
NORTHSTAR GYMNASTICS TEAM HANDBOOK

2019-2020



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Introduction:

We are excited to have you and your gymnast be a part of the NorthStar Gymnastics community! Here at NorthStar we strive to develop well-rounded gymnasts into the best they can be. Through their hard work, dedication and love for the sport we look forward to guiding them in the right direction. To us it is important to keep everyone as well informed as possible. This handbook is used as a tool to help display our rules and policies for the NorthStar Gymnastics Team.

Yearly Break Down:

Gymnastics is a year-round sport and at every point in the year it is vital that involvement and participation remains at a steady level. Here is a typical yearly break down:

May-August: Gymnasts will begin working on skills needed for the upcoming season as well as upgrade their skills from the previous season. This is a time to learn new skills, continue building on basics and progress strength through conditioning.

Late July-August: Coaches will begin to decide what level the gymnasts will be competing in the next competitive season. After levels are decided, we will begin choreographing floor and beam routines.

Late August-October: After a gymnast has been given a routine, it is very important that they are practicing it every time they are at practice. During this time in the season, gymnasts will begin mainly focusing on their routines and the skills in their routines in preparation for the upcoming competitive season.

November-May: Meet season. The duration of the meet season depends and the qualifications met at state meet. If a gymnast meets the qualifying score at State Meet, she will have the opportunity to advance to Regionals and/or Nationals. State Meet is typically held around late March-early April.

Uniform:

Our uniform consists of a warm-up (pants and jacket), competitive leotard, and a backpack for the gymnasts to bring to practice/meets with whatever they may need. Every part of their uniform may only be worn to practice (backpacks only) and meets.

1. Warm-ups- New warm up leggings and jacket will be ordered every other season. If you are new to team on the second year of warm-ups, you will need to buy the warm-ups for the upcoming season, as well as the new warm-ups for the next season. If you are not new to team on the second year of warm-ups, you will not need to purchase new warm-ups unless they are outgrown, or you choose to do so.

2. Leotards- New, customized leotards will be ordered every season. We bring in sizers during the summer to make sure we are ordering the gymnasts the right sizes.

3. Backpacks- New backpacks are ordered every three years. You may get a new backpack before the third year is up if choose to do so.

USAG:

A USAG membership is required for every competitive gymnast in order for them to compete at meets. Before we are able to register them for meets, they must have a USAG membership. A renewal email will be sent out every year to those who already have a USAG membership. If you do not already have a membership, you can sign up for one at usagym.org, or an email will get sent out to you as well with a link to sign up. If the girls are competing silver, they will be able to get an introductory athlete membership. However, every other level will have to obtain an athlete membership. Every level must have a picture or copy of their card so that their USAG number is readily available.

Missing Scheduled Practice Time:

There are going to be times when your gymnast will miss practice times due to: illness, family emergencies, school time functions, family time, etc.. You will be allowed to make up 3 practices per month. You will have the month you missed the practice's in and the following month to make those practice times. After that time the make - ups are considered to be expired. Example: If your gymnast misses 2 practice times in September, you have the month of September and October to make those practice times up.

VERY IMPORTANT: 1. You cannot use singular practice times missed as a deduction to team tuition. 2. You cannot group singular practice times in a month and consider them under the team weekly discount request form.

Extended Illness or Injury Time Missed: This will be determined by the ownership of Northstar Gymnastics on a case by case basis. We will make every attempt to be as fair as possible when these situations arise.

Make-up Policy:

How to use make-ups- In order for your gymnast to attend a practice for a make-up you MUST notify a coach via email, text or in person at least one full day before the intended make-up practice. If this doesn't happen, we may not have the appropriate amount of space for your gymnast. This will also result in not being able participate in future make-ups. Coach to gymnast ratio plays a vital role in the gymnasts getting the best quality practice, so it is not always guaranteed that we will be able to get you into your first choice make-up day. Open gym is also option for using a make-up.

