



ISLAND GYMNASTICS

TEAM HANDBOOK

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Team Handbook Purpose

This handbook has been created for parents or team members to utilize as an informational guide for Island Gymnastics and More LLC. This handbook has been constructed to aid in any questions regarding the team training and any requirements that may accompany it. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the information provided.

We expect high standards for Island Gymnastics Team Members and Parents. The coaches want nothing more but the best for each gymnast and for an enjoyable experience. Being an Island Gymnastics Team Member/Parent should be fun while maintaining great discipline for achievement. Each gymnast has great potential to be successful, however remaining humble that not every gymnast will rise to the top at the same pace. Gymnasts who are dedicated, work hard, listen well, and show respect have potential for great success on the Island Gymnastics Team. Being a part of the Team is different from recreational gymnastic classes and therefore have higher expectations.

If there is any need to speak with a coach; please call:

Rita DeCesare: 410-490-0303

Noelle DeCesare: 443-262-5648

Sarah Gladu: 410-253-4948

Team Introduction/Welcome

Welcome to the Island Gymnastics Team! If you are reading this, it means that you are striving to be a successful gymnast and we are here to help! We hope that this handbook will help give you guidance as a member of the Team and as a Parent.

TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More

The coaches, gymnasts, and parents must work together and function as a Team to provide a rewarding experience for all Team members. Each individual has an important role to play in this experience, and there is a stronger chance of success if we can all collaborate and work well together.

Competitive Gymnastics is a great outlet for a gymnast to further advance their skills and aspirations to become a successful gymnast. At Island Gymnastics, we will strive to help grow and inspire our gymnasts to become as successful as their determination will allow us.

Gymnastics is not just a sport, it is so much more!

Every gymnast will learn:

1. Safety
2. Discipline
3. Respect
4. Progression
5. Empowerment
6. Valuable life lessons through sport

Parent/Coach Relationship

A key component to a gymnasts' success is you, the parent/family. A gymnast will succeed best if the coach and parent can work together with strong communication and respect. The gymnast is always at the forefront of our focus and is the center of attention. We strive for a good parent/coach relationship to create and promote opportunities for gymnasts to have the best experience.

As coaches, we have had different experiences in our walk of life, especially in the gymnastics world. We have created the Island Gymnastics Team through experience, education, planning, successes, and even from mistakes. Each step that we take as a coach, is to provide the best experience possible for each Gymnastics Team member.

As a parent, you play an important role in the gymnast's experience. You are supporting the gymnast, the coaches, and the team. It is important to not lose sight in the responsibility of providing encouragement, confidence, and care for your gymnast. Communication with your gymnast about goals, dreams, and challenges is a responsibility on your behalf. Seeking to understand your gymnast and the coach's goal is important and effective for your gymnast's success. It is the parent's job to do what is best for their gymnast; you have the choice whether or not to support the coach's decision or to find another gym. We put the gymnast first and if that means that another gym is a better fit for your gymnast, then we support that decision. If you have any questions regarding your gymnast, please ask to speak with one of the coaches!

Island Gymnastics mission is to provide a safe, fun, nurturing, challenging, and rewarding environment for the gymnasts! There will be successes and failures, however there is always a lesson to be learned which will help the gymnast grow to reach their goals and dreams.

Parent' initials _____ Date: _____

Gymnast initials _____ Date: _____

Team Gymnast Expectations and Policies

An important rule to remember is to treat your teammates, coaches, and parents with respect; you are on the same team! Everything someone else does will help your team to be better. As an Island Gymnasts Team Member, bullying, teasing or negative comments will not be tolerated, whether in person, by email, text, or social media.

Physical Condition:

It is important and a key component for all gymnasts to take care of their body. Proper care includes fueling their body with healthy foods and snacks, as well as maintaining flexibility and strength. Continuing to promote physical condition will promote the gymnast's success on the team as well as help prevent serious injury. We recommend all gymnasts to eat clean healthy diets. Food is fuel for the body and mind. We recommend that all gymnasts eat breakfast before any morning practices, this prevents sluggishness, fatigue and hunger during practice which are all common complaints of those gymnasts who don't eat breakfast. We also recommend that all gymnasts pack a healthy snack and enough water to last their entire practice. Ex. of healthy snacks are fruits, veggies, soup, nuts, protein such as meat, yogurt, hummus, protein shake, chocolate milk, etc.

