

Welcome To Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center!



2021 – 2022 Team Handbook

“Thank You for joining our programs”

Torey, Sharon, TJ & Forever Jacquie Hirsch,
Kristen Fahnestock - Owners

The Hirsch Family of Companies:



Hirsch Real Estate Properties

Welcome!

We are excited to have you as a member of our program!

This year our facility celebrates its 29th anniversary. Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center is part of one of the most comprehensive health, physical fitness, and childcare development centers in all of New York State. Our 4-acre campus is home to:

- Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center
- TJ Hirsch Enterprises, Inc.
 - Auto Storage, Detailing, Vehicle Appraisals, Sales & Consulting
- The Jacquie Hirsch For A.L.L. Foundation
 - Cancer & Leukemia Awareness, Research, Fundraising Events & Patient Support
- Four Seasons Child Care & Preschool
- Spezio's Dance Dynamics



Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center provides state-of-the-art training, teaching, coaching, mentoring, and character development for children of all ages. Each of our programs are designed to meet and exceed specific physical and emotional conditioning expectations for the diversity of our participants. The results of our work can be measured and seen by increased confidence, interpersonal skills, motor skills, and focus while preparing children for a bright, happy, and successful future.

In summary: We will help our students to accept individual differences in skill levels and success rates as they progress. Our promise is that we will do everything in our power to provide priceless child growth and development opportunities second to none.

Revised 05/17/2022

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This content is subject to change without notice. Yet, when updated, it will be posted directly to our website for you to review @ www.greaterbuffalogymnastics.com.

"Introduction"

Welcome

Our philosophy at Greater Buffalo Gymnastics & Fitness Center focuses on the education of children - our most vital resource for the future. We believe that young people can learn to develop coordination, motor skills, and body control, as well as the more important mental qualities: self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-awareness through physical activity. Motivation, problem solving, and patience are qualities that are emphasized at our center. Most importantly, young people will learn to develop respect for themselves and others. Our coaching staff reflects this philosophy of teaching and uses a positive approach to place the emphasis on the individual.

Here at Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center proper staff selection and development is the key to ensuring that a high-quality activity, such as gymnastics, creates a positive learning experience.

- Our trained staff will use the sport of gymnastics as an avenue to develop positive personal qualities.
- These qualities, nurtured at an early age, will be utilized in all areas of the individual's future.
- Whether a recreational or a competitive gymnast, we are confident that our staff will be able to help each child reach their potential, have FUN while doing so, and enjoy all aspects of our program.

Mission

We are here to leave a lifelong, positive, lasting impression of a time where children and young adults spend their youthful years growing, learning, finding their path, and feeling prepared to go out into the world, define what success means to them, and make it their own.

Competitive Gymnastics...What Does It Mean?

The decision to be a competitive athlete is an important and exciting step in the life of you and your child! Congratulations to both of you for selecting the world's greatest sport! We now suggest that you read over the following information and carefully consider the material that pertains to our boys & girls competitive gymnastics teams. We believe gymnastics greatly enhances body conditioning, self-confidence, and positive self-esteem. Competitive gymnastics is also a unique sport that requires the backing and support of the entire family for any gymnast to be successful.

Competitive Team Philosophy

The Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Centers' Competitive Team consist of USA Gymnastics (USAG) Men's & Women's Pre-Team, Levels 3-10, and Xcel Program.

- a. Our goal for competitive athletes is to help them go as far in gymnastics as their ability and desire will take them.
- b. Our team coaches will place gymnasts at the most appropriate level where they can be happy, safe, competitive, and confident.
- c. This means 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/her ability level.
- d. We will never ask or expect our athletes to perform skills or routines in a competition which he/she cannot perform consistently and safely in practice.

Selection for Team

Again, Congratulations! You are one of the select few invited to train with us as we move through the rankings of the elite gymnastics world and represent Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center locally, regionally, nationally, and at times, internationally!

- a. The initial placement and subsequent advancement from one team level to the next or from a recreational class to our team is determined by our trained and qualified coaching staff. Where possible, objective measures of learning potential will be used, however, subjective predictors such as courage, commitment, desire, "coachability", and integrity are also considered.
- b. A tryout, either individually or in a group, will be offered in order to assess the gymnasts' placement, readiness for training, parental support, and compatibility with the team.
- c. After the initial placement, the gymnast will be on a one-month trial period on the team to ensure proper placement and readiness within the competitive program.
- d. Keep in mind that team participation is by invitation only. Remaining on the team is a privilege. Occasionally, the best fit for the athlete is a more suitable placement in our recreational program. So, work hard, have fun, and believe in yourself!

Moving from Level to Level

Moving up from one level to the next is decided by the coaches based upon attendance at workouts, skill level, attitude, and (if applicable) any score achievement requirements set forth by USA Gymnastics. This decision will be made in the best interest of the athlete, not on parent recommendations or a friend's mobility.

Description of USA Gymnastics Development Program Levels

Our competitive gymnastics program is divided into these major segments:

- a. The women's Pre-Team may be used as a non-competitive and achievement-oriented program with the goal of obtaining all skills necessary to begin competing at Level 3 or as an Xcel Bronze.
- b. The second part consists of Compulsory Levels women's levels 3-5 and men's levels 3-6. These levels are progressive in nature, building upon the skills required at previous levels. Competitive opportunities are provided up to and including the USA Gymnastics State Championships.
- c. The third segment is Optional Levels women's 6-10 and men's 7-10. Competitive opportunities may include local, state, regional, and national championships.
- d. The men's and women's Xcel Program is designed to offer a broad-based, competitive experience outside the traditional USA Gymnastics Development

Program to attract and retain a diverse group of athletes. It allows the athletes more flexibility to balance school, gymnastics, and other activities while still progressing through the sport. It offers more choices in skill requirements and a less intense practice schedule while still maintaining the designation as a competitive gymnast.

