



Xcel Bronze:

Travel Competitions & Training Update

Xcel Bronze: Travel Competitions

A young gymnast with blonde hair is performing a handstand on a pommel horse in a gymnasium. She is wearing a dark leotard with white accents. Her right leg is extended upwards, and her left leg is bent. The background is a blurred gymnasium with other people and equipment. The lighting is bright, and the overall tone is blue.

The modified pre team level (Xcel Bronze) is where gymnasts learn to perform in front of an audience in an unfamiliar environment. The travel fun meets allow for athletes to gain real competition experience where they will be critiqued and provided with a score or score range by a sanctioned official.

Judges & Scoring



One of the major differences athletes will experience at the travel fun meet (compared to our in house meets) is being formally evaluated and scored by a USA Gymnastics sanctioned judge. Athletes will receive a ribbon on each event representing their SCORE range.

blue ribbon : 9.0 to 10.0 range

red ribbon: 8.0 to 8.9 range

white ribbon : 7.0 to 7.9 range

anything below a 7.0 will be either purple, brown or rainbow ribbon.

Team Uniform:

- Sleeveless leotard (NEW for 2021-2022)
- Team T-Shirt
- Red Sweat pants
- Solid white socks with athletic shoes
- Hair pulled back in a bun with matching team scrunchie (directions below)
- NO NAIL POLISH
- Nude color briefs and a sports bra may be worn and ARE recommended, but cannot show, it will result in a deduction.



Hair for the Travel Meet: The Bun

Practicing and perfecting your child's meet hairdo is highly encouraged to ensure a neat, clean look and to avoid unnecessary stress the day of the competition. ALWAYS have the hair finished BEFORE arriving to the meet.

It is very important that gymnasts' hair is tight and secure to avoid being a distraction. If your child's hair does come loose, the coaches will take care of the problem.



Hair for the Travel Meet: Directions for the Bun

Practicing and perfecting your child's meet hairdo is highly encouraged to ensure a neat, clean look and to avoid unnecessary stress the day of the competition. ALWAYS have the hair finished BEFORE arriving to the meet. A nice hairdo is IMPORTANT and WILL result in a better competition.

- Begin with a high pony tail (centered between the hairline at the forehead and the hairline at the neck). If the pony tail is too low, it will get in the way of skills, if it is too high it just looks silly. All Bangs MUST be pulled back, also make sure there are not any bumps, and pin back (with barrettes), hairspray or gel any fly-aways. Barrettes must match the gymnast's hair color to ensure a neat, clean look.
- Either braid the pony tail in one or two very tight braids depending on thickness of the hair, or simply twist the hair very tightly (then hairspray and/or gel the twist).
- Once hair is braided or twisted, wrap the braid or braids or twisted pony tail around the base of the pony tail into a rounded, tight shape. The bun should be flat, not cone shaped and extremely tight. Place several bobby pins around the entire bun (several meaning at least 8-10 pins).
- Hairspray and or gel all around the bun for a slick, clean look. Everything must be tight to avoid hair distractions.
- Finally, place the matching scrunchie around the bun.



Items to bring in gym bag:

- **Wet wipes or wet wash cloth in zip lock back (to clean up after bars)**
- **Water Bottle (*water only*)**
- **Snack or snack for after the competition (fruit, granola bar, trail mix, whole grain crackers, string cheese, ½ sandwich, **NO CANDY, COOKIES, DESSERTS, ETC.**)**
- **Extra hair rubber bands and/or scrunchie**
- **Hairspray**
- **Extra bobby pins, barrettes and rubber bands**
- ***It is helpful to have a separate container/cosmetic bag for hair supplies.**

Check in & Award Ceremony

Upon arrival to the competition venue:

Parents will pay spectator fees (usually between \$10 to \$20), then locate the designated gym, join the rest of the team and coaches (as everyone arrives). Once athletes and coaches enter the competition area for warm up, parents may find a seat in the spectator viewing area. Gymnasts will stay with their coaches through the award ceremony. Gymnasts will be released to parents upon conclusion of the award ceremony.

Award Ceremony

Each team will be recognized at the award ceremony. Athletes do not receive placements or rankings at fun meets.

