Competitive Team Handbook

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Welcome to Team Twisters

Dear Parents and Gymnasts,

Welcome to Team Twisters Organization. We are very proud of our competitive team program that has been active in southern Florida since 1986. The Team Twisters Competitive Program has produced 17 USAG JO National Team Members and 6 USAG Elite National Team Members, that have represented the USA in international competitions, Team Twisters have had 85 recipients of gymnastics scholarships to various Division I and II Universities.

Team Twisters have won age group state championships at every level and were recently voted by its peers to be both the Florida State and Region 8 "Club of the Year". Team Twisters have qualified 10 or more girls to the Level 10 National Championships on seven occasions, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. We are known for our "no-nonsense, blue collar" approach to training, and we strive to get a 100% effort out of our athletes each day. Like any highly successful organization, we have strict rules and guidelines for our participants to follow. Please read over this Team Handbook carefully to learn more about our team.

If you should have any questions or concerns about anything in this booklet, do not hesitate to contact the team coordinator or one of our head coaches that are listed below.

Key Personnel in the Team Twisters Competitive Team Organization

Gary Anderson – Competitive Team Coordinator -- MrMVT@aol.com

Christy Ramirez – Optional Levels' Head Coach -- TwistersCoachChristy@gmail.com

Erin Hall – AT Xcel Head Coach – Gymcoach84@gmail.com

Jessica Poole – BT Xcel Head Coach – jessica.btwisters@gmail.com

Elayne Anderson – Team Billing Manager -- elayne3333@aol.com

Team Twisters Village People:
A large part of our success is because of the number of outside professionals we have affiliated with Twisters who consult and work closely within our competitive team program. Please be sure to visit our website to learn more about them at: http://americantwisters.com/team-twisters-village/

Team Twisters Sports Psychology Program Dr. Christine Hiler, PhD
Team Twisters Nutrition Program – Christina Anderson, MS, RDN, CSSD, CSP, CDE, LD
Team Orthopedic Doctor/Consultant - Dr. Stephen Swirsky
BARWIS Performance Center for Sports Physical Therapy and Rehab – Mike Barwis, CEO

Mission Statement

Team Twisters strive to develop happy, healthy, responsible, successful gymnasts. Team Twisters competitive program is committed to providing participants with safe skill progressions and a positive workout environment conducive for preparing and competing successfully in formal gymnastics competitions.

The Triangular Boat Philosophy

Team Twisters Competitive Program believes in a "Triangular Boat" philosophy. In order to make progress in paddling a real triangular boat, the people in the various corners must each have their own specific job, yet cooperate and co-exist with the others in the boat in order to make progress and be successful. If no one paddles, the boat goes nowhere, if everyone paddles as fast and as hard as they can without communicating with the others, the boat will simply go in circles.

In gymnastics, the coaches are in one corner of this triangular boat. Their responsibilities are to provide safe and logical skill progressions along with a master plan for each girl's progress throughout the year and into the future.

The parents occupy another corner of the boat and are responsible to pay the bills on time, get the athlete to practices and most importantly be a "warm fuzzy blanket" as a loyal and positive supporter of their daughter. Parents should use sentences such as "….I don't care if you are the only one that can't do a back handspring, I love you anyway…" and "….I am sure the coaches know what they are talking about and we really have to leave those types of decisions up to them…." Parents also have a MAJOR role in monitoring the athlete's nutrition and rest.

Let's not forget the athlete, who is in the third corner of our triangular boat. She has a responsibility of paddling as actively (if not more actively) than the others in the boat. She must come to practice both mentally and physically prepared to put in the hard work and remain focused on her goals. Without her doing her part, the efforts of both the coaches and parents will not be fully realized.

Goals of the Team Twisters Competitive Program

1. To foster the growth and development of each gymnast by setting realistic goals that can be achieved through hard work and challenging training.
2. To provide opportunities for gymnasts to achieve high levels of gymnastics proficiency.
3. To help gymnasts work to their maximum genetic potential in the sport of gymnastics.
4. To become a viable member of a team that shares similar goals and aspirations.
5. To use their gymnastics training to build character, teamwork, discipline, time managements skills, and to gain self- confidence and self-esteem.
6. To encourage athletes to do their best and to have both individual and team success in competitions.
7. To produce "champion" people who are outstanding gymnasts.

