and will be determined in the sole discretion of the coaches. Failure to attend the required number of practice hours during the competitive season will disqualify the gymnast from participation in meets.

The gymnast must re-establish her weekly attendance requirement following a vacation and at least one week prior to the next scheduled meet in order to compete. During extended vacations of three weeks or more, gymnasts should maintain a strength and flexibility program.

Due to holidays, meet travel, etc., the coaches may need to cancel scheduled practices. Such cancellations will be kept to a minimum.

## **Athlete's Responsibilities**

### **Practice**

Demonstrate commitment. You have made the commitment to be on this team and with every commitment comes sacrifices. You are required to not only attend practices and meets, but you might also be doing demonstrations and fundraisers that offset team expenses. A big part of being a team member is learning time management. Our team cannot be successful without the full **participation of each of the members**.

Demonstrate a positive attitude and good work ethic. The success of our team is measured by how we portray ourselves and execute on the practice and competition floor. While winning is not so important, doing your personal best is our goal. Doing your best at practice and meets means attending each practice and working hard while you are in the gym, respecting your coaches and all of your teammates, overcoming fear and keeping a positive attitude through every obstacle. All assignments, stretching and conditioning must be carried out to the fullest. Cheating on assignments or conditioning will not be tolerated. By the team level, you are expected to do this whether or not a coach is observing. Tween and teen attitudes will not be tolerated at any time.

Accept all constructive criticism and scores in a positive manner, since we know that we learn just as much from our mistakes as we learn from our successes.

Control your emotions. Crying is not allowed in the gym or at a competition (unless due to an injury). Our philosophy is that effort and attitude are more important than performance. Disappointment is part of life and we are trying to teach you to be in control of your emotions. Team coaches may remove a gymnast from practice for inappropriate behavior including crying, pouting, arguing with coaches, laziness or for not performing to potential.

Don't make comparisons. Never compare your progress, performance or level with other gymnasts. Each athlete is an individual and will achieve success at her own pace. Place emphasis on individual success and improvements, not on what place you are awarded. Even poor performance on any given day can be turned into a learning experience in which the gymnast can go back to the gym with motivation, new goals and a positive attitude.

Follow the Golden Rule. Treat other gymnasts with respect and kindness, especially those younger than you. Do not think of yourself above anyone else no matter what level you are. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. If you haven't found yours yet, you will.

Work through obstacles. Injured gymnasts are expected to participate in practice and gym activities to the extent possible. It is often possible to work around injuries and turn a difficult situation into something positive by increased work on flexibility, strength, specific events or specific skills. A signed doctor's note releasing the gymnast may be necessary in cases of a significant injury before workouts can begin again.

Keep the gym clean. No carbonated or colored beverages in the gym during practices. Healthy snacks are encouraged before practice.

Show respect for yourself and your gym. Off-colored comments, foul language or inappropriate dress in the facility will not be tolerated.

### Competition

The coaches determine whether a gymnast competes based upon physical and psychological readiness and attendance.

The coaches reserve the right to remove a gymnast from competition due to unsportsmanlike conduct (pouting, negative attitude, discouraging remarks, disrespect to a coach or judge, etc.). Gymnasts may be removed from competition for crying.

Gymnasts are expected to be on time and in a positive state of mind for each competition.

Gymnasts **must** compete in every scheduled meet excluding injuries or extreme circumstances that prevent them from doing so.

Gymnasts are to walk into the arena fully dressed in competition warm-up and leotard.

Gymnasts are not allowed to talk to parents during warm-up or competition

Optional gymnasts are required to have an extra copy of their floor music with them at all meets.

It is recommended that Level 7 and up have a back-up pair of grips at all meets in case the current grips break or tear.

Gymnasts should bring water or sports drinks (nothing carbonated) to have during the competition. No food is allowed during competition.

Competition bags should be brought to each competition. The contents should be kept to a minimum.

Gymnasts should have their warm-ups fully on and zipped during awards.

### **Parents' Responsibilities**

Parents play a huge role in the development of a successful gymnast. Your role is every bit as important as that of the gymnast and coaches. It is also every bit as difficult. We try to be very family oriented. We want your input and need your support because we want your child to succeed. The rules below are based on our professional experience about how parents can best support their gymnast.

