

Monthly Team Newsletter

WINTER NEWS!



TEAM SPIRIT WEAR ORDER!

A link to the Stars & Stripes competitive team spirit store will be emailed within the upcoming weeks and posted on the Stars & Stripes Competitive team group Facebook page, be on the look out for this!

There are a variety of clothing and accessories options to choose from for both children and adults in several colors. There is also a choice of the Stars & Stripes Athletics logo or the Stars & Stripes competitive team logo. This makes a perfect gifts for the upcoming holiday season

PRE TEAM: SKILL CLINICS

Athletes have the opportunity to accelerate progress and hone in a specific skill and/or skill set with the variety of skill clinics offered. Clinics provide athletes with repetition of basic components, drills and strength exercises. Check out our website for more information regarding clinics!

Practice Changes

NOVEMBER

- Closed Wednesday 26th through Friday 28th- Thanksgiving break
- SILVER TEAM: Extra routine practice Nov 7th 6:30-8 & Nov 15th 11:30-1

DECEMBER/JANUARY

- NO PRACTICE Gold & Platinum Monday, December 8th
- Tuesday December 23rd through Thursday January 1st: Holiday Break





PRE TEAM: PAJAMA WEEK!

All pre team athletes are invited to wear their Pajamas to practice starting Tuesday December 16th through Monday December 22nd. Have athletes wear their leotard under their pajamas.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!

It is strongly encourage that you follow us on Facebook by joining the Stars & Stripes Competitive team group page. This page is updated with important information such as practice changes, closures, meet information and other reminders. Pictures and videos of practice and events are also posted. It a great way to stay in the loop!

SAVE THE DATE: PICTURE DAY

Team picture day will be Friday, February 6th. More details to come.

WORD OF THE MONTH

Cooperation: means working together with others to reach a common goal or help each other succeed.

Example: In gymnastics, teammates show cooperation when they help set up equipment together or cheer each other on during practice so everyone can do their best.

MONTHLY NUTRITION

Each month the team newsletter contains nutritional tips, recipes and valuable information from sports nutritionist Betsy McNally Laouar – the best part, all of the information is specific to gymnasts!

This month Betsy talks about functional eating for gymnasts and how to have more energy and focus in the gym. Recipes on the month include baked apple chips, check it out!

PRE TEAM: SAVE THE DATE

JINGLE BELL ROCK HOLIDAY SHOWCASE REGISTRATION STARTS OCTOBER 6TH.

DETAILS:

Athlete registration FREE.
Spectator tickets are \$7, required for entry at the door.

SHOW TIMES:

Saturday, December 6th
Hot Shots/Hot Shots 1- 12:00-1:15pm
Hot Shots 2/Bronze- 1:45-3:00pm



2025-2026 Competition Schedule

DATES	COMPETITION	LOCATION	LEVELS ATTENDING
January 9th-11th	PG Memorial	Livonia Athletic District Livonia, MI	Silver through Platinum
January 23rd-25th	Athlete Warrior	Oakland Expo Center, Waterford MI	Silver through Platinum
January 30th- February 1st	Grand Rapids Classic	MSA Sports Spot, Grand Rapids, MI	Silver through Platinum
February 13th-15th	Presidential Classic *Optional travel meet*	ESPN Wide World of Sports at Walt Disney, Orlando, FL	Silver through Platinum
February 20th-22nd	Cereal City	Kellogg Arena Battle Creek, MI	Silver through Platinum
March 6th-8th	Silver State Championships	Ypsilanti	Silver
March 20th-22nd	Gold State Championships	Livonia	Gold
March 27th-29th	Platinum State Championships	Washington Twp	Platinum
April 24th-26th	Regional Championships *qualification required*	Location TBD Held in Kentucky	Gold and Platinum

*Subject to change

The exact date and times for competitions will be provided by the competition host club approximately 10-14 days before the competition weekend. Once we receive this information we will send it out via email.

Regional Championship: competitive team members at the Gold level and above have the opportunity to qualify to Regional championships via state meet. Regional championships are an additional fee and are typically held out of state (Michigan, Illinois Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky).

