

# **Part One:**

## **Introduction to Olympia Gymnastics Academy**

### **Welcome to the Olympia Gymnastics Academy Team Program**

Thank you for your interest in Olympia Gymnastics. The adventure you and your child are about to embark on will be a very special one. (Yes, it will be your adventure too!) Over the years, we have had the pleasure of watching many children learn, grow, develop, and mature into confident young adults who are ready to face the world. We look forward to the unique opportunities which working with your child will present. This undertaking will give your child a stage on which to develop his confidence, poise, individuality, mental and physical discipline, determination, appreciation for dedicated effort, and self-respect. Your child will mature among individuals and circumstances that will demand his finest efforts and judgments. He will develop close relationships with other young athletes who demand the best of themselves and expect the best in others. Educational opportunities will be made available which will compliment and enhance the experiences he will have in the gym. Above all, he will have tons of fun!

We would like to personally congratulate each and every one of you for choosing gymnastics for your child. Gymnastics is the greatest overall body conditioning activity that you can have your child involved in. A study was done testing the components of physical fitness (strength, flexibility, coordination, etc.) of a number of college athletes involved in various sports. When the totals were added up, gymnasts proved to be the most physically fit. 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, agility, running speed, balance, and grace. Some of the mental attributes that we hope to develop are positive self-image, self-motivation, tenacity, patience, and willingness to sacrifice for personal development, goal setting, courage, and enjoyment. It is rewarding and fun to work hard, improve your skills, and achieve your goals.

### **The Staff**

We are proud of our staff here at Olympia. Most of our staff members are college graduates with degrees in dance, education, physical education, and sports management. All of our staff members are USA Gymnastics professional members and safety certified.

### **Mission Statement & Philosophy**

Our goal at Olympia Gymnastics Academy, Inc. is to develop each individual's gymnastics potential in a safe and enjoyable atmosphere. Using specific gymnastic progressions and a highly trained staff, each gymnast will learn the correct fundamental and basic skills that will equip him with the knowledge and ability to progress to whatever level he is able to achieve. We use the sport of gymnastics to help each child gain greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image.

The philosophy at Olympia Gymnastics closely mirrors the statement above. The program was founded on the belief that there can be a place for many gymnasts on the competitive gymnastics field, and the reality that a rare few will ever make it to the top. It must therefore be the process, and not the outcome, that is emphasized. Character, indeed life, is truly shaped by the day-to-day toil and struggle that is the measure of the human soul. Accomplishments and success come to fruition only after a sometimes long and hard process. Our challenge then is to nurture the student-athlete in a healthy, wholesome, enjoyable environment, stressing sound, progressive fundamentals, so as to become a model for others to live by. Success, in its own disguise for each of us, will follow.

### **Safety**

Gymnastics is inherently a very dangerous sport. This fact combined with the high difficulty level achieved by the gymnasts at Olympia Gymnastics only adds to the potential for injury. We want all parents to be fully

aware of the risk involved in the sport of gymnastics. Speed, motion, height, flipping, and the difficulty of the skills put our athletes in potentially life threatening situations on a daily basis.

We at Olympia Gymnastics are very aware of the “potential danger” and will make every effort to achieve and maintain a safe environment for our athletes. We believe in spotting whenever there is a doubt as to the consistency of the skill. We believe in proper and meticulous progressions as lead ups for more advanced skills. We believe in the use of padding and matting and any training devices designed to make learning as safe as possible.

### **Developmental and Competitive Gymnasts**

Olympia Gymnastics conducts training for both developmental and competitive gymnasts. We offer a competition and demonstration opportunity for children of diverse abilities, interests, and ages. We offer inter-club competitions; compulsory and optional competitions throughout the local area, our state, and beyond; and we perform for a variety of local schools, organizations, and nonprofit groups. This variety allows us to offer programs for every ability, level, and interest. Our coaching staff determines the placement of athletes within our team and developmental programs based on the following criteria:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| -Skill level              | -mental attitude                       |
| -Success at current level | -potential for success at higher level |
| -individual desire        | -individual confidence and courage     |
| -Coach ability            | -team orientation and spirit           |
| -Competitive experience   | -work ethic                            |
| -Age                      | -physical abilities                    |
| -Attendance               | -strength/flexibility                  |
|                           | -parental support                      |

It is becoming obvious that gymnastics is a very technical sport whose nature encourages a search for perfection. Advancement and success in the sport requires mastery of basic skills. Similar to a pyramid, the larger the base of support (basics), the higher the pyramid will stand (ultimate skill level). It seems rather ridiculous and simplistic to think that merely achieving a minimum “move- up” score will indicate an athlete’s readiness to achieve success at the next level. A score is meaningless without the mastery of the underlying skills. The gymnasts will eventually “hit the wall” if the basics are not mastered. With this in mind, Olympia Gymnastics has instituted mobility requirements when being considered for the next level.

### **Nutrition**

Olympia Gymnastics encourages all of our gymnasts (and their families) to follow the nutrition pyramid guidelines. It is important for gymnast to have good overall health and that begins with their eating habits. We will not monitor our athletes eating habits or their weight. We will inquire with the parents if we feel that there is a problem that is developing.

If your practice is 5 hours long, the gymnasts will get time for a snack break. During gymnastics practice, your brain needs constant energy to help you concentrate and stay motivated. Your body needs energy to help its muscles give you power and strength.

All gymnasts are responsible for bringing their own snack. All snacks should be in a container that is disposable (no Tupperware etc.) and should not require refrigeration. The snack is small and just enough to give the gymnast an extra boost. Here are some snack suggestions: A few orange wedges, handful of cheerios, few pieces of dried fruit, handful of dried cranberries, half a banana, ½ a bagel, 6 ginger snaps, baby carrots, 10 cherries, small apple, 15 frozen grapes, 6 vanilla wafers, handful or popcorn or pretzels

### **Sport Psychology**

It has been said that gymnastics is 90% mental and only 10% physical. Those who work in the gym every day know this to be nonsense, but only because the ratios are off, not because mental and emotional readiness is not important. Indeed, the mental game of gymnastics often separates the good from the

great.

