



MONTHLY TEAM NEWSLETTER

START HERE. THRIVE EVERYWHERE: THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE PROCESS

One of the greatest lessons in gymnastics is that becoming a better gymnast isn't about learning more flips—it's about becoming exceptional at the fundamentals. Every advanced skill is built on a foundation of strength, flexibility, body control and proper technique. The stronger that foundation, the greater an athlete's potential.

We know that can be difficult for young gymnasts. It's exciting to chase the next big skill and patience doesn't always come naturally. But patience is part of being a disciplined athlete.

Time spent improving strength, body positions, flexibility and basic skills such as handstands (especially without walking) will do far more to accelerate long-term progress than practicing skills the body isn't yet prepared to perform. If athletes wish to practice gymnasts at home - coaches recommend focus on improving strength, flexibility and basic skills. It can be very exciting to increase timing on a handstand - and beneficial!

At Stars & Stripes Athletics, we believe great gymnasts aren't defined by the skills they can do—they're defined by the foundation they've built. Trust the process, and the skills will follow.



UNIFORM SIZING & TEAM SPIRIT WEAR BRONZE TEAM MEMBERS & UP

Uniform sizing will take place at the end of practice during the second and third week of August. A specific form will be emailed and available at sizing to complete. Please look out for an email regarding specific uniform sizing handouts and procedures along with a team spirit wear order form.

2026-2027 COMPETITION SCHEDULE AVAILABLE NOW!

The Fun Meet schedule for Pre Team and the Competitive Team Schedules are available now! Please note, since we are releasing the schedule early, dates are subject to change. Reminder, the exact date and time of travel meets will not be available until approximately 2-4 weeks from the meet weekend.

OPTIONAL TRAVEL MEET: SILVER & GOLD

The optional travel meet will be the Windy City Invitational in Chicago January 15th - 17th. Please register for the travel meet through the main office by September 1st. The \$245 registration fee will be drafted on October 1st. Hotel Information will be available soon - stay tuned!

UPCOMING EVENTS & PRACTICE CHANGES

SUMMER PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

The summer practice schedule will continue through Friday, August 21st.

PRE TEAM & COMPETITIVE TEAM CLOSURE: LABOR DAY WEEKEND

No practice for all levels Friday, September 4th through Monday, September 7th

****Complete Pre Team & Competitive Team calendars are located on the gymnastics team page of our website.****



POWERFUL WORD OF THE MONTH: SPORTSMANSHIP

Each month we have a new Powerful Word of the Month from the Powerful Words Character Developmental System. Sportsmanship is a focal point of our competitive program from being a supportive teammate to being a gracious winner.

The Silver and Gold athletes participated in a great exercise during Team Camp - the Post-It Challenge. When they spotted a teammate doing something note-worthy, they wrote them a quick message on a post-it then stuck it to the wall. The exercise made the athletes more aware of their fellow-teammates efforts while also boosting each other. Putting sportsmanship into action!





2026-2027 COMPETITION SCHEDULE

DATE	EVENT	TEAMS ATTENDING
DECEMBER 5 TH & 6 TH	JINGLE BELL ROCK HOLIDAY SHOWCASE	HOT SHOTS, HOT SHOTS 1, HOT SHOTS 2 & BRONZE GROUP PERFORMANCE - GOLD
JANUARY 8 TH - 10 TH	BORN TO FLY MICHIGAN STARS SPORTS CENTER WASHINGTON TWP. MI	SILVER & GOLD
JANUARY 15 TH - 17 TH	WINDY CITY INVITATIONAL (OPTIONAL TRAVEL MEET) CHICAGO, IL	SILVER & GOLD
JANUARY 29 TH - 31 ST	EPIC BLIZZARD BASH DORT FINANCIAL CENTER - FLINT, MI	SILVER & GOLD
FEBRUARY 12 TH - 14 TH	GIRL POWER INVITATIONAL VIBE CREDIT UNION - NOVI, MI	BRONZE, SILVER & GOLD
FEBRUARY 26 TH - 28 TH	SCHOLARSHIP SPECTACULAR FRANKENMUTH, MI	BRONZE, SILVER & GOLD
MARCH 12 TH - 14 TH	SILVER STATE MEET DEVOS CONVENTION CETNER GRAND RAPIDS, MI	SILVER
MARCH 19 TH	STARS & STRIPES PRE TEAM FUN MEET	HOT SHOTS, HOTS 1, HOT SHOTS 2 & BRONZE
APRIL 2 ND - 4 TH	GOLD STATE MEET DEVOS CONVENTION CENTER GRAND RAPIDS, MI	GOLD
APRIL 29 TH - MAY 2 ND	XCEL GOLD REGIONAL 5 CHAMPIONSHIPS LOCATION TBD (OPTIONAL MEET)	GOLD
JUNE 25 TH	SUMMER SHOWCASE FUN MEET AT STARS & STRIPES	HOT SHOTS, HOT SHOTS 1, HOTS 2 & BRONZE



POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

POWERFUL FAMILY

A Special Members-Only Newsletter from Powerful Words Character Development

Dear Family,

This month the powerful word of the month is sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is considered "The Golden Rule" of competition. It's usually associated with one's attitude while competing in sports. However, good sportsmanship is important in all types of competition. And, while sportsmanship typically describes how participants act when competing themselves, sportsmanship can also refer to those who are spectating.