Please note: Categorization of athletes into "women" and "men" reflect USAG guidelines for gymnastics categories that are broken up into "female" and "male". We recognize that not every child fits into the gender binary. All athletes are welcome to participate in the category that they feel best fits their gender identity. Greater Buffalo supports children of all gender identities.

"Need to Knows" 😊

RULES & POLICIES DESIGNED TO:

- A) Keep you and your child(ren) safe.
- B) Keep the flow of children between classes efficient and safe.

Communication

Our main form of communication is through email. Please make sure your address(es) is on file and current with us. Watch for messages, read all emails carefully, and check out updates at www.greaterbuffalogymnastics.com as well as the Customer Portal. We look forward to keeping you up to date and well informed.

The Team App: Once you have joined the team you will be invited to join us on the Team App. This is used primarily by coaches to communicate with parents in regard to non-urgent messages and information regarding nutrition, mental toughness boards, and other progress updates. Please make sure to keep your notifications on.

Meeting with a Team Coach: If you are interested in meeting with your child's coach(es) please call Client Services to setup an appointment. Our staff is happy to discuss your child's progress with you and would like to make sure time is set aside to do so versus between classes, during team workouts, and other times when they are required to be on the floor.

Conferences may be scheduled with a team member and his/her parents at any time to discuss the gymnast's progress, evaluation, and goals. The gym will also schedule interim conferences if problems/situations arise that affect the gymnast.

Time Management

Our Team Program workouts are very prompt:

- a. Please arrive 5 minutes early to be greeted by Client Services.
- b. Pick your child up promptly when workout is dismissed.
- c. Traffic jam, running late at work, car broke down? Things happen. No Problem. If you will be late picking up your child, just call us at (716) 639-0020. After hours, please use the Team App to message the coach.

Homework and study time will become much more efficient and better habits will develop due to shorter periods of time being available. It has been the experience of most coaches that students who are involved in our Team Program tend to have good grades and are better at studying because they have learned to budget their time more effectively than their peers. Time management skills will become a necessity in all areas of your child's life.

Each gymnast is required to attend all regularly scheduled workouts. **Be on time to all workouts.** If you are early then you are on time. If you are on time, then you are late.

If for some reason your child will be late or absent, have him/her call the office before the start of workout. You can also submit any future absences through the Customer Portal within 24 hours' notice. Being responsible can never start too soon.

- a. All team members must attend the dates and times designated for his/her level.
- b. At the lower team levels, the number of hours of practice per week is relatively small. As your child progresses up the competitive ladder, the hours and days of workout will continue to grow.
- c. Team members may not switch days and times or come for less than the required number of days or hours per week. This is due to staff scheduling, the number of team members already in the gym at that time, and the skill levels of our athletes.

Practice Attire

WHAT DOES MY DAUGHTER WEAR?

- a. Girls should wear a properly fitting leotard and leo shorts. No shirts and no bare midriffs are allowed.
- b. Hair should be appropriately tied back, in a bun or braids, secured for the duration of the workout. For the courtesy of all coaches and other athletes, proper hygiene is a must.
- c. You will be notified when your gymnast requires extra equipment such as grips. Grips are not required or recommended for any levels before a gymnast reaches Level 4 or Xcel Silver.

WHAT DOES MY SON WEAR?

- a. Boys should wear athletic shorts finishing above the knee with a drawstring and a t-shirt that can be tucked in, with cotton socks.
- b. Hair should be appropriately tied back, in a bun or braids, secured for the duration of the workout, if applicable. For the courtesy of all coaches and other athletes, proper hygiene is a must.
- c. You will be notified when your gymnast requires extra equipment such as grips. Grips are not required or recommended for any levels before a gymnast reaches Level 4.

Tuition

The USA Gymnastics Development Program is year-round and team members are expected to pay the monthly tuition and meet summer requirements. Parents are expected to pay summer tuition regardless of attendance. Information regarding tuition payments and injuries can be found in the injuries section.

WHEN DO I PAY?

Tuition is due the (1st) of the month regardless of the day the (1st) falls on.

HOW DO I PAY?

Payments are accepted in CASH, CHECK, MAJOR CREDIT CARD, or INDEPENDENT HEALTH FLEX FIT FAMILY CARD.

- a. Credit/Debit payments can be made online through our Customer Portal by Logging in > My Account > Payments > Make Payment. Card payments can also be taken in person or called in during our office hours.
- b. A drop box is located in the front lobby for cash or check payments. It is provided in the event Client Services is closed. Checks may also be mailed to the center. Please be sure your child's first name, last name, day and time are clearly marked on the front of your check.
- c. You can also setup automatic billing on a credit card. Tuition will be charged to your credit card on or around the first of each month for your tuition amount. An email receipt will be sent to you.
- d. Gymnasts must be current on all Greater Buffalo financial obligations in order to compete in meets or participate in ancillary activities.

