



Frequently Asked Questions - Competitions

The questions listed below are asked quite frequently and are perfectly normal to ponder. Many parents have the same questions, so a few explanations might be helpful. Although some of these questions are very basic, some are a little more intense, but are sometimes asked. If you choose to approach the coach on any of the more intense issues make sure it is in an appropriate time and manner. Also, please be aware that if you allow yourself to get too wrapped up in some of these questions or find yourself asking them frequently, it could be detrimental to your child's gymnastics and development.

Do we have practice the weekend of a meet?

Depending on the session schedules of the *entire team*, practice during a competition weekend may or may not be held. Please expect practice times to change or be canceled during a meet weekend. **This may apply to your child even if their particular level does NOT have a meet.** Please understand that we are not made aware of session schedules until approximately 10 days before the competition, practice changes WILL be made at the last minute. We will notify parents of practice changes by e mail and post the changes on the team calendar on the Stars & Stripes website.

How and when will I know what day my child competes on?

Please understand that Stars & Stripes will not know the exact session schedule for each level until approximately 10 days before the competition weekend. We will get the information to families as promptly as a possible. Days and times will be posted on the Stars & Stripes website ASAP. **We ask that parents do not contact the meet host to find out session information.** Host gyms will usually post meet information on their website, however please follow the times provided by your coaches. Sometimes session schedules are posted (on the host site) listing open stretch and check in at the same time, however gymnasts must already be checked in to receive full stretching time, therefore they must arrive well BEFORE the designated open stretch time.

Why are the scores (on a specific event) so low at today's meet?

Please remember, if you must ask this question, it should be away from your child's sight in an appropriate manner. In a sport such as gymnastics with subjective judging scores *will* vary from meet to meet. A gymnast may have a better performance than the last meet for example, but end up with a lower score. Some judges have specific pet peeves they may deduct for, where another judge at another meet did not. Another possibility is that maybe your child did not perform as well that particular day, which is

normal and *will* happen. These ups and downs must be expected, and it should not change your support for your child, the coaches or the program. We explain to the gymnasts that every judge is different, and we cannot blame the judges for doing their job and taking deductions where necessary. We expect that gymnasts always have a positive attitude regardless of their score; parents can help by also setting that example.

My daughter's routine looked better than her teammate's routine; why did her teammate get a better score?

First, this question could be very unhealthy to get wrapped up in, simply because comparing your child to another athlete could negatively impact your child. However, it is human nature to *think* this question. When “thinking” this question it is very important to be honest with yourself about your child's ability, performance under pressure, competitive nature, work ethic and motivation. Please understand there are specific angles, body positions, heights, shapes, etc. a gymnast must show throughout her routine on each event. It is quite difficult for a parent to decipher what is right or wrong with so many rules that are constantly changing. Also, some mistakes or imperfections have greater deductions in the scoring system. Something that may look like a minor mistake may be a large mistake in regard to deductions. Remember, we do our best to prepare *every* athlete for competition, and we strive for every athlete to reach *their* own personal potential.

Why does my daughter always go first in the competitive line up? It seems that gymnasts who go first get lower scores.

Please understand that the line up does not affect your child's score, her performance is what will determine her score. It is common in the sport of gymnastics to end with the strongest competitor on an event, which we will experiment with from time to time. When we use this strategy, going last is an earned position. However, more importantly we strongly believe in giving every gymnast the opportunity to be at the beginning of the line up, the middle, and the end throughout the entire meet season. Gymnasts must learn to compete confidently wherever they are placed, and they must learn to make a positive situation out of where they are placed in the line up. At the State meet, regionals, nationals and big invitations the line up is predetermined by a random draw. We must prepare the gymnasts for these situations from the very beginning years of competition. We want the gymnasts to focus on their performance (which is what really matters), not their placement in the line up.

Why don't the coaches stay and watch at every award ceremony?

Please do not assume that we are disappointed in the teams' performance if we are not at awards, that will NEVER be the case. It is common that coaches have back-to-back sessions at a meet. We may use the time during awards to rest, eat, etc. or we may be preparing the next group for their competition. While winning is an excellent reward for a job well done, as coaches we find great joy in watching each gymnast achieve their personal best on the competition floor. We measure our work and progress

by going on the competition floor to compete. While winning is not so important, trying to win is representing everything we strive for. Which means in practice we want every gymnast striving toward the goal of being amongst the best of the best and challenging themselves to reach their ultimate potential, however not “winning” should not take away from the journey if a gymnast gave it their all.

Why is my child not competing on a particular event at the upcoming competition?

We firmly believe in proper preparation, and providing every child the opportunity to be successful and strive for their personal best. If a gymnast is not showing that capability in practice, we do not believe in allowing them to compete. Sometimes this situation occurs because it is early in the season, and a gymnast just isn't ready. This situation may also occur if a gymnast is not striving for their personal potential in practice. We attempt to teach gymnasts to practice as if they were competing, not save their top performance for the day of the meet. In the long-run, if a gymnast only attempts their best at competition, they will NOT build necessary confidence and they WILL struggle with further progression. To teach gymnasts this valuable lesson we will demand each gymnast's personal best in practice (which does vary from gymnast to gymnast, because every child is an individual). If they are unwilling to practice at their best, the consequence may be deleting an event from competition. We need parents support on this issue to teach gymnasts what is expected of them, and what it takes to be a good competitor. Our hope is to bring out the best in every athlete. Although this can be a difficult situation for gymnasts to deal with, it can also be a wonderful life lesson to learn and grow from. Our intension in doing this is NEVER to break a child's confidence or to embarrass them. The goal is ALWAYS teach them to expect the best out of themselves. We would NEVER put expectations on a child that they could not achieve. We believe in setting a team standard to ensure success on every level.