Olympia Gymnastics has used and will continue to use a sports psychology program to help our athletes develop the mental strategies that will help them achieve their **goals**. The areas of concentration are stress management, goal setting, relaxation techniques, visualization, and team building.

### **Sports Medicine & Injured Gymnasts**

Injured athletes are expected to be at practice for at least a portion of the scheduled practice times. When an athlete becomes injured it is our goal to concentrate on the areas of the body or the areas of training that we can improve while the gymnast is recovering. This philosophy is vital to staying on top of the game. It is the reason that we expect injured athletes to participate in practice.

## **Part Two: Introduction to Gymnastics**

### **Guide for Parents**

Gymnastics competitions for boys involve performances on six apparatuses called “events”: floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, vault, parallel bars, and horizontal bar. The athletes compete either compulsory or optional exercises. Compulsory exercises (also called routines) are developed for each nation by the national governing body (USA Gymnastics). The compulsory routines are developed with varying levels of difficulty so the athletes use the compulsories to develop their skills progressively. The gymnast’s coach, taking into account the goals and insights of the gymnast, choreographs (i.e. puts together) the optional routines. Optional routines are usually unique to each particular gymnast, while compulsory routines are performed by all gymnasts in much the same manner. Scoring for compulsory gymnasts and optional gymnasts is similar except that the gymnast must follow a prescribed sequence of skills in compulsories.

### **THE EVENTS**

In summary, here is a brief description of the six events the male gymnasts compete in:

1. Floor Exercise: composed predominantly of acrobatic elements that are combined with gymnastic elements such as strength, balance, elements of flexibility, handstands, etc. All of these elements form a fluid, rhythmic exercise which is performed using the entire floor exercise area (12m x 12m).
2. Pommel Horse(a.k.a. “Horse”)/Mushroom: characterized by pendulum swings and by different types of circular swings with legs apart and together. These swings are done in a variety of support positions using all parts of the “horse”. Swings through handstand, with or without turns, are permitted. All elements on “horse” must be executed with swing and without the slightest interruption. Strength and hold elements are not permitted. At the younger levels, a mushroom is used both as a training tool and for competition.
3. Still Rings: composed of swing, strength, and hold parts in approximately equal portions. These parts and combinations are executed in a hang position, to or through a support position, or to or through the handstand position, and execution with straight arms should be predominant. Routines are characterized by transitions between elements of swing and strength or the reverse. Swinging of the cables and the crossing of the cables is not permitted.
4. Vault: consists of one or two vaults, depending on the competition. Each vault begins with a run and a take off from both feet (with or without a round off) to the vault board with legs together and is executed with a brief support phase on the horse with both hands. The vault may contain single or multiple flips and twist of the body.
5. Parallel Bars (a.k.a. “P-bars”): consists predominantly of swings and flight elements selected from all element groups (e.g. swing elements through support on both bars). Skills are performed with continuous transitions through various hang and support positions in such a way as to reflect the full potential of the apparatus.

6. Horizontal Bar (a.k.a. “High Bar”): must be a dynamic presentation that consists entirely of the fluid connection of swinging, turning, and flight (release and re-grasp) elements alternating between elements performed near to and far from the bar in a variety of hand grips so as to demonstrate the full potential of the apparatus.
- Judges evaluate these routines based on rules developed by the “FIG” which is a French acronym for International Gymnastics Federation. The FIG publishes a new set of rules every 4 years following the Olympic Games. This is one of the reasons gymnastics is so hard to understand. There are few sports that reinvent their rules every 4 years.

There will be times when the coaches do not agree with the way the judges scored the routine. In most cases, the coaches will do nothing about the “incorrect score.” This is because the judges score the routines too high as often as they get them too low. It all evens out over the course of a meet or a season. Since the coaches do not generally ask the judges to lower their gymnasts’ score when it is too high, they do not feel right asking to have it raised when it is too low. There are times, though, when it is REALLY too low. This is particularly troublesome when the meet is important. In this case, there is still little the coach can do, though the coach can “inquire.” The only way to find out why your son received a particular score is for the coaches to inquire. As a parent, it is not proper meet etiquette for you to ask the judges about your son’s routine.

Although gymnastics meets tend to be rather stoic affairs, they need not be. You should feel free to applaud and cheer for any and everything you like, the more the better. The gymnasts really do appreciate your support.

### THE LEVELS

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>AGE GROUPS</b>
Elite	
Level 10	15-16, 17-18
Level 9	13-14, 15 -16
Level 8	12, 13 -14
Level 7	10-11, 12 & Over
Level 6	8-9, 10-11, 12 & Over
Level 5	7-8, 9-10, 11 & Over
Level 4	6, 7-8, 9-10, 11 & Over
Stepping-Up	5 and Over

### **A Brief Description of the Competitions**

*State Championships:* All levels in boys gymnastics may compete in the State Championship competition. Unlike the girls program, the boys program does not require qualifying scores to enter this competition. This meet typically occurs in the middle of March.

*Regional Championships:* Regional Championships involve the best gymnasts from each state within the region. There are ten regions in the United States. Olympia Gymnastics is in region 5 and our Regional

Championship involves gymnasts from the following states: Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois. Gymnasts in levels 6-10 are eligible to compete at the Regional Championships if they attain the qualifying score at the state championships.

*National Championships:* There are National Championships offered for levels 8-10 and elite gymnasts through USA Gymnastics. In all cases, the boys must qualify for these events through a qualifying process. At levels 8-10, the gymnasts must attain a predetermined qualifying score at the Regional Competition to then proceed to the National Championships. At the elite level, the gymnasts must achieve a certain minimum score in order to compete at Senior National Competitions. From these meets a limited number are taken to Championships of the USA where our national team is determined.

*Invitationals:* There are meets hosted by individual clubs and they generally offer team as well as individual competition.

*Future Stars:* The Future Stars Program is an athlete development and education program. The Future Stars Program consists of four age groups: 8-9 year olds, 10 year olds, 11 year olds and 12-13 year olds, who perform selected skills and compulsory routines on the six men's events plus strength and flexibility evaluations. The 8-9 year old division participates up to the Regional level while the 10-, 11- and 12-13-year-old divisions can qualify to the National level.

