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This booklet is a general guide for parents and gymnasts who are entering the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic Program. The information contained here is meant help make your competitive experience a positive and rewarding one.

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# Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts and Family Members

## Before the Day of the Meet

Whether your meet is in your own facility or in another team's gym, it is important that you and your athlete remember that hosting a meet takes a great deal of work.

The hosting gym receives a roster of athletes from each gym wishing to participate in the competition. To give everyone an equal opportunity to take part in the meet, a deadline date is usually established. The deadline for entries can be up to six weeks to ten days prior to the event.

When the hosting gym gets all of the rosters, they may then begin to establish sessions and times. This all takes time. Please DO NOT call the hosting gym for information. The proper etiquette is to ask your own coach. It is her responsibility to furnish you with this information. Sometimes there are unforeseen problems that might cause a delay in this information being communicated, so be patient.

**Each gym club has a set of rules and regulations that have been established for your comfort and safety. ALWAYS follow the hosting gym's rules. Here are a few rules that are common to ALL meets:**

**NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY**

**NO PARENTS OR SIBLINGS IN THE COMPETITION AREA**

**NO FOOD OR DRINKS IN THE GYM PROPER**

**NO PARENTS ALLOWED TO QUESTION A JUDGE**

**NO SPECTATORS ALLOWED ON ANY EQUIPMENT**

**NO PROFANITY**

**NO UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR**

**NO DESTRUCTION OF GYM PROPERTY**

## Competitive Dress Code

In gymnastics, women must wear a team leotard. Many training schools, including K2 Academy, have a coordinating warm-up suit as part of their competitive apparel. Both of these items are to be worn to each meet.

## Hair and More

A gymnast's appearance is very important to her self confidence when at a competition. Hair should be off of her face and neck, pulled back in a bun or French braid. Clips, bobby pins and hair spray may be used to keep strands of hair from falling down. There is a deduction for **any** kind of jewelry as well as **any** nail polish worn on the fingers or toes. Please make certain that your gymnast looks her very best when representing Team K2.

## Stretch and Warm-Up Session

Stretch and warm-up sessions are usually held 30 minutes-1 hour before competition begins.

Gymnasts should arrive at least 15 minutes early to check in, obtain their competition number and become organized. Once you arrive at the gym have your gymnast use the restroom and find her coach. Stretching and warm-up will be done as a team.

## Opening Ceremonies and Competition

At the conclusion of warm-ups, your gymnast will prepare for Opening Ceremonies. Gymnasts are usually queued up in ascending height order and march into the gym as a team. Once all teams and officials have been introduced, it is customary to begin the contest with the National Anthem or the Pledge of Allegiance. During this solemn period, please stand at attention and maintain silence, unless singing the anthem or speaking the pledge. Once the ceremonies are concluded the gymnasts will be

directed to their first event. Most gyms have a designated “waiting area” for the contestants. Each gymnast will have a short warm-up period before their event begins. This warm-up may be done as a group or individually depending on the event. Once all the gymnasts have warmed up their event the competition begins. The gymnast will salute the judge and perform her routine. She will salute the judge again at the completion of her performance. The score for your gymnast will be flashed (see Scoring Guide below). This will continue until all four events are finished. Meets run anywhere from 4-6 hours depending on the number of athletes in the meet.

### **Competing is a Privilege**

Your gymnasts have earned the right to compete in the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic program, through countless hours of hard work and dedication to the sport. Please remember that competing is a privilege and as such, should not be taken for granted. All gymnasts should conduct themselves with dignity, composure and good sportsmanship.

At all meets, please keep in mind that you are a guest, whether you are competing at a “home” meet or at an “away” meet. Treat the hosting facility, its equipment and all other gymnasts with respect and courtesy. Support your teammates by cheering in a courteous manner and congratulating them. Be friendly and polite to all judges, coaches and other gymnasts *regardless of whose team they are on*.