Optional Travel Meet: this is an optional, additional meet for Team members. Please register by September 15th however, your account will not be charged until Nov 15th. The additional cost is \$229, register online through the parent portal (listed under 2025-2026 special event season) or call/text our business office.





2025-2026 Fun Meet Schedule

DATES	COMPETITION	LOCATION	LEVELS ATTENDING
November 1st	In House Fun Meet	Stars & Stripes Athletics	Hot Shots, Hot Shots 1, Hots Shots 2 & Bronze
December 6th & 7th	In House Fun Meet Jingle Bell Rock	Stars & Stripes Athletics	Hot Shots, Hot Shots 1, Hots Shots 2 & Bronze
January 23rd-25th	Athlete Warrior Challenge *Travel Fun Meet*	Oakland Expo Center, Waterford MI	Bronze
February 7th	In House Fun Meet	Stars & Stripes Athletics	Hot Shots, Hot Shots 1, Hots Shots 2 & Bronze
February 27th - March 1st	Showtime Scholarship Spectacular *Travel Fun Meet*	Harvey Kern Community Pavilion	Bronze
May 16th	In House Fun Meet	Stars & Stripes Athletics	Hot Shots, Hot Shots 1, Hots Shots 2 & Bronze

*Subject to change

Travel Fun Meets: The exact date and times for competitions will be provided by the competition host club approximately 10-14 days before the competition weekend. Once we receive this information we will send it out via email.



Jingle Bell Rock



HOLIDAY SHOWCASE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH AND
SUNDAY DECEMBER 7TH

ATHLETE SCHEDULE:

SATURDAY ARRIVAL:
11:00AM
SATURDAY PICK UP:
6:30PM

SUNDAY ARRIVAL:
11:30AM
SUNDAY PICK UP:
3:00PM

DETAILS

Mandatory practices will be held in order to perform at the Jingle Bell Rock holiday performance. Below are the practice times:

- Wednesday, November 19th (during practice time)
- Monday, November 24th (during practice time)
- Monday, December 1st (during practice time)
- Wednesday, December 3rd (during practice time)
- Thursday, December 4th 5:25-8:25pm
- Saturday, December 6th 11:00-11:30am

Attendance at all rehearsals is required, with the exception of November 24th, where we recognize some families may be traveling for the holiday. These rehearsals are essential to ensure the athletes are ready for their performances.

Gymnasts will be provided a meal during their time at the gym. It is encouraged for the athletes to bring snacks and blanket/cozy clothes for the downtime in between shows. When the gymnasts arrive on Saturday & Sunday, they will need to report to GYM B.

Gold and Platinum athletes will have Monday, December 8th off.

MEET HOTEL

Information

GRAND RAPIDS CLASSIC

JAN 23RD-
FEB 1ST

GRAND
RAPIDS, MI

Once this information is made available, I will send an updated list.

CEREAL CITY

FEBRUARY
14TH-16TH

BATTLE
CREEK, MI

- DoubleTree by Hilton- 50 Capital Ave. SW
Battle Creek, MI

Newly renovated DoubleTree is attached to Kellogg Arena for your convenience and serves as the host hotel for Cereal City.

GROUP CODE when booking: CDTCCB

REMINDERS: #1. Specific competition session information will not be made available until approximately 2-4 weeks before the competition. It is possible athletes compete on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. It is advised to reserve rooms for the entire weekend, then make needed adjustments when the details are made available. Always check host hotel deadlines for cancellation and changes to avoid unnecessary changes.

#2. Please expect potential practice adjustment surrounding competition weekends. These arrangements will be distributed when session information is distributed.



BETSY'S NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

TIME TO GIVE THANKS AND ISSUES FACING THE GYMNAST

Happy November! It's a wonderful time of year for a gymnast. The season is just upon us and the holidays are around the corner. During this time there are also some other "issues" that maybe creeping up trying to throw off your training. Here are some of the issues and how to fight them with food!