In fact, research tells us that how the spectators act at an event can have a profound effect on the players. When spectators are positive, the players act more positively. When the spectators act more negatively, so do the players.

We are all responsible for the spirit of competition. However, many of those who coach and manage sports have all but declared that sportsmanship is on the decline. Some observers say that this perspective reflects a larger societal problem, specifically of challenged character and poor moral fiber. Some studies show that the level of competition is the culprit while others discuss expectations of aggression or violence and a lack of self-control strategies as the reasons to blame.

When many worry that competition has gotten too intense, comparisons and perfectionism has been on the rise and mental health effects have been brought into question, this seems like the perfect time to reflect upon how we interact, compete, and work with one another. How can we scaffold our children and bolster their positive

character?

Good sportsmanship embodies the written and unwritten rules of a game. When we show good sportsmanship, we follow the known rules like "each competitor must wear the appropriate uniform." But there are also "unwritten" rules that we must follow. For example, good sports know that cheating is wrong and that grace when losing and kindness when winning is a respectful part of competition.

As key adults in the lives of children, it's important to both talk to our children about good sportsmanship and show them what good sportsmanship looks like. This doesn't mean that we need to pretend we are happy when we lose or "neutral" when we win, but rather show respect no matter what the outcome.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,

—Your Motivated and Dedicated
InstructorsInstructors

Week 1 Sportsmanship defined: How can I win graciously and lose respectfully?

Week 2 Playing by the rules: Being safe, fair and respectful while in competition.

Week 3 Competitors, coaches & spectators: How should we act, speak and cheer?

Week 4 Dealing with the outcome: What can we learn for next time? What does this mean in the larger picture?

"The score tells what happened.
Your character shows who you are."
—Dr. Robyn Silverman

"It's not whether you get knocked down; it's whether you get up."
—Vince Lombardi

"A good sport respects the rules, respects the opponents, and respects the game."
—John Wooden

"The more difficult the victory, the greater the happiness in winning."
—Pelé

"Winning is important, but the effort, the respect, and the integrity you show along the way are what people remember."
—Pat Summitt

"Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard."
—Tim Notke

"Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game."
—Babe Ruth

"Sportsmanship for me is when a guy walks off the court and you really can't tell whether he won or lost, when he carries himself with pride either way."
—Jim Courier





Betsy's August Kitchen:

Finish Strong!

Hello Summer Strong Families,

August is a month of transition. Summer isn't quite over, but school, sports, homework, and busy schedules are right around the corner. This is the time of year when many athletes slowly lose the progress they worked so hard to build. Let's not let that happen.

FOCUS #1: KEEP VITAMIN D AND IMMUNITY STRONG

Even though summer is winding down, your gymnast still benefits from spending time outside and eating a variety of colorful foods. Vitamin D is essential for bone healthy and immunity as you finish off your summer **STRONG!**

Simple goals:

- Get outside whenever possible, wear sunscreen!
- Eat fruits and vegetables every day. If its **GREEN** IT's **GOOD!**

- Include protein at every meal, especially vitamin D rich foods like eggs, wild fish and yogurt
- Prioritize quality sleep, shut down electronics at least an hour before bedtime



REMINDER

A healthy immune system is one of the best ways to start the school year strong.

FOCUS #2: HYDRATION STILL MATTERS

August heat can be just as intense as July.
In fact its' usually much hotter and sweatier!

- Don't wait until your gymnast says they're thirsty. Mild dehydration can affect energy, focus, recovery, and performance.

Watch for signs like:

- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Muscle cramps



Simple Homemade Electrolyte Drink

- Water
- Splash of orange juice
- Pinch of sea salt
- Drizzle of honey

BACK-TO-SCHOOL TRANSITION

TIPS School will be here before you know it!
Start easing into your school routine now instead of waiting until the night before classes begin.

Betsy's Inside Tip: Small changes now make the first week of school much easier.

TRY TO:
Move bedtime a little earlier each night.

