

Aftershock
Gymnastics
Team Handbook

First of all, WELCOME!

WELCOME to the place where a lifetime of dreaming has become a reality.

Our dream has always been to operate a competitive gymnastics program of the highest caliber - a program that stands for quality. You are now a part of that dream becoming a reality. Our program strives to be the pride of the Coachella Valley, to earn the respect of the Southern California gymnastics community and to be recognized nationally. Finding and developing our team is the most important step in our process. Now YOU are a vital part of that process and an important part of our dream.

WELCOME to a very special team.

Together, our Aftershock Team works hard to develop a strong team program at all levels of competition. Our team has had numerous 1st Place Team titles, State and Regional Champions, a Western National Champion, a State Team Member, TOPs National Qualifiers, and graduating athletes placed on college gymnastics teams. The coaches and staff take a great deal of pride in the accomplishments of our gymnastics team. Strong competitive performances and the behavior of our gymnasts and parents at meets are important to us and our program. Your child should feel a great sense of accomplishment and pride because they are part of a very select group. We grow together, learn together and take joy in watching our athletes develop into outstanding young people.

WELCOME to the place where children can live their dreams.

With the support of very special people like YOU and our dedicated coaching staff, our team members will be empowered to set goals, dream big and then work hard in pursuit of those goals & dreams. The coaches and parents are encouraged to work together to make accomplishing those dreams a reality. Here is a place where we sincerely believed that the sum of the parts IS greater than any one individual.

Now let's get started!

Doing Our Part- Coaches' Responsibilities:

Role Models

The staff at Aftershock understands that we must shoulder the major responsibility of being a role model for our athletes. The number of hours that they interact with our athletes dictates that they will be major contributors in the overall development of your children. This is a responsibility that we do not take lightly.

Technical Excellence

When you combine the major responsibilities of staying in tune with the world's most technically advanced and ever-changing sport, the inherent dangers involved in gymnastics and the important responsibility of our role in your child's development, it is paramount that we have the resources, experience and desire to do the job right. Aftershock staff members are safety-certified professional members of USA Gymnastics. They have undergone background checks and have spent hours training, meeting and keeping up-to-date with the sport in order to train the children/athletes at the highest level possible. Along with the assistance of our team parents, the club regularly sends team coaches to attend conferences and clinics with the very best gymnastics professionals including members of the US National Team Staff... the same coaches who train our Olympic Team! The professional development of our staff is, and always will be, of the highest priority.

Coach The Whole Person

Our coaches have signed commitments to coaching the whole person, not just the gymnast. Our coaches strive to win, while pursuing the more-important goal of teaching life lessons through sports.

Being A Winning Parent - Your Responsibilities:

Fully Commit To The Expectations For Your Daughter's Level

Aftershock team membership is a huge commitment, and we ask that you read and understand all the expectations set forth in our team handbook to make an informed decision about whether being an Aftershock team member is for you at this time. By paying your tuition and accepting a spot on our team, you are agreeing to the terms set forth in this handbook.

Maintain a harmonious and professional relationship with the coaching staff and club.

Parents can support coaching decisions by clarifying concerns with a coach in an open and caring way, and then helping their children to understand and accept those decisions. It is important that parents show respect for the authority of your child's coach. Members of the coaching staff will be available to you to discuss your concerns. If ever you feel the need to carry a concern to our owners, Alison or Jeannette, please know that our doors are always open.

Be Your Child's Biggest Fan

Gymnastics, like life, will have its ups and downs. When your child comes to you in need of encouragement, it is your job to give them a hug, remind them of how wonderful they are, and send them to train with renewed confidence. Parents must be strong enough to see their children achieve success and also to occasionally fail or experience disappointment. The latter is when we really need YOUR help. The children will confide in you during these times... and they are unique opportunities for you to teach fearlessness & perseverance, demonstrate exemplary sportsmanship, and tenderly lead the experience to a "good place" in the child's mind... Fuel for next time!

A Brief History Of Our Team

Please see more about our team coaches by looking on our website, www.powerkidscenter.com: meet our staff, and review our Champions Page on www.aftershockgymnastics.com.

