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February 3, 2010

Dear Venice Y Goldstar Parents & Gymnasts,

On behalf of the Venice YMCA and its competitive gymnastics coaching staff, we would like to thank you for being such supportive parents in our program. The following is a compilation of several rules, policies, philosophies and tips. Please read this handbook carefully as it will answer most questions regarding competitive gymnastics at the Venice YMCA. We are very excited about the upcoming season.

Gymnastics is such a great sport for developing lifelong skills and friendships that will increase overall proficiency with whatever the future may hold. Through combined years of training and experience, the YMCA gymnastics staff's goal is to provide a positive competitive experience. We want to provide each gymnast with the best possible training (physically and mentally) to maximize potential and establish a disciplined environment that will be with her throughout her life. Our mission is to develop happy, healthy and confident young people.

While winning is not so important, trying to win represents everything that we strive for.

Trying to win means that you do your best to attend every scheduled workout, you train hard at every workout, you respect your coaches and teammates, you overcome fear and that you maintain a positive attitude through every obstacle. We measure our progress by how we portray ourselves and how we execute on the practice and competition floor.

Understanding the fact that being involved in a competitive gymnastics program requires a financial, physical and social commitment to the sport, we believe that if the entity pledges to a commitment of teamwork, the experience will be fulfilling for everyone. Presented here is a *policy and information handbook* to help guide parents and athletes in their roles.

The YMCA has provided a Goldstar team webpage linked to the gymnastics home page. Username: YMCA, Password: Goldstar. Please refer to this site for additional team information. If you ever have any questions, please contact us. We will be happy to discuss anything regarding your child or the program.

Michelle Guy
Gymnastics Director - Michelle@veniceymca.org

Alyssa Freeman	Level 3 Coach
Chrissy Brown	Level 3/4 Coach
Debbie Kotti	Level 4 Coach, Goldstar Team Coordinator; email: ynastics@gmail.com
Whitney Carter	Level 5 Coach
Cherie Chambers	Optional Level Coach
Dinko Dinev	Optional Level Coach

Parents' Responsibilities

Mission: *To support the Venice YMCA and its Gymnastics Program financially, physically, and socially. To be your child's #1 fan!*

FINANCIAL

A. **Monthly Tuition Expense** – This monthly fee covers training hours, uniform fees, meet fees and association membership fees that vary per level. The fee is collected through a monthly bank draft or credit card draft per appropriate account. (A one time payment of the year in full will also be accepted.) Monthly team fees must be paid regardless of attendance. This payment is maintaining your spot on the team. YMCA member and non-member rates apply.

1. **Training hours** – The 2009-10 training period is Tuesday, September 1st through Friday, May 28th. The spring “Jamboree” will be Friday & Saturday, May 21st & 22nd.

The following are days there will **not be** any regular practice:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. November 25 th – 27 th | Thanksgiving Break |
| b. December 21 st – Jan 1 st | Christmas Break (Practice 12/28, 12/29, 12/30 all levels) |
| c. February 12 th | Set-up for Auction |
| d. March 29 th – April 2 nd | Sarasota County Spring Break |

2. **Uniforms** – Competition leotard, bikers, team bag, and warm-up suit are included in the monthly fees. Any gymnast who does not have a uniform item will have to pay an additional fee for that item. Daily workout attire, hand grips and tape are not included in the monthly fee and may be purchased separately in the YMCA gymnastics pro-shop.

3. **Meet Fees** – Meet fees are included in the monthly tuition expense. Additional meets, YMCA Nationals and any other meets to qualify for these competitions, will be billed in addition to the monthly fees.

B. **Summer Team Training** – To be eligible for August tryouts, gymnast must fulfill the required attendance for summer camp.

C. **Make-ups** – Make-ups will be given for certain missed days:

1. Practices canceled due to inclement weather
2. Coach's conflict

Note: *Injured gymnasts are expected to come to practice. A special workout will be designed to facilitate rehabilitation with injured gymnasts. There are no make-ups for missed practices due to family vacations, etc.*

D. **Try Out Fee** – This expense is directly related to competition: i.e. coach's salaries, hotel expense, and food allowance. The tryout fee is will paid in full on the day of tryout.