CREDIT CARDS ON FILE

All team families will be required to keep a credit card on file with the gym office. This card can be used for any services offered at the gym including but not limited to tuition, meet fees, and choreography. If you are not interested in automatic billing, no problem, you can opt-out. However, this payment method will be available as a backup payment method, should you miss the deadline for any payments. If you wish to use the credit card on file as your primary means of payment no action is necessary and all charges will post to your credit card on time.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PAYMENT IS LATE?

That's okay. Fees are just an additional \$10.00 per charge if payment is not received by the (10th) of each month. However, your credit card on file with us will serve as a backup and your fees will always be on time!

Should your gymnast's tuition remain outstanding at the end of the month, your gymnast(s) will be unable to participate in practice until the balance is paid in full.

DO YOU OFFER FAMILY DISCOUNTS?

Of course! We're very proud to have so many families join us at the gym and to have siblings participating together. Discounts are tiered according to the number of siblings enrolled and will be applied individually per child to the lower/lowest tuition cost(s). These adjustments are automatically reflected in your account. Discounts are as follows:

- 1st Child - Full Price
- 2nd Child - 5% off their monthly tuition
- 3rd Child - 10% off their monthly tuition

- 4th Child - 15% off their monthly tuition

We also offer a military discount through the Erie County Thank-A-Vet and Honoring the Fallen Programs. Simply present your Thank-A-Vet or Honoring the Fallen card at the front desk and receive 10% off all services offered at the facility.

*Please Note, there is a \$35.00 fee for returned checks. If a problem with payment arises, please call the office BEFORE payment is due in order to discuss other payment arrangements. We will help you any way that we can.

Withdrawal from Team

This is a 12-month program. We plan on you and your child being with us for the full duration. Please setup a time to speak with your child's coach(es) if you plan to withdraw from the team. If you wish to avoid being billed for the month you leave, give Client Services notice one (1) week BEFORE that month starts.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Women's optional and Xcel Gold, Platinum, and Diamond gymnasts are required to have their floor routines designed by a choreographer outside of normal practice hours. The fee for these sessions is based on the athletes' level, number of skill elements included, and time to teach the routine. The fees will be noted for you in advance.

Absences

Missed practices can mean missed competitive opportunities. We keep on top of our "attendance game." Please notify Client Services or your child's coach in advance if your child will be absent. Your gymnast is required to attend no less than 75% of practices in order to maintain their place on the team.

- General Absences:** Just like tuition at an academic institution, Team Tuition is due regardless of attendance. The reason we cannot prorate is simple: all team expenses - wages, insurances, utilities, facilities, equipment, and others continue, unabated, no matter if your athlete is at practice or not.

There are no makeups for missed scheduled workouts. Each day's lesson plans and staffing schedule is based on a particular number of specific athletes being in the gym. It is impossible for us to properly train each athlete in the way they deserve if extra people are in the gym on nights, they are not regularly scheduled to be.

- Changes/Cancellations to Workouts:** As a member of our competitive team, you know or will learn quickly that most meets take place Friday-Sunday. Because we run workouts on Friday and Saturday sometimes a competition may take place the same day as a scheduled workout, please refer to the following general guidelines as to whether or not a workout will be held.

If your child's level competes on the same day that they normally have a workout, workout for that day will be cancelled. We do not want our athletes overextending themselves by practicing and then going to a meet tired or coming to workout tired from a competition.

If your child's level has workout the day before or the day after their scheduled competition, his/her workout will still be held. For example, if you compete on Friday and normally workout on Saturday, there will still be workout. If you normally workout on Saturday and compete Sunday, there will still be workout. Any changes to workouts will be emailed out once competition schedules are received.

- c. **Meet Attendance:** Attendance is expected at all meets for all gymnasts. While much of gymnastics is an individual sport, meets opportunities for athletes to compete as a team. Your absence from a meet can be costly for your entire team. We know sometimes things are scheduled that are outside of your control but please note, your gymnast is expected to attend as many meets as possible. Attendance at practice the full week before the meet is required. It is unsafe for gymnasts to go on the competition floor cold with no practice prior to competition.
- d. **Summer Attendance:** As previously stated, this is a year-round program and the 75% attendance requirement continues through the summer. If you travel out of the state/country for a period of time in the summer that would preclude your gymnast from meeting this requirement we recommend signing your gymnast up at a gym in your location to allow them to continue their training. If this is not an option, your child will be reevaluated upon their return to the gym to be placed back on their current level. Gymnasts who do not workout over the summer will be unable to move-up.

Safety/Injuries/Illnesses

AT THE GYM

The sport of gymnastics is one of the most demanding on the human body, and injuries do require time to heal. They are extremely rare here and in the event of an injury, first aid procedures will be performed and an injury report will be filled out and kept on file.

You can take confidence knowing that our staff is properly trained in skill progression, safety, matting, spotting, and skill development to help ensure the safety of your child. Additionally, all of our coaches go through USAG safety training plus a background check. We do carry insurance to operate our business, however, each student must be covered by his/her own health insurance.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation. Our goal is to offer an environment for your child to reach his/her gymnastics goals and dreams while safeguarding their health and wellness for all future endeavors.

GYMNASTS – PLEASE NOTE: Alert your coach when your body is telling you to slow down or stop. If you are sick, on medication, or are injured please inform your coach. Pain is the body's way of telling you to stop. In addition, alert your coach if you have engaged in any strenuous activity prior to the start of practice.