We do not recommend unhealthy snacks such as candy, soda, cookies, or snacks with high sugar content.

Why is this important?

It is important that gymnasts eat a nutritional diet because gymnastics is a body-impacted sport. Their body needs to repair sore muscles, replenish calories, and replenish lost nutrients. Gymnasts can be very physically exhausting for your body and may require more food for your gymnast.

Eligibility:

All gymnasts **MUST** have paid all fees due to be an active member of the team and to be considered eligible to compete.

Performance Level:

Each gymnast will be evaluated and assessed based on their skill level, strength, flexibility, ability to focus, and consistency. The coaches will make the final say to what level each gymnast may compete.

Injuries

- Each gymnast and/or their parent(s) are responsible for notifying team coaches of any injury, illness, or medical condition. Any gymnast under a physician's care is required to have a Doctor's note that outlines the gymnast's limitations pertaining to their limitations.
- Any team gymnast that is injured is expected to participate in practice and gym activities to their best possible ability upon their limitations. **It is important for the gymnast to continue to condition for their return to the team and to help prevent any future injuries.**
- Injured athletes are required to have a Doctor's note releasing them to return to practice.
- In addition, injured athletes attending practice are required to have a Doctor's note describing their limitations until total release and then a final Doctor's note is required for that release.

Team Attire:

- Athletes must wear only gymnastics leotards to practice and spandex shorts are optional
- Hair pulled back into ponytail or bun
- No dangling jewelry

Attitude: Attitude is Everything! Each gymnast is expected to have a positive attitude and show respect to their coaches and teammates. It is important for gymnasts to be positive and emotionally ready for competitions! We will enforce a 3 strike rule. Gymnasts displaying negative attitudes, disrespectful behaviors, bullying, teasing, hazing, or misconduct will be sent home and possibly expelled from the team program.

Sign below if you have read and agree to the Team Gymnast Expectations and Policies

Parent Initials _____ Date: _____

Gymnast Initials _____ Date: _____

TEAM DESCRIPTIONS

JO Developmental Team:

The development team consists of 10 different levels.

Level 2- Entry competitive compulsory level. USAG Invitational and local sanctioned meets are attended.

Level 3- The first major compulsory competitive level. Local meets, USAG Invitational and traveling meets are attended. This level is a stepping stone to higher levels.

Level 4- A continuation of the compulsory competitive level with training with training on more advanced optional skills.

Level 5- A continuation of the compulsory competitive level with training with training on more advanced optional skills.

Level 6- Advanced optional level routines are developed and choreographed individually by the coaches for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty level.

Level 7- Advanced optional level routines are developed and choreographed individually by the coaches for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty level.

Level 8- Advanced optional level routines are developed and choreographed individually by the coaches for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty level. Contains States and Regional competition.

Level 9- Highly Advanced optional level routines are developed and choreographed individually by the coaches for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty level. Contains States, Regional and USA Eastern National competition.

Level 10- Expert optional level routines are developed and choreographed individually by the coaches for each gymnast's strength, style, and difficulty level. Contains State Regional and USA National competitions. FULL RIDE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS OPPORTUNITIES TO D1,D2, AND D3 SCHOOLS!

XCEL Team Level: The Xcel Program is a national USA Gymnastics program of gymnastics levels that runs alongside the Junior Olympic (JO) program. The Xcel program is a completely separate, alternate program.

The XCEL team consists of 6 different levels.

For each level there is an age requirement. For each level, the gymnast must be able to do routines that meet these requirements, as stated in the **Xcel Code of Points!**

Bronze: Basic gymnastics skills demonstrated and competed

Silver: Basic and intermediate skills demonstrated and competed

Gold: Intermediate level skills demonstrated and competed

Platinum: Intermediate and Advanced skills demonstrated and competed

Diamond: Advanced skills demonstrated and competed

(New Level Starting 2023) Sapphire: Highly advanced skills demonstrated and competed

ATTENDANCE: DEVELOPMENT AND XCEL

If your gymnast is going to be late, miss practice or leave a few minutes early, you must contact us ahead of time via email or phone. Tardiness, unexcused absences, and leaving early without prior notice is not acceptable and directly goes against our team policies and expectations. The team coaches do a lot of pre-planning and coordinating to determine who will be coaching each practice and establish a clear lesson plan for each practice according to who will be attending each practice.