### **Mobility between the Levels**

The specific mission of Olympia Gymnastics is to develop happy, healthy, and confident children. One way in which we can help meet this demanding goal is to place the gymnasts at a level where they can be happy, safe, and confident. What this means is that every gymnast must be able to perform the skills and routines required at a given level comfortably. The skills should not be at the edge of or beyond his ability level. We can never ask or expect our athletes to perform skills or routines in a competition that they cannot perform consistently in practice.

The following criteria will help coaches decide the placement of each gymnast:

1. An assessment of gymnast's basic abilities. . . physical, emotional, mental and psychological. These attributes are observable in subjective ways as opposed to an objective testing procedure. This assessment may indicate a child's ability to overcome reasonable fears, to make quick yet sound judgments, to be self-motivated and dedicated to achieving personal goals.
2. Physical preparedness: An assessment is made of strength, flexibility, endurance, agility, quickness, and suppleness.
3. Present skill level: The accomplishment of skills is in many respects controlled by one's basic abilities. In every case, new skills will require more strength and flexibility. We will ask gymnasts to acquire skills in the next level up before being considered to move to that level. In this manner, coaches will be able to project your skill and routine readiness for the coming competitive season.

### **Training Content**

In order to understand and appreciate what goes into the development of a competitive gymnast, one must understand exactly what it is that we are trying to achieve during training. There are four fundamental areas of development that need to be addressed during the training: 1) strength, 2) flexibility, 3) skills, 4) mental aspects.

- 1) Strength development — As with all sports one object to the training is to make the difficult look easy. This is much easier to accomplish if the athlete has the strength required to master the skills. In most cases the stronger the better. This is certainly true of gymnastics. It is also true that strength training can also play a role in the reduction of injuries.

Strength development at the beginning or compulsory levels centers on building a base on which to build as the gymnast advances. General callisthenic exercises achieve this goal very well. Sit-ups, push-ups, pull-ups, running, and so on are used to achieve this goal. While it may appear that the gymnasts simply repeat these basic exercises over and over again through the course of the year, in fact there are subtle, and at times not so subtle, variations in the performance of these exercises. Technique may be changed or improved, the number of repetitions change, resistance is altered, the range of motion is increased, and the athlete is continually challenged to complete his assignment.

2) Flexibility development is also critical to the long-term success of the gymnast. Superior flexibility adds to the aesthetic appeal of the performance, allows the athlete to master skills more easily, and plays a role in reducing the frequency and seriousness of injuries.

Every training session at Olympia Gymnastics will begin with a warm-up. This warm-up serves to raise the core body temperature so that the body is ready for action. The warm-up is not intended to be a time to improve flexibility. Once the muscles are warm and tired then they can be stretched and flexibility can be improved. This generally occurs at the end of practice.

3) Skill development falls into 2 distinct but related categories: basics and new skills. Basics or core skills are like the ABC's of gymnastics. The gymnast uses these ABC's to compose their gymnastic sequences and routines, if any of these building blocks is missing or defective the entire performance is weakened. These core skills, the building blocks of the sport, must be continually refined in order to permit the gymnast and his coaches to continually improve performance. The better the core skills, the better the performance. That is why we continually review and drill the basics.

## Part Three: **Gym Rules and Policies**

### **Respect Yourself and Others**

Respect your physical self. All your efforts should go into building up your abilities. Fuel your body with nutritious food; rest your body with plenty of sleep; protect your body by being safe in the gym; listen to your body when it tells you to stop either because of illness or injury; heal your body when it tells you not to continue; and celebrate your body by making it strong, flexible and powerful enough to do the wonderful things expected of it in this sport.

Respect your emotional self. Gymnastics is the most demanding and difficult of all sports. You will suffer setbacks, frustration, fear, and defeat. Expect these things, learn from them, face them, and overcome them. Set high goals and achieve them step-by-step. Maintain a positive attitude that will help you to defeat them.

Respect your teammates. They have their own goals and dreams, but they also are here to support and help you. Cheer for them when they attempt new skills, make skills that are difficult for them, or when they are competing. Accept compliments with a simple, "thank you."

**NO TEAM MEMBER IS ALLOWED TO USE ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR TO SMOKE.** We spend many hours together trying to be the best we can be. All of that work is a complete waste of time if you blow it on drugs or alcohol. Perhaps if you understand that you will be dismissed from the team if you engage in these illegal or inappropriate activities you will have an additional bit of motivation to say "no" if and when you are confronted by your peers.

## **Respect for Olympia Gymnastics Academy**

You show respect by the way in which you act. The following actions show respect and are expected of a member of the Olympia Gymnastics Team.

1. Attend all practices, competitions, and special events
2. Call the gym or fill out an absence form to alert the coaches if you will be absent for any reason.
3. Arrive on time and stay until the practice is over. Get any taping completed before practice begins.
4. You are expected to work hard and to try your best. This is all that we will ever ask of you and this is always what you should demand of yourself.
5. Arrive at the gym ready to participate with the proper attire; hair pulled back, jewelry off, gum in the trashcan, well rested, and ready to go. Stay off the equipment until it is time to start.
6. Treat other gymnasts with respect, be kind to those gymnasts younger than you are, and do not think yourself as better than any other gymnast. Everyone has strengths and weakness and if you have not found your weakness yet, you will.
7. Ask permission to leave the gym. This applies to leaving early and going to the restroom. The main reason is so that the coaches know where you are.
8. Always act in a way that shows respect for yourself and to the gym. We want the gym to be a happy, motivating and uplifting place to be. There is no place in our gym for rude or belittling comments, displays of anger or disgust, talking back to coaches or other adults, or crying because you have given in to your frustrations and fears.
9. Be honest. Cheating is the most ugly form of disrespect. It shows disrespect to your coaches, your parents, and most importantly to yourself. If you cannot or will not complete an assignment, be honest about it.
10. Tell your coach when your body is telling you to stop or slow down. This shows respect for yourself and for the coach. If you are sick or on medication, or are injured, we need to know and you need to listen to your body. Pain is the body's way to tell you to stop.
11. Provide your body with food and drink that will help you do your best.
12. Show respect for your safety and the wishes of your coaches by staying off the equipment without permission from the coaches. This rule applies specifically to the tumble track and the pits.
13. Always wait inside for your ride. Gymnasts are not to wait outside for pickup following practice. If clothing needs to be changed before or after practice, please always use the bathrooms inside the gym. Do not use the bathrooms in the lobby or viewing area.
14. Concentrate on what you are trying to accomplish during practice. We will not permit you to make or receive phone calls during practice unless it is a family emergency. Absolutely no cell phones in the gym.