PARENTS – PLEASE NOTE: USA Gymnastics, (our governing body) recommends that the following paragraph be presented to all parents of gymnasts enrolled in any gymnastics program:

"By the very nature of the activity, gymnastics carries a risk of physical injury. No matter how careful the gymnast and coach are, no matter how many spotters are used, no matter what height is used or what landing surface exists, the risk cannot be eliminated. Risk can be reduced, but never eliminated. The risk of injury includes minor injuries such as bruises and more serious injuries such as broken bones, dislocations and muscle pulls. The risk also includes catastrophic injuries such as permanent paralysis or even death from landings or falls on the back, neck or head."

USA Gymnastics Safety Handbook (1998) USA Gymnastics Publications Indianapolis, IN

"At Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center, safety is our most fundamental coaching concept. We hold safety in the highest regard and have taken steps to ensure the safest and most enjoyable atmosphere possible. Gymnastics is an inherently dangerous sport. This fact combined with the high difficulty level many gymnasts at Greater Buffalo will achieve only adds to the potential for injury. All parents must be fully aware of the risks involved in the sport of gymnastics. Speed, motion, height, flipping and the difficulty of the skill put our athletes in potentially life-threatening situations on a daily basis. Our staff is continuously learning new and improved spotting and coaching techniques to help guarantee the safety of your child. We believe in spotting whenever there is a doubt as to the consistency of a skill. We believe in padding, matting and using any training devices designed to make learning as safe as possible."

– Torey Hirsch Sr. – Co-Owner

OUTSIDE OF THE GYM

Please notify the gym as soon as possible if your child is injured outside of the gym or is diagnosed with any communicable diseases (i.e., chicken pox, mumps, conjunctivitis, fifth's disease, etc.) and will be missing an extended number of practices.

If your athlete is struck by an illness or injury that requires them to miss school, please do not send them to the gym that day. If they are not well enough to go to school, we consider them not healthy enough to be at practice. The athlete must be fever free for 48 hours without the aid of medication. This is not only for their safety; an unwell athlete is more likely to injure themselves or a coach trying to spot. We want to make sure illnesses do not spread through the team/gym.

Any injury that occurs outside the gym has the potential to affect the workout here. We cannot safely train our athletes if we are not kept informed of changes in their health status.

MEDICAL RELEASES ARE REQUIRED TO RETURN TO PRACTICE

Medical releases are **REQUIRED** before returning to practice for any child who has been seen by a doctor or under medical care for any injury or illness excluding "annual check-ups." **NO child will be allowed to participate in workouts until the gym receives the medical release stating the full start and end dates.** Please be sure you bring a release to the first practice after your child has been seen by a doctor. We are unable to accept any verbal confirmation your athlete has been cleared but must have the written release from the doctor. No note, no practice; your gymnast will be sent home.

INJURY PROTOCOL

If a gymnast becomes injured and needs to take time to heal, the following shall apply:

- a. Injured athletes are expected to continue participating in workouts to the extent possible. In most cases it is possible to work around injuries and turn a weakness into a strength by increased attention on strength, flexibility or specific skills. Because athletes will still be utilizing the gym, no discounts or credits are given. The length of these workouts will be discussed on an individual basis.
- b. Any visit to a doctor (aside from an annual well-visit) requires a physician's release note in order to return to practice. This includes a negative diagnosis. This note must contain the diagnosis of injury, an expected duration of absence for healing, and a list of all areas of the body that may still be trained for strength and flexibility (for example: A broken wrist will still permit splits, shoulder stretches, and strength training for abs and legs.) The gymnast is expected to return to the gym after diagnosis so that he/she may maintain as much of their strength and flexibility as possible.
- c. No child will be asked to perform activities that put the injured area in danger of further injury.
- d. Should an injury require total absence from the gym for a doctor determined amount of time with no medical ability to participate our staff will make a determination about a reduction in/credit to your tuition.

USA GYMNASTICS SAFE SPORT POLICY

Our first commitment and top priority at Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center is the safety and wellbeing of our athletes and our staff. With that always at the forefront of our minds, each of our coaches have been required to become a member of USAG, requiring them to pass a criminal background check and take a course related to the new Safe Sport Policy.

The following is a note from USA Gymnastics regarding the Safe Sport Policy, the full text of which can be found at www.usagym.org/pages/education/safesport/.

"USA Gymnastics is committed to fostering a safe, fun, and healthy environment for all members. Since 1990 - prior to almost all other National Governing Bodies - USA Gymnastics has provided awareness, prevention and reporting information regarding sexual misconduct to professional members, member clubs, athlete members and their families.

In June 2017, USA Gymnastics leadership approved and adopted a new Safe Sport Policy, which significantly strengthened the organization's approach to athlete safety. The Safe Sport Policy, which is mandatory for all members to comply with:

- Increases the number of individuals who fall under USA Gymnastics jurisdiction; essentially increasing the number of people in our sport who are accountable for their behavior;
- Increases the categories of misconduct from two (sexual and physical misconduct) to six (verbal/emotional misconduct, bullying, hazing and harassment were added);

- Addresses and prohibits boundary violations and grooming behaviors;
- Requires covered individuals to report a suspicion of abuse to law enforcement, even if they are not a mandated reporter according to their state law;
- Requires covered individuals to notify USA Gymnastics or the U.S. Center for SafeSport for any misconduct; and
- Requires covered individuals to take a designated safe sport course every two years.

