

# **RED RIVER VALLEY GYMNASTICS**

## **Welcome to the Girls Competitive Team Program**

We would like to congratulate everyone 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 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 your child will develop are: 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.

Gymnastics is a unique sport in which every child's potential is different but the common factor is that every child can gain life skills that will long outlast their gymnastics experience.

### **Philosophy of our Program**

To provide the mental and physical discipline needed for competition within a framework of positive reinforcement and encouragement. We also hope that our program will deliver more than physical and competitive development. We hope that your child will learn self esteem, self motivation, self discipline, dedication, determination, work ethic, time management, team work, team spirit, leadership, sportsmanship, respect for danger, respect for others, grace and poise. When our athletes are "retired" from our team we hope they have established a base of life skills that will assist them through all of their adult life. Team Competition is very important to us at Red River Valley Gymnastics. Although gymnastics is generally viewed as an individual sport, we try to cultivate the importance of Team and working as a Team. Every athlete on our team cannot be an individual winner but if we win "the Team"; every athlete on the team can feel a part of the winning team. We feel this is very important for our athletes.

### **Invitations to our Team**

- Athletes from another team program that are moving to the area. In this case, the athlete will be invited to train with us for a week during which time we will evaluate their level and they will be able to evaluate our program as well.
- Athletes are selected from our Preschool, Progressive, and Developmental programs.

## Training Hours and Commitment for the 2008-2009 Season

Level	# hr/wk	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Level 4	9.0	4:00pm-7:00pm		4:00pm-7:00pm	4:00pm-7:00pm	
Level 5	10.5	4:00pm-7:30pm		4:00pm-7:30pm		4:00pm-7:30pm
Level 6*	10.5	4:00pm-7:30pm	4:00pm-7:00pm	4:00pm-7:30pm		4:00pm-7:30pm
Level 7-10	14.0	5:00pm-8:30pm	5:00pm-8:30pm		5:00pm-8:30pm	4:00pm-7:30pm
Hot Shots	6.5		4:00pm-6:00pm	4:00pm-6:30pm	4:00pm-6:00pm	
Dynos	3.0		4:00pm-5:30pm		4:00pm-5:30pm	
Dyno Mini	3.0		2:00pm-3:30pm		2:00pm-3:30pm	

\* Tuesday is an optional practice for Level 6's – 13.5hrs/week

### Mobility within the USAG Levels

Mobility scores are required in order to advance from level to level. Athletes may not skip levels. Red River Valley Gymnastics is dedicated to developing happy, healthy, confident and successful children. One way to meet this goal is to place the gymnasts at the level where they can be happy, safe and confident. This means that the athletes must be able to perform the skills & routines (on all 4 events) required at a given level comfortably. The skills should not be on the edge or beyond her ability. We can never ask or expect our athletes to perform skills or routines in a competition, which they cannot perform consistently in practice. **Since skill level generally determines the level of competition, this will be the deciding factor when deciding the level that each athlete will compete each year. All Around scores from the prior year, although an important tool to determine level, is not the most important or deciding factor for our gym.**

### Attendance and Make-up Policy

- Each gymnast should try to make all scheduled practices.
- Gymnasts must attend at least 1 of the last 2 practices prior to a meet in order to be evaluated on readiness to compete.
- If an athlete has missed more than 50% of practices or is not able to successfully train her routines in the gym at least 2 weeks prior to a competition date, the coaching staff may decide to do one of the following:
  - Scratch the athlete from the competition
  - Allow the athlete to compete on only the event routines that she has been able to complete in the gym

At a Competition:

- If an athlete has difficulty in timed warm up and cannot make her skills, it will be up to the coach's discretion to either scratch her from that event or take skills out of her routine.
- Only practices missed because of a gym function will be rescheduled. A free open gym pass can be used for a missed class.
- Make-ups are not offered due to the following National Holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

## **A Brief Description of the Levels in the USAG**

The USAG is the largest gymnastic organization in the USA and is the organization responsible for the selection of our Olympic and National team members. 99.9% of all athletes who receive scholarships will come from the USAG. Other organizations are AAU, USAIGC, and YMCA.

### **Elite:**

This is the top level in gymnastics. Gymnasts compete at national meets and represent the USA in most international competitions including the Olympics.