The Gymnastics Team is a commitment. Leaving early is disruptive and avoidable. If your child must leave practice more than 15 minutes early for **ANY REASON**, do not bring them to practice. You will still owe the tuition and the gymnast will be marked absent. The **PARENT** must contact us prior to the absence, your child cannot have the opportunity to make this practice up.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM ATTENDANCE

- All gymnasts are expected and required to arrive to practice on time and fully prepared to practice. Ex. arrive early, hair pulled back, dressed in leotard, lined up ready to practice.
- Gymnasts are required to practice from start to finish with the only exception being an injury.
- If and when a gymnast is unable to make a scheduled training session, it is the **parents** full responsibility to let us know via email/phone of the absence or tardiness prior to the start of practice.
- In the event of 3 or more absences without coaches being notified by the parent of the gymnast, the gymnast may be suspended from team practices and/or competitions, but not its financial obligations.
- Failure to maintain a eighty - five (85%) percent attendance rate may result in the suspension from the team and or competition, but not its financial obligations.
- Parents/family members/guardians must be respectful of coaches and practice by waiting in the lobby/waiting area until gymnasts are dismissed. With the exception of a real emergency, please do not call your gymnast to leave before the end time of practice or walk into the gym during practice.
- All gymnasts competing are expected and required to be at **every practice** seven (7) days prior to the competition. There will be no refunds for that particular competition if this is not followed.

Sign below if you have read and agree to these terms and conditions

Parent Initials _____ Date: _____

Gymnast Initials _____ Date: _____

XCEL TEAM ATTENDANCE

- All gymnasts are expected and required to arrive to practice on time and fully prepared to practice.
- Gymnasts are required to practice from start to finish with the only exception being an injury.
- If and when a gymnast is unable to make a scheduled training session, it is the **parents** full responsibility to let us know via email/phone of the absence or tardiness prior to the start of practice.
- In the event of 3 or more absences without being notified, the gymnast may be suspended from practices and/or competition, but not its financial obligations.
- Failure to maintain a seventy - five (75%) percent attendance rate may result in the suspension from the team and or competition, but not its financial obligations.
- Missed practices may be made up only if available and pre-organized with head coaches. Make ups are not to replace entire weeks of missed practice, but only on occasion.
- Parents/family members/guardians must be respectful of coaches and practice by waiting in the lobby/waiting area until gymnasts are dismissed. With the exception of a real emergency, please do not call your gymnast to leave before the end time of practice or walk into the gym during practice.
- All gymnasts competing are expected and required to be at **every practice** five (5) of their normal practice days prior to the competition. There will be no refunds for that particular competition if not followed.

Sign below if you have read and agree to all team attendance expectations

Parent Initials _____ Date: _____

Gymnast Initials _____ Date: _____

Meet Expectations and Info for Gymnasts

1. Gymnasts must arrive to competitions in uniform no later than 30 min prior to open stretch.
2. Gymnasts must wear hair completely pulled back and out of their face. Long hair must be secured in a bun that will not fall out mid competition. Pack hairspray and bobby pins in your bag in the event the coach needs to fix hair.
3. Gymnasts must remain on the competition floor once the competition has begun.
4. Once a competition has started, all competing gymnasts must remain on the competition floor and are not allowed to go into the spectators' section.
5. Gymnasts are expected to have a positive attitude during the entire competition.
6. Gymnasts must compete the routines they practice in the gym, gymnasts are not to switch or alter routines during the competition for any reason.
7. Gymnasts must be good winners and good losers. Be respectful if you win, be respectful if you don't.
8. Gymnasts may be scratched from an event if the coach determines the routine/event is unsafe for the gymnasts to compete.