## **Showing Respect to the Sport of Gymnastics**

The way you act in the gym is a private reflection of your respect to yourself, to your teammates, and to Olympia Gymnastics. The way you act at competitions, while at team functions, and while traveling to and from the competitions and functions is a public statement about how you feel about yourself, Olympia Gymnastics, and to the sport of gymnastics itself. Only the highest standard of behavior will be acceptable. The following actions show respect and are expected of a member of the Olympia Gymnastics Team.

1. Participate in all scheduled competitions. We are a competitive gymnastics team. We measure our work and progress by going out on the competition floor to do our best in front of our families, our coaches, our friends, and our teammates.
2. Attend every practice leading up to competitions. Gymnasts who miss more than one practice in the ten days prior to competitions risk losing our respect for them and their dreams. In general, we only compete gymnasts who we respect.
3. Demonstrate the highest regard for our sport and your hard work by arriving to all competitions & practices on time, by conducting yourself with grace and courage during the competition, by accepting all scores in a positive manner, and by thanking your coaches, parents, and the organizers of the meet for spending their time on your behalf.
4. During the competition, gymnasts are to wear their competition uniform and their team warm-up. *All gymnasts must be in warm-ups for awards.* All gymnasts are expected to remain for awards.

## **How Parents Show Respect for the Athlete, Olympia Gymnastics, and Our Outstanding Sport**

Parents play a huge role in the development of a successful gymnast. Your role is every bit as important as that of the gym or the coaches. It is also every bit as difficult. Here is what you can do to help your son achieve his dream.

On the physical side, it is your job to insure that your young athlete gets enough sleep, eats the proper food and drink, gets to and from the gym on time, and has proper clothing and equipment.

The emotional side is just as important. It is your role to provide unconditional love, encouragement, and support. Keep in mind, your love is not based on whether he made his kip; your support is not dependent on his scoring an 80.00 in the all around; and your encouragement is not conditioned on his being the best in his group, on his team, in his state, or in the country.

It is through performing these tasks that you show respect for your gymnast and the effort he is putting into his sport. Any more or any less does a disservice to your child and will limit his opportunity for success.

1. Please come to any of your child's coaches if you have a problem or concern. We are in business to serve you and your child. Your thoughts are important to us. If we cannot help you, we will explain why and we will work to find another way to solve whatever is bothering you. **Complaining to other parents cannot solve your problem, nor can we solve them if we do not know about them.** If you respect us enough to allow us to play a large role in your child's life, please respect us enough to know that we have your child's best interest at heart.
2. Parents perform their role at home and outside the gym area. Within the gym, the coaches and administrators of the gym play their roles. Please do not coach your child. Your comments detract from what the coach is doing, they give the gymnast another thing to think about, and it interferes with the development of the coach/athlete relationship that is critical for long-term success.
3. Please stay in the waiting area and out of the gym. Parents who venture out into the gym create a danger for themselves and to the athletes. Parents are often unaware of traffic patterns and often get in the way of the gymnasts performing their skills. ***There are to be no parents walking in the gym!!!*** If you need to contact your child, ask the secretary to contact the coach that is working with your child's group. Please make others who will be driving your child to practice aware of this policy (grandparents, aunts, friends etc.)
4. Please let a coach know before practice if you think your child might have a problem due to illness, medication, or injury.
5. It is the philosophy of Olympia Gymnastics that the coaches, the gym, the parents, and the gymnasts are all part of the team. We encourage all of our parents to attend every competition. Having a strong cheering section does wonders for team motivation and it is something we can be proud of. But as parents, you should be aware that as a member of the Olympia Gymnastics Team,



you too represent Olympia Gymnastics. With that in mind, a few guidelines for parents during competitions should be in order.

- A. Cheer loud and often, but do so in a courteous manner. Obnoxious yelling is for the other teams, not for us.
- B. Cheer for all members of the Olympia team and feel free to cheer for fine performances turned in by gymnasts of other teams. In a very real way, we are competing with them not against them. If you allow yourself, you will become friendly with the parents of the gymnasts of other teams that you may see several times each season over the next few years.
- C. Promote Olympia in every way you feel is appropriate: t-shirts, sweatshirts, banners, and cheers; but never ever speak in a negative way about another club, coach, gymnast, or judge in the process.
- D. Under no circumstances, is a parent or a gymnast ever to approach a judge or a meet official before, during, or after competition to comment on, complain, or even ask about a score.
- E. Please do not contact or talk to your gymnast once they are on the competitive floor. We ask them to focus all their energy on the competition and we want as few distractions as possible. After the meet is over they will come to see you once we are finished with our team meeting.

6. Gymnastics must come second to school. Although the vast majority of our gymnasts are very good students, there may be times when a gymnast needs to miss due to school activities, homework, or functions. Please let the coaching staff know in advance if your gymnast will miss due to school. Parents can inform us in several ways. You may use one of the absence forms in the pro-shop, go to the "Team" page of our web site and fill out a quick online form, or call our hotline absence number at 586.803.1217.

7. Mailboxes are located in the ProShop. They are divided by level and will have your gymnast's last name on it. Please understand that the information that goes into your mailbox may be from the office, booster club, or coaching staff. That is a lot of information. You can help us communicate more effectively by checking your child's box on a regular basis. Information will also be sent by email. Our email system is an **outgoing** system only. You may not respond to the information you are sent by email. Questions regarding information must be addressed by leaving a note in your coach's folder in the Proshop or by calling the gym.