E. **YMCA Membership** – Members of the YMCA receive the benefit of member program discounted rates. If you are not a member of the South County Family YMCA, non-member program rates apply. Please place your membership I.D. number in the appropriate space on the acknowledgement form enclosed. These forms are due by February 19, 2010. (The age for a youth membership will be waived for Goldstar Team members. Please see Michelle re. this issue.)

F. **Optional Floor Music** – Optional level (not compulsory 3-6) gymnasts need to purchase their own optional floor exercise music, which could range from \$30 - \$100, depending on the gymnast's selection. Consultations with the Optional level coaches should take place before music selections are made.

G. **Optional Routines** – Fees for individual choreographers will vary. Private lessons will need to be scheduled for each gymnast's needs. Optional routines are in addition to the regular practice and monthly fees.

PHYSICAL

H. **Transportation** – It is the responsibility of each parent to provide transportation:

1. **Practice** – Attendance is extremely important because the gymnasts and coaches are following lesson plans training towards particular goals at specific times of the year. Punctuality is equally important due to the fact that the workouts are based on specific timed rotations and a proper warm-up period and conditioning period are pertinent. Gymnasts are not to arrive more than 15 minutes prior to practice or to be picked up later than 15 minutes after completion of practice.

Mandatory: If arriving late, please bring a written note to practice, which has been signed by the gymnast's parent. If absent, please call the YMCA Gymnastics direct line @ 375-9121 and leave a message prior to the missed practice – **we worry about you.**

2. **Meets** – Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled general stretch/warm-up time. Make sure each gymnast is ready to compete (hair done, competition leotard and warm-up on, gym bag). Maps and itineraries for competitions will be handed out as soon as they are made available. Sometimes the host gym delays this process.

a. Once the competition season begins, each gymnast will be expected to compete in every meet. All healthy team gymnasts will be entered into a competition. If unable to compete in a particular meet please let the gymnastics staff know **IN WRITING 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE COMPETITION**. This is very important because meet entry forms and fees are due to the host gym 3 - 4 weeks prior to the competition. A schedule of competitions is handed out prior to the season.

b. If practice is missed the week of a competition, the gymnast will not be allowed to participate in the competition. *The only exception is an excused absence verified by coach and/or gymnastics director prior to the day missed. Meet fees will not be reimbursed in this case.*

c. It is inappropriate to discuss your child's score and/or performance with judges. Please address all questions to your child's coach at the end of the meet (if time allows) or back at the gym before or after the next practice. It is also **inappropriate** for a parent to step out of the viewing area onto the floor of a meet while the meet is in session. Only gymnasts, coaches, and judges who are qualified to be on the floor are allowed. This is due to safety and liability factors per each league of competition.

d. There is to be **NO** flash photography or lights on video cameras during competition. The flash can literally blind the gymnast and/or judge for a brief moment. This puts the gymnast in danger of losing sight of the apparatus and injuring herself. Judges may miss skills that are performed and the gymnast may not receive proper credit for the skill.

e. All coaching should come only from the coaches that are on the competition floor with the gymnasts. Spectators make great motivators for the gymnasts by their positive cheers. Once a gymnast is on the competition floor, it is very important to allow them to focus on their skills and routines. Make sure to give out hugs, take pictures, and take care of any personal activities before or after the competition.

f. Keep in mind that scores are good, but that is not our main focus for a meet. The girls are learning, growing, achieving, and overcoming so much more than just a number per event.

3. **Exhibitions and special team functions.** All special team functions, exhibitions and parades are mandatory. You will be notified of these special events via email.

- I. Home Meets** – Goldstar team parents are expected to volunteer in all aspects of a home meet. The proceeds benefit the YMCA and the gymnastics program. A few responsibilities of home meets include:
1. **Concession** – Supplying baked goods, soft drinks, snacks, etc.
 2. **Admission** – Greeting people as they enter and collecting admission fees.
 3. **Decorating** – Making sure the gym is decorated according to the theme of the competition.
 4. **Goodie Bags** – Supplying a goodie bag for each competitor.
 5. **Coaches' and Judges' Hospitality** – This is an important one! Making sure coaches and judges are happy and well fed so they will want to come back.
 6. **Set-up and Clean up** – The gym equipment will be set up differently for a competition either at the YMCA or at an off site facility. Your support and hard work will be greatly appreciated.
- J. Fundraising Events** – Goldstar parents are expected to volunteer at all fundraising events such as, but not exclusive to: skate nights, class programs, concession sales, etc.
- K. Meetings** – Goldstar parents are expected to attend all scheduled team parent meetings.

