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**Parent / Gymnast Acknowledgement (Please sign and return to coach)**  
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**Welcome to the Team!**

Team ABK would like to welcome your family to our club. If you are reading this team manual then your daughter has already impressed us with her gymnastics talent and potential. Through this team manual we hope to give you more insight into how our program operates and answer many of your questions.

First, and most important, providing a fantastic gymnastics experience is what ABK is all about. We are here for the young children, many who have hopes and dreams of being the best they can be in life and in this sport. We are here to support them in that dream.

To make that dream come alive the gymnast, parents, and coaches must function as a TEAM. Team for our purposes means:

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Together
Everyone
Achieves
More!
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You might have noticed there is no "I" in TEAM. That does not mean that your daughter as an individual or you as a parent are not important, not at all! It simply means that the whole is stronger than the sum of its parts. If we all work together toward common goals we have a much greater chance of achieving something really significant with our program.

The purpose of this team manual is to give you a better idea of what our goals are and how we operate as TEAM ABK.

After reading this manual, if you have any questions about any aspect of the program - please ASK! The coaching staff will be happy to answer any question or provide you with options to help you solve your problems.

Once again, welcome to ABK. We are glad to have you as part of our TEAM.
ABK  
America’s Best Kids  
Sports & Enrichment  

Company Mission Statement

Our mission is to help all children become happy, healthy, confident and responsible individuals, in a safe, fun, positive and nurturing environment.

Using specific gymnastics progressions and a highly trained gymnastics staff each gymnast will learn the correct fundamentals and basic skills which will equip her with the knowledge and ability to progress to whatever level she desires.

As instructors we will use the sport of gymnastics to help each child gain a greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image.

Team Philosophy

Our goal is to provide the mental and physical discipline needed for competition within a framework of positive reinforcement and encouragement. Learning to be comfortable in a competitive situation is a positive experience and adds to a child’s development.

Introduction

The decision to enter competitive gymnastics is an important and exciting step in the life of your child!

This team manual is designed to answer questions and explain the rules and policies for the competitive gymnastics program at ABK.

Competitive gymnastics is a unique sport requiring the backing and support of the family for any gymnast to be successful. Therefore when making the selection for team gymnasts we also look closely at the team parents. Can they also make a commitment to the program? This need not be a difficult or demanding task, only one that shows each family is interested in and committed to providing their child with a positive learning experience through the competitive aspect of women’s gymnastics.

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.

**Gymnastics goals**

Does your daughter dream of making it to the Olympics, get a scholarship to college, or does she just enjoy the achievement of new skills and the companionship of other team members? Any of these may be valid reasons for joining the team, but it is important to assess her goals in a shorter time frame, such as within the next six months to a year.

Talking to parents reveals that in many instances there is no agreement as to what the actual goal is regarding the child's gymnastics experience. The father may say, "I want her to be the best, win state championships!" while the mother says, "I just want her to enjoy herself" and the gymnast says, "I like to go to gym because my friends are there and we have a lot of fun working out." Which goal is the coach supposed to follow? And what are the goals the coach has for the team?

Gymnastics is a specialized sport that demands many hours of hard work and dedication. Success certainly does not happen overnight.

**Life changes to keep in mind**

- At the lower team levels the number of hours of practice per week is relatively few. As your daughter progresses up the competitive ladder the hours and days of workout will continue to build.

- You will have to change your schedule to the extent that you are available to drive your gymnast to practice and pick her up.

- There will be gym meets that take up a number of weekends during the competitive season. Typically, 8 meets per year.

- 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.

The rest of this team manual will go over the various aspects of team participation. Please take the time to read this material and then set a time to discuss with the team coaches the goals and objectives of the team program and how they fit with your child’s gymnastic goals. Then, discuss in a family meeting exactly what your child’s goals are and if they can be achieved in this setting.
Be warned, however, that once a child has developed a taste for the sport of gymnastics (especially the competitive aspect) it is an addiction that will grow and become a part of your child for life.

