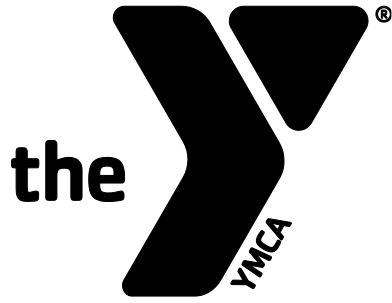




**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

2026-2027 Stevens Point Area YMCA Gymnastics SPIRITS Team Handbook

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Welcome to the Stevens Point Area YMCA Gymnastics Team...Go SPIRITS!

This handbook is designed to give gymnasts and parents a better understanding of the Stevens Point Area YMCA Gymnastics Team. This handbook has information gymnasts and parents will need to make their gymnastics experience a positive one.

Our Mission & Philosophy

The Stevens Point Area YMCA Gymnastics Team (SPIRITS) is committed to providing every child and family with a positive gymnastics experience. We teach safe gymnastics through quality instruction and encouragement while promoting the four core values of the Y; Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. The Stevens Point Area YMCA builds strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

Our program is a progressive goal-setting environment for gymnastics training with teamwork as an emphasis. We believe the attainment of personal goals is the first step in the development of an all-around athlete. Success is the achievement of goals.

Our Goals for Gymnasts in Our Program

- *To realize success is getting better, rather than winning. The development of the potential of the individual through which winning has a reinforcing and positive effect.
- *To understand that athletics provides a lifetime outlet for exercise and living a healthy lifestyle.
- *To promote a love for sports.
- *To learn: good sportsmanship, self-discipline, commitment, team play, goal setting, how to lose, how to win, personal achievement, individual excellence, maintaining a schedule, responsibility, time management, handling disappointment, handling frustration, handling success, handling pressure and leadership.

General Team Level Information

Our team consists of many different levels. Gymnasts are invited to join the team when they possess the physical and mental skill required for a given level.

Competitive levels include Xcel Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum and Junior Olympic levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Although there are similar skills and sequences done in some of the levels, each have their own set of rules and requirements. Both Xcel and Junior Olympic (JO) programs are run and governed by USA Gymnastics. USAG and the YMCA offer both of these gymnastics "tracks" to allow a greater number of gymnasts experiencing competitive gymnastics. Both tracks are competitive in our area, within all of the surrounding gyms in the state, as well as across the country.

- **Compulsory Level:** These levels are the beginning of competition in which the gymnasts perform a set routine that allows for no changes from the text established by USA Gymnastics. Levels 1-5 are compulsory levels.
- **Optionals Level:** The more advanced levels of competition in which the gymnasts perform routines, they create, along with their coach, and that meets the skill value requirements for their level of competition. Levels 6-10 are called Optionals.

- **Xcel:** This program is for gymnasts ten or older and the purpose is to provide an alternative optional level of competition to serve any of the following gymnasts: those who have competed on the team at the compulsory level and would like to experience a basic optional program, or those who have competed as an optional level but no longer have time or desire to train skills required. Xcel is not a closed door; it is simply a different pathway. We can expect to see more Xcel gymnasts from other teams again this year. A year or two at Xcel, and then moving to optionals (levels 6-10) may be a good option for some Level 4 or 5's.

Roles and Responsibilities

GYMNAST:

- To exhibit the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility AT ALL TIMES.
- To work hard and honestly in all training areas.
- To show respect for teammates, coaches, opponents, judges and parents.
- To treat others as one would like to be treated.
- To take care of the gym equipment and keep the training area clean.
- To display good sportsmanship at all times!

PARENT:

- To exhibit the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility AT ALL TIMES.
- To actively support the program through positive attitudes, comments and actions.
- To become actively involved with the SPIRITS PARENT ORGANIZATION (SPO).
- To show interest, enthusiasm, and support of their child.
- To work as a team with the coaches and communicate effectively with one another.
- To treat others as one would like to be treated.
- To display good sportsmanship at all times!

Issues and Concerns

It is our policy to resolve any issue that may come up with the gymnast first. If it is something we think you need to be aware of, we will contact you. If a parent or gymnast has a question or concern relating to potentially controversial or confidential subjects, we ask that an appointment be made. During a meet or practice is not the time for an in-depth discussion.

Attendance Expectations

- All scheduled practices need to be attended.
- Please call the Gymnastic Center (X321) if your child cannot attend, will be late or will need to leave early from practice. You may send a note if you know in advance of any absence. Indicate the date(s) of absence, the reason and sign the note. The gymnastics team staff reserve the right to recommend the removal from competition, without refund, from any meet if a gymnast has not been attending practice on a regular weekly basis. We expect gymnasts to attend a minimum of one practice out of the two offered during the week of that meet, this does not include open gyms.
- There are **NO** scheduled make-ups for team level gymnasts.
- All team members must keep a strong attendance. Times and day for each level vary depending on the skills required at each level. Attending practices regularly will help the coaches and gymnast achieve requirements with safety and less frustration.
- The best practice is to be at practice!