SOCIAL

- A. Lobby Etiquette** – Understand that talking negatively to other parents about the program or about anything else pertaining to gymnastics in the lobby or at a competition will not be tolerated. If you are overheard talking negatively you will be warned once. If the problem persists, you will no longer be allowed in the lobby or possibly even asked to leave the program. If you have concerns that warrant conversation, please tell us, not the other parents in the reception area or competition venue.

B. Phone Calls

1. All concerns regarding your child at the YMCA should be addressed at (941) 375-9121 or michelle@veniceymca.org.
2. If your gymnasts will not be taking the YMCA transportation, please **call and leave a message**. Do not email. Messages are the first priority of the gymnastics staff. Sometimes the email is not addressed on a timely basis.
3. If for any reason you have a personal phone number of a gymnastics staff member, please do not call that person regarding issues that directly relate to your child at the YMCA. Patiently wait to direct your question with the appropriate staff person during normal business hours.

For best results...*all conflicts, questions, or concerns should be discussed with the gymnastics director.*

“Together Everyone Achieves More”

TEAM

Parents and children can share wonderful times together in sports. Triumphs and heartaches, trophies and defeats, joyous faces and bruised egos – all these can be used for your child's growth and learning. Sports can be a source of joy for young athletes – and can provide them valuable lessons as they journey on toward adulthood.

By helping your child learn and grow through sport, and keeping sport in perspective, sports should provide great moments and memories for both you and your child.

P is for praising, which your child needs often

A is for accepting, so hard edges will soften

R is for recognizing your child's many talents

E is for encouraging a good, healthy balance

N is for nurturing, to help your child grow

T is for teaching, then letting go

S is for smiling at the growth and the glow

- Taken from *SportParent*, American Sport Education Program.

Gymnast's Responsibilities

Mission: *To recognize the fact that being competitive gymnastics team member is an honor and you must represent yourself and the YMCA in a manner reflecting the character development values: respect, responsibility, caring and honesty.*

Any display of misconduct (inside or outside of the gym) will result in a written referral and can jeopardize your position on the team.

Responsibility

A. **Attendance** - Being at practice is the most important part of the discipline involved with competitive gymnastics.

1. **Punctuality** - arrive to practice no more than 15 minutes early to prepare yourself mentally and get the small talk done. If you are late, please have a written excuse signed by your parent.
2. **Absences** - You or your parent must call the YMCA and speak with a coach or leave a message on the gymnastics voicemail 375-9121.
3. If practice is missed the week of a meet, the gymnasts will **not be eligible to compete in the meet**, unless prior approval of the coach and/or gymnastics director. Meet fees will not be reimbursed in this case.

“True champions do not need to be pushed by their coaches, teammates or parents... True champions pull along their coaches, teammates and parents.” -Mark Gibson

B. **Gym Bags** - It is the gymnast's responsibility to be prepared for practice. A leotard, hairbrush, hair tie, deodorant and tape should always accompany the gymnast in her gym bag. *(Please provide your gymnast with a baggie full of hair ties that will last a substantial amount of time.)* Grips, a snack and a drink are optional but should always be considered. Healthy snacks & drinks are highly recommended and can be purchased in the gymnastics pro-shop daily.

C. **Dance Days** – It is mandatory to wear a black leotard on dance days. Tan tights will be worn over the black leotard in the dance class. Ballet shoes are mandatory.

D. **Nutrition** - Although your parents and coaches are here to help advise about proper nutrition, it is ultimately the gymnast's responsibility to eat right. A diet high in complex carbohydrates (bread, pasta, fruits and vegetables) moderate protein (lean red meat, poultry, fish, beans and low-fat dairy products) and relatively low in fat is very important for the young athlete.

“Take responsibility for all that you are and all that you can be.”

-Bob Greene

Respect

Always show respect for teammates, coaches, parents, other gymnasts, YMCA members and YMCA property, as you will expect respect to be shown to you.