Team Twisters Competitive Levels and Advancement

USA Gymnastics is the Governing Body for competitive gymnastics in the United States. As members of this organization, Team Twisters follows USAG's competition rules and regulations. Team Twisters competes in USAG's Developmental Program, Levels 6 through 10, and all Xcel Levels, Bronze through Sapphire. This provides an opportunity to every girl, regardless of age or ability, who wishes to participate in competitive gymnastics. Mobility through the levels is as follows:

Team Twisters Competitive Levels Chart

<table>
<tr><th>USAG Developmental Program</th><th></th><th>USAG Xcel Program</th></tr>
<tr><td>Level 10</td><td rowspan="5">< --- Cross over is based on individual gymnastics profile --- ></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 9</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 8</td><td>Xcel Sapphire</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 7</td><td>Xcel Diamond</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 6</td><td>Xcel Platinum</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Xcel Gold</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Xcel Silver</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Xcel Bronze</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Twisters Developmental Program</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Classes</td></tr>
</table>

Gymnastics Profile:
Movement through the competitive levels is based on a gymnast's gymnastics profile. A gymnastics profile is made up of her physical abilities, safe skill development, attendance, attitude, age, maturity, competitive success, keen focus, good concentration, behavior, work habits and being competitive.

What is Twisters Team Accountability?

- Attendance is taken at each practice and attendance reports are sent home each month. We can statistically prove that those girls who attend more frequently and are on time, will advance more rapidly.

- The Twisters PA (physical abilities) Test is given up to 6 times each year, with the results sent home each time. In optional levels (6 through 10), there are minimum scores required to train at each level. The PA test is given to all Xcel team members, but minimum scores are **NOT** required (just acquisition of skills) to progress through all the Xcel competitive levels.

- Skill Verifications are given throughout the fall, where girls are tested on their form, execution and success of various skills needed for each of the competitive levels. Results are sent home, much like a report card.

Gymnasts Rules & Responsibilities

To run such a successful, organized and disciplined gymnastics program, there must be rules, guidelines and responsibilities for the participants to follow.

Improper types of behavior during practice and competition will result in disciplinary action. Examples of such behavior are:

1. Talking over or arguing with a coach,
2. Breaking gym rules,
3. Cheating,
4. Lying,
5. Unwillingness to complete assignments,
6. Stealing/going through another person's belongings/cubby,
7. Disrespectful towards teammates (physically and/or emotionally),
8. Poor sportsmanship,
9. Bullying

Any of the above behaviors, depending on their severity and the gymnast's history, will be dealt with in the following ways:

1. Time out,
2. Removal from practice,
3. Parental conference,
4. Suspension from the team,
5. Dismissal from the team

Gymnast's Responsibilities:

1. To attend scheduled practices,
2. To wear a clean and appropriate leotard to all practices (no shorts or two-piece leos),
3. To have your hair securely tied back in a bun or "waterfall". This may mean using several hair ties and scrunchies,
4. To have NO JEWELRY on during practice (exception is one set of stud earrings),
5. To leave all valuables at home, Team Twisters cannot be responsible for any lost or stolen items,
6. To have your nails cut short so you don't scratch a coach or teammate,
7. All team gymnasts aged 7 and older should wear deodorant (or earlier upon coach's request).
8. To strive for excellence each day,
9. To be attentive to coaches and to be cooperative with coaching staff,
10. To complete all training assignments before leaving the gym (including strength and flexibility conditioning each day),
11. To assist and cooperate with fellow teammates,
12. To be safety conscious for oneself and for fellow teammates,
13. To ask permission of a coach to use the phone or communicate with parents (cell phones are not permitted on the floor),
14. To assist in cleaning and keeping the gym clean when asked,
15. To participate in exhibitions, demonstrations, and clinics as requested,
16. To maintain good habits, including maintaining a proper diet and rest,
17. To abide by all USAG regulations and the policies put forth in this manual

Substance Abuse Policy

The Team Twisters employees and organization has a “NO TOLERANCE POLICY” WHEN IT COMES TO DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE. Any gymnast who uses or distributes any illegal drug (including alcohol, tobacco, Juul, etc.) to minors will be immediately dismissed from the competitive team program.