8. Parents are not to park in the handicapped spaces of our parking lot unless authorized by law to do so. Parking in the entrance and exit area of our parking lot is also not authorized. Even short term parking in these areas is not allowed and could cause safety concerns in emergency situations.

9. The staff members of Olympia Gymnastics are not authorized to communicate with any parents or students on social networking sites or by email. Please refrain from using social networking sites as a method of contact. Contact must be done in person or by phone and never online. Even being "Friends" on social networking sites is unauthorized.

#### The Role of the Parent in the Olympia Gymnastics Family

The parent of a gymnast on our team can have one of the most difficult of all jobs. While members of our "family," which includes the gymnast, the coaches, and the parent, are all equally important, the parent has the smallest role in actually controlling the performance of the athlete. At the same time, the parent may feel the greatest sense of emotional attachment to that performance. This combination of a high emotional stake in the performance with little or no direct control over the outcome can produce stress and can lead to some bizarre behavior. Parents have been known to lose sight of the important role that they have to play. They often step outside their sphere of influence and enter the domain of other members of the family. This often creates conflicts with the coaches.

The coaches do their job in the gym and on the competition floor. When a parent starts to coach their child, they actually interfere with the very performance they are trying to improve. The gymnast can only concentrate on one part of his performance at a time. If parents are telling the child to “keep their legs straight,” or to “run faster,” or to “smile,” they are directing the child’s attention away from what his coach is telling him. The child cannot make two corrections at once, so either he does poorly, or he focuses on one and not the other. No matter which choice he makes, someone is going to be upset with him, and he will not progress in the way that he should. Coaching your child puts him in a no-win situation. It is unfair to him and to his coaches.

In addition, you are interfering with the development of the coach/gymnast bond that is critical to any long-term success in the sport. The gymnast must be able to trust his coach, rely on his coach to direct his training, and to receive important emotional support from his coach’s praise. You interfere with all of that when the child is confused as to which way to turn for direction and support.

Finally, do you really think that the coach doesn’t notice when an athlete’s legs are bent?? Of course the coaches notice! If the coach is not working on improving appearance, it is because he is working on something more important at this point in the training. Perfect execution often comes late in the mastery of key skills.

### Some Guidelines for Parents Feeling Stress

Danger signs — watch for these. If you recognize yourself in these descriptions, you probably need to reevaluate your actions, your role, and your attitudes.

- Observing every practice or private lesson allowed — INTENTLY
- Punishing or praising your child for what you observed during these observations
- Finding your sense of worth and happiness dependent on the success of your gymnast
- Constantly comparing your child and his progress to others in his group, on his team, or in competition
- Verbally abusing the gym, the coaches, and the program while still placing your child in our control
- Video taping each competition and requiring your child to review it at home with you

### *Inappropriate Comments VS Appropriate Comments*

“You finally beat Tommy.” VS “You made your entire ring routine!” “How many (difficult skills) did you make today?” VS “How was practice?” “I’ll give you \$20 if you win today.” VS “Do your best and have fun.” “That judge always scores you low.” VS “Work hard and you’ll do better next time.” “I cannot believe they moved Alex up and not you!” VS “As long as you are happy, safe, and progressing, I’m happy.”

### **Other Policies and Procedures of Olympia Gymnastics Academy**

1. Workout Attire: Gymnasts are required to train dressed in a manner which promotes a safe workout environment.

Comfortable clothing that does not impede movement is necessary for gymnastics. The boys need to wear a T-shirt or tank top and gym shorts to all practices. Practice uniforms (practice leotard, practice shorts, and an athletic supporter with a protective cup) will be required during certain practices throughout the week.

Protective cups are required for safeguarding students on the boys’ equipment. Protective cups are to be worn at all times during practice.

Competition pants will be available at the gym for athletes to use on pommel horse.

No jewelry is permitted because it causes a safety hazard for both the gymnast and the coach.

The boys spend a profound amount of time supporting themselves on their hands. This may lead to severe discomfort in the wrists. Protective wrist supporters are available and help to prevent this pain.

Students who are nearsighted will need to wear eyeglasses at all practices.

2. Attendance: There are always more athletes who want to be on team than we have room for. Therefore, if you do not come to practice, you are taking the place of someone else who would like to be part of our team. For this reason, Olympia Gymnastics expects every gymnast to come to every practice. Every gymnast needs to make a minimum of 80% of the scheduled practices. In addition, gymnasts are expected to arrive 5-10 minutes early so they will be ready to go the minute practice starts. Further, we want all our athletes to stay the entire practice. Gymnasts are expected and required to attend all practices the week prior to a competition. Failure to do so may result in a gymnast being scratched from the meet.

3. In order to help control blood-sugar levels, a nutrition break will be provided during practices that last 5 hours. The types of food that should be consumed are listed above. Never bring candy, soda, or other sugared foods. Each gymnast should bring a water bottle of non-break plastic to practice. The water bottle is for water only.

4. Olympia Gymnastics Staff works hard to keep our gym clean and in good repair. However, each athlete on our team will be responsible for contributing to this effort. They will help by keeping the training area safe, neat, and ready to use by the next group in the gym.

5. Emergency Procedure: In the unlikely event of a medical emergency involving your son, the following procedure will be followed:

A. Emergency first aid will be administered, including requesting of emergency medical technicians and an ambulance if needed.

B. **You** will be contacted using the emergency contact information you provide on your registration card. It is important that you fill out a new emergency contact card whenever a change in contact information takes place.

6. Inclement Weather Procedures: Olympia Gymnastics will not offer daytime preschool classes when the Utica Community Schools closes for snow/hazardous driving conditions. A determination on evening classes & team practice is made at 2pm. For an update on the status of afternoon/evening practice, please check our website [olympiagymnastics.com](http://olympiagymnastics.com) after 2pm. It is also possible that schools will be open, but the weather will deteriorate during the day, making team practice unlikely. Check the website after 2pm on days when weather may be a factor.