Make-ups during the season- It is highly recommended that gymnasts make up in practices that are their same level. This is important due to the skills being trained at each level and the different equipment required for each skill. Please make an effort to make-up at a practice that is the gymnast's same level. If this is a scheduling issue and won't work, we will try to get you into a different practice.

Canceled Practices- Due to meets and inclement weather we may occasionally have to cancel practices. When practices are canceled due to meets, we will try our best to schedule a make-up day for the gymnasts to attend. If this doesn't happen, then the practice is just canceled and there will be no make-up day, even if the gymnast isn't attending the meet. When practice is canceled due to weather, we will not have a make-up practice. Our team tuition amount accounts for these types of situations.

Practice Schedule:

Our yearly practice schedule consists of two parts, school schedule and summer schedule. The school practice schedule begins when most of the girls go back to school. Sometimes, with different school districts starting at different times, there could be a week overlap between the summer and the school year. Whenever the practices are scheduled to change we will give about a three week notice of when the new practice times will be. It is important that your gymnast is attending their practice time that is given. If after the schedule comes out, and there are legitimate time conflicts with your schedule, please let us know and we will do what we can to try to make it work for you. Our goal at practice is to teach the gymnasts how to be as efficient as possible and accomplish what they need while they are at an event. So, we ask that when practice is done, the girls are off the floor, and not doing any extra skills unless approved by a coach and parent.

Payments:

Tuition Payments: Tuition payments are always due on the first weekday of the month. After the 5th day of the month, unless other arrangements have been made with the front desk, if tuition has not been paid, it is considered late. After tuition has not been paid for the month and is late, you cannot sign your gymnast up for any make-ups, use any make-ups or attend scheduled practice time.

Tuition Discounts: Team tuition discounts are only given if a Team Discount Form is filled out and approved by the front desk. A Team Discount Form may only be filled out if you are planning on taking a consecutive week off. You may only use these forms for up to two weeks throughout the month and they must be filled out before the monthly tuition is paid.

Meet Payments: Meet payments need to be made by the due date. No late meet payments will be accepted. If tuition is not up to date, you will not be able to sign up for any non-required meets until tuition is paid.

Team Payments: Any payment for team other than tuition needs to be in cash or check. Checks made out to NorthStar Gymnastics Team.

Spirit Fund: Every year we have a spirit fund due at the beginning of the season. This helps cover our sleepovers (at least 3 a year), team parties and spirit gifts the girls get throughout the season. Team sleepovers are for active team members only. Any visitors to the sleepovers must be approved by all coaches.

Fundraising:

There will be 2-3 fundraising opportunities throughout the season. These are optional and can be used on anything except tuition. This money will stay in the Team Account under your name until it is used.

Athlete Expectations:

- When gymnasts arrive at the gym it is expected that they are getting ready for practice and that they are on the floor when practice starts. If an athlete is running late it is also expected that they do whatever parts of warm-up they might have missed.
- Gymnasts are expected to stay on the floor during the entirety of practice unless they are switching events, where they are allowed a three-minute passing time to get to their next rotation. If they need more time for the restroom or anything else that may be more than three minutes, they must go to their next event and get permission first. Not following this rule will lead to a gymnast missing their next event.
- We will always treat the girls with the utmost respect, so it is expected that the girls are always treating their coaches, other staff, teammates and equipment with the same respect.
- To be the most productive at practice it is essential that the girls are always giving coaches their full attention, best effort and all-around participation.
- Attendance to practice plays a very important role in gymnasts' success. You should arrive on time and stay for the entire duration of practice, unless otherwise arranged. Make your best effort to make it to all scheduled practice, required meets, and team events
- Gymnasts are responsible for following all directions given by coaches. Any non-reasonable excuse for not following coaches' directions could result in sitting for an event, or in extreme cases, sitting for the rest of practice and calling home.
- Communicate with your coach if you are not mentally or physically feeling well. Gymnastics is a very mentally and physically demanding sport and if this is not communicated there is risk for injury.
- Gymnasts must be appropriately dressed for practice. During warm-up they will be allowed to wear t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. over their leos, but after warming up it needs to only be a leo and shorts, or tight-fitting pants or leggings. If you don't own a leo, it is required to wear tight fitting active wear. Hair should be up right when practice starts and remain up for the duration of practice. The last two weeks before a meet shorts or pants will not be allowed to be worn over leos at practice.