Parent' initials _____ Date: _____

Gymnast initials _____ Date: _____

Meet Expectations and Info for Parents

1. Per USAG Policies and Procedures, only coaches, competing gymnasts, Judges and credentialed and/or appointed personnel are allowed on the competition floor. Crossing over the boundary of the spectators section into the coaches and gymnasts section is prohibited and against these policies.
2. Per USAG Policies and Procedures as well as host gym's protocols. Interruptions such as, calling your gymnast over to you, shouting to get your child's attention, using flash photography, and or distracting your gymnasts focus during the meet is dangerous and prohibited. This could also distract other teams' gymnasts.
3. Scores are 99% accurate, on the rare occasion we feel that the gymnast was not given the correct score, we as coaches will file a request to ask the judges why they were given a specific score. Judges are not obligated or expected to give coaches an explanation for every score. **If coaches do not ask judges about the scores, it is Because the score is accurate and the coaches are aware of the reason that the score was given.**
4. Parents/gymnasts/coaches must respect all coaches, gymnasts, and judges at all times.
5. Per Island Gymnastics policies, parents/spectators must wait until the commencement of awards to talk or ask coaches any questions about the competition. (Questions must be respectful and considerate of all gymnasts and coaches of Island Gymnastics and other Teams at the competition).
6. Gymnasts must remain seated and respectful with their team at awards for the entire duration of awards. Leaving in the middle of awards is considered disrespectful to other gymnasts and goes against competition etiquette.
7. Photos may be taken at the beginning or during a competition in the spectators section, spectators are not allowed to cross boundaries to take pictures.

Parent' initials _____ Date:_____

Gymnast initials _____ Date:_____

Why is Winning and Losing Important?

Winning and succeeding in gymnastics is very rewarding. Gymnastics is very difficult. Team is competitive Gymnastics, meaning that we want all of our gymnasts to be confident and feel prepared when walking into a meet and win. Healthy competition is important in all sports. Motivation to win helps gymnasts to progress and stay focused. Winning and progressing should be a goal for you and your child, please do not feel pressured to stay on our team if this is not important to you or your gymnast. With that being said, winning at all costs is not our philosophy or something we agree with. Everything must be balanced. We want to work together to create a fun, exciting, goal oriented, safe atmosphere for all gymnasts who want to succeed. Success on a team comes from safety, positivity, competitiveness, nutrition, attendance, dedication, and perseverance. Parents must encourage gymnasts and not tear them down if they don't win. Adding pressure, criticism, or disappointment to gymnasts will negatively affect them and their love for the sport. Gymnasts need support and encouragement.

Sign below if you have read and agree to all gymnast/parent meet expectations

Parent Initials _____ Date: _____

Gymnast Initials _____ Date: _____

Competitive Team Program Financial Policies

1. Our Island Gymnastics Team is a year round commitment. We base our tuition on 12 months.
2. Tuition is due the 1st of every month
3. We are able to take credit/debit, check or cash payments
4. Tuition is considered late after the 7th day and you will be charged a \$25 Late fee.
5. If you pay by check and the check is returned, there is a \$35 returned check Fee.
6. Island Gymnastics will not prorate for missed practices due to illness,
7. Vacations, minor injuries, other sports or activities. However, we will prorate and use our discretion on certain lengthy illnesses, serious injuries, or particular family events. Please see us if you believe your child might fall under this category.
8. If your gymnast is on the XCEL competitive team and they are participating in another sport, it is of course, understandable and acceptable that your gymnasts reduce their training hours (6 hours minimum).
9. If you decide to take your child out of the Island Gymnastics Competitive Team program you must send us something in writing so that you will not incur Charges on your account. You will receive a refund for any dollars not used to pay for competition, registration or coaching fees.

10. There will be NO REFUNDS of any Competitions that are/were already paid for from your installment account Unless Island Gymnastics is able to get the refund by or before the refund deadline.
11. ****You WILL NOT** get a refund of any tuition that was previously paid for training for any reason.
12. There are NO REFUNDS of any full or partial payments for competitive wear that is/was purchased.
13. With total assistance of Island Gymnastics and coaches, Parents/guardians are responsible for the final size of their gymnasts competitive wear and there will be no refunds for incorrect sizing that is not the result of an error by the competitive uniform company.
14. There are NO REFUNDS for registrations to competitions if your gymnast is injured or ill before or during the competitions unless Island Gymnastics is able to get the refund before the refund deadline from that particular gym that is hosting the competition/meet. All coaching fees for that particular event will still be owed.

