

VEGA Comets Team Handbook

To Parents and Athletes:

Thank you for being part of the VEGA Rec-Optional program. Our goal is to provide the highest quality experience for athletes and their families. Accomplishing this goal takes teamwork, good communication and flexibility among all involved. It is our pleasure and privilege to call Camas and Vancouver our home and to be an integral member of these communities.

At VEGA, our staff and coaches understand that competition is a new experience for many of our families. There is much to learn/discover. Gymnastics is a sport that requires a very high level of commitment in order to achieve significant success. So we're going to be spending a lot of time together. Athletes and families that participate really do form a larger VEGA family over time. As with any family, there will no doubt be opportunity for questions and/or concerns. In these times VEGA will strive to bring further information in an open and friendly manner. We ask that our families respond the same way, each focused on building the best, most effective learning experience possible.

So, congratulations on being selected to the Vega Comets Rec-Optional Team and welcome to our VEGA family. We look forward to getting to know you.

The VEGA Coaching Staff

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Office Hours-

Monday thru Thursday from 10am to 7pm.
Friday 10am to 3pm
Saturday 9am-12pm

What is Rec-Optional?

The Rec-Optional (Rec-Op) program is a unique training opportunity that meets the needs of many gymnasts by providing a team atmosphere and competitive experience without the strenuous commitment of time and finances of the USAG Program. The optional nature of the program allows gymnasts to develop original routines which fit their own talents and personalities. The Rec-optional program is a **nine month** team and financial commitment.

To enter the VEGA Rec-Optional program, each athlete must first be invited to test, then be evaluated and ultimately, invited to join by the Rec-Optional Director. Finally, each athlete and family must agree to and defend the VEGA philosophy of "no funny business." Selection for the Rec-Optional Team should not be construed as a promise that an athlete will become a competitive gymnast. It is instead a planned pathway for a child to explore their individual potential, learn to focus, create healthy habits, and make friends that will last a lifetime.

How fast will my Rec-Optional athlete progress?

Athletes learn in different ways and at differing speeds. VEGA is committed to working with each athlete at her individual pace. Each athlete is expected to be respectful of the others' growth experiences.

Gymnastics is a long, hard road—and it is all about TEAMWORK. Whether the team is a coach and a specific athlete, or a group of athletes, or a group of athletes and coaches, it is all about TEAMWORK. No one does it alone. Athletes must learn to develop respectful and supportive relationships with the other team members and with their coaches. Athletes that excel at positive relationships, strive to do their best, and follow the coaching regiment will find themselves growing at a remarkable rate.

Our Philosophy and Expectations

The Rec-Optional Team is a privilege that has been extended to each of the athletes and their families. We want to honor each family for their dedication and hard work in bringing their child to VEGA. The Rec-Optional program does come with certain expectations on the part of coaches and administration.

Each athlete is required to attend practice and be on time, with hair pulled back and the proper workout attire.

Each athlete is expected to work hard and do their best, this includes doing all assigned conditioning and tasks during workout.

Each athlete is expected to attend all the competitive meets.

Emotional outbursts, crying and negative attitudes will only bring down the spirit of the team and will not be tolerated.

Following these expectations promotes an atmosphere of respect among teammates and with the coaches. Recurring tardiness, lack of preparation or attendance may indicate a lack of commitment to the program and may trigger a conference with the coaches to re-evaluate whether or not Rec-op is the right placement for the gymnast. Missed workouts the week prior to a meet may result in ineligibility to compete. Parents are encouraged to support their athlete in a positive way. Be their fan, not their instructor.

No coaching on the side by the parents.

Please applaud your athlete, but do not speak with them during their training time or during a meet. This allows them to better respect their coach, and learn to work together with their coach and other team members. The coach will deal with any issues that may arise with your athlete. If the coach needs a parents involvement, the parent will be notified. In many gyms, parents are not allowed to observe the training because of the potential distractions that can develop. This is not our position currently at VEGA. Like you, we enjoy watching the training and progress. We hope to continue the current environment, and will, as long as it remains workable for the coaches and athletes. This doesn't mean that coaches must or will always train athletes in the gallery's field of vision or within earshot. But rest assured that the proper training necessary is being performed. Please respect the other team members and their families by allowing the coach to run their class. If the coach is talking with you they are likely not able to focus on the athletes. If you have a question, please feel free to talk with the office staff and they will be glad to assist you, or they will be happy to set up an appointment/ phone conversation with the coach.

No Funny Business

This one bears repeating. We base our experience at VEGA on a very simple premise. Be Nice. Of course, questions are encouraged, and, as Americans, we take very seriously our right to our opinions. But in a situation like ours, where our children are the subjects, and partially heard comments or misunderstood motivations are not only possible, but also likely; go the extra mile. Please respect all the athletes in the gym and keep personal opinions about athletes/families/ coaches to yourself.