COVID-19 FACILITY SAFETY

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Greater Buffalo has taken very seriously all protections and protocols in an effort to keep your families and our staff as safe as possible, while continuing to have as much fun as possible! With that in mind, please be advised of the following policies we will continue to maintain as long as necessary.

- Hand sanitizer stations will continue to be located throughout the entire building and use will be encouraged before and after class, along with in between rotations.
- Some physical distancing methods will continue to be employed.
- Equipment and surfaces will be continuously disinfected.
- Should mask mandates be put back into place for indoor facilities by the county or state, Greater Buffalo will follow said mandates for everyone in the building: staff, students, and parents, regardless of vaccination status.

We ask that you please understand our number one goal here is to maintain the safety of everyone in the building, gymnastically or otherwise. Please help us do so by complying with whatever mandates we are required to put in place. We are happy to do what we have to do to continue offering your children gymnastics in a way that keeps everyone safe.

Emergency Procedures

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency involving your child, we follow the steps below:

- Greater Buffalo staff will assess the situation and emergency first aid will be administered, including requesting of emergency medical technicians and an ambulance if needed.
- You will be contacted using the emergency contact information you provided to us in your Customer Portal Profile.
- In the event we are unable to make contact with a parent or guardian, we will attempt to contact the nearest professional medical staff and/or hospital.

Gym Protocol & Housekeeping

- There is NO food, gum, or drinks allowed in the gym area, except water. We do ask that gymnasts keep a non-nut snack in their backpack in the case of an emergency.
- Please encourage your child(ren) to respect our brand-new locker rooms and furniture.
- For safety, please park in the designated areas to ensure proper traffic flow and escort children through the parking lot. Be respectful of spaces that are reserved.
Thank you.

- d. The center will not be responsible for lost items or articles of clothing. Please do not allow your child to bring valuable jewelry, clothing, cell phones, tablets, or other items to the gym. Label clothing so it may be returned if it is misplaced.
- e. PARENTS OR UNREGISTERED CHILDREN ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THE GYM AREA. If you need assistance, please come to the office first.
- f. Help us to reinforce honesty. Gymnasts - cutting corners or not completing all assignments shows disrespect to your coaches, your parents, and most importantly, to yourself. If you cannot or will not complete an assignment of practice skills, be honest about it. We're here to help you.
- g. Maintain a positive attitude when facing fears and frustrations. Gymnastics is the most demanding and difficult of all sports. Many athletes suffer setbacks, frustrations, fears, and defeat. Expect these things to happen from time to time, learn from them, face them, and overcome them. Together, we will set goals and achieve them step by step.

How Do I Watch My Child?

Parent viewing is always available in the balcony upstairs.

- a. Gymnastics is an extremely focused sport. To enhance your child's safety and ensure a great experience, please no tapping on the glass or distracting the gymnast of any kind.
- b. Please note, as per USA Gymnastics, no flash pictures are permitted in the gym to ensure the safety of all gymnasts.
- c. If you do not wish to stay, you may exit through the locker rooms. Gymnasts will be released from workout back through the locker rooms.

Gym Closings

HOLIDAYS/SCHEDULED CLOSINGS

Please follow the website and calendar on the last page of this handbook for closings. We do not adhere to any particular school district's schedule but make our own so please follow this calendar for gymnastics. The gym is entirely closed on dates marked in red; other than that, please assume the team has workout.

WEATHER/EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Should the gym close due to weather or emergency related conditions, it will be announced on the WGRZ Channel 2, WIVB Channel 4, WKBW Channel 7 webpages, as well as our home page www.greaterbuffalogymnastics.com. If time permits, we will also send you an email. Make sure to also follow us on Facebook and Instagram for regular updates.

Parent Commitment

We feel that the support of our team parents is important for team morale and unity. If you have any questions or concerns let us know because we've learned that positive questions and constructive comments = positive outcomes. If you enjoy being a part of this team, then tell everyone you know! And if not, then please tell us first.

- a. Ensure that your child gets enough sleep, gets proper nutrition, gets to and from the gym on time, and has proper clothing and equipment.

- b. Provide unconditional love, encouragement, and support to your young athlete. Please do not compare your child with other athletes. Each athlete is unique with differing strengths and weaknesses. It is unfair to you and your child to compare themselves to anyone else. Rather, try to look for the progress your child is making in gymnastics and celebrate it!
- c. **PLEASE DO NOT COACH YOUR CHILD.** Your comments might detract from what the coach is doing by giving the gymnast another thing to think about; it interferes with the development of the coach/athlete relationship which is critical for long-term success, progression, and safety.
- d. Please stay in the waiting area and out of the gym while waiting for your child.
- e. Please attend team parent meetings which will be held during the year. The meetings are an opportunity for coaches and parent board officers to communicate detailed information with plenty of time for questions and answers.

Team Guidelines

The decision to join the Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Team Program reflects effort and commitment. Each year our gymnasts will build on their talents, improve their skills and experience milestone accomplishments. Team members do not move on and off the team based on things like illness, injuries or vacation plans. Being committed to the team builds comradery, trust, and self-confidence.

