

Tips & Tricks for your upcoming Competitive Season.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & GYMNASTS

COMPETITION BAG PACKING CHECKLIST:

- Extra hair ties & bobby pins - be sure your gymnast's bobby pins and hair are secure because there is a deduction for their hair / scrunchie / bobby pins falling out mid routine!
- Hairspray / hair gel - extra hairspray / gel to touch up any flyaways before a routine or for pictures at awards comes in handy
- Extra waters / gatorade - to keep your gymnast hydrated throughout the competition. Competitions can get pretty warm and long for gymnasts, so packing extra drinks to stay hydrated is very important. Buying water / drinks at meets can be quite pricey on top of the entrance fees, so packing beforehand makes it easier on your bank account!
- Healthy, no mess snacks - Packing some healthy snacks to fuel your gymnast in between routines / rotations & awards will help keep their energy up throughout their long day. Sometimes gymnasts will also have trouble eating before competitions because of nerves, so having something extra with them on the floor ensures that they stay healthy & energized
- Pair of flip-flops or slides - Having an extra pair of flip-flops or slides that your gymnast easily slip on to run to the bathroom between events is super helpful! It allows for a quick trip so that they don't miss any of their warm-ups / don't have to go to the bathroom right before they perform their routine in front of the judges,
- Grips / Braces / Supports - Double check that your gymnast has packed their grips & wristbands for bars (if they use them), and any other supportive gear they use during practice (knee braces, heel cups, etc) RIGHT before leaving. I cannot tell you how many gymnasts I've had throughout the years unfortunately forgot their equipment.
- Extra tape / KT tape / band-aids - If your gymnast uses kinesiology tape during practice, make sure to pack extra for their meet! That way they can re-tape if need be. Band-aids & regular gymnastics tape SHOULD be provided by the competition at physical trainer stations on the competition floor, but it's nice to have in case your gymnast or their coach can't find a trainer or are rushing from event to event.



Hotels & Competition Schedule.

+ SOME PRO-TIPS

COMMON QUESTIONS

WHEN WILL I KNOW MY GYMNAST'S COMPETITION SCHEDULE?

- Every gym is different, but Meets are commonly chosen and sent out to parents in late Summer/Early Fall. Coaches will be able to provide the weekend that your gymnast is competing, but usually do not receive the detailed competition schedule (your gymnast's competition day & time) until a few weeks/months before, depending on the size of the meet.
- PRO-TIP: When you find out which Meets your gymnast is going to, make sure to book hotel rooms for all possible days you may need to be there, at a hotel who allows free cancellation (If it's a far away competition). Hotels book FAST on competition weekends and get pricier the longer you wait. Before booking, make sure to ask the hotel if there are any special rates for that specific competition, because usually there are at hotels surrounding the competition area. Once you find out the exact day and time that your gymnast is competing, you can easily call and cancel the extra days! This is even more essential for State & Regional Competitions!

THERE ARE MULTIPLE DAYS LISTED ON THE MEET SCHEDULE FOR THE SEASON. DOES MY CHILD COMPETE EVERY ONE OF THOSE DAYS?

- No, your gymnast only competes one day during the meet weekend and you will be informed about that once your coach receives the schedule from the Meet Director of the Competition.

HOW LONG DOES EACH COMPETITION LAST?

- While typically competitions (along with awards) last around 3 ½ to 4 hours, every competition is different. How long a competition lasts depends on many factors; how large the meet is, how many teams & gymnasts have signed up, how well the meet is run so that it flows smoothly & more.
- PRO-TIP: Try to ask your coaches what they think regarding the length of each meet, because they have most likely been to some of them in previous years and will have a good idea of how long they will run!



COMMON QUESTIONS CONTINUED.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHO MY GYMNAST IS COMPETING AGAINST?

- You most often won't know until awards. Sometimes, there may be two completely different levels competing in the same competitive area. One level will be Flight A, one will be Flight B (Flight & Rotation details below!)
- PRO-TIP: If you don't know your gymnast's age group for awards, you have a few options to try to figure it out;
- Download the My USAG app from your app store. You can search up the competition and find your gymnast's age group, scores, placements and more!
- Competitions may also post all of the above ^ on mymeetscoresonline.com and you can find a list of your gymnast's/Team's scores on mymeetscores.com

OTHER GYMNASTS IN OTHER AGE GROUPS ARE PLACING HIGHER WITH THE VERY SAME SCORES MY GYMNAST HAS. WHY?

- All gymnasts are grouped in each meet based on how many gymnasts sign up & their age. As teams sign up, the Meet Director begins to break up the gymnasts into age groups (as evenly as they can). Some age groups are just easier to place in than others, and it varies with each meet based on what ages attend the meet.

HOW ARE TEAM SCORES & RANKINGS CALCULATED?

- Team scores & rankings are calculated by taking each team's top 3 scores for each event & adding them together. This means the Meet Director/Scoring System looks at all of your Teams scores for Vault, Bars, Beam & Floor. Let's pretend there are 5 people on your team.