Different coaches. Different styles. Same philosophy.

We believe in diversity. So, over time, each athlete will train with several of VEGA's coaches. This is a huge advantage. Each coach brings a unique blend of experience, focus and skill. Further, athletes respond differently to each coach. But the overall effect is a well-rounded training experience.

Team Commitment

Joining the VEGA team is a 9 month commitment. Parents and athletes are required to sign a commitment agreement by June 1st in order for the athlete to be eligible to compete. The parents agreement obligates

the family to tuition and competitive fees for the 9 month commitment period and the athlete agreement obligates the athlete to finish the season. We require these commitments in order to properly staff practices and determine competitive fees which are shared equally by all team families.

Communications

Vegatalk, located on our website www.vegagym.com, is our main forum for communication amongst our teams, team families and coaches. Please register for this feature and check it regularly. For your convenience, a USAG Team/ Rec-Optional Communications Board is located in the main hallway just beyond the Pepsi machine. Many upcoming events and informational flyers will be posted there. In the cabinet below the board, a file labeled with your family name is provided. Notices/communications from the coaching and administrative staff will be placed in your file as needed. Email is also an important form of communication for our team families. Please make certain that the office and our team director has your current email address. In order to facilitate communication, each family should provide a current E-mail address that is checked regularly.

Payment

Tuition payments are due on the first day of each month. *Autopay is the required method of payment.* Each gymnast's account at VEGA must be current and in good standing in order for that gymnast to attend workout or to compete. If a gymnast misses a number of workouts due to a conflicting activities, tuition will not be prorated and there are no make ups available. It is the parents' responsibility to check their account and file routinely. Expenses (in addition to tuition and the VEGA annual registration fee of \$35) are as follows:

1. Annual equipment fee of \$75, payable July 1st of each year. The Rec-opt teams use all of the team equipment and therefore share in the cost of acquiring and maintaining it. The fee is based on usage for all of our VEGA teams. This payment will automatically be applied to your July tuition bill.
2. Annual coaches education fee of \$50 payable July 1st of each year. Rec-op coaches attend the annual USAG congress or other professional workshops for continuing education and training. This fee helps cover that expense. The balance is paid by VEGA. This fee will automatically be applied to your July tuition bill.
3. Team Uniform. Leotard and warm up, prices vary from year to year, but run approximately \$250-\$300 for both. We make every effort to use leos and warm ups a minimum of two years. Gym bag \$35. If you already own a VEGA gym bag from a previous competition season, you will not need to order a new one.
4. Choreography and Music. If your athlete needs an original routine. This cost varies depending on the music selected, and any extra private time needed to learn a routine. In general you can expect to pay \$150 for floor choreography and \$75 for beam choreography. Music is additional. This process will begin in the pre-season. A schedule will be determined by Coach Fox. Payment is due at time of choreography session.
5. Competition fees. Competition fees are announced in July. Competition fees are a combination of meet registration fees, coaches session fees, coaches travel expenses, competition wear (every effort is made to get two years of use out of competition wear), end of the year celebration and administration costs. The total cost for the team is then divided evenly by the number of team members. It is for this reason that once you have signed your letter of commitment that you are obligated to pay the competition fees, as a team members decision to leave the squad within the commitment period would unfairly put the financial burden on the remainder of the team. All competition fees are paid through autopay. VEGA will divide the total fees into four equal payments. Payments will occur August through November. Competition fees must be paid in full by November 1st in order for your athlete to compete. Families may deposit money into their competition account at any time prior to the first payment in August. The remaining balance will be then divided by four equal payments. Travel costs to and from meets is the responsibility of each individual athlete.

Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts

Athletes should arrive at the competition site 15 minutes before open stretch is scheduled to begin.

When an athlete arrives at the competition, she should report to the coaches immediately. She will not be allowed to have contact with his/her parents until the competition has ended.

Athletes will wear The VEGA team leotard and warm ups at all competitions. No finger polish or jewelry other than post earrings is allowed on the competitive floor. Sports bras may not show, including matching

ones. (This includes the warm up leotard). Hair must be neatly pulled back with the proper hair ribbons and scrunchies. Glitter may be applied at the competition.

Athletes must remain in the designated competition area throughout the course of warmups and competition and obey all warm-up regulations and procedures.

Each athlete should accept her place in the line-up and the scores she receives, with dignity and without criticism. There is no place for crying and uncontrolled emotions during gymnastics meets. Athletes who exhibit these behaviors will be scratched from the competition. Athletes cannot control how a judge scores their routines, they can only control their own performance.