Attire for the Award Ceremony:

Gymnasts must wear their sweatpants and team t-shirt, along with their athletic shoes with white socks. Gymnasts must wear their meet hairdo to the award ceremony. Gymnasts are representing Stars & Stripes during the award ceremony and it is expected that they maintain the same sharp appearance required for competition.



Competition Preparation

Having a consistent “pre-meet routine” the day of the competition (and possibly the night before) is beneficial to the mind of an athlete and additionally teaches young athletes responsibility and organization.

- Gymnasts will feel more prepared, calm and focused for a meet if they have a consistent routine and/or schedule of events leading up to meets. They should begin preparing for their meet with plenty of time to spare.
- This will help to avoid additional nerves or anxiety from having to rush or worrying about being late. Gymnasts must be able to relax and avoid chaos. Always include enough time to properly prepare to avoid chaos and unnecessary anxiety.

Adequate Sleep

Gymnasts should maintain a regular sleep schedule and she be sure to get plenty of sleep the night before a competition (even if they don't have any early morning session).



Fueling the Body for Competition

- Gymnasts must always have a nutritious meal before competing as well as the days leading up to the competition. They are athletes and to have the best advantage possible, they should ALWAYS be fueling their bodies with adequate nutrients and really learn the benefits of healthy food choices. Meals before competing should be light, but nutrient dense; avoid sugar and processed food. A gymnast must NEVER skip breakfast before a morning session.
- Between the warm up, competition and awards, the meet can be very long. Please provide a small snack in your gymnast's bag for after the meet or if the meet is long they may need it during. This may include fruit, energy bar/ granola bar, string cheese, trail mix, ½ sandwich, whole grain crackers, etc. NO CANDY, COOKIES, OR DESSERTS.
- Many meets offer concessions. Gymnasts should not consume any unhealthy snacks at the venue until after they compete and finish the award ceremony. (Please save the “Maui Wowi” for a treat after the competition, the drink is very large and can be overfilling).

Healthy Meal Options to Fuel Young Athletes

The background of the slide is a collage of various healthy meal options. At the top, there are bananas and strawberries. Below that, there are several glass containers filled with different types of food: one with sliced strawberries, one with broccoli, one with a yellow sauce, one with a salad of field greens and chicken, one with brown rice and broccoli, one with grilled chicken and brown rice, one with whole wheat pasta and red sauce, one with lean ground beef and turkey, one with a baked potato and veggies, and one with raisins and string cheese. There are also some whole fruits like oranges and apples scattered throughout the collage.

Breakfast

- Greek yogurt with some granola and a banana or any other fresh fruit
- Whole-grain cereal (or oatmeal) with sliced strawberries or other fresh fruit
- Whole grain toast, 2 eggs, and an orange
- 100% whole grain waffles or pancakes with fresh fruit and yogurt

Lunch

- Turkey wrap with veggies, (dressing), and a piece of fruit (or additional veggies)
- Tuna salad on whole grain wrap (use omega-3 mayonnaise in the tuna salad) with fruit and string cheese
- Salad with field greens, grilled chicken (or hard boiled egg), along with many other fresh veggies and/or fruit
- Brown rice with broccoli

Dinner

- Grilled chicken with steamed brown rice or quinoa and vegetables
- Whole wheat pasta with red sauce and lean ground beef or turkey along with a salad
- Lean piece of meat, sweet potato, fresh veggies (steamed)
- baked potato with veggies

Snacks

- raisins, whole wheat crackers, string cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese (try with pineapple or strawberries), fruit (pears, apples, bananas), celery, carrots dipped in ranch dressing or hummus, red, yellow, orange or green peppers sliced with hummus, hardboiled eggs, whole grain bagels, whole grain/rice/bean crackers.

Role of the Parents:

Take Advantage of the Learning

Opportunities - Parents can use competitive gymnastics as an opportunity to teach their children so many valuable lessons including commitment to the training schedule, arriving to practices and competitions on time and prepared, and the importance of healthy food choices to enhance their training and performance. Pre meet preparations outside of the gym leading up to practices and competition can really complement actual training in the gym.

Enjoy the Experience – Take of advantage of watching young athletes participate in a sport they love. Parents and athletes will only have this experience once, make the most of it! Take advantage of the social aspects and the friendships athletes have the opportunity to develop. Gymnasts are surrounded by a group of peers/friends with common goals and interests which will only assist them in becoming even more goal-oriented and focused.