Parents are not allowed in the gym area without permission from one of the coaches.

Tuition, annual Booster Club dues and all competitive fees must be paid on time. Financial obligations are explained more fully below beginning on page 10.

No parent coaching in the gym or at home. Your comments detract from what the coaches are doing and they give the gymnast another thing to think about. This interferes with the development of the coach/athlete relationship, which is critical for long term success. Any parent violating this rule may be asked to leave the gym. If it continues, their gymnast will be suspended from the team. If the problem continues to persist, the coaches have the right to remove the gymnast from the team.

We understand a parent's desire to observe their daughter's practice; however, sometimes this presence creates a distraction to their child as well as other gymnasts even though it may not be intended. When parents observe practice, it is critical that they refrain from interacting with their daughter (giving corrections, pulling them out of practice to talk).

If your daughter has an injury during practice, it is important that the coaches be able to assess and handle the situation without parental interference. Often times a parent's presence will initiate an emotional response that makes assessing the injury difficult. The majority of injuries are minor and the gymnast must face the injury and complete practice. The coaches will contact the parent if a situation occurs during practice that requires their immediate attention.

In a competition environment, the gymnasts must be entrusted to the coaches for the duration of the meet. It is extremely important that the parent NOT interact with the gymnasts directly at any point during the meet. Encouragement from the stands is tremendously desirable, but direct conversation is not.

At competitions, parents are expected to act in a way that shows respect for the gym. In public, you are a representative of the gym. Cheer loudly and often, but do so in a courteous manner. Obnoxious screaming may be acceptable for other teams, but not for us. For these same reasons, please refrain from consumption of alcohol at meets.

If parents have concerns during a meet about a coach's decision or their child's performance, these must be addressed with the coaches by appointment some time after the day of the meet. The coaches are not to be confronted before, during or immediately following the meet since this disrupts their focus on the team as a whole.

Parents are expected to support the NGTC Booster Club ("Booster Club"). The Booster Club is a group that supports the team in various ways. The purpose of the Booster Club is explained on page 8 of this handbook. Every parent or guardian of a gymnast that commits to be on the NGTC competitive team is automatically a member of the Booster Club.

It is the parent's job to ensure that your daughter gets enough sleep, eats a healthy diet on a regular basis, gets to and from the gym on time and has the proper clothing and equipment.

If your child does not attend school due to an illness, they may not attend practice that day. Please do not send your child to the gym if they have been running a fever or sick in the last 24 hours.



NGTC's' philosophy is that family always comes first, school second, gymnastics third, friends fourth, boyfriend last. Your support of our philosophies is critical.

## **Gym Communication**

Communicating effectively with everyone on our team is a challenge. We work very hard to get information out to you in a timely manner by sending information via e-mail. We also post information on the gym bulletin board or Facebook page and occasionally send handouts home with the gymnasts.

Please come to your child's coaches if you have a problem or concern. Your thoughts are important to us. If you respect us enough to allow us to play such a large role in your child's life, please trust that we have your child's best interest at heart. We cannot help you solve a problem if we are unaware that there is a problem. In the event that you have a concern that needs immediate attention, please contact Coach Justine at the gym to schedule a meeting. Meetings should be scheduled before or after workout hours. Coaches are not available once workout has started. At no time will parents be allowed on the training floor during workout hours to address questions or concerns.

When questions or concerns do arise, please understand that complaining to other parents cannot solve your problem. Parents who consistently complain or show signs of disrespect for the coaches or others, will be asked to leave the lobby. If the problem persists, the parent will not be allowed to attend practice and/or your child may be removed from the NGTC team program. We cannot emphasize enough how disruptive parent coaching, complaining or disrespect can be to the team program. It will not be tolerated.

## **NGTC Boosters**

**Membership:** In order to provide the best experience for our gymnasts, we believe parent involvement is a key component. As a result, all parents and guardians of the competitive team gymnasts are automatically members of the Booster Club. Members must keep all Booster Club obligations current or their daughter may not compete.

**Purpose:** The Booster Club exists to foster national or international amateur gymnastics competition through the provision and promotion of gymnastics training and meets in the metropolitan Nashville area. This includes, but is not limited to, the provision of operational, financial and moral support to the coaches and members of the NGTC competitive team.