* NOTE TO ATHLETES: If you do not do your best and receive a disappointing score, ask your coach about it when the meet is over. If you make mistakes and are disappointed in your performance, do not make matters worse by becoming emotional and jeopardizing your chances for good performances on upcoming events. Remember, too, that you are part of a team. The team needs you to be in control and ready to perform. They do not need you bringing the spirit of the entire team down by pouting, crying or exhibiting any negative behavior. Gymnasts should not keep track of their event scores, all-around scores or placement during the competition. Athletes' concentration should stay focused on their performance. There will be plenty of time to review scores later. Gymnasts should be prepared to assist with boards, mats, bar settings, etc., during the meet. Be courteous, respectful and polite to all meet officials, hosts, competitors and coaches. The only time you should approach a meet official is to thank them for hosting or judging a meet. Athletes will always cheer for their teammates and be courteous and supportive to gymnasts from other teams.

Gymnasts should have a team competition bag and keep all of their belongings in the bag during the meet.

Athletes should stay at their last event until the last athlete in the competition has finished and the coach releases them.

Athletes should stay for awards dressed in the VEGA warm-up suit. Most meets have a formal system for presenting awards. As a participating athlete you have an obligation to stay for all the awards and to accept any award presented to you with courtesy and gratitude.

Athletes may not wear jeans or other street clothes on the award stand. It is customary to accept awards with a firm handshake and a warm smile. Congratulate and shake hands with the other athletes as well. Remember that you are not just representing yourself—you are acting as a representative of VEGA as well.

If you are staying to watch another teammate compete or you have arrived early for warm ups, stay seated in the spectators section and do not to wander out onto the competition floor. Only gymnasts competing in the session are allowed in the competition area.

Fundraising

VEGA provides fundraising campaigns to offset competition fees. These campaigns are sent out via email with all the info needed to participate. The fundraising includes restaurant cards, plant sales, wreath and poinsettia sales.

Competition

Team members are expected to compete every meet if healthy. Every gymnast competes all four events. We also expect our team to stay for the entire competition, including all awards, as it shows respect to our teammates, competitors and our host gym.

Meet Schedule

A tentative meet schedule will be posted as soon as it becomes available, usually in early fall. Meet schedules are confirmed as we receive information from the hosting gyms. Competition fees are an estimate and will be corrected if necessary as the meet schedule is confirmed. Admission is charged to spectators at meets. The judging standards for Rec-op are a bit inconsistent, but continue to improve as the program grows in our state and the league refines and standardizes the judging criteria and quality. Placements are awarded on each event as well as in the all around for each age group. Awards are also given for team placement.

Why are other athletes on the team working on harder skills?

Athletes should never compare their progress, performances or skill level with other gymnasts. Each athlete is an individual and will achieve success at their own pace. All athletes have to start from the beginning, building a strong foundation. This requires them to work on basics long after most people feel they have excelled and are capable of harder skills. This results in less injury and stronger bodies. Gymnastics is NOT a quick sport. Pushing an athlete too fast can end in injury and/or self-doubt. Coaches recognize when an athlete is ready to be challenged for the next skill. Each athlete will be ready in their own time. Your child will excel and feel great about the process. We want our athletes to succeed in front of their family and teammates. At VEGA we are building an excellent team of confident, safe and kind competitors.

Athlete Responsibilities

Gymnastics is a competitive sport and the competitive teams at VEGA measure success and progress by how we perform at practice and competition. Always doing our best is our goal. Placing at competitions is the icing on the cake. This means that you make every effort to attend every scheduled practice and that you train hard while you are here. You must work diligently to overcome your fears and keep a positive attitude through every obstacle. Doing your best is an attitude that must be displayed by every team member. The way you act in the gym and at competitions is a reflection of your respect for yourself, your coaches, your teammates and VEGA. Only the highest standard of behavior will be acceptable.

- Any negative comments, foul language or inappropriate attire in the gym will not be tolerated. Each team member should show the utmost respect and support for their coaches, teammates, judges as well as gymnasts and coaches from other teams.

- Discouraging remarks (whether directed towards self, a coach or another gymnast), formation of cliques (including parents), excluding others from activities, etc. are grounds for dismissal from practice and possibly from the team.

- Give 100% in performing all assignments and conditioning. Cheating on assignments and/or conditioning will not be tolerated.

- Demonstrate the highest regard for your sport by working hard, arriving to all workouts and competitions on time and conducting yourself with grace and courage during the workout or competition. Accept all constructive criticism and scores in a positive manner. We learn just as much from our mistakes as we do from our successes.

- Understand that one specific goal of VEGA is to develop happy, healthy and confident people. One way in which we can help meet this demanding goal, is to place the gymnasts at the level where they can be happy, safe and confident. Mobility through the levels (moving up) can only be achieved when a high level of proficiency has been demonstrated at your current level, and the potential for a high level of proficiency in the next level is apparent. This means that a gymnast is never declared having moved to the next level until ALL of the requirements for that level have been achieved.