Meet Etiquette

Arriving to a Meet: It will always be posted on the Shutterfly website when the girls warm-up time starts. We require that the girls arrive 20 minutes prior to the start time to ensure everyone is there and ready to go. A coach will either come get all of the girls or we will let them know when it is ok to come out onto the floor. Please don't send the girls out on the floor if the coaches are not with any of the girls or have not let anyone know it was time to come out.

What to Wear: Before the girls come onto the floor they should be fully dressed in their leotards and warm-ups with their bag. They should also have their hair competition ready, meaning it should be up, out of their face and done so that they won't have to mess with it during the meets. Hair also needs to be secure. You are able to use bobby pins or clips, but it is a deduction if anything falls out of the girl's hair during a routine. The gymnasts will not be allowed to leave the competition floor until after the meet is completed, so they need to make sure they have everything they need in their bag for the duration of the meet.

What to Bring in Your Bag: The bags that the gymnasts receive should only be used for meets and practice. To a meet, the girls should pack everything they may need for the entire duration of the competition. This may include: grips, water bottle, hair ties, hair spray, bobby pins, a small snack, sandals (for when the meets are on turf, or for awards), nail polish remover, etc.

Gymnast Behavior and Sportsmanship: An incredible amount of time and energy goes into every individual routine that the gymnasts perform, so meets are an exciting time for the parents, gymnasts and coaches. To make this the best experience for the girls, it is expected that they are always treating themselves, teammates and every other gymnast, coach, and meet official with respect. This means they are always being encouraging and supportive of themselves and each other. Here at NorthStar we take pride in good sportsmanship by cheering on and encouraging everyone, regardless of the team. Not every meet will have the most ideal outcome for every gymnast, when things don't turn out as planned it is unacceptable to act in a way that misrepresents our team. It is important that we teach the gymnasts that making mistakes is ok. So, when a result of any part of the meet is not what they wanted or expected we ask that they do not cry, act in a disrespectful manner, have a negative attitude or throw fits. This will absolutely not be tolerated and could result in not participating in the rest of the meet or awards.

Skills Competed at a Meet: Every skill that is going to be competed at the meet needs to be performed at practice consistently. If a gymnast is having a hard time with a certain skill before an upcoming meet, it may be decided that she will compete an alternate skill. This will be decided two weeks prior to a meet to ensure that the correct skills are getting practiced, the gymnast is prepared for all routines and she is safely doing the skill on her own.

Parent Expectations:

- On the NorthStar Gymnastics Team we primarily use the Shutterfly website and email for communication. If there are ever any issues with practice, meets, etc. it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to voice their concerns with the staff and we will do our best to resolve them.
- It is NEVER appropriate to contact any meet directors, judges or meet officials. The only people you should be in contact with about anything concerning the gym or any gymnastics function are the coaches and other staff members at NorthStar.
- During meets it is important to the coaches that we are able to keep the girls focused and ready to compete. We try to keep the numerous amounts of distractions at the meet to a minimum. We ask that the parents help with this too by making sure after your gymnast enters the floor, that they are only in contact with the other athletes and coaches on the floor until after the meet is completed.
- Parents/guardians play a very dynamic role in the athlete's gymnastics journey. It sometimes may be difficult as a parent to gage everything that is happening with your gymnast during practice. If there are ever any specific problems your gymnast is having with a certain skill, event or routine we ask that you come to the coaches first to let us try to figure it out with your gymnast. When the gymnasts feel stressed at the gym about a skill, event, etc. and pressure gets added at home it can delay the issue getting resolved.
- Please do not try to coach your child. We get into a lot of technical details about their events, skills and routines. When the gymnasts hear contradicting information from at home it can create conflict between the gymnasts and their coach.
- Be your child's biggest supporter! They need all the support they can get whether they are on top of the world or feeling like giving up. The sport of gymnastics is extremely demanding and can often leave them feeling defeated. Seeing gymnasts like that is upsetting for everyone and as parents it is so important that you are letting them know that they are loved no matter what, and all they can do is give their best effort and keep trying!
- Make your best effort to have your gymnast attend all scheduled practices, arrive on time and ready to practice. Always feel free to communicate with coaches or other staff if there is something not working out and we will do our best to figure it out.