VAULT SCORES: 9.0 **9.2** 8.9 **9.4** **9.5** **TOP 3:** 9.2 + 9.4 + 9.5 = **28.1**

BEAM SCORES: 9.1 **9.7** **9.65** **9.55** 9.45 **TOP 3:** 9.7 + 9.65 + 9.55 = **28.9**

BAR SCORES: 9.35 **9.65** **9.5** 9.325 **9.45** **TOP 3:** 9.65 + 9.5 + 9.45 = **28.6**

FLOOR SCORES: 9.5 **9.65** 9.575 **9.7** **9.75** **TOP 3:** 9.65 + 9.7 + 9.75 = **29.1**

VAULT 28.1 + BARS 28.9 + BEAM 28.6 + FLOOR 29.1
= 114.7 TOTAL TEAM SCORE



More Competition Info.

+ UNDERSTANDING COMPETITION SET-UP

STARTING EVENT + HOW ROTATIONS WORK

- At every meet the order will be the same, but gymnasts might just start at a different event. The order is as follows: Vault, Bars, Beam, Floor.

IF THEY START ON

VAULT: Vault, Bars, Beam, Floor

IF THEY START ON

BAR: Bars, Beam, Floor, Vault

IF THEY START ON

BEAM: Beam, Floor, Vault, Bars

IF THEY START ON

FLOOR: Floor, Vault, Bars, Beam

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE 2 SETS OF EQUIPMENT IN THE AREA THAT YOUR GYMNAST IS COMPETING.

- There may even be two separate competitions going on at the same time on two separate floor areas
- Each Session (competition) is broken up into two separate “flights”. Flight A equipment & Flight B equipment. Teams are randomly assigned Flight A or B and only practice & compete on that set of equipment.

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH EQUIPMENT MY GYMNAST IS COMPETING ON SO THAT I CAN GET A BETTER VIEW OF HER ROUTINE?

- The “inside” set of equipment (the equipment closest to the center of the competitive area) will be either Flight A or Flight B. If you see your gymnast competing on the Beam closest to the center of the competitive area, expect that she will compete on all of the inside equipment.
- The 2nd set of equipment is referred to as the “outside” equipment. These will be furthest from the center of the competitive area, and closest to the audience in most cases. If you see your gymnast competing on the Beam furthest from the center of the competitive area or closest to the audience, expect that she will compete on all of the outside equipment.

Pre - Competition Nerves.

+ TIPS FOR COMPETITION SUCCES

***TO ALL GYMNASTICS PARENTS, NEW AND EXPERIENCED,
PLEASE REMEMBER THIS WHEN ENTERING THE BEGINNING OF
EACH COMPETITION SEASON:***

- This is either your gymnast's very first competition ever, or their first competition of the season. Nerves will most likely be high, so expect mistakes; They're normal and should not only be expected, but welcomed. Mistakes allow a gymnast/athlete to adapt and grow within their sport!

**AS A LONGTIME HEAD COMPETITIVE COACH & COMPETITIVE
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, I PREFER TO REFER TO THE FIRST MEET OF
THE SEASON AS A PRACTICE MEET; A WARM-UP & STARTING POINT
FOR THE COMPETITIVE SEASON**

HERE'S WHY:

- Your gymnast is performing difficult skills & routines in front of a huge crowd of people for the first time ever, or for the first time in months. In some cases, they may have also moved up a level and are performing new, more difficult skills & routines. This is an intimidating situation & making mistakes can be embarrassing to them.
- Whether they're afraid of making a mistake and disappointing their coach, their teammates, their parents or even themselves, they are still most likely worried about disappointing someone.
- While there is no way to remove pre-competition nerves entirely, I have found that referring to the first competition of the season as a practice meet, and a starting point for the season helps gymnasts take some pressure off of themselves. This way, they can start the season with a more positive attitude and growth mindset instead of beating themselves up about every small error. Remind your gymnast that their first meet can be used to see what skills they individually struggle with most under pressure, and to know what they have to work on/drill more throughout the season.



A Final Note to Parents.

A GUIDE TO HELP YOUR GYMNAST
HAVE FUN!

Gymnastics is a difficult sport that requires a great deal of mental strength and perseverance. It is important to remember that each child is different in how they deal with the obstacles that come along with being a competitive gymnast, whether it be overcoming a fear of performing a certain skill or dealing with the pressure and nerves at a competition.

It is important that you be careful not to show if you are upset with performance at a Competition. Try to refrain from correcting your gymnast. They need you for support. These gymnasts already put so much pressure on themselves that this will just add to their anxiety for the next competition. This is not to suggest or assume that you put any extra pressure on your child, it is only a gentle reminder that they notice more than you think. If they sense that you are unhappy, it will affect their next performance and their confidence moving forward.

Finally, remember that each child progresses at her own pace and do your best not to compare your child's progress with anyone else's. Your child may have beautiful routines at practice, but they may not always go as well at competitions. It is important that as Coaches & Parents, we do our best to encourage these athletes and ensure that their love for the sport continues. If these guidelines are followed, your gymnast should be able to have a fun and successful competitive season!

Good luck to all this season!

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