**COMPETITIVE PROGRAM POLICIES**

**One month trial phase**

- All incoming competitive gymnasts will be interviewed and evaluated by the coaching staff concerning acceptance and placement in the competitive program.

- After evaluation new competitive gymnasts may be able to enroll for a period of one month on a trial basis, and then be re-evaluated at the end of the month concerning final acceptance.

- Parents of potential team members will be interviewed and informed of club policies and philosophies concerning the competitive program.

**Team guidelines**

1. Gymnastics training is exclusive to this club. Gymnasts may not train at any other gym, camp, or clinic while competing and/or representing this facility without prior approval.

2. Each gymnast is required to attend all regularly scheduled workouts. Be on time to all workouts. That means on the floor ready to workout when your workout begins, not talking by the lockers or hanging out. If for some reason you will be late or absent you are required to call the office and notify the coaches so that they may adjust the workout accordingly.

3. Proper workout attire is a must. A properly fitting leotard (with or without gym shorts) is the only acceptable workout attire. Hair should be appropriately tied so as not to interfere in any way during the workout. No jewelry of any kind may be worn during the workout.

4. All gymnasts are required to bring to each workout a gym bag with the appropriate equipment as listed by the coaching staff. Lockers are provided and items may be stored in there as well. If gym lockers are not properly taken care of, i.e. food or trash is left in them – this privilege may be revoked.

5. Absolutely no food, drink, or candy is permitted on the workout floor. All snacks or meals must remain in the lobby area. The designated snack area is the cubbies closest to the door of the girls’ locker room.

6. Gymnasts may not leave the workout or competition floor without the expressed permission of the coaching staff. This includes bathroom, water fountain, and telephone use (including personal cell phone use).
7. Interaction between gymnast and parent (visually or verbally) during workouts or at gymnastics competitions is not appropriate. A distracted gymnast is a prime candidate for injury. Contact an ABK coach first if you need to communicate with a gymnast on the workout floor.

8. All gymnasts are expected to maintain the best physical condition possible. From time to time strength and flexibility evaluations will be made. Each gymnast should demonstrate marked improvement from test to test.

9. Gymnasts are encouraged to maintain healthy food choices inside and outside the gym. Snacks during workout should be limited to healthy foods and no candy, sweets, or sodas are allowed on breaks.

10. All injuries, no matter how small, must be promptly reported to the coach.

11. Coaching technique and discipline are not subject to compromise with parents or gymnasts. The coaching staff has the final say in all competitive program matters, as they are ultimately responsible in the eyes of the law for each child’s well being.

12. All competitive gymnasts must demonstrate proficiency in all skills appropriate to their competitive level to be allowed to enter any competition. In addition, the gymnast must be in good health and have attended every workout the week prior to any competition. Special situations should be discussed well in advance of the competition with the coach.

13. The majority of this section has focused on the gym and competition; however, the coaching staff believes that the order of importance always needs to be family, education, and then gymnastics. If you choose to be a member of our program, we make the assumption you have allowed appropriate time for family functions and that your child’s study habits and schoolwork is of exemplary quality.

We do not advocate the use of this statement as an excuse for coming late to workouts, missing practices, etc. As with all things in life, it is your responsibility to fulfill your commitments. If you are unable to make the commitment this program requires, we can place you in another program that fits your needs better.

**Communication**

If you need or want to know any information please see the coaching staff. Parents are encouraged to come to the coaching staff first regarding any dissatisfaction. To prevent confusion and rumors being spread, communication between coaches and parents is vital. Lack of communication can be detrimental to the successful operation of any gymnastic facility.

All questions regarding your child’s progress, discipline etc. should be discussed only with the coaching staff. To implement a meeting please contact the Head Coach either by email or leaving a message on their ABK voicemail.

From time to time the coaches may have discussions in which they seek the opinion of team members and even parents. There may even be a vote, but it is opinion only - the
coach has the final word on any decision that affects the competitive gymnastics program.

This will be most evident in determining workout structure and training styles, but also includes routine construction, choreography, choice of music, choice of leotards and warm ups, what meets we attend, and workout times.