### **Level 10:**

Gymnasts compete optional routines that are created by their coaches. This is the highest level in the USAG age group program. Gymnast must be 9 years old to compete.  
Competitions: Local, State, Regional, and National

### **Level 9:**

Gymnasts compete optional routines that are created by their coaches. Gymnast must be 8 years old to compete.  
Competitions: Local, State, Regional, and National

### **Level 8:**

Gymnasts compete optional routines that are created by their coaches. Gymnast must be 8 years old to compete.  
Competitions: Local, State, Regional

### **Level 7:**

Gymnast compete a compulsory/optional routine. Routines are created by their coaches but must include certain compulsory elements. Gymnast must be 7 years old to compete.  
Competitions: Local, State

### **Level 6:**

Gymnast compete a compulsory routine. Routines are all the same and are determined by the USAG JO program. Gymnast must be 7 years old to compete.  
Competitions: Local, State

### **Level 5:**

Gymnast compete a compulsory routine. Routines are all the same and are determined by the USAG JO program. Gymnast must be 7 years old to compete.  
Competitions: Local, State

### **Level 4:**

Gymnast compete a compulsory routine. Routines are all the same and are determined by the USAG JO program. Gymnast must be 6 years old to compete. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> level that gymnasts can compete but are not required to. Competitions: Local, State

## **ABC's of Gymnastics**

Red River Valley Gymnastics believes that it is very important to insist that our athletes master the basic skills at each level with proper form and technique. Our experience has taught us that taking the time with the basics (ABC's) provides the best learning tool for more advanced skills. Athletes who move through the levels too quickly without ever taking the time to master skills will find that each level gets harder and the athlete finds herself falling further and further behind the higher she moves up. This frustrates the athlete and causes depression, low self-esteem, and usually leads to the athlete leaving the sport. Our #1 goal is to keep our athletes in the gym, long enough to get a college scholarship & to be happy and successful. We realize that there are some gyms that move their athletes up 2 or 3 levels in one season; however, we do not believe that obtaining a "C" average (31.00AA) is an acceptable goal. If we consider that an athlete has until her 18th birthday to train with us before she leaves for college, we have 12 years to prepare an athlete for level 10 if she joins our team when she is 6 years old. Except for the exceptionally talented athlete that is considering the elite program there is no need to rush through the levels. If an athlete can get to the level 10 program by the age of 15, she will have 3 years to compete as a level 10 and to be seen by college coaches. Please understand that all the coaches at Red River Valley Gymnastics would like every single athlete to be able to master all the skills and move up as quickly as possible however, we do not wish to sacrifice your child's safety, or self esteem to have more "advanced" athletes in our program.

**Safety** – Gymnastics, as with most sports, has potential for injury. We are aware of this and we will make every effort to maintain a safe environment for our athletes. We believe in proper and meticulous progressions as lead ups for more advanced skills. We believe in providing the proper equipment and training devices designed to make learning as safe as possible.

## **Competition Rules for Athletes**

- Athletes are expected to go to all meets unless otherwise noted.
- Arrive to the competition 20 minutes prior to the scheduled stretch time.
- Hair should be neatly pulled back with the proper hair ribbons and scrunchies. Coaches will instruct the athletes as to the best way to wear their hair.
- Athletes will wear Red River Valley Gymnastics team leotard at all competitions. If a competition has finals, the athletes may wear a different leotard. No finger polish or jewelry other than post earrings is allowed on the competitive floor. Sports bras may not show including matching ones. (This includes the warm up leotard)
- When an athlete arrives at the competition, she should report to the coaches right away.
- Athletes will always cheer for their teammates and be courteous to gymnasts from other teams.
- Athletes will always show respect for the judges and other coaches at the competition
- Athletes should always have an extra set of grips and a copy of their optional floor music
- Athletes should stay at their last event until the last athlete has finished the competition.
- Athletes should stay for awards and always wear either their team leotard or warm up. Athletes may not wear jeans or other street clothes on the award stand. (This is a USAG rule)