Eligibility:

All gymnasts **MUST** have paid all fees due to be an active member of the team and to be considered eligible to compete.

Parent' initials _____ Date:_____

Gymnast initials _____ Date:_____

COMPETITION REQUIREMENT

All gymnasts are expected to compete at all competitions.

There may be rare exceptions to this, for example, sickness, injury, and family obligations.

You are still required to pay for installment fees/coaching fees in the event your child cannot participate in a competition.

IMPORTANT EXCEPTION:

Our number one priority is safety in our gym and at competitions.

If your gymnast does not meet their attendance requirements by missing training days, this will result in your gymnast being “pulled” from a competition with no refund.

Parent' initials _____ Date: _____

Gymnast initials _____ Date: _____

PARENT AND ATHLETE CONTRACT

This is a binding contract between the parties, conditions and agreements are enforceable in the proper courts and all monetary terms collectable when due. I also fully understand that if any of the above stated rules are violated by any of my family members, the result could lead to my gymnast(s) immediate removal from the Island Gymnastics competitive team.

Contract Date _____

I/we have read and accepted the Island Gymnastics team information, rules, policies and financial commitment included in the attached manual. I/we agree to support team activities as outlined, and fulfill all obligations thereof.

_____ has my/our consent and permission to participate in the Island Gymnastics Team program at Level _____ for the _____ season. As stated on the waiver form, I/we release Island Gymnastics, its staff and directors from any and all responsibility and/or liability in case of accident or injury to the above named child.

As the coaching and administrative staff has made a professional commitment to the gymnast, the gymnast and her family also commit themselves to the completion of the entire season through the State Competition or May 31, _____ - whichever is applicable to the level of the gymnast. Upon signing, the gymnast and family are also financially responsible for team leotards and warm-ups, as well as all monetary obligations the athlete accrues.

Parent Signature

Date

Gymnast Signature

Date

*Please return the **signed** contract to our office, where it will be added to the gymnast's file. A copy will be given to the Parent upon request.*

Meet the Coaches

Coach Rita:

Rita was a gymnast herself and did a variety of sports such as gymnastics, tennis, and track growing up and throughout college. Rita has been both coaching and judging gymnastics for over 10 years. Rita also took over managing Island Gymnastics since 2019 and has continued to grow and now owns our wonderful gym. She is Safety certified, SafeSport Certified, USAG Background Checked and Certified in Fundamentals of Gymnastics Training. **"I love coaching kids and I love gymnastics, this is the job I've always dreamed about, it's truly exhausting in the best way possible."**

Coach Noelle:

Noelle was an exceptional gymnast for over 15 years and progressed all the way to the Elite level. She competed as a Level 10 gymnast who qualified and competed in several USA National Championships herself and was state and regional floor champion. Noelle has been coaching gymnastics for over five years. She coaches our Development team athletes for levels 2,3,4,and 6. She is Safety certified, SafeSport Certified, USAG Background Checked and Certified in Fundamentals of Gymnastics Training. Noelle hopes to own and operate multiple businesses in the future. **"I love working with kids and teaching them gymnastics, I want to help children grow confidence through empowerment! Island is a safe space for all kids to feel free to express themselves and learn and have fun!"**

Coach Sarah:

Sarah Gladu was a successful level 8/9 gymnast. She is also an experienced dancer which can help our girls master many dance elements in both floor and balance beam events. Sarah is also one of our choreographers. She coaches our Development team athletes for levels 2,3,4,and 6. Sarah is planning on becoming a physical therapist assistant. She is Safety certified, SafeSport Certified, USAG Background Checked and Certified in Fundamentals of Gymnastics Training. **"I've done 15 years of gymnastics, 3 years of dance, coached gymnastics for about 6 years and taught acro dance for about 3 years"**

Coach Anna:

Anna Ratel was a talented level 7 gymnast and competed for many years. She is now the coach for our Xcel Team for the Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels. She is Safety certified, SafeSport Certified, USAG Background Checked and Certified in Fundamentals of Gymnastics Training.

Coach Emily:

Emily Alt was a successful level 5 gymnast and is now on the Dance Team at Kent Island High School. Emily is an experienced instructor with our class students and has experience in gymnastics skills and techniques as well as dance training.