Termination of enrollment

Discipline and gymnastic technique are determined only by the coaching staff. Workouts are not for socializing; they are for skill development. Idle chatter and horseplay is not acceptable during workout.

The coaching staff has the right to suspend or ask a gymnast and/or parent to terminate enrollment due to continuous disciplinary problems.

COMPETITIVE PROGRAM - FINANCIAL POLICIES

Team is a year round commitment.

1. The competitive program tuition is determined on a yearly basis; however, payments are made on a monthly schedule. Tuition payments must be received in the office before the fifth of each month. Payments after the fifth of each month are assessed a $5.00 late fee. Competitive program accounts must be current and paid in full to enable your gymnast to participate in the competitive season.

2. Notice of intent to cancel enrollment must be in writing at least one month previous to the gymnast's final workout. If you choose not to notify the office you will be charged for the month following your gymnasts' last workout.

3. There are no make-ups, discounts, or prorated accounts due to absence of any nature. The competitive program is already greatly discounted in comparison to other club programs and is in fact effectively subsidized by the class programs.

4. Open workouts, dance classes, clinics, private lessons, summer programs etc., are separate from your yearly/monthly competitive program tuition and must be paid for accordingly.

5. Each gymnast must maintain up to date USAG athlete registration and club registration fees. ABK takes care of processing all renewals and this is included in your annual assessment.

6. Gymnasts are required to obtain team leotards, warm ups, exhibition suits etc., necessary to being a member of this program. In addition, each gymnast is required to have a gym bag with particular items necessary for each practice. These items can also be stored in their provided locker.

7. Meet expenses for all coaching fees (i.e.: gas, mileage, food, lodging, and session fees) are shared by all gymnasts on the competitive roster. ABK has instituted a simple process which charges each child an assessment before the beginning of
each season including all of these fees. The current schedule is available from the
ABK Gym Director.

8. As a member of this competitive program all gymnasts are encouraged to attend and
be actively involved in all gymnastic activities related to this facility. (i.e.: fundraising
projects, exhibitions, meets etc.)

Parent Commitment

1. Make sure gymnast attends all regularly scheduled workouts, meets, and special
functions. Communicate with the coaches regarding any problems.

2. Check your email regularly to stay current with team activities.

3. Attend any scheduled parent meetings and help with hosting of home meets. Notice
by email will be used as a reminder.

Coaching & Equipment

In order to have successful team gymnasts the quality of coaching staff must be
high. Teams coaches tend to be higher paid professionals, however the tuition that is
charged is greatly reduced in comparison to recreational classes. Per hour, team tuition
is far less than the cost of recreational training. Very few clubs can afford to subsidize
the costs. In addition to coaching practices, there are several pieces of specialized
equipment in the gym that are only necessary for competitive programs - Another
expense that benefits primarily the team. ABK has and will continue to create and
provide optimal conditions for every gymnast to have the best possible instruction and
training equipment.

We ask that you join with your fellow parents and support the efforts to continue
this successful program. We have a great group of parents and are very GRATEFUL for
your help.

Competitive season information

USAG:
Team ABK competes in the USAG competitive system. USAG dues are currently
$54.00 per year (August 1 - July 31) and are included in your assessment. Competition
begins at Level 3.

Athlete Registration Form: To be registered for competition each gymnast must
complete and sign a USAG Athlete Registration Form. These forms must be turned in
along with the USAG fee by July of the competitive year.

Uniform Requirements: Before your child competes they will need to purchase a
competitive leotard, sweats, and gym bag. Please see your head coach for further
details.
Meet scheduling: A preliminary schedule of meet locations and dates will be emailed out to the parents (usually by Aug. 1st). Meets may be added, changed, or canceled.

Home Meets
Team ABK holds one meet per year. All parents working any session will receive free admission to home meets. Home meets do require volunteer help, but this is usually not more than the travel time spent on attending an away meet. At least one parent for each competing gymnast should make themselves available for at least one shift during a home meet.