- Return to consistent meal times.
- Practice packing lunches and snacks.
- Keep breakfast simple and ready to go.
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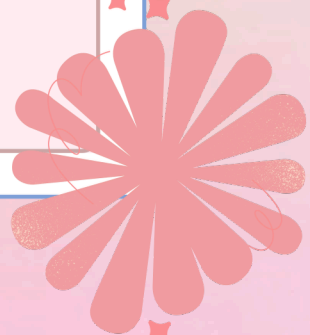
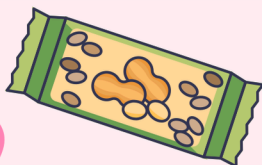
EASY BACKPACK SNACK IDEAS

Busy mornings don't need complicated nutrition.

A few great grab-and-go options:

- Protein bars with simple ingredients (I prefer homemade bars, check out Gymnachef books for ideas)
- Trail mix with nuts, seeds and dried fruit
- Apples, bananas, oranges and grapes
- String cheese
- Whole grain crackers with peanut butter or almond butter
- Greek yogurt with seeds and honey
- Organic salmon, beef or turkey jerky
- (watch for nitrates!)

Betsy's Inside Tip:
Remember...something is always better than nothing.



THREE QUICK AND EASY BACK-TO-SCHOOL MEALS

Here are a few simple meals that athletes actually enjoy and parents can make quickly. When time is short don't sacrifice protein, iron dense foods, vitamin C or complex carbs!

Breakfast Wrap

Scrambled eggs with spinach, cheese, and a whole grain tortilla.

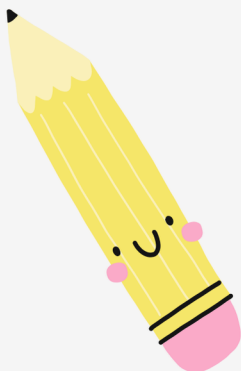


Power Bowl
Rice, grilled chicken, roasted vegetables, and avocado.



Greek Yogurt Bowl

Greek yogurt, raspberries, granola, and a drizzle of honey.



ASK BETSY

QUESTION

Coach Angela asks: "Betsy, I'm a busy coach and

I'm starving along with my kids halfway through practice. What are some good summertime snacks I can eat and even share with my athletes that help improve energy, mood, and focus?"

ANSWER

Betsy Says:

Keep it simple! Aim for a combination of carbohydrates for quick energy and protein for staying power. Here are some of my favorite gym-friendly summer snacks:

- Frozen blueberries or chilled apple slices
- Cheese sticks with whole grain crackers
- Greek yogurt cups
- Trail mix (if allergies allow)
- Applesauce or fruit puree pouches
- Peanut butter packets with rice cakes or crackers

Don't forget to hydrate. Even mild dehydration can make athletes and coaches feel tired, unfocused, and cranky. Keep a water bottle nearby and sip throughout practice.

QUESTION

Gymnast Sophia asks: "It's summertime and I don't have much time in the morning. I don't want a heavy breakfast, but I need enough energy for a long practice. What's the best thing to eat before my workout?"

ANSWER

Betsy Says:

Great question! If practice starts within about an hour, keep it light and easy to digest. Try a banana with peanut butter, Greek yogurt with honey, toast with peanut butter, a smoothie, applesauce with a protein shake, or even a homemade energy bite. The goal is to give your body quick carbohydrates for energy plus a little protein without feeling overly full. Then, be sure to eat a balanced meal after practice to recover.

QUESTION

Gymnast Finley asks: "I'm allergic to a lot of the water-rich foods you recommend in the summer, like berries, watermelon, and foods with seeds. What fruits or vegetables can I eat instead?"

ANSWER

Betsy Says:

Absolutely! There are still plenty of hydrating choices. Try cucumbers (peeled if needed), lettuce, celery, cauliflower, broccoli, zucchini, peaches, nectarines, pears, apples, oranges, grapefruit (if appropriate for your medications), or grapes if you tolerate them. You can also increase hydration by adding vegetables to smoothies, soups, salads, or wraps. Remember, fluids count too. Water, milk, and electrolyte drinks all help keep you hydrated.



Final Thought

The end of summer is just as important as the beginning.

Champions aren't built during one great week of training, they're built through consistent habits over time.

Carry those healthy routines into the school year, stay consistent, and keep building on everything you've accomplished this summer. Finally, I am so proud of all the hard work I have been seeing over social media. Thank you to the gyms who have consistently posted, I will be picking a winner for the free year of my subscription very soon!

Finish strong. The next season starts now.

And don't forget, my book, *You Can't Flip on Empty* is a great end of summer read for those last few days on the beach, get it here!

<https://www.amazon.com/You-Cant-Flip-Empty->

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— Betsy McNally