Commitment to Team Twisters Competitive Team

Team Twisters Competitive membership is a year-round commitment. We believe that the parents and child should seriously discuss all aspects of gymnastics training and commitment each August before making the one-year competitive team commitment. Children must learn the importance of honoring a commitment. It is a principle to be carried over into the adult world.

All parents of Team Twisters members must be responsible for supporting their gymnast in meeting their financial, practice attendance and competitive meet commitments.

Team Private Lesson Policy

Twister Team gymnasts are provided the opportunity to select from low, medium or high intensity training programs at every level. If your daughter feels she needs more training, you can seek out private lessons with one of our competitive team coaches by contacting the front desk. Barwis Performance Center also offers strength training in personal sessions for those specifically wanting to improve their PA scores.

Competitive team Twister gymnasts are allowed to, and encouraged to seek additional dance (ballet, tap, jazz, etc.) training, yoga classes, running improvement instruction, and any additional general strength and flexibility training.

Parent “help or assistance” at home is strongly encouraged in the areas of physical abilities test items, which include flexibility. Parents or outside sources should NOT be involved in developing specific gymnastics skills. Realizing there are several ways to successfully teach most gymnastics skills, the Team Twisters coaching staff makes a conscientious effort to use the same terminology and same techniques in teaching the basic skills for gymnastics throughout all our levels. When “outside” sources, such as parents or other coaches get involved with the teaching of skills, many times it is very confusing to the gymnast when different terms, techniques and spotting methods are used on them when trying to teach them the same skill.

General and Miscellaneous

Drop off:
Being on time for practices is important so that the girls can fully participate in the entire "pre-practice warm-up". Girls arriving early to practice, must wait in the bleachers with a parent or in the team cubby area until being called out onto the floor for the start of practice. Girls aged 5 and under must be escorted into the building by an adult. Parents of children aged 5 and under must wait until the team is called onto the floor prior to leaving the building.

Pick up:

- Parents are requested to pick up their gymnast on time after their practice session is over.
- If your child must leave practice early, please have the office personnel come onto the floor to get her rather than calling or waving for her from the bleacher area.
- All gymnasts who do not drive themselves to the gym must have an adult come into the gym to pick them up.
- All gymnasts without an adult waiting for them at the end of practice must wait at the front office until a parent/adult arrives.
- Under no circumstances are any team girls to wait outside the building for their ride home.

Injuries:
It is important that gymnasts and parents communicate to the Head Coach any personal injuries. When injured, attendance (at least for half of the workout time) is encouraged since many times modifications can be made for an injured gymnast to do most of the conditioning exercises along with many of the dance and flexibility drills.

If a gymnast needs to be evaluated by a physician and/or physical therapist, this report and information must be shared with the Head Coach. By doing this, an appropriate rehab and recovery program can be established in conjunction with the medical personnel involved. Team Twisters has a physical therapist who visits the Coconut Creek location once per week. He is available to see any Team Twister gymnast who is injured.

Illness:
Please keep your daughter home if she is not feeling well. Viruses spread quickly in the gym.

Make ups:
All levels are allowed to "make up" missed workouts. Missed days must be made up within 1 month of missing. Optional level parents must email the head coach to get permission to make up this missed practice on her normal day off. Xcel level parents can sign up for a makeup at the front desk.

Cubbies:
Each team girl is assigned a cubby. This cubby is on LOAN to your daughter and therefore, she may not put any stickers, graffiti, gym, trash, etc. in it. No food or beverages are to be left in the cubbies overnight. Snacks must be put in a bag or container and not left out in the open inside the cubby where they could be "taken/borrowed" and attract insects.

Clothes, shoes, and a small bag with essentials like hair ties, deodorant, snacks, water container, grips and tiger paws are the only things that should be stored in the team cubbies during training.