Fundraising Opportunity
ABK has a sponsorship program that will assist in offsetting your child's competitive gymnastics fees. If you are interested please ask for the sponsorship packet explaining the need for assistance and how the program works. One letter is for you, and the other letter is an example of what would be given to a prospective sponsor. The final sheet is the form needed to fill-out the sponsor information. This program was set up with the purpose to help those who wish to, or need to off-set fees associated with competitive gymnastics. There is no tax exemption; it is purely a sponsorship to help the families of competitive athletes. Remember that sponsors can be family members, friends, business associates or companies. Please ask for the packet for further details regarding this opportunity.

Gymnast Readiness and Meet Attendance

Evaluations will be performed prior to the beginning of the season. Your child will be allowed to compete once they have successfully met requirements set forth by the ABK coaching staff. It is not required that a gymnast compete every event, although that is the goal. In some instances a child may compete, only the events for which they are prepared.

Our goal is to have every gymnast be prepared and be able to attend every meet, however sometimes for various reasons this is not possible. Meets should be a positive experience and therefore gymnast selection is made very carefully. Coaches make decisions based on the following criteria:

1. **Eligibility** - Gymnast must have all necessary fees paid and be considered an active and eligible gymnast.
2. **Performance Level** - Mastery of skills is based on performance in workouts.
3. **Attendance** - Gymnasts missing an excessive number of practices may not be selected for competition. The same could be true for gymnasts that consistently arrive late or leave early from workouts.

Arriving late and leaving early may seem insignificant at first glance, however, gymnasts arriving late tend to miss stretching, as a result flexibility suffers and it shows in split leaps and several skills that demand a wide range of dynamic movement. Gymnasts leaving early not only miss end of workout stretch, but usually some part of the conditioning circuit. This lack of strength development makes itself known in skills requiring explosive repulsion and general endurance.
The concept of “it's not what you do, but how you do it” is the overriding principle in making a determination whether a gymnast is ready to compete. No coach would willingly send a gymnast into a competition knowing the gymnast is not prepared to do her best. The child would have an unsuccessful experience, which could shatter her self-confidence and ruin the competitive experience.

**Gymnasts should have perfect attendance the week previous to a meet or they could be removed from competition.** Please see coaches well in advance regarding extenuating circumstances.

4. **Attitude** - A positive attitude and showing respect to coaches and teammates is important. Gymnasts must be emotionally ready for the competitive arena.

**All About Meets**

1-2 weeks before a competition, participating gymnasts will receive a meet information sheet that includes session times, gymnasts & coaches attending, host hotel (if needed) with phone numbers, costs, and a map. All gymnasts are considered invited to all meets on our competitive schedule unless otherwise discussed. It is not uncommon for host clubs to send out meet information late or make last minute changes. Information in many instances is not received until a few days before a competition. It is a good idea to clear the whole weekend of a meet on the chance there will be last minute changes that could conflict with your previous plans. DO NOT under any circumstances contact the host gym prior to a competition. All information will be distributed by your own head coach.

**The meet takes how long?**

The average meet can take as little as 3 ½ hours or as long as 5 1/2 hours. We suggest that you bring reading material or some other project with you to help pass the time while at one of your child’s competitions. Most competitions run in a format similar to the one listed below;

**Open Warm Up** – Usually a half-hour long. This time is for general stretching and getting equipment settings specific to the gymnast. **March In** – all the gymnasts line up and march in to the gym to be presented to the audience and judges. Usually the National Anthem is played. This takes about ten to fifteen minutes. **Timed Warm Up** - Every gymnast warms up on each of the apparatus. It is their practice before the real thing. This constitutes over an hour of the meet itself and occurs while others are competing. **Competition** – the gymnasts now actually compete and receive scores from the judges at each event. This may take an hour and a half to two hours to complete. Longer if it is an optional meet and one touch warm ups are necessary. **Awards** – if the organization running the meet is on the ball you may only have to wait five to ten minutes before the awards are handed out. It has been known to take significantly longer to get the awards ready. Raffle prizes are handed out during this time. It takes about a half an hour to distribute the awards. Are you sure you brought enough to read?
Missing meets

If your family has a schedule conflict with a meet, listed on our season schedule please notify the head coach as soon as possible. Gymnasts canceling or becoming ineligible may be subject to loss of moneys already spent on entry fees and travel arrangements. It should also be noted that it is perfectly fine for your child to ride up with another gymnast and their family.

