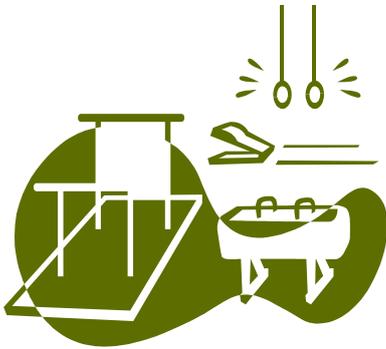


Competitive Gymnastics



The Levels within Gymnastics

There are three basic streams for children to participate in the sport of gymnastics:

- **Gymnastics for All** recreational gymnastics which is designed to teach children basic gymnastics skills and increase their human movement development. These children probably only come into the gym for two or three hours per week. They can participate in two events each year to demonstrate the skills that they have learnt to their parents.
- Each discipline or Gymsport, in our Club we have four, namely, Men's Artistic Gymnastics (MAG); Sports Acrobatics (Acro); Trampoline (TRP) and Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG), has a mid-level competition stream, now called the Australian Levels Program, where gymnasts undertake intensive training in order to compete in State, National and potentially some International events.
- The highest level of gymnastics training is an Elite stream where gymnasts work incredibly long hours, normally at a High Performance Centre, specifically to gain selection in Australian International Teams.

Woden Valley Gymnastics Club

WVGC has all three levels working in the gym and our primary competition focus is on the mid-level stream for talented children who want to pursue a competitive gymnastics career in order to compete for the Club and the ACT. Training involves years of preparation in skill development, flexibility, strength and conditioning. Gymnasts with the necessary potential and drive are selected each year from the Kindergym Program and the Club's Recreational Program to start the difficult road to representative honours.



This competitive stream is NOT a social group. While good social interaction and friendship is necessary in both the training group and the Team, it is not the main reason to be in this stream. Groups in this stream focus on learning skills and routines in order to compete, not to socialise.

The initial selection process is based on observations by our senior coaches who look for young gymnasts who are willing to push themselves; who work that little bit harder; who demonstrate that they have the physical ability to be competitive and who indicate that they want to train more and at a higher level.



These gymnasts have the opportunity to represent the Club in local, inter-State, national and international competitions. Initially, they start representing the Club in ACT competitions and, as they progress to higher Levels, they may be selected in an ACT Team to compete at national events. Progression from one Level to the next relies on how well the gymnast demonstrates mastery of the stipulated routines and skills, including nominated bonuses and connections, at the current Level of competition. This may or may not occur at a competition or it may be based on the coach's experience and understanding of what is required.

Entry into the competitive programs is by invitation only. Our coaches assess each gymnast to make the decision as to which stream and which Level will provide the best pathway for each individual gymnast, commensurate with their current skill level and ability, to progress within the sport. High level skills need a solid base and cannot be developed if the foundation skills are not sound. Our coaches are highly trained, fully accredited through Gymnastics Australia and have a great deal of experience at coaching gymnastics. They are similar in many ways to school teachers. Parents rely on teachers to make the correct decisions with regard to their child's progress at school and, so, our coaches must be trusted to make informed decisions on what class or pathway is best for their child in the gym.



Progression from one Level to the next may occur immediately after a competition series where the gymnast has demonstrated full competence at a particular Level, or it may be delayed until the coach is satisfied that the gymnast is ready to move up. A gymnast does not necessarily move up a Level every year; they may need another year to consolidate before moving up a Level. This is not detrimental. It is better to have good base skills before trying to build on shaky skills to develop harder, more complex ones. Parents must rely on the experience of the Club's trained and accredited coaches to select the best pathway for the on-going development of their child's development in the gymnastics environment. Decisions are not made in isolation; there is wide consultation within each stream as to which gymnasts are ready to move up a Level and which group or coach is best suited to that gymnast's needs. Unfortunately, gymnastics is highly competitive, even at the lower Levels, so putting a gymnast in the right class is critical.



An invitation to join the competitive stream of gymnastics training is primarily about:

- The child's ability and desire to compete;
- The coaches' confidence that a child has the foundation skills, strength and demonstrated competence to acquire the new skills required at the next Level; and
- Support and encouragement from parents to assist the young gymnast to achieve reasonable goals, commensurate with their ability.

The Club has a responsibility, which it takes extremely seriously, to:

- Provide the best possible challenging, friendly learning environment for all our participants; and
- Be absolutely fair and open in all our dealings with parents and gymnasts alike.

The Club encourages all our parents to talk to our Program Managers and Senior Coaches if they would like to gain a deeper understanding as to why their child has been placed in a particular class!