A Note To Future Team Parents

Behind every success of our athletes is a dedicated parent. Being a part of the team program is not for everybody. You are to be congratulated because you are taking the time to think through the consequences of team membership. Many parents are so thrilled when their child is asked to be on the team they do not take the time to assess what the consequences will be on the rest of their lives. This team is a competitive one, not a recreational endeavor. That means more time, commitment, expense and responsibility from both the athlete and parent.

What is Pre-Team?

Developmental Pre-Team at Aftershock include Super Tots (3-4 year olds), Hot Shots (5-7 year olds) and Pre-Team (8 and 12 years old).

Developmental Pre-Team is simply the stepping-stone between the recreational class program and the competitive program. It is a place for students with gymnastics aptitude to explore the avenue to the competitive team world. It is a place to “get your feet wet” while easing into the obligations associated with being a member of our Aftershock Team.

The Developmental Pre-Team groups are a place for talented students to experience accelerated training. Since the training hours increase, so does the learning. Expectations are higher, the challenges are greater and the results follow suit. These gymnasts will have the opportunity to compete in “fun meets” that are designed to assist the young gymnast in becoming familiar with the rules of competing.

First year Developmental Pre-Team members will compete in the two in-house exhibition meets during the year, usually the December holiday show and the Spring inspirational meet.

Developmental Pre-Team is NOT a place for students who have no intention of exploring the world of competitive gymnastics. Pre-Team is NOT to be used as an advanced gymnastics class.

Additional Pre-Team Information

We hope that this review of common questions regarding our Pre-Team will be helpful to you:

Q: How does a gymnast get involved in Pre-Team?

A: Three times a year, recommendations for Team Try-Outs go home (Fall Team Try-Out Recommendations go out in August, Spring recommendations go out in November, and Summer Recommendations go out in April) for currently enrolled students. Students with advanced skill attainment, interest and/or high potential to succeed at Team may be invited into Developmental Pre-Team at these times. From time to time, a gymnast participating in our recreational program is invited to join one of our Developmental Pre-Team groups mid-year. At that time, the coaching staff will sit down with you and go over any questions you have on an individual or small group basis.

Q: If my child is invited on to one of the Developmental Pre-Teams, what does that mean?

As discussed in the Team Handbook, membership in one of our Developmental Pre-Team is a year round commitment and carries monthly tuition fees. Team members, like those involved in recreational classes, will need to be Members of PowerKids Center (\$48 annually, due as part of the competitive dues paid to the CVGA).

Q: Is Developmental Pre-Team a part of your regular Developmental program?

A: NO! Pre-Team members, although they come from the ranks of our excellent Developmental Class program, are expected to be committed to their training and development into a competitive gymnast. By offering Developmental Pre-Team as a bridge to the rigors of competitive gymnastics, we hope to

give our gymnasts the opportunity to see if this sport is right for them.

Q: My daughter enjoys gymnastics, but doesn't think she is interested in competing. Is Developmental Pre-Team the right place for her?

A: Understanding that Developmental Pre-Team is a stepping stone to our Competitive Team program, we view competition as an important part of the experience. The opportunity to compete and be part of a team in competition is one of the big pay backs for the time and effort spent in the gym.

Developmental Pre-Team members are encouraged to compete at 'fun meets' that give them a real taste of competing in a "non-competitive" environment.

Q: How do I know what fun meets we will be attending?

A: It is our practice to pick the dates of the selected fun meets towards the end of summer each year.

Q: How are the costs to participate in fun meets paid and what are we paying for?

Upon joining a Developmental Pre-Team group, you will have 6 months to pay team fees through our Booster Club (CVGA) of \$300. These team fees will cover the Holiday Team Party, the Holiday Show, The Spring Inspirational Meet, the Team Banquet, and an apparel package. First year Developmental Pre-Team members cannot "opt-out" of team dues. Fundraising opportunities are available (see Booster Club section).