Meet fees & travel expense

Each gymnast is responsible for paying her own travel fees. Each gymnast is responsible for her own transportation to the competition, hotel (if needed), and restaurants. Meet entry fees will vary, but are typically between $60-$100 depending on the type of meet (I.E. local qualifying meet, invitational or state meet). For simplicity, ABK averages and includes meet entry fees into your assessment fees. Assessments are spread out into 8 equal payments. A copy of the current season’s schedule is available by asking our ABK gym director.

Admission is charged to spectators and is usually between $5.00 and $10.00. If a meet is held in a rented facility like a college, casino, or sports complex, the admission can be more.

Moving from level to level

Moving up from one level to the next is decided by the coaches based upon numerous aspects. Attendance at workouts, skill level, attitude of the gymnast, and even scores all play a factor. The coaches will discuss the move with the parent(s) before a final decision is made. This decision will be made in the best interest of the child. Moving up between compulsory seasons is rare – Promotions are almost always done at the completion of season so that the athlete has all summer to get ready for the next level. As a gymnast moves up, she gains more responsibility. Her commitment and dedication must also increase.

Although one criteria used to advance gymnasts from one level to the next are meet scores, gymnasts whose scores qualify them to move to the next higher level are not necessarily required to do so.

Meet etiquette for gymnasts

The following guidelines will help each gymnast make competition a fun and successful experience.

- Be friendly and use sportsmanlike like conduct at all times. Everybody has a unique way of experiencing gymnastics competition. Some people look for the fun in the experience, while others are simply hoping to cope with their fears, while others are focused to the point of excluding everything else around them – including you! This may at times make it seem difficult to be friendly with some gymnasts at a meet. Just remember, everyone is doing the best they are capable of at that moment.
• Stay focused on the competition. Talking with parents, relatives, or friends is inappropriate during the meet. Even with the best of intentions, relatives and friends may give advice that conflicts with what your coach says. What will you do when you receive advice from Mom that differs from what Dad told you, then the coach says something different? The answer is you will become more nervous and uptight because you do not know where to place your focus. During workouts and competition pay attention to the coach.

• Before leaving the competition, notify the head coach. Always let the coach know when you are going to leave the facility. You should never leave the competition facility or go to the parking lot without specific permission from your coach. You should always be accompanied by another team member or coach when leaving the competition floor.

• There is absolutely no reason for you to be on any piece of gymnastics equipment unless you are warming up or currently competing. If you are staying to watch another teammate compete, or you have arrived early for warm ups, stay seated in the bleachers and do not wander out onto the competition floor. Meet sanctioning requires that only competing athletes for that session are allowed in the exercise area.

• Competing gymnasts must stay in their rotation group sitting quietly until the last competitor has finished.

• Gym bags, warm up suits, grips, snacks and any other stuff you brought with you should be placed inside your gym bag and kept near you or under your chair.

• Warm ups should be worn for march-out and when accepting awards.

Win, Lose, or Wipeout

It is important to remember that a score for any routine is an evaluation of one single performance in your career as a gymnast, not a label you must live up to (i.e. winning the all around this time means you must win it every time), or hang around your neck for the rest of your life (a 95th place ribbon for falling off the beam 20 times). Each meet teaches you more about your abilities as a gymnast, competitor, and human being, and are necessary ingredients for success at higher levels of competition.

Regardless of the outcome of a routine or overall competition, you must learn that crying and feeling sorry for yourself is not an appropriate response to this situation or to most learning situations in the gym or normal life.
**Meet etiquette for parents**

1. Team Spirit is a big help.... Wear the team colors, or one of our club T-shirts or sweatshirts.

2. Remember, your gymnast is part of the ABK team. She competes not only for herself but also her teammates, parents, coaches, and ABK.