The Booster Club will provide all team gymnasts and their families the opportunity to raise funds through cooperative fundraising. All monies raised will be used to fund and support the gymnastics team program at NGTC. Specifics regarding the organization of the Booster Club and its fundraising program are contained in the Bylaws of NGTC Boosters Inc. Participation in certain fundraisers is a team-wide obligation. Other fundraising opportunities will be available, but participation will be optional. We highly encourage you to take advantage of all of the opportunities to raise money for the team as funds raised are used to offset various team expenses.

## **Time Commitments**

Joining the NGTC team is a year-round commitment. During the competitive season, gymnasts are required to maintain their weekly hours in order to compete. If a gymnast does not meet the set attendance requirements for her level without being excused by her coach, she will not be allowed to compete in specific meets. Failure to attend the required number of practice hours on a regular basis will result in a verbal warning from the coaches. If the absences continue, the coaches will meet with the gymnast and her parents. If the problem remains unresolved, continued participation on the team is in jeopardy and will be determined in the sole discretion of the coaches.

The hourly requirements during the school year are approximately:

1. Level 4 and 5/Prep-Op Silver: 13 hours per week.
2. Level 6/Prep-Op Gold and Platinum: 14 hours per week.
3. Levels 7 and 8: 17.5 hours per week.
4. Levels 9 and 10: 20 hours per week.

**Booster Club Activities:** A gymnast's parents are an instrumental contributor to her success and happiness. Parents must help instill the work ethic and values their daughter will need to succeed. One of the best ways to accomplish this is by example. Each family of team members is expected to contribute in some way to Booster Club functions. This not only involves keeping all of your financial commitments current, but giving of your time to chair a fundraiser, work a fundraiser, assist with the administrative functions of the Booster Club, etc. Please contact the Booster Club president for further information about how the Booster Club supports the team and how you can become involved.

## **Financial Obligations**

The categories of fees are described below.

### Tuition

Tuition covers the training/coaching your gymnast receives. None of your tuition payment is used for any competition-related expenses. Tuition is paid on a monthly basis to Nashville Gymnastics Training Center. Tuition is not pro-rated and is a year-long commitment, including summer months. Tuition is due on or before the 10th of the month for the next training month. If your gymnast is injured or becomes injured, tuition is still owed.

If you have more than one gymnast in the NGTC program, you will receive a 10% discount off of the additional sibling's monthly tuition. If you have questions regarding the tuition bill, please contact Coach Justine or Coach Stephanie.

### Competitive Program Fees

The competitive program fees are determined on a yearly basis and primarily depend upon the number and location of the meets selected by the coaches and the number of gymnasts on the team. These fees are administered by the Booster Club. These fees are **non-refundable**. All fees must be paid when due or your daughter will not be eligible to compete.

#### 1. Annual Dues

The annual dues will typically be billed on August 1<sup>st</sup> and payments due monthly thereafter with payment in full due by October or November depending on level. Checks are to be made payable to "NGTC Boosters". The dues are used to cover all Booster Club expenses including, but not limited to, the following: coaches' expenses to attend meets including compensation for their time, travel expenses to and from meets, accommodations and food; coaches' training and gymnast meet fees. The dues for the 2013 – 2014 competitive season are \$1,500 for levels 4 - 8 & Xcel and \$ 1,700 for levels 9 - 10.

#### 2. Competition Costs

The competition costs are intended to cover costs associated with competing that are personal to the gymnast. They are paid directly by each gymnast. These fees include: USAG membership fees, Tennessee Junior Olympic fee, competition apparel (leotard, warm up), team bag, and equipment (grips, ankle weights, kinetic bands).

The approximate competition costs for the 2013 – 2014 season are detailed below. These approximations are based on past competitive seasons. These fee estimates may vary each season. If actual expenses in a season exceed the estimate, a special assessment may be needed. The estimates below do not include personal equipment (e.g., grips, ankle weights), choreography charges, personal travel expenses associated with meets or costs associated with regional or national meets.

Competitive clothing*	\$270
Team bag	\$35
USAG Fee	\$50
TN JO fund	\$15
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 370</b>

\*Only repurchased when outgrown.