Level Advancements:

The Xcel levels are silver, gold, platinum and diamond. Every new addition to our team will compete silver, unless they have already competed at a higher level prior to NorthStar. It is always up to the coaches to decide what level each gymnast will be competing. While it is unquestionable that the girls need to have all of the required skills before moving up, this is not the only deciding factor. The girls always need to be working hard at practice, doing what they're asked without question, and being respectful to all coaches and teammates. We also require that for the gymnast to move up levels, the gymnast must receive a qualifying regional score at State Meet. Towards the end of every summer, parents will be notified on what level their gymnast will ideally be competing for the

next season. While these may not be official, after they receive their routines for the upcoming season, they will be competing the level that their routine was made for.

These are the required skills for every level:

****All skills listed must be preformed consistently, without a coach every time and correct form.****

| | Silver | Gold | Platinum | Diamond |
|-------|--|--|--|---|
| Vault | Front handspring over mat stack, landing on feet. | Front handspring over vault table with springboard, landing on feet and with correct shape. | Half on, half off on vault table with correct shape and landing on feet. | Either a tsuk landing on feet, or a yurchanko full. |
| Bars | Glide swing, pullover, cast, back hip circle and cast straddle dismount. | Pullover (feet together), cast at horizontal, back hip circle, squat on, jump to high bar, tap swings and dismount. | Pullover, cast above horizontal, clear hip (open to at least 55° from handstand), kip, squat on, jump to high bar, tap swings, and flyaway. | Kip, cast 45° from handstand, clear hip, squat on, long hang kip, high bar clear hip, and then one of the following: handstand pirouette, a release or a gaint. |
| Beam | Handstand to at least 45°, split jump or leap, and passé half turn. | Close to vertical handstand, back walkover or cartwheel, split jump or leap and another jump of choice, and passé full turn. | Vertical handstand, either a flight acro or acro connection, split jump or leap to at least 120° connected to a jump of choice, and passé full turn. | Acro/flight series (back walkover back handspring or cartwheel round-off), 2 nd acro either handstand, cartwheel or back walkover, spilt jump or leap to 150° connected to a jump, passé full turn, and either a back half dismount or straight body layout. |

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|-------|--|--|---|---|
| Floor | Round-off back handspring, running round-off, leap pass, and passé full turn | Round-off back handspring back tuck, front tuck, leap pass, and passé full turn. | Round-off back handspring layout, front pike, leap to at least 150°, and passé full turn. | Round-off back handspring full and front handspring front tuck or front layout, leap to at least 180°, full turn with straight leg. |
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****Skills that are competed at meets are always at the coach’s discretion due to safety reasons and might not always follow the chart.****

Communication:

Communication is very important to us and should always be a priority when anyone feels there is an issue. It is the parent’s responsibility to ask for clarity or assistance when needed. Listed below is the contact information of the only people who should be contacted with any concerns throughout the season.

Head Coach: Patrick MacDougall
 Email: ngcoachpatrick@yahoo.com
 Phone: (cell) 616-581-7984

Front Desk: Emily Lombard
 Email: ngoffice94@yahoo.com
 Phone: (gym phone) 616-866-8731

Gym Owner: Tim Chesla
 Email: tim@northstargym.net