***GYMNASTS ARE TO REMAIN IN THE COMPETITIVE AREA UNTIL AFTER THE AWARDS CEREMONY.***

### **Receiving Awards In Public**

Most meets have a formal system for presenting awards. As an athlete, a demonstration of courtesy and gratitude is appropriate. It is customary to accept awards by thanking the presenter with a firm handshake. Congratulate the other athletes receiving awards as well. Stay on the awards podium for a brief time after all gymnasts have received their awards; this will enable parents and relatives to take your photo on the platform.

**Under no circumstances should you show disappointment in the awards that you are given.**

## **Gymnastics Scoring Guide for Spectators**

The sport of gymnastics combines athletic strength, technical perfection and graceful presentation.

The scoring in gymnastics is a negative system, based upon a perfect routine of 10.00 points. Judges make specific deductions for errors throughout the routine, total the deductions and subtract that amount from 10.00 points to arrive at the score. Deductions are made for falls, bent arms and legs, flexed feet, poor rhythm, improper conduct of a gymnast or coach, for improper dress and for coaches spotting the performer. There are normally two judges per event and each score must be within specific ranges of each other; the scores are averaged and the final score flashed. **If** the scores are not within acceptable ranges the judges must confer and adjust each score until they are within the allotted margin and then average the scores. Gymnasts who perform in all events receive an All-Around score, which is the total of all events.

## **Other Useful Information**

Each year, prior her first competition, every competitor in the J. O. Program will need to have a valid registration number. The USA Gymnastics membership office assigns this Team Member number. 100% of all Athletes appearing in a USAG Sanctioned Event must be pre-registered and their number must be for the current year. The Team Member season begins each August 1 and runs through the following July 31. All Team Member numbers are automatically null and void each July 31, which means you must register each year.

Once you have sent in your Team Membership registration form, along with payment, your gym will receive a computer printout from the USAG membership dept. (or download it from their Website) with your gymnasts name and number. Shortly after registration you will receive a Team Member card from USAG. Please keep this card with you at all meets. This Card entitles the gymnasts to enter any state meet as a spectator free of charge.

## **Competitions Awards**

The minimum number and/or type of awards that must be distributed are determined by USA Gymnastics. However, many hosting facilities chose to exceed the minimum number/type of awards given at local meets, while many States set their own standards for awards.

### ***Achievement Awards***

**Currently, ALL TEAM K2 gymnasts in Level 3, 4 & 5 are achievement levels, awards are given based on score rather than placement.** This system was designed to encourage the beginning gymnast by giving her an opportunity to receive recognition based on *her* performance alone. Each color achievement ribbon represents a range of scores:

#### **Ribbon Color / Individual Score**

**Blue Ribbon 9.00-10.00**

**Red Ribbon 8.00 – 8.90**

**White Ribbon 7.00 – 7.90**

**Yellow Ribbon 6.00 - 6.90**

### ***Placement Awards***

Team K2 coaches will determine whether or not your gymnast will compete in PLACEMENT. Gymnasts are ranked in the order that they finish on each event and/or in the all-around (the total of all four events). First, second and third place, etc., awards are given out, with the number of places receiving awards determined by the number of gymnasts entered in a given age group. These awards are typically given in the form of ribbons, medals and occasionally, as trophies.

### ***Team Awards***

The final type of award that may be earned at a competition falls under the category of Team Awards. In most meets only PLACEMENT teams will have the opportunity to receive a team award. Team awards can be earned for an Age Group of gymnasts (as covered in the USA Gymnastics Rules & Policies), as well as for Combined Age-Group Team. The age group score is usually determined by taking the top 3 scores per event or all-around, per age group, while the Combined Age Group Team score is determined by taking the top 5 (in some cases 6) scores per event or all-around, despite age.

**Regardless of the type of awards offered at a competition, it is important to remember that it is not the winning that counts, but the effort and sense of personal accomplishment that an athlete feels when doing her “personal best”.**

## **A Final Note**

This communication is meant as a very general guideline to help you and your child with the most frequently asked questions about competition in the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic Program. Every gym/coach has rules that are specific to that agency or coach, so please take the time to ask and understand those rules. It is our sincere wish that your competitive experience be a positive and rewarding one.