Injuries

- All injuries in or out of practice must be reported.
- If your gymnast goes to the doctor for their injury and is given any restrictions, needs the use of a brace or tape for their injury, this must be signed off by the physician. The note must be given to the level coach before the gymnast may participate with the support device.
 - The note should include the following information:
 - Reason it needs to be worn, length of time it is expected to be needed and whether or not the gymnast is meeting with a physical therapist to develop a plan to strengthen the area currently being supported.
- In the event that your gymnast is injured, they will also need a doctor's note releasing them back into gymnastics. It does not matter if the injury occurred here, at home or at school. Any time they are injured they will need a release. This is so we can continue to make safe choices for their activity level.
- **Gymnasts will not be able to participate in practice or a meet wearing a brace unless a Doctor's note is provided.**

Practice Attire

- **A leotard must be worn at practice.** Spandex bike shorts/gymnastics' workout shorts may be also worn. NO loose or baggy clothing while practicing.
- Hair **MUST** be pulled back and out of the face.
- NO jewelry worn. This includes necklaces and rings. Only stud earrings allowed.
- Team competition leotards should not be worn during practice.

Practice Structure

- All levels begin practice with a structured stretching time.
- Each level has their own routine.
- Each level will have cardiovascular work, running, etc., timed by the coach also based on the skill level. Then each level will complete their warm-up skills, which includes tumbling basics, dance and leap passes from their level floor routine and more as needed.
- Event work will follow.
- Conditioning will occur at the beginning, during or the end of practice. Some home conditioning will assigned.

Participation at Practice

- You need to eat before you get to practice. If you come straight from school, eat a snack before you arrive.
- Gymnasts need to be on time, dressed for practice when they arrive, including having their hair done, when practice begins and stay until the end of practice.
- Full participation in stretching is an expectation. If you are late, please ask the coach that is leading, what is needed to start and then finish the stretching at the beginning at the first event.
- Gymnasts are expected to stay in the gym and active for the duration of practice, leaving only to get a drink or use the restroom. Please ask for permission from a coach before leaving the gym.

Personal Items During Practice

- Please place personal items in your cubby.
- The athlete's grips, hair ties, leotards, etc. are the athlete's responsibility and the athlete alone. Parents do not use these items, they are not expected to remember them.
- If your hair is longer than your ears, you need barrettes or elastic ties to keep your hair up.
- Leave your cell phone in your gym bag at your own risk. Phones are not allowed out of the cubby area.

Picking Up & Setting Up Expectations

- It is an expectation that ALL gymnasts, Level 1 and up will assist in picking up every practice, even if you leave early.
- All gymnasts will be expected to assist in moving equipment whenever necessary.
- Gymnasts are required to communicate with each other and work together, until their job is complete. Teammates may be asked to help move equipment for teammates in another level.
- Please be cooperative, rather than complaining or disappearing into the hallway.

Training at Home

- Our gymnasts have very limited practice time. Gymnasts who spend time training strength and flexibility outside of practice times are able to make much more effective use of their skill training in the gym.
- Skills at or above your current team level are not advised to be practiced at home, as it is generally not a “gymnastics safe” environment and can increase an unneeded risk for fluke or overuse injuries.
- Stretching—like straddle, pike, right/left/middle splits and even walking on toe—is advised and strongly recommended to safely practice at home.

Priorities for Gymnasts

Family first, academics second, gymnastics third. There will be sacrifices. There will be times when gymnasts will have to pass on dances or sleepovers in favor of practice and meets. This is part of the commitment the athletes makes to herself, her family and her team.

Expectations of Gymnasts

The way you act in the gym is a reflection of your respect for yourself, for teammates, and for SPIRITS Gymnastics. Only the highest standard of behavior will be acceptable. We ask that you have a positive attitude, come to practice with the intention of working hard, and working together with teammates. The following actions show respect and expected of a team member.

- You are expected to work hard and do your best.
- Arrive at the gym ready to participate with proper attire, hair pulled back, jewelry off and ready to go!
- Treat other gymnasts with respect, be kind to those gymnasts younger than you. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and if you have not found them yet...you WILL!
- Only concern yourself with things that YOU can control, which are YOUR ATTITUDE, YOUR EFFORT...YOUR GYMNASTICS!!
- Maintain a positive attitude when facing fears and frustrations. Gymnastics is the most demanding and difficult of all sports. All gymnasts suffer setbacks, frustration, fear and defeat. Expect these things, learn from them, face them and overcome them!
- You must have coach’s permission to leave the gym. This applies to going to the restroom, getting a drink or talking to your parents. The main reason is so that your coaches always know where you are.
- There is no place in our gym for displays of anger or disgust, talking back to coaches or other adults. You will have consequences for these actions.
- Show respect for your safety and to the demands of your coaches by staying off the equipment without specific permission and supervision of a coach.
- Always wait inside the YMCA facility for your ride.