## **Gymnast Expectations at Red River Valley Gymnastics**

- **Respect RRVG**
  - Help keep the facility clean
  - Help clean up mats when your group is finished with them
  - Keep the locker room neat by keeping all of your belongings in your locker
  - Be mindful of all of the other gymnasts practicing here and watch out for little kids in the gym
- **Respect Coaches**
  - Trust that they have your best interests in mind
  - Follow directions
  - Speak and listen respectfully
  - Be honest in relaying information to coaches and parents
- **Respect Teammates**
  - Only kind words to other gymnasts
  - No gossip or talking about others
  - Help other gymnasts when they're down
  - Be respectful of other gymnasts' lockers and personal belongings
- **Communicate to coaches all of the following:**
  - Fear
  - Pain
  - Injuries
  - Frustrations
  - Schedule changes (coming late, leaving early, missing practices, etc.)
- **Ask coach's permission before leaving the event for:**
  - Drinks
  - Bathroom
  - Using the phone
  - Any other reason
- **Take care of injuries**
  - Know the difference between an ache or pain and an injury – if not sure, communicate pain to coach
  - Communicate injuries to coaches, work through aches and pains
  - Do injury workouts or conditioning to stay in shape through injuries
  - Stay with your team as much as possible on the events they are on
  - Ice injuries at home and at gymnastics
  - Avoid things that hurt your injury outside of gymnastics
- **Positive Attitude**
  - Have fun working hard
  - Be motivating to your teammates
  - Remember that negative attitudes spread, stay positive
- **Work Ethic**
  - Use time and equipment wisely to avoid wasted time for you or your teammates
  - Stay busy (ask coaches for additional work if you need it)
  - Be self-motivated: don't wait for the coaches to push you
  - Always do your best

**Disciplinary Actions** – Unkind, unsafe, or improper behavior including breaking gym rules will be handled as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> time: warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> time: Gymnast will be sent home. Will discuss a punishment with parents if behavior continues.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time: punishment enforced

**Injured Athletes** – are expected to participate in practice to the 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.

**Injury Credits**- A meeting with the Head Coach must be set up to discuss the situation. The Head Coach, Parents and possibly the doctor involved will discuss the extent of the injury and come up with allowable activities. As a general rule: If training hours are changed/reduced, you will pay for the hours based on the Team rate schedule. – You will pay for the time you come to the gym.

### **Rules and Expectations for Parents**

The parents are as much a part of our team as the athletes and the coaches! We encourage all our parents to attend every competition and to be involved in our program. But as parents you should be aware that as a member of our team you are representing Red River Valley Gymnastics too! With that in mind, a few guidelines for our parents during competitions & in the gym are an order:

- Cheer loud and often for all of the members of our team and for any good performance that you see.
- Promote Red River Valley Gymnastics in every way that you feel is appropriate: T-shirts, banners and cheers – but never ever speak in a negative way about another club, coach, gymnast or judge. We realize that from time to time, you will hear other parents speak poorly about our team but just keep in mind that the misinformation that they have is often coming from frustration. Ignore it and never stoop down to that level! If you cannot say anything nice, don't say anything at all.
- Under no circumstance is a parent ever to approach a judge before, during or after the competition to comment on, complain about or even ask about a score.
- Under USAG rules, only USAG professional members, judges and persons assigned to assist with the competition are allowed on the competitive floor. Parents should never come on to the competitive floor unless requested to by one of our coaches. (in the case of serious injury or major problem)
- Please do not contact or talk to your gymnast once they are on the competitive floor. We want them to focus all their energy on the competition with as few distractions as possible. After the meet is over, they will come to see you.
- In case of injury during the competition, please wait for your coach to give some indication that you should come onto the competition floor. In most cases the injury will be relatively minor and the coach and /or trainers will take care of it. Your daughter will continue her competition and she will need to maintain her focus. In cases of more serious injury, one of the coaches will come and get you.
- Please think about what you say to your child before and after the competition. Your child only wants your love and praise for her performance (no matter how it went) and how we say things makes a big difference –

**Inappropriate Comments**

“You beat Sally”  
“I’ll give you \$20 if you win today”  
“That judge always scores you low”  
“Why did you fall on beam?”

**More Appropriate Comments**

“You scored your highest yet!”  
“Do your best and have fun”  
“Work hard and next time you’ll score better”  
“You did a great bar routine”

- Do not coach your child – When a parent starts to coach their child, they actually interfere with the very performance they are trying to improve. Please let the coaches do their job in the gym and on the competition floor. In addition to causing confusion for the child as to who they should listen to, it also interferes with the development of the coach/athlete bond which is critical to any long term success in the sport. Finally, do you think that the coaches do not notice that her legs are bent?! Of course, they notice and will at the appropriate time make the child aware of their error.

**Danger signs for Parents to be aware of –**

- Do you praise or punish your child for what you observe during observation time?
- Do you find that your sense of worth and happiness depends on the success of your child?
- Do you constantly compare your child or her progress to others on the team or in competition?
- Do you verbally criticize the coaches, the gym and the program while sitting in the wait room or at competitions?
- Do you video tape every competition and require your child to review it at home with you- going over errors in slow motion, pointing out areas where you think the child could improve?

If you recognize any of these descriptions in yourself, you probably need to reevaluate your actions, your role and your attitudes. Your child is an individual. Your child will progress at her own pace based on her own special talents and abilities. Please do not compare your child to others in the gym. Our athletes although receiving the same coaching on every event will progress at different paces. Fear, work ethic, attitude as well as talent will all play a role in your child’s progression. Allow your child to progress at her own pace and realize that the most important thing is that your child is happy and safe.