THE ISSUES FACING THE GYMNAST IN NOVEMBER

1. Nagging Injuries. Ankles, wrists, general soreness and inflammation due to hitting harder landing surfaces. Supplement your evening meals by adding turmeric spice or drinking tart cherry juice for less inflammation of joints. Add kale to your smoothies for a vitamin K boost.
2. Loss of Energy. Are you running out of steam halfway through your floor routine? Be sure you are getting adequate complex carbs, food rich in Vitamin B 12 and drinking at a minimum half your body weight in water in ounces. Complex carbs include oatmeal, sweet potatoes and quinoa. Food rich in B 12 include eggs, lean meats /chicken and green leafy veggies
3. Fear. Are you having mental blocks due to putting your routines and skills together? Load up on foods that stimulate brain power and well being like blueberries, walnuts, pumpkin seeds and wild fish
4. Immunity: Feel like you are always run down and getting sick? Be sure you are getting enough zinc rich foods and vitamin C foods. These include colorful fruits and veggies and for zinc, nuts, seeds and beans!



FALL INTO ENERGY



B VITAMINS

B Vitamins! There are 8 B vitamins! All of them help convert the foods we eat into glucose and energy. They help with cell metabolism, blood flow and "B" is the ENERGY vitamin! A lot of times I find athletes are tired because they aren't hydrated and they aren't getting enough B vitamins. B vitamins- especially B12 help, with mood, concentration, memory as well as energy. All things a gymnast needs at the end of the day. You may see a deficiency in B Vitamins if your athlete is dealing with muscle weakness, fatigue, or they are moody! Check your B vitamins!! We will go into foods that are rich in Vitamin B more closely in the next section of the newsletter

HYDRATION AND POTASSIUM

Not only is drinking water important (it is the life force behind all of our bodies functions on a cellular level, from our joints, to our muscles, our brains and bones) but it is ESSENTIAL for athletes! If your athlete isn't a big water drinker, consider getting more water dense foods into their diet, including fruits and veggies (especially the cruciferous type) Along with this more potassium dense foods. Potassium is a positively charged electrolyte in the body that is crucial for keeping muscle contractions consistent. We will go more into water dense foods that are seasonal for November in the next part of the newsletter.

COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES

Complex carbohydrates are essential to gymnasts because of the 3-4 hour practices that most gymnasts take part in. Sure, eating quick acting carbs during practice is important as they are quickly used as energy but what happens when those sugars are used up within the first hour and a half of training? The body needs sustainable energy and it can find this energy through complex carbs. I will give you my top picks for those in the next part of this newsletter

FALLING INTO ENERGY!

Betsy's Message:

As we head into the late fall months, the days are getting shorter, the nights are getting longer. Homework, school schedules and practice schedules are set. School is getting more challenging, stress and fatigue are setting in with the responsibilities of gymnastics life and home life. Holidays are upon us as well and we are tempted by all the delicious goodies of Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

With this being said, one of the biggest complaints I get from gymnasts right now, is that "I AM TIRED."

Fatigue at the end of the day is common and normal during these times. As it gets darker earlier, our rhythms are changing and we long for that cozy bed a little earlier. Our food choices during this time are super important as the mounting responsibilities of gymnastics season and school work are in abundance.

That is why I am focusing on ENERGY FOODS for our November Newsletter!

Here are my TOP PICKS to energize and revitalize our athletes during this fatiguing time!





TOP VITAMIN B FOODS FOR ENERGY!

Beans and Legumes (pod food) : Packed with zinc, vitamin B6, protein and fiber, all excellent sources of sustainable ENERGY!

Bananas: Help to regulate blood pressure, great source of vitamin C as well as great source of potassium and vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) which not only helps with energy but also helps with moods and brain health and the release of serotonin, or the "happy hormone."

Fatty Fish: Vitamin B12 is naturally found in fish, specifically trout, wild salmon, and canned tuna.

Eggs: Great source of both B12 and B2 vitamins (also known as riboflavin) which helps to break down food and maintain energy to the body consistently. Note: B2 is also found in mushrooms, green leafy vegetables and nuts too!