Parent/Guardian Behavior During Practice

Be supportive of your child. YMCA gymnastics is a chance for your child to grow and develop in a safe, fun environment. Cheer and encourage all gymnasts, model good sportsmanship and above all be positive. Officials and coaches are trying to provide a positive and enjoyable gymnastics experience for all gymnasts. Let them practice, compete, have fun, make mistakes and do not put pressure on them.

Please know that we have your child's best interests at heart. Decisions are made with what we, as gymnastics professionals feel will best help your child to be happy, healthy and successful. Provide unconditional love, encouragement and support your young athlete. Look for progress your child is making and celebrate it!

Expectations of Parents/Guardians

Parents play a huge role in the development of a successful gymnast. Your role is every bit as important as that of the gym, coaches and the athlete. The following actions and ideas are expected of the Stevens Point Area YMCA Gymnastics Team member's parents.

- Tuition and fees **must** be paid on time and a commitment to transport your gymnast to and from practices and competitions must be made.
- A gymnast's parents are an instrumental contributor to her success and happiness. Parents must help instill work ethic, values and provide support for your gymnast to be successful.
- You have chosen to bring your child to trained coaches. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. Please do not offer advice on technique or skill, this may confuse your child and prevent that gymnast/coach bond from forming.
- If you need to get a message to your gymnast during practice, please call the Gymnastic Center (X321) and a coach will relay the message.
- Parents or family members are not permitted in the gym during practice, you may view from the hallway.
- We feel communication with the parents of our team members should be open and flowing. All-important information regarding team will be distributed via email and sportsYou.
- **PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAILS AND sportsYou!**
- Parents are expected and encouraged to show proper respect for our sport at all times. Rude, belittling or negative comments about coaches, parents and other gymnasts are always inappropriate and have no place in our program.
- If you have a problem or concern, please speak to the coaches and/or Gymnastics' Director. Complaining to other parents cannot solve your problem, nor can we solve them if we do not know about them. So save yourself the time and aggravation and please come to us.
- Be encouraging and positive to your child. Be careful of comparison because each child is an individual with different talents and capabilities.
- Please be on time dropping off/picking up your gymnast.

- Please familiarize yourself and your gymnast with the Team Handbook. It is important that parents and gymnast understands the rules and policies of the competition team.
- Spectating is allowed and encouraged from the hallway, come see what these talented gymnasts do during their practices!!

Advancement-Moving Up A Level

During the competitive season, a gymnast is required to achieve a state mandate score or higher all around three times during the competitive season to be considered to move up a level for the following season. We will continue upskill throughout the season as well as use the pre-season(July-September) to prepare for their new level for competition in October.

Getting three required scores does not mean a gymnast will move up automatically. In addition to scores, there are other factors that we consider before moving a gymnast up to the next level such as:

- Coach's recommendation
- Coach's belief the gymnast has/will have the ability to succeed in three out of the four events in the next level
- Coaches see potential in the gymnast's flexibility and strength abilities
- Gymnast has a POSITIVE ATTITUDE!!!
- Gymnast works hard during practice
- Gymnast has minimal disciplinary problems
- Regular attendance at practices and meets

Gymnasts are evaluated all season. There is a specific list of skills and sequences that are set for each level. Gymnasts who have achieved the required skills and have met all other criteria will be moved up at the end of mini session. If your gymnast did not move up at the end of mini session, they will have the opportunity to continue to work their skills and be moved up at the end of July. As a general guide, gymnasts remain on each level for two competitive seasons.

Gymnasts who are moved up in the first round of evaluations must meet their summer requirements on their new level for September.

Any gymnast who chooses not to participate beyond the standard season (takes the summer session off) will need to attend and try out in the beginning of August to be placed accordingly.

Meet Information

- **Meet Attendance and Expectations**

Our regular season includes home and away meets that are scheduled between October and April. All of our meets are held within three hours of Stevens Point and will be held on one day of the scheduled weekend.

- **Meet Length**

The average meet can take four hours or more. Many competitions are about two hours for the competition, 45 minutes for warm-ups and one hour for awards. Gymnasts are required to arrive about 30 minutes prior to their posted stretch time ready to participate—leotards and warm-ups on and hair completely done—and stay until awards are completed.

- **Awards**

Awards distributed after all sessions of the level are complete. Generally, after the last team has completed their last event, awards will start 15-20 minutes later. Each awards presentation we will need a parent volunteer to chaperone the team during the ceremony when a team coach is not available.