Food and Beverages:
Water is the only beverage allowed on the gym floor. Gymnasts are encouraged to bring a water bottle with them to each event during training.

Water bottles and clothes that are found out on the gym floor throughout the week are placed on marked bins just outside the team cubby area. Each Tuesday morning these items are taken to Goodwill if not claimed.

Nutritious snacks are allowed but must be kept in a tightly sealed container or bag in the gymnast's cubby during practice. Gymnasts may request to get a quick snack between event rotations throughout the workout. Cut fruit, pretzels, granola bars, veggies, go-gurt, protein shakes, etc. are the good choices. It is important that these are kept in a marked bag or lunch box inside the cubby to avoid having these eaten by another team member by mistake.

Treats and sweets are prohibited. Please do not bring in candy, donuts, ice cream, cupcakes, cookies, popsicles, etc. to celebrate your daughter's birthday with the team. If your daughter wants to celebrate with the team, we suggest non-edible items such as stickers, tattoos, party favors, etc.

Communication

The main means of communication between coaches and team parents is via email. When all other means of communication are exhausted, head coaches will make themselves available for private meetings. For safety reasons, coaches may not leave the gym floor and their assigned coaching rotation on the gym floor to talk with parents, leaving gymnasts unsupervised at their event.

Keep an eye out for frequent coaches emails with important dates, events, changes in practice days/times, monthly attendance reports, physical abilities test results, and skills tests results.

Approximately every 4 months, each head coach offers the parents an informal 30-minute question and answer (Q & A) session via zoom. There is no agenda to these meetings. These are used to address any rumors and to entertain any questions or concerns from any team parent who wishes to attend.

A formal team parents meeting (via zoom) for each level, is held in the fall of each year, prior to the competitive season. Competitive team documents and projected competitive schedules are all discussed and reviewed at this meeting.

Team information, including all team manuals and packets can be found on line at:
https://americantwisters.com/team/

Expenses

Competitive gymnastics, much like figure skating and equestrian, is a very expensive sport. Be sure you take into consideration the various expenses involved in this sport before trying out for or joining any competitive gymnastic team program.

At Team Twisters, along with the monthly tuition (which varies depending on the competitive level and the number of days and hours she spends training per week), there is a yearly team and national membership registration fee, a team travel fund fee, a competitive leotard and warm-up suit to purchase. The competitive leotard and warm ups change every 2 years.

Below you will find **estimates** of other additional competitive team costs. The uniform price was for the previous season so you have an idea of around how much it may cost this season.

Items	Xcel Bronze	Xcel S/G/P/D/SA	Optionals
Grips	NA	Coach will let parents know when to order	~ $55.00
Wristbands	NA	~ $6.00	~ $6.00
Grip Bag	NA	~ $10.00	~ $10.00
Previous competition uniform (leo, warm up jacket, warm up pants, 2 shirts, socks) - $411.25 - $619.28 + tax			
Hair Bow	$15.00	$15.00	$15.00
Competition Bag	~ $65.00	~ $65.00	~ $65.00
Tiger Paws (wrist guards)	NA	NA	~ $50.00
Seasonal Meet Fees	See Competition Packet	See Competition Packet	See Competition Packet

Additional Items:
The items listed below are considered "personal training items" that each girl must purchase separately for her training once the head coach advises she needs them.

Tiger Paws:
https://www.usglove.com/collections/tiger-paws

Dowel Grips:
https://www.ten-o.com/501-Blues-Double-Buckle-Straight-Strap-Uneven-Bar-Grip-FREE-SHIPPING,14843.html?b=s*buckle+grips&s=d&p=2&c=73

Wrist Bands:
https://www.amazon.com/Mcolics-Inch-Wrist-Sweatband-Wristbands/dp/B01BXTUP1U/ref=sr_1_4?keywords=Gymnastics+Wristbands+for+Grips&qid=1641320368&sr=8-4

Grip bag:
http://www.ebay.com/itm/like/231030762787?lpid=82&chn=ps&ul_noapp=true

Contact the Team Coordinator or your daughter's Head Coach with any additional questions.