**Gymnast Burnout Signs for Parents to be aware of –**

- Doesn’t want to come to the gym
- Always complains of a different injury every day
- Performance declines and gymnast seems withdrawn and fatigued
- Mood changes: gymnast becomes tense, anxious, and/or has difficulty sleeping
- Avoids talking about the gym
- High expectation and demands placed on the gymnast by self and others

**Burnout Prevention Skills for Parents –**

- Recognize the warning signs and learn stress management skills you can teach your gymnast
- Allow your gymnast to have some input into her training

- Help her set realistic goals, not only for gymnastics, but also other life interests
- Communicate and listen to your gymnast frequently
- Minimize criticism... even innocuous parental remarks are frequently perceived by a gymnast as critical

Obviously, in gymnastics, the gymnast has enough challenges to overcome, including maintaining concentration and confidence while minimizing nervousness and fear. As parents, you can play a major part in your gymnast's success. Having your "radar" tuned into their needs and behavior is the best way to ensure that they will live up to their potential!

### **Communication....**

Please call the coaches for any coaching question, the front desk for any billing question, and the gym director for any general gym question. If we cannot help you, we will explain why and will work to find another way to answer your question. Complaining to other parents will not solve the problem, nor can we solve the problem if we do not know about it. If you have enough respect for us to allow us to spend so much time with your child and 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. We will not tolerate idle gossiping about other gymnasts or the coaches in our waiting room. It should be realized that we are a private organization and although we value all our athletes and their families, we believe that if you are so unhappy with the gym & or coaches that you may be better off at another gym.

**Communication in the gym can be a challenge** – We work hard to send home notices, meet information to you in a timely manner. However, they often end up in the bottom of the gym bags. Please check your child's bag from time to time and get in the habit of asking if they received any notices that day when you pick them up or when they arrive home.

**Special problems** – If your child is having problems in school with low grades or there is a special activity that she needs to attend and will be missing practices. NO problem but please let the staff know what is going on and why your child will be missing practices. On the other hand, missing practice may affect the progress of your child and everyone needs to accept this possibility.

**Conferences with Coaches** – Unless there is a major problem, we will not set up conferences with our coaches unless the coach requests one. In most cases, we can handle any problem by telephone or by communication between our front desk and the coaches. If there is a serious problem that needs private discussion, of course, we will set up a meeting in this case. Appointments with James and/or JJ can be made at the front desk and will be scheduled during their office hours. In most cases coach conferences will not be possible without an appointment. Two coaches will be present at all meetings.

**Discipline:** In most cases, discipline problems are minor and will be handled quickly and easily in the gym during the workout. In the event, which the situation continues either with a child or a parent, we will set up a conference to discuss the problems that we are having. In some cases, if this does not help, we will not take the athlete to any more competitions until we have solved the problem. If all else fails, we will ask the athlete and her family to leave our team. Although this is a last resort, it is sometimes necessary.



## **FEES – Tuition, Meet, Coaching, Travel and Other**

**Team tuition is a commitment for a full year** – The decision to join the Red River Valley Gymnastics team is a big one and reflects a commitment to the team for the entire year. Team members do not move on and off the team based on illness, injury, conflicts, or vacations. There are no discounts for missed workouts. Team members are allowed to take one week off during the membership year (September 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31) in addition to the two down weeks scheduled by the Team Directors.

1. The annual membership fee will be charged with your September tuition. The membership fee will include the following charges --- RRVG annual fee (\$20 single or \$30 Family), USAG Athlete Registration, ND Athlete Registration, and the Booster Club Membership dues (\$25 Family, Dyno/Hot Shot/Top Gun \$10) – Acro: RRVG annual fee (\$20 single or \$30 Family) & Performance fee
2. Vacation Credits: All Girls Team members will have 1 week credit. You may take 2 half week credits or 1 full week credit. Simply complete the Vacation Credit form at the front desk. A vacation credit will be placed on your account for the month in which it is used. Credits for the 2 gym down weeks will also be placed on your account in the month they are scheduled.
3. How are your fees calculated? Very simply, everyone attending practice is on an hourly rate based on the number of hours they attend each week. This weekly rate is then multiplied by 52 (52 weeks per year) and then divided by 12 to assess the monthly fee. No other adjustments are made except when you schedule a vacation (1 week total), the gym schedules a down week (2 weeks total) or a National holiday. These will be added as credits to your account.