3. Please show proper respect to all Officials and Coaches at every competition. They are all there for one reason, to support your child’s interest in gymnastics. Under no circumstance 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 you must contact your coach. Even the coach is not allowed to approach the judges regarding routines or scores during the meet, but must submit an inquiry through the Meet Director. Points could be deducted not only from your gymnast but the team score as well for failure to follow these rules.

4. Please show proper respect to all competitors. You NEVER KNOW who is sitting near you (*I.E. parents of the gymnast you just made a remark about)*.

5. Once a gymnast has walked into the competition area for warm-up, they **ARE NOT ALLOWED** to talk or have contact with their parents until the competition is over. This has less to do with control than it does with FOCUS. Any distraction could disturb the focus necessary to have a successful routine. The coach’s job at the meet is to monitor the gymnast’s condition and teach her to respond appropriately. If the gymnast is too excited, the coach calms her down. If the gymnast is too complacent, the coach pumps her up and motivates her to do her best. The emotional dynamic is fluid in a competition. An excellent vault score may cause a gymnast to be over-confident. A terrible bar routine may actually provide an educational moment. At these times the gymnast needs to focus on her coach’s advice, not distractions from off the competitive floor.

As coaches, we know that you mean well with your comments, but they may not be appropriate for the long-term training of your gymnast. If you have any questions about what happens at a meet, talk to the coach after you have returned to your gym and you have first had time to reflect.

6. In any competition, parents, friends, and relatives of the gymnast **ARE NOT ALLOWED** onto the competitive floor. **YOU MUST** remain in the spectator’s area. This also includes other relatives and friends. Your child could be immediately scratched from the meet if a parent is in the competitor’s area.

7. In case of injury during warm-up or competition, **YOU MUST** stay in the spectator area until your coach flags you onto the floor.

8. **DO NOT** coach your child. Coaches should coach, everyone else should encourage. Injury may result from changing the gymnast’s focus away from the coach’s technique. Even the most helpful comment from you could have disastrous consequences.
9. **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY** is permitted during a meet. The sudden flash of light could cause a gymnast to be injured. Check out your camera in advance. Many cameras come with an automatic flash that will go off if it detects low light levels. If you cannot manually disable this device, please do not take pictures during the competition.

10. On the day of competition your child should eat a well-balanced meal about two-three hours prior to the actual competition. This energy will carry them through the entire competition. If necessary, a gymnast may carry fruit juices and pieces of fruit in their gym bag to curb hunger pangs.

11. All gymnasts are encouraged to stay until the end of the awards ceremony whether they are receiving an award or not. They need to cheer all award recipients - especially their teammates.

**Expectations**

Problems occur when a parent expects too much from an athlete who is new to the competitive arena. *(New is defined as having only competed for two or three years.)* It takes a number of years of quality competition for a gymnast to develop the poise and grace to continuously take top honors in a gymnastics competition.

Some parents seem to have developed their own system of evaluating the scores their children earn during a gymnastics competition. When their child earns a 9.00 or better in the meet, the parents tend to walk around with the look and attitude "YES, my kid is hot!" If their child receives an 8.00, the parents are still happy and feel their child is a very good competitor. However, if a child gets a mark around a 7.00, the parents start to wonder what needs to be fixed in the routine, or why the coach doesn't pay more attention to their child. As the scores get lower than 7.00, the gymnast's parents hide in the bleachers and hope that no one they know will see them.

Obviously this is an over-simplification of what happens, and not all parents react in this manner. The key is to recognize when your child is working up to her potential. If she completes all her skills for the first time, without a fall, that is a winning routine regardless of what score she receives. Comments from you should be congratulatory and positive. No mention should be made at that time of what she can do better, that would lessen the effect of this "victory" for her. After the meet your daughter’s coach will go over those elements that need work and congratulate her on the elements she competed correctly.