The following are guidelines which all team members are expected to follow:

- a. We recommend a pre-participation physical examination for all team members.
- b. Work hard and try your best. This is all that we will ever ask of you and this is always what you should demand of yourself. Do not compare yourself with other gymnasts. You are all different and will advance at different rates. Only concern yourself with things that YOU can control which are YOUR ATTITUDE, YOUR EFFORT, AND YOUR GYMNASTICS SKILLS!
- c. Gymnasts should remain on the workout floor until practice is finished and on the competition floor until a meet is over - this includes awards.
- d. Treat your coaches and teammates with respect. We are all on the same "Team", we are all one family. Be kind to those gymnasts younger than you. They look up to you and appreciate you being a role model.
- e. We encourage all our athletes and coaches to consistently catch each other doing things exceptionally well. Bring your "A" game here. Positive feedback = positive results.
- f. We may have the opportunity for our team members to perform exhibitions and demonstrations throughout the year. If these become available, we will distribute information as soon as we have it. This is an excellent time for our gymnasts to "show off" and perform in a non-competitive setting. Please give your child the chance to participate whenever possible and demonstrate what they have worked so hard to achieve.
- g. Upon becoming a member of our competitive team any membership at other gymnastics or gymnastics-like facilities should be terminated. This includes classes, private lessons, or open gym time of any kind. Failure to terminate outside training will result in dismissal from the team.

Team Family Requirements

- a. Home Meets - Each Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Team (Girls and Boys) hosts one large meet a year, The Jacquie Hirsch Memorial Buffalo Challenge and The Boys Buffalo Challenge, respectively. Further information will be forthcoming regarding these events. Please note, once the dates are released you are expected to set aside the weekend; these are the team's largest fundraiser of the year.
- b. Team Banquet - (End of June) Our annual celebration of our team's accomplishments for the season! Information typically becomes available on the banquet each spring. Gymnasts who complete the meet season and continue their commitment to team thereafter, are invited to attend the banquet to celebrate with the rest of their teammates.
- c. Halloween Sleepover - Gymnasts are invited to bring a friend for a spooky sleepover in the gym. Costumes are required and no parental help is needed.
- d. Team Holiday Party - Usually held the weekend before winter break. Gymnasts bring a donation for charity. No parental help is needed.
- e. We ask that Parent Liaisons write meet/competition articles to submit to the local newspapers.
- f. Throughout the season, there will be other fundraisers that you may be responsible for; these fundraisers are chosen and run by the Booster Club.

Requirements for Competitive Eligibility

Athletes must be physically, emotionally, and mentally prepared for competition. The coaching staff will determine when each athlete is competition-ready and relay this information to the parent.

USA Gymnastics Athlete Membership for 2021-2022 Season

- a. Annual membership is \$63.00 for all levels of girls, boys, and Xcel teams.
- b. First time athletes purchase a new membership for \$25.00.
- c. The USAG athlete should be prepared to show his/her membership card at all sanctioned meets. The athlete number and card are to be obtained each year prior to the competitive season. (Parents are asked to purchase a luggage tag for their child's USAG card to place on their gym bags.)

Competition/Meet Scheduling

At the beginning of each season, a preliminary schedule of meet locations and dates will be distributed to the gymnasts. Meets may be added, changed, or cancelled.

Please check your email regularly for updates.

- a. Gymnasts in all levels are expected to attend all scheduled meets. Attendance is critical for team support and the more experience you obtain, the better you will become. Missing more than 2 meets in a season will trigger a reevaluation of your gymnast's status on team.
- b. Host clubs will set a deadline for meet entries. After this date the host club will set the final meet schedule depending on the number of entrants.
- c. It is not uncommon for host clubs to send out final meet information only 1-2 weeks prior to a meet or to make last minute changes. Information in many instances is not received until a few weeks or days before a competition. It is a

good idea to clear the whole weekend of a meet on the chance that there will be last minute changes that could conflict with your previous plans.

- d. Please check your email for information regarding meets; we will release the information to you as soon as the gym receives it.
- e. Meet fees are paid for by each individual team member by the due date. We will give meet fee deadlines, which must be adhered to. Meet fees not charged to your credit card on file and, received any time after the deadline, will incur a late charge of \$10.00. Unless we receive a written note **BY THE DEADLINE** that your son/daughter will not participate in a meet, your child's entry fee will be submitted and paid for by the gym and you are then responsible for that meet fee. Barring some instances regarding injuries, once meet fees are submitted, they are non-refundable, even if your gymnast can no longer attend a meet. Each gymnast is responsible for coordinating his/her own transportation to competitions, hotels (*if needed*), and meals. Admission is typically charged to spectators at most meets.
- f. If you choose not to attend a competition, there is no practice that day, as coaches will be at the competition.

Competition Attire

The competition dress code is set by USA Gymnastics and failure to comply can result in deductions from the gymnast's scores, the inability to receive awards or disqualification by the judges.

Girls Team Requirements

Pre-Team

- Practice Leotard - \$33.00

Level 2

- Practice Leotard - \$33.00
- Warm-up Capri - \$21.00
- Backpack - \$51.00

Levels 3-10 and Xcel

- Practice Leotard - \$33.00
- Competition Leotard - \$104.00-\$185.00 (depending on level)
- Warm-up Jacket - \$75.00
- Warm-up Capri- \$21.00
- Backpack - \$51.00
- Competition Shorts (Optional) - \$39.00

Gymnasts are expected to arrive to competition in their warm-ups with leotards on underneath. When actually warming up the events and/or competing, the gymnast will wear her competition leotard alone or with the competition shorts, if desired. During awards gymnasts are to wear capri pants over their leotard. There is no jewelry allowed during competition except stud earrings. There should be no nail polish, nor visible bra straps or underwear. The prices listed above are the prices for the 2021-2022 uniforms and may not exactly reflect the cost of your child's uniform but should be a good approximation.