Second year Hot Shots and Pre-Team members may be invited to compete in Level 2 to prepare fully for the competitive experience in their future. Level 2s pay full team fees (usually upwards of \$1500) in five installments from May-September. Team fees will include four "fun meets" around Southern California (they will love them!), the Holiday Team Party, the Holiday Show, The Spring Inspirational Meet, the Team Banquet, and an apparel package. Fundraising opportunities are available (see Booster Club section).

Second year Developmental Pre-Team gymnasts can "opt-out" of Level 2 recommendations, but will still need to pay \$300 team dues to continue in the Developmental Pre-Team Program. While the financial commitment is great, competing in level 2 is highly recommended. One of the greatest benefits of participating in gymnastics is the self-confidence and poise that comes from competing.

Developmental Pre-Team Members must pay full team dues and participate in level 2, 3 or Xcel competition when entering their third year in the group.

Q: Who do I talk to if I have questions about Developmental Pre-Team Team and my child's progress?

A: As is true for all Team members, any questions or issues should first be directed to your child's coach. They are in the best position to give feedback.

What is Competitive Team?

Competitive team membership is for the child who wants more of the sport than can be achieved by participation in our developmental class program. Southern California is one of the best places in the world for competitive gymnastics, consistently producing some of the very highest caliber gymnastics in the country and beyond. Two of the 2012 Olympic gold medal "Fierce Five" were from Southern California!

Our national governing body, USA Gymnastics, directs competitive gymnastics. USAG has three distinct programs: Xcel, Junior Olympic and Elite.

Xcel

XCEL is a USA Gymnastics competitive program offering individual flexibility to coaches and gymnasts. Gymnasts can be between 5-18 years old. There are five levels of Xcel: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond. The coaches can choose which beginning-intermediate skills (within a set of rules) will be used along with individual choreography based on the individual strengths and skill set of the gymnast. Attendance requirements are more flexible at this level, and the training averages 6-13 hours-a-week. Gymnasts in this program are allowed more flexibility to participate in other activities, can miss occasional practices for social commitments, and have some leniencies in taking extending vacations. This flexibility has tradeoffs, as this is not a program rigorous enough for the college-bound athlete. Therefore, the focus of Xcel will be enjoying the wonderful sport of gymnastics while developing a healthy body through physical fitness.

Junior Olympic Program

The Junior Olympic program is made up of Levels 2 through 10 and is a popular program in which over 90% of gymnasts train and compete.

The Compulsories

Levels 2-5 are nicknamed "**compulsory**", as every gymnast at competition will perform the same routines under rigorous judging criteria. Gymnasts need to be 5 years old to compete "**Compulsory**".

Attendance requirements become important at this level due to the exceptional quality of competition in Southern California, the stringent rules, and the precise routines these young gymnasts must perfect. It is our experience that those athletes that miss workout regularly will plateau when trying to advance to the higher levels of gymnastics.

The "Compulsory" training averages 8-16 hours-a-week during the school year. The summer training averages between 8-24 hours-a-week (typically Fridays through Sundays are off). Gymnasts in this program need to start committing more fully to gymnastics as the primary sport. They should no longer be participating in other activities that consistently conflict with their gymnastics (ballet may be an exception-see your child's primary coach for pre-approval). Missing practices for social commitments should be rare. Extended vacations (where workout is missed) of more than one week in a year are not allowed.

The Optionals

Levels 6-10 are nicknamed "**Optional**" as the coaches can choose which advanced skills (within a set of rules) will be used along with individual choreography based on the individual strengths and skill set of the gymnast. Optional routines are judged under an even more complex and rigorous set of rules than "**Compulsory**", and those rules increase in difficulty as the athlete reaches a higher "**Optional**" level.

The "**Optionals**" train between 19-28 hours-a-week year round. As the difficulty increases, so do the risks, so a total commitment is required at the "**Optional**" level. No outside activities can interfere with training time, and by level 8, they should no longer be participating in other outside activities. (Ballet/dance may be an exception-see your child's primary coach for pre-approval). Church and volunteer opportunities are encouraged, but must work around training hours. Missing practices for social and extra-curricular school commitments should be rare and must be approved in-advance by your child's coach. These dedicated families will have to rearrange their vacation schedules around their child/athlete's training requirements. Extended vacations (where workout is missed) of more than one week in a year are not allowed. An excellent attendance record with minimal absences will be a determinate when evaluating athletes for placement into the next optional level. Gymnasts must have exceptional time management skills as to balance homework and test preparation outside of workout hours. Excellence in academics is expected to remain in the optional program.