### **Example: Level 5 Girls Team Athlete**

# hours per week = 10.5hrs/week

Rate per hour = \$3.41    Rate per week = \$35.81

Annual Rate (weekly rate x 52 weeks) = \$1861.86

Monthly Rate: (\$1861.86 / 12) = \$155.15

So then you take a vacation week in March, so your bill for March will be \$119.35 with the credit.

### **RRVGC Leave Policy**

- If circumstances apply that a gymnast must be absent for a month during off season, a meeting with the head coach must be made to discuss options and determine eligibility to join the team again.
- If a gymnast decides to drop from team, a meeting needs to be set up with the head coach to discuss options. Parents are responsible for tuition until a meeting takes place.
- If a former gymnast decides to join again, a meeting with the head coach needs to be set up to discuss options.
- If a gymnast is absent for 4 weeks or more without paying, they will be dropped from team. Tuition is still expected to be paid, all efforts will be made to make contact with the family regarding payments. After 60 days past due, the account will be sent to collections.

To re-enroll onto team, the policy is:

- A meeting with the head coach needs to be set up to discuss options.
- Gymnast is put on probation for 2 months and will pay by the gym's open rate.

**Meet Entry Fees:** Athletes will be responsible to pay entry fees to Red River Valley Gymnastics by deadline dates for any meet that they are planning on attending. Red River Valley Gymnastics will send in entry fees for all athletes who have paid the fee to the appropriate meet host. Athletes who have not paid the fee will not be entered in the competition. Entry fees received after the deadline date will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee (provided it is not too late to enter the athlete in the competition.) **Only athletes that are current on their Booster and Gym fees will be registered for the meets.**

	<b>ND Meet</b>	<b>Out of State</b>
Level 4 – 6	\$25	\$55-\$85
Level 7	\$35	\$55-\$85
Levels 8 – 9	\$45	\$65-\$85
Level 10	\$50	\$65-\$85

**REFUNDS of Meet Entry Fees:** Each competition will have their own deadline and rules for refunds. There are no guarantees that if you scratch from a competition that you will receive a refund. In most cases, if you scratch at least 60 days prior to the event, you should receive a refund. If you cancel 2 weeks or less prior to the date of the meet, you will NOT receive a refund. If your child cannot attend a competition, you need to contact the office immediately and we will notify the meet host. IF & WHEN we receive the refund, we will credit your account. Please do not subtract the entry fee from your tuition on your own.

**Coaches Fees for Meets:** Parents are responsible for coaching fees for all meets regardless of attendance.

**Athletes Travel Fees:** All athletes and their families will be responsible for their own travel expenses to competitions. For all in state meets, each family will be responsible to make their own hotel and travel arrangements. The gym will provide host hotel information and times of competitions as soon as it is available. Red River Valley gymnasts must always travel with a parent(s)/ legal guardians/ or in an arranged situation with another family. Under no circumstances is a gymnast allowed to travel with a coach for any Red River Valley Gymnastics related event without another adult present and without the prior approval of the gym.

**Private Lessons:** These are optional lessons. The gym does not require private lessons. All private lessons must be set up through our secretary. Coaches' fees will be specified and payment is due at the time of the lesson. Lessons will only be scheduled during a normal operating hours and when the coaches do not have workout or classes. Private lessons will only be scheduled for athletes who are current on their tuition.

## USAG Meet Season Check List

- **All fees are approximates and are subject to change.**

1. USAG Athlete Membership Fee	\$53
2. ND Athlete Fee	\$15
3. Warm-Up Leo (September Deadline)	\$20-\$30
4. Competition Leo (September Deadline)	\$90-\$110
5. Warm-up Suit (September Deadline)	\$120-\$130
6. Meet registration deadlines	\$5 late fee
7. Levels 7 -10 gymnasts have their floor and beam routines choreographed and ready for the season.	\$125 Floor \$75 Beam
8. Floor routine music ordered. Once you get the music please give a copy to the head coach.	\$60-\$70

### **New Routine Choreography**

All level 7 and above gymnasts have their Floor and Beam routines choreographed by a coach of their choice.

1. \$125 for a floor routine: Includes up to 5 hours of private lessons.  
(All the hours may not be used depending on the gymnast)
2. \$75 for a beam routine: Includes up to 3 hours of private lessons.  
(All the hours may not be used depending on the gymnast)
3. Payment in full must be made prior to the private lessons.
4. Parents are responsible for ordering the music for new routines. Please try and have them ordered no later than mid September.

- **All fees are approximates and are subject to change.**