7. No Cell Phones in the gym or taken to travel meets or clinics.

8. If your gymnast is old enough to drive themselves, he will not be allowed to arrive late or leave early without written notification from the parents. Please call if he will not be coming to practice. This, of course, is for the gymnast's safety. All athletes are to park on the side of the building and should save the spaces in the front of the building for other customers.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

The rules and policies that govern the gymnasts and their parents have been outlined here and in other sections of the Handbook. In the event that there is an ongoing pattern of disruption or there are major rule infractions, it may be necessary to impose some disciplinary action in an attempt to improve the situation. The list and the procedures noted below are not intended to be all-inclusive. They are presented as an expression of our beliefs as to what disciplinary actions are necessary and appropriate. We will treat all of our gymnasts and gym parents as individuals and will seek to impose the most effective disciplinary actions based on each unique set of circumstances.

1. The gymnast may be asked to sit and watch.
2. The gymnast may be asked to leave the gym and go home early.
3. The coach may request a meeting with a parent.
4. The gymnast may be suspended from the team for one or more days or may be scratched from a competition.
5. The gymnast may be asked to leave the program if we cannot get him to conform his behavior to the expectations of the team, his coach, or the gym.

Note: The development of the coach/gymnast relationship is paramount. We cannot and will not run to the parents every time we have a problem. We will attempt to build our own relationship with our athletes. Those relationships are built on time shared, belief in the same dreams and values, work performed together, and the emotional ups and downs that are part of all important ventures. The downs include discipline problems, and we will attempt to solve them within the framework of building a relationship. Should we need your help to overcome a challenge that is too much for us to accomplish on our own, we will contact you. The final two items on the list are reserved for the most serious violations of our rules and policies. They are seldom used. They are reserved primarily for times when there is an ongoing problem with disruption and disrespect within the gym that has proven resistant to improvement. We will not let the bad attitude of one gymnast bring down the spirit and work ethic of an entire group.

It is also possible that a gymnast will have to leave our program because of the actions or inaction of his parents. While we never want to punish a child for the actions of his parent(s), we will not tolerate parents who, by their words or actions, do not support the policies and values of our team program.

## **Part Four: Travel and Competition**

### **Competition and Travel**

Competition, in itself, is neither good nor bad; it is only appropriate or inappropriate. Competition is not for everyone. Some thrive in a competitive environment, and others do not. Some gymnasts are ready to compete at their present age and/or maturity level, others need more time, while a few may never prosper from the competitive experience.

Olympia Gymnastics will always be dedicated to producing some of the nation's top athletes in the sport of gymnastics. This does not mean that every child on our competitive team must have a burning desire to be an Olympian. Quite the opposite, in fact. The staff at Olympia Gymnastics will treat each athlete's goals and aspirations individually. Some kids haven't any desire to train at an elite pace, nor should they have to.

Workout structure, training time loads, and intensity can all be altered and adjusted to meet each child's needs. This is not to say that the staff at Olympia Gymnastics will accept mediocrity in the training. We will always run a structured, disciplined program as it is our belief that gymnastics is too costly and far too dangerous to have training be nothing more than glorified baby-sitting sessions. Our staff will demand respect and a strong work ethic from our athletes. We will not, however, participate in humiliating or ridiculing a child in order to get our goals accomplished.

Another fundamental belief is that we want Olympia Gymnastics to be as family- oriented as possible. The coach, athlete, parent cooperation/communication triangle is essential in the development of the total child/athlete. Parent/athlete concerns will be viewed by our staff as a way of gaining insight as to how to better us as coaches.

### **The Olympia Philosophy on Competition**

Olympia has always set a high priority on rewarding the effort and accomplishments of our gymnasts by providing them with an opportunity to participate in great competitions in exciting places. The traveling that we provide is a reward for their efforts, a motivation for continued excellence, and an opportunity to expand their knowledge and understanding of the world as a complement to the training they receive in gymnastics.

Let's be honest, fewer than 1 in 2,000 gymnasts will ever make a national team and represent the USA in national and international competition. If we wait for a call from USA Gymnastics (USAG) to invite any of us to go to Europe for a competition, we might be waiting a long time and then it will involve only one gymnast.

Our goal is to have every gymnast on our team (level 4-10) attend at least one super competition each season. We can't win them all or even contend in many of them, but the experience is good for the gymnasts. They get to see what it takes to compete at such a meet and that, in turn, motivates them to work harder in the gym. It also gives them experience in handling themselves in high-pressure situations and prepares them for regional and national USAG competitions.

This commitment to travel and exploration will continue to be an important component of the competitive and educational experience at Olympia. We know that the vast majority of our families applaud these efforts and appreciate the fact that the coaches at the gym are willing to take time away from their own families to plan and conduct these trips.

### **Eligibility for Competition and Travel**

1. Gymnasts must be current on all OGA and OGBC obligations. Failure to be current on your financial obligations will result in your child being suspended from competitions.
2. Attendance — excessive missed practices can mean missed competitive opportunities.
3. A positive attitude toward the coaching staff and training is important. The gymnasts must be emotionally ready to compete.

### **Rules and Policies for Competition**

1. All athletes must be registered with USAG. The gym will register all athletes in the fall.
2. Arrive at the competition venue 15 minutes before the open warm-up is scheduled to begin.
3. Find his coach or teammates as soon as he arrives.
4. Remain in the area designed for the gymnasts as either competitors or observers throughout the competition. Obey all warm-up regulations and procedures.
5. Present himself in proper competition attire.
6. Accept his place in the line-up and the scores he receives with dignity and without comment and

criticism. There is no place for crying and uncontrolled emotions during a gymnastic meet. You cannot control the scores you get, nor can you control the performances of any other gymnast. You can only control what you do. If you do well and receive a disappointing score, ask your coach about it when the meet is over. If you make a mistake and are disappointed in your performances, do not make matters worse by giving in to your emotions and ruining your chances for good performances on upcoming events. Remember too that you are part of a team. The team needs you to be in control and ready to perform. Your teammates do not need you bringing the spirit of the entire team down with your wailing and whimpering. The gymnasts should not keep track of their event scores, all around scores, or placement during the competition. Parents and coaches will keep track of those things. You will have plenty of time to review them later. Your concentration should center on your performance and on the performance of your team.