Boys Team Requirements

All Levels

- Warm-up Jacket - \$75.00
- Warm-up Pants - \$36.00
- Backpack - \$51.00
- Competition Shirt - \$55.00
- Competition Shorts - \$39.00
- Competition Pants - \$30.00

Gymnasts should arrive to meets for warm-up with their competition shirt, competition shorts, and competition pants worn underneath the Greater Buffalo warm-up suit along with a clean, intact pair of black socks. Manufactured braces or supports may be worn on any event when needed throughout warm-ups and competition. Socks and/or gymnastics shoes, along with competition pants must be worn on Pommel Horse/ Mushroom, Still Rings, Parallel Bars, and Horizontal Bar. The gymnast may perform on Floor Exercise and Vault wearing only shorts, socks, gymnastics shoes (slippers), or bare feet. There is NO JEWELRY allowed during competition. Greater Buffalo warm-up suit must be worn in order to receive awards. There are no shoes or boots of any kind allowed during the award ceremony. Look sharp!

Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts

- Athletes should arrive at the competition site 15 minutes before open stretch is scheduled to begin or a time designated by your coach.
- No food or drink is permitted in the gym area other than water.
- Gymnasts must present themselves in proper meet attire. Gymnasts should be well groomed. No nail polish should be worn. Long hair should be pulled back and sprayed ("glued") in place, only snap clips or barrettes, no bobby pins.
- Athletes should stay with the team until competition is over and the coach releases them. Once a gymnast has entered the competition area there should be no contact between the gymnast and his/her parents. Distractions like waving or texting might result in an injury, so please take care. Athletes must remain in the designated competition area throughout the course of warm-ups and competition and obey all warm-up regulations and procedures. You may not visit with family or friends until your coach has dismissed you.
- We expect all team members to act responsibly and politely at meets or other places we attend as a team. We expect that all property at other gyms will be treated as if it were ours. Team members and their families are to follow all rules established by the host gym. In the rare event of inappropriate behavior, it will not be tolerated and will be reason to be excused from the remainder of the competition.
- Each athlete should accept their place in the line-up and the scores they receive with dignity and without criticism. Encourage your child to accept wins or losses as positively as possible and we will support your athlete no matter how they score. Athletes cannot control the scores or the performances of any other gymnast. They can only control their own performance.
- NOTE TO ATHLETES:** If you make mistakes and are disappointed in your performance, that is part of the learning curve. We've got your back. You will persevere and succeed. Stay calm, stay in control of yourself and be ready to perform on other events and cheer on your teammates.

- h. Be courteous, respectful, and polite to all meet officials, hosts, competitors, and coaches. The only time you should approach a meet official is to thank them for hosting or judging a meet.
- i. Gymnasts should have the mandatory competition bag and keep all of their belongings in the bag during the meet. We will offer a once per year ordering of team backpacks.
- j. Athletes must stay for awards dressed in their team warm-up. Most meets have a formal system for presenting awards. As a participating athlete, you have an obligation to stay for all the awards, whether you are receiving one or not, and to accept any award presented to you with courtesy and gratitude. It is customary to accept awards with a "thank you" and a warm smile. Congratulate the other athletes as well. Remember that you are not just representing yourself; you are acting as a representative of Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center as well.
- k. If you are staying to watch another teammate compete or you have arrived early for warm-ups, stay seated in the bleachers, please do not wander out onto the competition floor.
- l. Keep in mind that each meet is a learning experience. Have fun, be positive and realize that if you are unhappy with your performance, *you* can prepare even better for the next meet.

Meet Etiquette for Parents

- a. Team Spirit is a big help... Wear our team colors or some of our Greater Buffalo apparel.
- b. Please show proper respect to all officials and coaches at every competition. They are all there for one reason, to support your child's interest in gymnastics. Under no circumstance should you attempt to contact any coach or official on the competition floor during or after the meet (judges, score keepers, etc.) If you have any questions regarding the meet or your child's scores you are to address it with your child's coach following the session. Even the coach is not allowed to approach the judges regarding routines or scores during the meet, but must submit an inquiry through the Meet Director. Points could be deducted not only from your gymnast but the team score as well for failure to follow USAG guidelines.
- c. Please show proper respect to all competitors. You NEVER KNOW who is sitting near you.
- d. Once a gymnast has walked into the competition area for warm-up, he/she will not be permitted to have contact with parents, family, friends, etc. until competition is completed for ALL team members, unless given permission by the head coach. This has less to do with control than it does with FOCUS.
The coach's job at the meet is to monitor the gymnast's condition and body language and teach them to respond appropriately. The gymnast needs to focus on their coach's advice. As coaches, we know that you mean well with your comments, however, they may not be appropriate for the current time or situation. If you have any questions about what happens at a meet, schedule a time to talk with your coach.
- e. In any competition, parents, friends, and relatives of the gymnast *ARE NOT ALLOWED* onto the competitive floor. *YOU MUST* remain in the spectator's area along with all other relatives and friends. Your child could be immediately scratched from the meet if a parent is in the competitor's area. In case of injury

during warm-up or competition at a USAG sanctioned event, *YOU MUST* stay in the spectator area unless your coach flags you onto the floor.