Caring

“It’s the support and care and love you give yourself that gives you the real strength to care for and love others.” -Oprah Winfrey

- A. Gymnasts should pick up after themselves and their teammates in the gymnastics facility and lobby. This demonstrates that one cares about the environment they are training in. Each gymnast will be responsible for an area of the gym at the end of practice. The duties will rotate throughout the year and will be posted in the gym.
- B. Staying on the competition floor until the last gymnast is through demonstrates caring.
- C. All gymnasts will stay for the entire awards ceremony at a gymnastics competition. This demonstrates good sportsmanlike conduct. **This means that the gymnast is not to leave the arena until all awards are handed out for the session (unless there has been prior written approval with the head coach).**

Honesty

It is first and foremost to be truthful to others and yourself. This is displayed in our actions and words on a daily basis.

“Without honesty and truth, life has no substance” –Shannon Miller’s Golden Rule



Leagues, Levels and Mobility

Three **leagues** exist for the purpose of competition:

- A. AAU - Amateur Athletic Union
- B. USAG - United States of America Gymnastics
- C. YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association

During the 2010 competitive season, the staff at the YMCA has chosen to support the AAU league for compulsory level 3, 4, 5, 7 and modified optional. Level 8 gymnasts will compete in the USAG league.

Levels of Competition

- A. **Compulsory** - The YMCA host compulsory levels 3, 4, and 5. Compulsory competition consists of the same routine for each individual gymnast at the same level.
- B. **Modified Optionals** - Modified optional exists to help with the transition from compulsories and optionals.
- C. **Optionals** - Level 7, 8, 9, 10 and elite make up the optional levels. Each gymnast competes a different routine with certain requirements for the appropriate level. Most gymnasts at the collegiate level are level 10 and elite where the U.S. national team consists of elites.

Mobility - A gymnast must achieve certain criteria before moving up to the next level. The final decision for moving up will be the decision of the coaching staff. Many aspects i.e. attendance, age, maturity, work ethic, attitude, character development values, and skill acquisition are considered before moving up. A 34.00 AA at the current level will be required before consideration for moving up.

Format of Competition

The **format of a competition** is based upon four Olympic events. The Olympic order is vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise. All-around is the total of all four event scores. Team competition is based upon the size of the team. Teams are competing against other teams of the same size.

Meets are sanctioned according to each league. This means that all rules and policies of the particular league are used and judges are certified to the appropriate level of competition. All gymnasts and coaches must be members of the designated league in order to compete and be on the floor. Persons without a registered number are not allowed on the competition floor. If the rules are not followed, the person involved can cause their team to be disqualified from the competition.

Arrive 15 minutes prior to scheduled **stretch**. The first ½ hour is used to stretch and warm-up on the floor only. After stretch, teams are given their order of competition. Olympic order is always vault, bars, beam and floor. The start event may vary but the order will always be the same. In a traditional format, a team will warm up their first competitive event last. In a capital cup format, a team will warm-up their first competitive event, then immediately compete it. Your itinerary will tell you what time march-in and competition starts. Competition time can range from 2 - 5 hours depending on the size, organization and type of competition.

Following the competition, it will take approximately 15 - 30 minutes for the **awards ceremony** to begin. **All gymnasts are expected to stay for the entire awards ceremony.** Sometimes awards can be lengthy. This depends on the number of competitors in each age group. During the awards ceremony, gymnasts need to be dressed in their complete warm-up or just their competitive leotard. No gum, candy, snacks, or drinks are allowed while accepting awards. Smiles only! Take pride in your achievements and in your team.

Some advice from Shannon Miller:

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned about competition over the years, it’s that you should never compete with anyone but yourself. And since you may not top your best effort, you’ve got to learn from mistakes and disappointments and move on. Always remember to have a sense of humor and be positive. Life isn’t just about gold medals. It’s about what you learn along the way to success, and what you take from the experience.”



Gymnasts & Parents:

Please return this form to the gymnastics office by February 19, 2010.

Thank you!

Acknowledgement Form

I / we have read and understand the rules and guidelines written and provided to us in the gymnast and parent team handbook 2009-2010.

We understand the commitment and responsibilities of being a Goldstar Gymnastics Team Member and parent. I also authorize my current monthly bankdraft/credit card draft of \$ _____

Gymnast's Signature

Parent's Signature

Parents: Please provide the gymnastics department with your YMCA membership ID Number.
(This is found on your ID card)

ID # _____