7. Be prepared to assist the coach with the boards, mats, bar settings, and so on during the meet.
8. Be courteous, respectful, and polite to all meet officials, hosts and hostesses, competitors, and coaches. The only time you should approach a meet official is to thank him for hosting or judging the meet.
9. Remain seated at all times when not performing. Keep all belongings in your competition bag.
10. Stay with the team until the competition is over and the coach has released you. Once a gymnast has entered the competition area, there should be no contact between the gymnast and his parents unless there is an emergency.
13. Stay for awards dressed in your Olympia warm-ups. Most meets have a formal system for presenting awards. As a participating athlete, you have an obligation to stay for all the awards and to accept any presented to you with courtesy and gratitude. It is customary to accept awards with a firm handshake and a warm smile. Congratulate and shake hands with the other athletes as well. Remember that you are not just representing yourself. You are also acting as a representative of Olympia Gymnastics.

### **Rules and Policies for Parents**

It is the philosophy of Olympia Gymnastics that the coaches, the gym, the parents, and the gymnasts are all part of the team. We encourage all of our parents to attend every competition. Having a strong cheering section does wonders for team motivation, and it is something that we can be proud of. But, as parents, you should be aware that as a member of the Olympia Team you too represent Olympia Gymnastics. With that in mind, a few guidelines for parents during competition seems in order.

1. Cheer loud and often, but do so in a courteous manner. Obnoxious *yelling* is for the other teams, not for us.
2. Cheer for all members of the Olympia team and feel free to cheer for fine performances turned in by gymnasts of other teams. In a very real way we are competing with them, not against them. If you allow yourself, you will become friendly with the parents of the gymnasts of other teams you see several times each season. Please show respect for all the competitors; you never know whose mother is sitting near you.
3. Promote Olympia in every way you feel is appropriate: t-shirts, sweatshirts, banners, and cheers: but never speak in a negative way about another club, coach, gymnast, or judge in the process.
4. Under USAG rules, the only adults allowed in the competitive area are judges, those helping to run the competition, and USAG professional members.
5. Under no circumstances is a parent or gymnast ever to approach a judge or meet official before, during, or after competition to comment on, complain about, or even ask about a score.
6. Please do not contact or talk to your gymnasts once they are on the competitive floor. We ask them to focus all their energy on the competition and we want as few distractions as possible. After the meet is over and we are finished with our team meeting, they will come to see you.
7. Parents are always encouraged to attend every competition. However, there may be times when

you will be unable to attend. If you are not going to attend the competition, please take care to cover the following details.

- A. Know the name and phone number of the facility in which the competition is being held.
- B. Communicate clearly with your child who is taking him and picking him up.
- C. Provide your child with an emergency number to use in case he needs to call home and you are not there.
- D. please remember that meets always run early or late, so plan on allowing that time for him to arrive home.
- E. Send enough money with him to cover meals, snacks, and to contribute for gas if appropriate.

8. In many cases, we register every gymnast for every competition. If you find that you are unable to participate in any competition (including in house meets) please let your child's coach know, by filling out the meet withdraw form (printable from our web site) and putting it in their mailbox, **as soon as you know of the schedule conflict**. We often send in meet entries and entry fees months in advance. It is sometimes possible to get a refund for gymnasts who cannot participate, but the chances of that happening are greatest if we can give the competition host enough notice of the opening for them to replace the missing gymnast.

9. In case of injury during warm-up or competition, please wait for your coach to give some indication that you should come on to the competition floor. In most cases, you will not be invited onto the floor, because the injury is relatively minor and the coach *will* take care of it. Your son will continue the competition, and he will need to maintain his focus. In cases of more serious injury where the gymnast may be finished for the day, then it would be appropriate for you to contact your son after he has been moved away from the competitive area for treatment. If the injury should be serious enough to require any emergency medical attention, then your presence will certainly be needed and you should be close at hand. In some cases where the gymnast is very young or new to the sport, the coach may give you the thumbs up to come on the competitive floor even if the injury is a minor one.

## Part Five: Time and Financial Obligations

### **Gymnastics is a Bargain**

Your child's involvement in gymnastics will cost you money, time, and effort. The children train in a large and well-equipped gym under the direction of an educated, experienced, and professional staff. The overhead incurred in running a large gymnastics club includes rent, utilities, insurance, taxes, debt services, and supplies in addition to wages and equipment. It is impossible and unreasonable to think that this facility and the staff who trains the gymnasts can operate without adequate funding.

At Olympia Gymnastics, we believe that the training, educational opportunities, and emotional support that we offer our students is valuable and important. The coaches spend an enormous amount of time planning, training, traveling, and supporting the gymnasts in addition to the time they spend actively coaching.

Further, the coaches meet with parents and gymnasts, return phone calls, set up competitions, work to maintain and improve the facility, and organize and administer the competition program.

This may all be a labor of love, but it is still labor. Indeed, the coaches spend more time working on the development of the competitive team than on any other program in the gym. Given the extraordinary amount of time and effort the coaches put into the competitive program, it makes no sense to suggest that they do all this work only to lose money every time the competitive gymnasts hit the floor.

Therefore, it is the express policy of Olympia Gymnastics to operate the competitive team program at a profit.

### ***Team Tuition Rates for 2017-2018***

<u>Level</u>	<u>#Hrs per Week</u>	<u>Tuition</u>
Stepping-U	4	\$175/mo
Groups F	6	\$200/mo
Groups D and E	12	\$275/mo
Groups A, B, and C	16	\$325/mo
Specialists	9	\$245/mo

#### Notes about Tuition:

1. The decision to join the Olympia Team is a big one and reflects a commitment to the team for an entire year. Team members do not move on and off the team based on illness, injury, conflicts, or the like. You are either on the team or not. Team tuition would be higher if we determined tuition based on the likelihood that some team members might not be able to attend for various reasons. Computing a high number of gymnast hours in the gym lowers the cost to everyone. That is why there are no discounts for missed practices.
2. **The tuition is based on 48 weeks per year. There are 4 weeks of the year that you are not paying for. Olympia Gymnastics gives the following holidays and holiday weekends to our full-time and salaried staff: Christmas, New Years Day, Labor Day Weekend, Memorial Day Weekend, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. The gym will be closed on these days and there will be no make-ups for these days because you have not paid for them.**

-Olympia Gymnastics will not offer regular team practice the week of Independence Day. This is an opportunity for our staff to have a much-needed vacation. We recommend planning your family vacations during this time whenever possible.