If athletes enter into the "**optional**" program at a young age, it is considered a program for the college-bound athlete, and a major focus will be placed on developing an exceptional, college-ready athlete.

TOPs/Elite

The Elite program is where our country's international and Olympic level athletes are trained. The filter program for Elite is **TOPs (Talent Opportunity Program)**. From time to time, a child may be added into a faster track group in order to participate in the TOPs program. Fast track athletes should follow Optional-level guidelines for attendance, and be exemplary models of commitment and responsibility.

Fast Track Athletes Must:

1. **Work with their schools to attend all practices (arriving timely and prepared) while maintaining an excellent relationship with their teachers and keeping their grades up.**
2. **Make all scheduled practices, with only rare exceptions. Missed practice time should be pre-made up when-ever possible.**
3. **Be properly dressed and groomed. Hair should be meet-ready and pride in personal appearance should reflect dedication level to the sport at the highest level.**
4. **Demonstrate the proper attitude at all times, including excellent coach communication, industrious worth ethic, above-and-beyond effort, intense desire to improve even the smallest of details, respect for the coaching team and the consistent demonstration of bravery and aggressiveness in training.**
5. **Maintain an excellent diet and gym-sleep balance as to avoid risking injury, avoid missing practices due to illness, and to fuel the body for the rigors of daily work-out.**

Team Requirements & Policies

Monthly Tuition

Due in advance of the next month's training, on the 25th each month. Please pay early when the 25th falls on a Holiday or weekend. Autopay is the preferred payment method.

Family Discount

Families with more than one child participating currently in our program will receive a 10% discount off the cost of the second child's tuition and 20% discount of the third.

Late Payment Penalty

Tuition is considered late as of the 10th of each month and will be assessed a late payment fee of \$10.00.

Outstanding Tuition

Athletes may not train if the outstanding tuition is more than two months in arrears.

Refund Policy

Aftershock does not offer refunds for any reason nor do we pro-rate for missed training sessions.

Outstanding Obligations

It is assumed that all outstanding financial obligations associated with Aftershock Gymnastics and/or the Aftershock Gymnastics Competitive Dues through the Coachella Valley Parent Association (CVGA) will be handled in a professional and prompt manner. These financial obligations should be taken seriously, and the office staff should never have to stop business-as-usual from our class programs to seek out delinquent payments from Aftershock team members. These considerations should weigh in heavily when accepting a team position.

Departure From The Team Program

The best time to exit the team program is at the end of the competitive season for your level. We ask that our athletes commit to competing each year after careful consideration, and uphold that commitment for the entirety of their competitive season. Upon departing as an Optional level athlete, all beam/floor choreography and floor music remains property of Aftershock Gymnastics and should not be used outside of the Aftershock gymnastics team.

30 Day Notice

Aftershock requires an "IN WRITING" one month notice should your child decide to retire from our program. Due to the cost of supporting competitive team member and the commitment we have extended to our coaching staff, it must be understood that it is your responsibility to notify the owners of the club 30 days prior to your child leaving the gym. During that month of notice, your child is welcome to train in the gym. We have often found that during this period of notice, the gymnast, together with our coaching staff, are able to find a resolution to their concerns. Failure to provide payment in lieu of notice is considered a serious breach of contract with Aftershock Gymnastics.

Level 10/Elite 6 Month Notice

Once an athlete has attained the status of Level 10 or Elite, there has been significant time and effort invested into their gymnastics on the part of the Aftershock coaching staff and the club. For this reason, we transition from a 30 day notice to a 6 month notice of departure (kind of like joining most health clubs) once an athlete attains this career milestone. IF an athlete retires from the sport, or the family (not athlete) is relocating this commitment will be waived (reverting back to the 30 day notice), thus this only applies should a level 10/elite decide to take many years of training and contributions to another gymnastics club.