Any score she receives during a competition is no reflection on you as parent. There is no reason for you to feel embarrassed if your child is having a bad meet. Everyone has good days and bad days, and it is how she learns to react to them that show her development as a competitor.

Remember always that a score given to your child in a gymnastics competition is an evaluation of one single performance, not an evaluation of the child.
**Gym bag necessities**

At the end of your last practice before leaving for a competition each gymnast must make sure the following items are in her gym bag:

- Uneven bar grips, wrist wraps, gymnastics tape and hand lotion.
- Team competition leotard.
- Team warm-up suit.
- Hair care, make-up, and personal hygiene items.
- Any vital medical braces, supports, or bandages.
- Medical Release Form, necessary medicines, and emergency phone numbers.
- Money for meals and snacks on the road.

The following are optional items the gymnast may wish to have with her during away meets:

- An extra leotard (clean).
- Gymnastics slippers or flip flops.
- Hand towel (especially when it's hot)
- Water bottle
- Small first aid kit for the care of rips, scrapes, etc.
- Sneakers or running shoes and socks
- Spiral bound pad and pen, leisure reading book, cards, or video game.
- Fruit slices or crackers to snack on when the meet runs long.

**Descriptions of Team Levels**

**Pre-Team** - This class is by invitation only, and is for girls who wish to enter the competitive program. Advanced skills like front and back handsprings are taught, however a greater emphasis is placed on form along with the more advanced skill training. Gymnasts are introduced to components of the Level 3 compulsory routines.

**Level 3** - The first major compulsory competitive level. USAG Invitational and local sanctioned meets are attended. Gymnasts receive awards based on scores on each event in their age level and division. Level 3 is the stepping stone to future higher levels.

**Levels 4 & 5** - A continuation of the compulsory competitive level with training on more advanced compulsory skills. Gymnasts will compete at USAG Invitational meets receiving awards based on scores on each event in their age level and division. Some gymnasts will be introduced to optional skills at these levels.
Level 6 - This is the introductory level to optional gymnastics. Routines are developed and choreographed individually by the coaches for each gymnast’s strength, style, and difficulty level. Necessary travel for competitions begins to increase at this level.

Levels 7-10 - Advanced optional level routines become increasingly difficult. Each gymnast’s strengths and styles are highlighted when the routines are individually developed and choreographed. Gymnasts at this level are very committed and are training 4-5 days/wk.

**Nutritional Guidelines**  
(when travelling with chaperones.)

Previous to a competition, the idea is to eat foods that are easily digested and will supply the gymnast with energy. Breakfast foods like waffles, cereal, muffins, and all types of fruit are good choices. The idea is not to bog the digestive a particular gymnast.

In general, every gymnast should finish their meal at least an hour before warm ups begin. Otherwise, the food lies like a lump in the stomach while the body diverts blood flow to arm and leg muscles, which are now demanding priority.

Each gymnast should carry a small snack (crackers, fruit) and a fruit juice drink and/or water in her gym bag to stave off hunger pangs should they arise during a competition.

- If your child is travelling without you to an away meet please provide an appropriate amount of money. Coaches/Chaperones are not banks.

**Travel Guidelines**

Occasionally, we travel to a meet that requires an overnight stay. A host hotel is recommended and this information will be distributed to you by your head coach. Again, please do not contact the host gym for any of this information. For a large competition, ABK will block a number of rooms for all of our families and coaches. All families are responsible for their own expenses. The assessment paid does cover all of the coaches travel expenses.

**Parent’s Notes to Ask Coaches:**
Parent / Gymnast Acknowledgement

I have read the document titled “Welcome to the Team!” from cover to cover and understand and agree to the guidelines set forth.

I also understand that the policies and procedures may change throughout the year. Modifications to this document may be made via letters or communications from the Team Coach and / or Gym Director.

Should I have any questions regarding any policies or procedures, I understand that I should contact ABK’s Gym Director for the appropriate answers.

_______________________________________          ______________
Parent Signature     Date

_______________________________________           ______________
Gymnast Signature     Date