TOP WATER DENSE FOODS FOR ENERGY (SPECIFIC TO FALL MONTHS)

Water: the Life-force

Pears: 90 percent of the pear is made of water. With its Immunity boosting antioxidants and soluble fiber called pectin (which also helps with gut health) and Vitamin B6, pears are also a good source of potassium!

Plums: Plums contain over 80 percent water! They also have a ton of fiber which helps with blood sugar which gives consistent energy to an athlete. They also include a good dose of vitamin A, C and K!

Grapes: Packed with vitamin C, K and folate, grapes are 92% water. The fiber content is ideal for athletes who need sustainable energy as their natural sugar is complex in variety. They are the perfect mid-workout snack!

Cruciferous Veggies: Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli packed with vitamin K, C, and folate, they are not only anti-inflammatory but extremely water dense and high in fiber. They help to maintain the glycemic index which keeps blood sugar regulated as well.

TOP COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES FOR ENERGY

Apples: An apple a day keeps the Dr. away. It's true! There isn't a more perfect mid-workout snack than an apple. The fiber and water density of apples help to regulate blood sugar to give athletes a mid-workout boost!

Quinoa: A protein and fiber dense grain, quinoa is packed with vitamin B minerals to help generate energy and ignite the metabolism. Quinoa is also low on the glycemic index which means sustained energy for a long period of time. Bring on the 4 hour practice!

Beans and Lentils: (AGAIN) I already mentioned this, but beans are packed with protein, fiber, B vitamins, and are also water dense and have slow releasing energy, which keeps an athlete energized for a longer period of time.

Oatmeal: Blood sugar is the name of the game with this potent antioxidant, fiber and heart healthy food. Great for energy as well as digestive health, I highly recommend oatmeal as a gymnast's start to everyday in their breakfast. Eat dry, with water or almond milk, or mixed into yogurt, it's a gymnast's dream breakfast!



A GYMNAST'S THANKSGIVING DAY PLATE:



Did you know that the foods served during this American Holiday are actually some of the most FUNCTIONAL and beneficial to gymnasts? The rich and colorful foods that are placed upon our tables are loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and energy boosting compounds! Now, you may say there are a lot of “white foods” on your table (white meat turkey, mashed potatoes, bread/rolls, butter) but there are really so many COLORFUL foods to be enjoyed at Thanksgiving! I want you to really focus on those as the colorful foods are the ones with powerful phyto-chemicals (good stuff) and antioxidants for your health!



L e t ' s t a k e a l o o k a t
B e t s y ' s t o p F I V E M u s t
e a t s f o r T h a n k s g i v i n g
D a y D i n n e r !



5 Colorful FOODS to Include on Your Turkey Dinner Plate

Sweet Potatoes/ Squash/ Root Vegetables: Sweet potatoes, yams, gourds, squash and root vegetables like turnips and rutabagas are all grown in the ground, which means they are mineral dense. Loaded with magnesium, potassium and zinc, these vegetables are good for your bones, your heart, and your skin and are also packed with fiber. Root veggies are also supportive of building immunity and healthy eyes! If you see deep orange, yellow foods then you know its heavy in vitamin A which is a gymnast's friend!



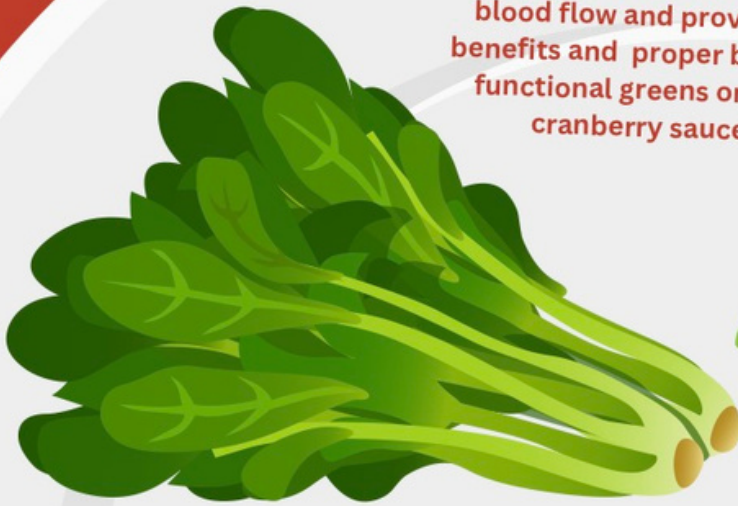
Homemade Cranberry Sauce: Cranberries are one of the most potent antioxidants on the planet. Packed with vitamins and minerals that help keep cells strong, cranberry sauce is also big in vitamins C and K great for immunity and bone health! Load up on the sauce!