Attendance Policy

Attendance must be consistent and making all scheduled practices is mandatory during the competition season and the off-season. Any missed practices must be called into the office (760-346-4446).

Xcel gymnasts are allowed 2 missed practices a month, and more if their coach approves the absence in advance.

Compulsory gymnasts are allowed 1 absence every two months, or one per month when "made-up" by paying for TOPs strength class held on Saturdays. Absences cannot be "banked" for the future.

Optional gymnasts are allowed 1 absence every 2 months, and the absences cannot be "banked" for the future. Occasional exceptions may be made based on the ability and willingness to make-up all missed hours in a productive manner. All optional absence hours must be made up within 30 days of the absence.

Year-Around Commitment

Although we encourage families to vacation together, it is our policy that competitive team members consider training at Aftershock to be a year-around commitment. Your commitment to a 12-month training cycle insures consistency in coaching and greater progress towards achieving goals. Summer training is perhaps the most crucial training time.

Exclusive Training

Gymnastics training is exclusive to this club. Gymnasts may not train at any other gym, camp, or clinic while competing and/or representing our program without explicit consent from the management.

Gym Closures

The gym will typically close the week of the 4th of July for summer recess, the last week of August for Fall planning and the week of the Christmas holiday (Optionals will have a few days off at Christmas). The Optional level athletes are required to keep up with some sort of training on their own during this time, and workouts may occasionally be offered during these breaks.

Participation In Outside Activities

Non-conflicting activities are allowed, however, gymnasts in our team program need to put their gymnastics training to the top of their priority list. Studio dance may be recommended or required with their personal coach's prior approval or request. Optional level gymnasts are asked to avoid conflicting activities or practice them in moderation as to not interfere with their training.

Extended Absences

Any families absent for more than one week of summer will be considered a new team-member upon returning. A private must be scheduled to verify skill level and to aid in catching up. A \$75 fee will be assessed and will cover the 1-hour private and administrative duties required to follow up with the extended absence. Please schedule this private and pay the \$75 fee in the office prior to returning to training.

Injuries

As an Aftershock team member, you are paying for your spot on the team. Consequently, if you are injured you continue to pay for that spot. If you choose not to pay your tuition, then there is no guarantee that your spot will still be available. Gymnasts must continue to attend workouts while injured, participating in conditioning and in whatever activities they are able. See "Extended Absences" for information on missed time for injuries.

Team Attire and Grooming

Aftershock team members are expected to not only act, but also look respectable when representing our team daily. While in the gym, team members should dress in a leotard. No shorts or sweats while in training unless allowed by the individual coach. Hair should be neatly and properly pulled back and should be secure enough to last for an entire practice. Appearance should always reflect pride in the team. A neat outwardly appearance is one of the many ways we demonstrate respect and discipline.

Communication/Distribution of Information

Please check www.aftershockgymnastics.com for all the latest team information, and make certain to have a current email on file in the office.

Life Changes To Keep In Mind When Accepting A Spot On Team

At the lower team levels, the number of hours of practice per week is relatively small. As your daughter progresses up the competitive ladder, the hours and days of workout will continue to grow as will the commitment level.

You will have to change your schedule to the extent that you are available to drive your gymnast to practice and pick her up. You may want to start a carpool with other team parents. Your child will be dismissed by their coach, and not by the clock. A higher level athlete may have to stay late, without parental permission, in order to finish required assignments.

There will be gym meets that consume a number of weekends during the competitive season.

Homework will have to be done much more efficiently and with better study habits due to shorter periods of time available. (It has been the experience of most coaches that students who are involved in a team program such as gymnastics 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 (and yours).

Your daughter will have less time at home and less time to spend with friends outside the sphere of gymnastics influence.

Once a child has developed a taste for the sport of gymnastics (especially the competitive aspect) it often becomes a passion that can grow and become an important part of your child for life!

Every child follows a path in life. For many that path will lead them to a door. A door that gives them a place to grow, to learn, to belong. A place to forge their future. While many doors open... these doors transform.

Are you ready for the Aftershock?