- **Judging**

Gymnasts and parents may not have any discussions with judges relating to routines and scores at any time. Please see a coach at the next practice or after the meet if you have a question.

Gymnasts Behavior During Meets

- Gymnasts should be in uniform, hair pulled up and ready to compete when they arrive.
- Gymnasts will wait with their parents until a coach arrives and directs them to the stretching area.
- Gymnasts should remain in the designated competitions area throughout the course of warm-ups and competition.
- Gymnasts are expected to stay with their team level for the duration of the meet.
- Gymnasts may not leave until the entire meet is complete.
- Gymnasts must let a coach know if they need to leave the competition floor to use the bathroom, etc.
- Cheer loudly and often but in a courteous manner.
- Each gymnast should accept her place in the lineup and the scores she receives with dignity and without criticism.
- Gymnasts are expected to stay at the meet until all awards for all participants have been given out.
- Gymnasts must wear team leotards only or full warm-ups to receive awards.
- Only water bottles allowed on competition floor. Healthy snacks are allowed while waiting for awards.
- All electronic devices (phone, iPad, iPod, tablet, etc.) must stay with your parents during warm-ups, competition and awards.
- While it is good to have someone who keeps you motivated because she is a little better than you are, please do not concentrate on "beating" each other. You are a team. Behave as one. Let your teammate inspire you!!

Meet Etiquette for Parents

- Be courteous, respectful and polite to all meet officials, hosts, competitors and coaches.
- Show team spirit. Cheer loudly and often, but do so in a courteous manner.
- Please show proper respect to all officials and coaches at every competition. They are all there for one reason—to support your child's interests. Under no circumstances should you attempt to contact any 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, please speak with a coach after the meet or at the next practice. It would be an

unusual situation in which a coach should ask a judge why a score is low. It would be even more unusual for a judge to agree and change the score.

- Please show proper respect to all competitors. You NEVER KNOW who is sitting near you.
- Please remain in the spectator's area. Parents, friends and relatives of the gymnast are not allowed on the competition floor at any time.
- Do not coach your child from the stands. Coaches should coach and everyone else should encourage.
- **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY!!**
- If your child becomes injured, please stay off the competition floor until a coach motions you to come to your gymnast.
- Treat all other gymnasts competing how you would like your gymnast to be treated.

Home Meet Participation

- The Home Meet is the weekend of October 16-18, competition on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday.
- Each Team family is **REQUIRED** to help with our Home Meet. Participation is required in order for your gymnast to be able to compete on this team. In order to make our meet a success, both for the gymnasts and financially for our program, we need full participation from everyone.
- **Responsibilities**
Parents are responsible to help organize and work at our home meet.
- **Fee**
A \$30.00 fee per session will be billed to your gymnasts' account if you have not signed up to help for the home meet. (Up to three sessions may be required to work per gymnast)
- **Food donations**
It is important to have a plentiful supply of baked goods, vegetables and any other tasty treats for our concession stand during our meet. (Sign-ups will be available closer to the meet)
- **Meet Set-up**
This requires a lot of physical work and is necessary to have many hands available to make the job go quickly. The items listed below are just some of the things that must be done before a meet.
 - Move balance beam and bars to the big gym (basketball gym)
 - Move mats to the big gym
 - Set up chairs in gymnastics center
 - Vacuum floor in gymnastics center
 - Set up bleachers in big gym
 - Get Concessions ready
 - Set up judges' tables
 - Set up for admissions
 - Set up judges' and coaches' room
 - Plus more!! :0)

- **Examples of volunteer jobs needed for meet:**

- Admissions, registration, concessions, scorer, announcer, beam timer, games, leotard sales, flasher, runner
- Information that is more complete will be available closer to the meet.

Meet Clean-up: All things that were done for set-up must be done for cleanup. Many hands are again needed. By the end of a meet weekend everybody is very tired, so as many helping hands as we can get makes the job go faster so we can all retire from a job well done!

****We will have a meeting closer to our Home Meet with information that is more specific about volunteering, job duties, etc.**

FUNDRAISERS

We will hold a variety of fundraisers this season, more information to come. Our Home Meet has been our largest and only fundraiser for team over the years. Our new fundraisers will help cover cost related to purchasing/replacing equipment, for example; torn or worn mats or props, iPad. We will also have the ongoing opportunity for fundraisers to benefit your gymnast or family to help offset purchases for team leo, team jacket and also fess.

We are also interested in other fundraisers to hold, if you have any ideas, please let us know.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristy Bridenhagen, 715-952-9365, kbridenhagen@spymca.org or Theresa Christianson, 715-342-2980 ext. 315, tchristianson@spymca.org and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for attending our annual SPIRITS Gymnastics Parent Meeting!