Baked Turkey: (Both light and dark meat) Turkey is a protein packed food that will help repair your muscles and also help to release tryptophan- which releases both melatonin (helps you sleep) and serotonin (makes you happy). Be ready to be happy then take a nap after your turkey dinner, and that's ok, because you work hard and deserve it! Turkey also is rich in B12 which is important for ENERGY.



5 Colorful FOODS to Include on Your Turkey Dinner Plate

Collard Greens and Green Beans: If it's green,,,, its GOOD! Yep, collard greens and green beans are dense with folate, calcium and protein, all essential for strong bones. Greens contain a large amount of vitamin K, which helps with blood flow and provides anti-inflammatory benefits and proper brain function. Slap some functional greens on your plate next to the cranberry sauce and turkey! Yum!



Apple Pie: An Apple a day, definitely keeps the Dr. Away! You can't have Thanksgiving Day Dinner without dessert! Be sure to have a slice of deep dish apple pie. Apples are not only water dense and filled with vitamin C, and A, they also lower your blood pressure- so good for your cardiovascular health/heart, your bones and your skin! A gymnast's dream!



Recipes Of The Month:

Baked Apple Chips



This recipe is a great “fall time favorite” alternative to greasy potato chips ! Apples are especially in season during the fall months and are know to be one of the most powerful, functional and healthy fruits on the planet!
Give it a try!

Ingredients

6-8 Granny Smith Apples
cored and slices VERY thin
(leave skins on)

Cinnamon and coconut
sugar

Baking sheets with wax
paper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 200
degrees.

Core your apple and slice
your apple sideways very
very very thin! Place on
baking sheets on wax paper.
Flip them over after one
hour then bake another 1.5
hours. Turn off the oven and
let them sit after that for
another 30 minutes.

Sprinkle with cinnamon and
coconut sugar and enjoy!

Note: The thinner the
crunchier your chips! Also
be patient with this recipe, it
takes a few hours to make
the perfect crunchy chips.



Message From Betsy: Be Confident and Thankful!!!



Every Thanksgiving I end my nutrition newsletter with a reminder to be **"THANKFUL"** for all that you have, your coaches who coach you, your parents who support you, your body that works for you and your friends and other loved ones around you- and of **COURSE**, I want to stress that again. But also, this Thanksgiving, I want to remind you to be **CONFIDENT** going into the competitive season. You have worked really hard this summer and pre-season to put your routines together, to eat healthfully and to take care of your body both inside and outside of the gym. Oftentimes I see athletes begin to doubt themselves as the competition season rolls around, and I want to **ENCOURAGE YOU** to be confident, and work extra hard this month to visualize and see, and believe in yourself that **YOU CAN** do it this year!!! Always remember, if you are honestly doing all the hard work, then you can be **CONFIDENT** in the hours and repetitions that you are putting toward your competitive season. All you can do is your best. And doing your best in **NUTRITION** is also important and aides in your confidence. Think about it, if you are eating well, you just **FEEL** well. And when you **FEEL** well, you are in a better mood, you are happier and your energy levels and practices go smoother. Eating well aides in not only your confidence, but also your gymnastics! So go out there this pre-season and really believe in **YOU**, **EAT FUNCTIONALLY** and **SHINE!** I am thankful for **YOU!**