- f. *NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY* is permitted during a meet. The sudden flash of light could cause a gymnast to be injured. Check out your camera in advance. If you cannot manually disable your flash, please do not take pictures during the competition.
- g. On the day of competition your child should eat a well-balanced meal about two hours prior to the actual competition. This energy will carry them through the entire competition. If necessary, a gymnast may carry fruit juices and pieces of fruit in their gym bag to curb hunger.

Problems occur when a parent expects too much from an athlete. It takes a number of years of quality competition for a gymnast to develop the poise and grace to continuously take top honors in a gymnastics competition. Some parents seem to have developed their own system of evaluating the scores their children earn during a gymnastics competition.

The key is to recognize when your child is working up to their potential. If they complete all their skills for the first time, without a fall, that is a winning routine regardless of what score is received. Comments from you should be congratulatory and positive. No mention should be made at that time of what they can do better, that would lessen the effect of this "victory". The week after the meet your child's coach will go over those elements that need work and congratulate them on the elements competed correctly.

Any score received during a competition is no reflection on you as parent. There is no reason for you to feel embarrassed if your child is having a bad meet. Everyone has good days and bad days and it is how your gymnast learns to react to them that illustrate their development as a competitor. Remember that a score given to your child in a gymnastics competition is an evaluation of one single performance, not an evaluation of the child.

Some Guidelines for Parents Feeling Stress (as suggested by USA Gymnastics)

We know that you are excited about your child's participation in gymnastics and want them to be successful, but as a parent you actually have the least amount of control over your gymnast's performance. To support your child in the best way possible, be a really good listener, ask questions, and let us know how we can help. If you recognize yourself in any of the following situations, you probably need to reevaluate your actions, your role, and your attitude towards your child's sports participation. Talk with us. We can work through it with you.

- a. Wanting to observe every practice intently.
- b. Praising or punishing your child for what you see during observations of workout.
- c. Finding your sense of worth and happiness dependent on the success of your gymnast.
- d. Constantly comparing your child and their progress to others in the group, on the team or in competition.

- e. Verbally abusing the gym, the coaches, and the program while still placing your child under their care.

Inappropriate Comments	Appropriate Comments
<i>"You finally beat Sally"</i>	<i>"You scored your highest yet!"</i>
<i>"How many (current difficult skill) did you make today?"</i>	<i>"How was practice?"</i>
<i>"I'll give you \$20 if you win today"</i>	<i>"Do your best and have fun"</i>
<i>"That judge always scores you low"</i>	<i>"Work hard and next time you'll do better."</i>
<i>"I cannot believe they moved Sally up and not you!"</i>	<i>"As long as you are happy, safe, and progressing, I'm happy."</i>

Disciplinary Actions

The rules and policies which govern the gymnasts and their parents have been outlined here in the Team Handbook. In the rare event that there is an ongoing pattern of disruption or there are major rule infractions, it may become necessary to act to make this a positive learning experience for the future.

We will treat all of our gymnasts and gym parents as individuals and will seek the most effective positive outcomes in every circumstance. Please take a minute to review the following guidelines based on our experience and the recommendations of other industry leaders.

- a. Sometimes the gymnast may not be permitted to rotate with his/her group at the designated time and will remain on an event to finish or repeat an assignment.
- b. The gymnast may be asked to sit and watch. Or the gymnast may be given appropriate conditioning to perform which will help focus their attention and build strength to accomplish the task at hand.
- c. The coach may request a meeting with a parent.
- d. The gymnast may be excused from the team for one or more practices or may be scratched from a competition. Please note that if the gymnast is asked to leave practice or is suspended from a competition due to poor attendance, poor work ethic or a negative attitude, fees are nonrefundable.
- e. In severe and rare cases, the gymnast may be asked to leave the program.

The development of the coach/gymnast relationship is paramount to safety and success. We will attempt to build a very positive relationships with our athletes. Thank you for supporting us in that from your side. Those relationships are built on time shared, belief in the same dreams and values, work performed together, and the emotional ups and downs of competitive sport, all of which are an important part of development. We want to work with you to create the most positive culture possible.

Our mission here is to build the self-esteem and happiness of every person who passes through our doors. Thank you for helping us make that happen.

Bullying Policy: Zero Tolerance

- 1) We will speak with the gymnasts involved to encourage kindness, respect, communication, and will help to facilitate conflict resolution. All parents of involved gymnasts will be notified of the incident.
- 2) Should the behavior continue, a meeting with all parents and gymnasts involved will be setup to talk through the situation and possible solutions.
- 3) Further incidents will result in suspension from practice and/or meets for a minimum of one (1) week.
- 4) If the issue cannot be resolved, a gymnast will be removed from the program.

Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center

2021-2022 Calendar

September 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
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October 2021						
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November 2021						
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December 2021						
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January 2022						
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February 2022						
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March 2022						
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April 2022						
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May 2022						
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June 2022						
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July 2022						
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August 2022						
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	September 9 - First Day of the 2021-2022 season!
	Gym is CLOSED - If a date is not marked, please assume we are open.
	Class Show Week - Our annual showcase of our gymnast's hard work this season.