### Choreography

NGTC's appointed choreographers create all floor and beam choreography. For gymnasts above Xcel Silver level, there is a charge for both inherited routines and newly composed individual floor routines. This fee is payable directly to the coach that creates and teaches the routines. Please consult with your child's coach to determine if a new routine is recommended and what the associated cost would be as both are determined on an individual basis. Floor routines are typically changed every two years for the upper level gymnasts.

## **Safety**

Gymnasts are not allowed on any equipment at any time without first getting permission from a coach.

**Injuries:** Tell your coach if you think you have an injury. There is a difference between being sore and being hurt. Your coaches need to know if you are hurt and it is your job to let a coach know if you are.

**Emergency Procedure:** In the event of a medical emergency involving one of our gymnasts, immediate first aid will be administered. If the injury is deemed to be urgent (requiring treatment within 24 hours) or emergent (requiring immediate treatment), one of two things will happen, depending upon the severity:

1. If the injury is urgent, you will be contacted using the emergency phone number on your annual registration form. It is important that you promptly notify the gymnastics office of any changes in your contact information. If we are unable to contact you, your child may be taken to the nearest facility.
2. If the injury is emergent, we will call 911 and we will follow any instructions from the emergency response unit until contact with a parent is made.

## **Miscellaneous**

Lockers: The gymnasts will be assigned a locker which may be shared with one other teammate. The locker is for clothes and equipment only. No food is allowed to be placed in the lockers.

Private lessons: Private lessons may be arranged through Coach Justine or Coach Stephanie. These lessons should not interfere with scheduled practice times and are in addition to the regular team practice hours. They are to be used as additional practice on a specific skill. Full attendance at regular practices must be maintained in order to take private lessons. The individual coaches set private lesson charges and payment is due directly to the coach at the beginning of each lesson.

## **NGTC Team Agreement**

**2013 – 2014 Season**

**As a parent of a member of the NGTC team and in exchange for the coaches' professional commitment to my daughter and to me, I:**

\_\_\_\_\_ have thoroughly read and understand the NGTC Team Handbook, specifically the obligations of the parents and of the gymnast.

\_\_\_\_\_ have reviewed and explained these obligations to my child and I support the philosophy of the NGTC team. I hereby agree to follow all of the rules, procedures and policies in the Team Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ understand that, as a parent of a NGTC team member, I am hereby agreeing to timely fulfill all of the time and financial obligations such as tuition, annual dues, meet fees, uniforms and other obligations related to my child's participation on the team.

\_\_\_\_\_ further **understand that all fees are non-refundable**. I also understand that returned check fees/penalties will be assessed if any are incurred by the Booster Club in connection with one of my payments.

\_\_\_\_\_ **understand that my daughter will not be eligible to compete if I do not pay all fees on time.**

\_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that NGTC reserves the right to modify or change the policies and procedures contained in the Team Handbook upon 30 days written notice.

\_\_\_\_\_ understand that if I approach a judge or meet official before, during or after any competition to question, comment on or complain about a score or the judging of the meet, my child may be removed from the team.

**As a gymnast and member of the NGTC team and in exchange for the coaches' professional commitments to me, I:**

\_\_\_\_\_ have read and reviewed the NGTC Handbook with my parents and agree to abide by the policies and obligations set forth in the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ agree not to argue with my coach.

\_\_\_\_\_ agree to compete in a complete competition season. I understand that I am signing a contract to compete for the upcoming year and will compete in all my meets including State Meet.

\_\_\_\_\_ agree to have confidence in my ability and the judgment and ability of my coach.

\_\_\_\_\_ understand that missing more than one practice the week before a meet may result in my not competing in that meet.

\_\_\_\_\_ agree to abide by the safety rules imposed by my coaches.

\_\_\_\_\_ agree that I will not engage in inappropriate dress, disruptive behavior, emotional outbursts, abusive or foul language or any other sort of misconduct at the gym or any meet. I further agree that any such conduct is grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal from the team as determined by the head coach.

\_\_\_\_\_ agree to communicate openly with my coaches about my fears, pain, stresses, emotions, expectations and goals.

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Gymnast's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Head Coach's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_