-Several levels on our competitive team may have practice cancelled due to competition. There are 2-3 weekends during the competition season where almost all of the coaching staff is required to travel to a meet. When this occurs, practice may be cancelled for the levels that are not traveling. We may also have to close due to weather from time to time.

-This leaves 7-10 days per year when the gym will be open and offering team practice that you have not paid for. We offer this extra practice time at no charge, but we realize that most families take a vacation each year. Please take your vacation without worrying about missing practice time that you have paid for. You have not paid for the week to ten days that you will be missing.

3. Injured gymnasts are expected to participate in practice and gym activities to any extent possible. It is often possible to work around injuries and to turn a difficult time into something positive by increased work on flexibility, strength, specific events, or specific skills. There is no reduction in tuition until the total time missed exceeds one month, and then only if the gymnast cannot participate in workouts in any way. At that time, the tuition may be adjusted depending on the circumstances. Any gymnast who is out for one month or more and requests a tuition reduction must present a return to activity release signed by their doctor and pass a strength and flexibility test.

4. Any past due balance may suspend your child's participation in any competitions or special gym activities. Any unpaid balance that is overdue may terminate your child's participation in any gym



practice, function, or competition. Failure to stay current on tuition and OGBC dues may also result in your athlete not receiving uniform apparel.

5. Returned checks are charged at \$15.00.

6. Families with more than one team member will receive a 10% discount on the second student. Discount will apply to lower monthly rate.

7. You must pay your tuition by either check or cash. **No credit card payments will be accepted. Payments may be made in person or placed in the black Olympia (not booster club) drop box in the Pro Shop. If placing tuition in the drop box, you must use the provided envelopes. Tuition Payments can not be sent by mail.**

8. A bill will not be issued unless your tuition is past due. OGA past due notices are placed in the athlete's mailbox and are not sent by email. **There is a \$10.00 late fee added to your account if payment is made after the 9<sup>th</sup>.**

9. **Departure Policy** If for some reason your family or child decides that you would no longer be a part of the Olympia team program, a 30-day written notification is required. Thirty days following your notification, your account will be removed from our team billing file. Failure to do so will result in a fee equal to your monthly tuition. A written notice must be given to a staff member of Olympia Gymnastics and Olympia Gymnastics Booster Club.

### Uniforms and Apparel

Two sets of uniform apparel will be required for participation on the competitive team, a practice uniform and a competition uniform.

The practice uniform (practice leotard, practice shorts, and an athletic supporter with a protective cup) will be used on designated days during the athletes' practice schedule.

For all competitive levels, the gymnasts will wear a competition uniform for the meets (competition leotard, competition shorts, competition pants, competition socks, and an athletic supporter with a protective cup). All of the gymnasts will be dressed the same for all competitions. They will wear a warm-up suit for march-in and as needed during the competition. The gymnasts are required to stay in their warm-ups for awards.

### Grips and Tape

Dowel grips for the horizontal bar and still rings are primarily used for gripping on large swinging movements. Therefore, dowel grips will only be used for levels 6-10. We realize that in levels 4 and 5, your gymnast will experience "rips". Grips do not prevent rips. They do help to minimize rips. However, a gymnast's hands must also be toughened so that rips will be less frequent in the future. When it is time for a gymnast to get grips, we will let you know.

All gymnasts must provide their own tape and pre-wrap. We sell both at the gym in the pro-shop.

### Private Lessons

It is the opinion of the competitive coaches that all gymnasts will receive the instruction they need during regular practice times, and private lessons are not needed. Occasionally it may be beneficial for a gymnast to have a private lesson if they are struggling with a particular skill or event and need extra coaching that is

not available during a practice session.

The fee for private lessons is:

\$25 per ½ hour for 1 student

\$30 per ½ hour for 2 students

-The fee must be paid prior to the private lesson, and you need to check in at the front desk.

-At all times, the regularly scheduled classes and events in the gym take priority over any private lesson.

The private lesson must work around and all normally scheduled gym activities.

-All team members taking private lessons must be current on their tuition and Booster obligations.

### **Olympia Gymnastics Booster Club**

All parents of Olympia Gymnastics team members must join this organization.

The Boosters organization is a nonprofit group which supports the efforts of the gymnasts, coaches, and the team program at Olympia Gymnastics. The booster club assist the funding of coaches' and gymnasts' travel expenses, competition entry fees, USAG fees, and other expenses (ex: All-Team party & Awards Banquet)

Participation in high-level gymnastics is an expensive proposition. Many of our gymnasts would not, and could not, participate at the higher levels without the support of the Boosters. After spending years of work to attain a high standing in the sport, we do not want our gymnasts to have to drop out because they cannot afford it. The Boosters makes it possible for all of our gymnasts to go as far as their talent and hard work will take them.

General Booster Obligations: The members of Boosters decide what they will and will not do. Because you are a member, you get a vote. You will need to plan on participating at the following level (this is a minimum participation):

\* Booster Club board meetings are held monthly. Attendance at these meetings is not mandatory, but very informative.

\* Every year Olympia hosts at least one competition. The competition is the biggest fundraiser the Boosters conduct each year. **Level 4— 10 families must help work at the event** (both boys & girls team members). *Volunteers from Preteam would be greatly appreciated.*

\* Levels 4— 10 are OGA's travel team. Booster club dues are paid in three installments per competitive season (September — June). You may choose to fundraise all or some of your dues.

\* Preteam is OGA's in house team. The students will be involved in several meets at the gym throughout the season. Olympia Preteam uniforms will be provided for the competitions. Booster club dues are paid in three installments per competitive season (September – June). You may choose to fundraise all or some of your dues.