- Place emphasis on individual success and improvements, not on what score you receive or what place you finish.

- Notify your coach for all absences from scheduled workouts. Keep the gym clean. Make sure that all tape and pre-wrap are thrown away and all ice packs are returned to the freezer. Making an undo mess with the chalk will result in athlete staying after practice to vacuum around bars. Make sure grips, wrist bands, weights and any mats or items used during practice are to be put in their proper place before leaving the gym.

- Cell phones are not permitted in the training area. Athletes should never leave the training area to answer a cell phone, make a call or to text unless it is an emergency, in which case their coach should be notified of the situation.

Discipline

As with any family, from time to time, disciplinary issues may arise within the Rec-Optional Team. Our policy is to work with athletes and families toward the safety of the athletes and the protection of our positive atmosphere. We employ the “three strikes and you’re out” philosophy. At the first infraction, athletes/families will be given a warning and asked to change the behavior in question. At the second infraction, an athlete/family will be asked to leave practice until a meeting can be

accomplished with the coaches and parents. At the third infraction, the athlete/ family will be asked to leave the program.

Parental Responsibilities for VEGA meets

VEGA hosts one to two Rec-Op invitational meets each year. These meets are run with the help of all team parents. Proceeds from the meet are used to purchase new equipment for the gym. Proceeds from the raffle are given to the Rec Op team to be used for an end of year celebration.

- Parents are required to work a minimum of one session at each VEGA hosted meet as well as attend meetings to help with the planning of the meet.
- By September, parents will be given the opportunity to sign up for specific meet responsibilities and/or committees. If a parent has not signed up by October, they will be assigned to a job by the meet director and notified.
- If a parent fails to fulfill their volunteer responsibility their account will be charged \$50.

General Rules

1. No entry to the floor or any equipment by non-participants will be allowed. A participant is a student athlete enrolled in a class. An instructor will call the students to class.
2. No participant is permitted on the equipment without an instructor at any time. Equipment includes (but is not limited to) conditioning equipment, spring floors, wedges, barrels, mats, trampolines, bars, vault, and balance beams.
3. No gum, drink, or food is allowed in the gymnastics training areas, with the exception of water.
4. No street shoes are allowed in the gym.
5. No running. **RUNNING IS UNACCEPTABLE**, except as directed by the instructor.
6. Respect your instructor - do not talk when the instructor is teaching. Respect your classmates - talking about, making fun of, or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.
7. Do not walk or run across any event area when leaving the gym, getting water, or using the rest room.
8. Loose clothing is not permitted. In many activities, the athlete's body must be spotted and loose clothing gets in the way.
9. Long hair must be tied back.
10. Respectful social behavior is expected of all students. Unacceptable behavior includes cutting in front of others, pushing, hitting, and bad language. Participants who are continually disruptive will be asked to leave.
11. If you must leave class for any reason, you must tell your instructor. This includes going to the rest room or for early dismissal.
12. If at any time you feel unusual pain or discomfort, it is your responsibility to report this to your instructor immediately.
13. When class is dismissed, athletes must exit the training floor.
14. No under-age student is permitted to leave the building without a caretaker, parent, or guardian. Students waiting to be picked up must wait inside the building.
15. And finally, no cell phones are permitted in the gym during scheduled practice times.

General Policies

Waiting Areas

The waiting areas are not playing areas. Please instruct your child not to run, jump on the furniture, stand on the furniture, etc. Should improper behavior persist, and the parent is not in attendance, the parent will be called and asked to pick the child up. Parents shall be responsible for any damages caused by their child's improper behavior to VEGA property.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Feel free to drop off your child for class. However, please do not drop your child off for class too early. Parents are asked to pick their child up on time. Only in extreme emergencies should a child be left longer than five minutes after their class is over. Should an emergency arise, call, and if necessary, leave a message. We will relay the message to your child. **Do not instruct your child to wait in front of the building for pick-up. Children are not allowed to wait under the canopy or play in the parking area.** Parents who consistently leave children past the recommended pick-up time will be asked to make other arrangements for their child. They may be charged a sitting fee after repeated tardiness.

Parking

Parking areas are limited at VEGA. If possible, please park in the left side fenced parking lot. Please respect the residential neighborhood by not parking on the street, if at all possible.

Jewelry/Valuables

Do not allow your child to bring valuables to class. All jewelry must be removed prior to class. Lost or stolen articles are the responsibility of the owner and not that of VEGA.

Phone Calls

Students are **discouraged** from using the telephone. Phone calls are allowed for emergencies **but** are not allowed for incidentals - calling friends, questions about pick-up times, etc. Cell phones are never allowed out in the gym.

Attendance

Attendance to all scheduled training sessions and other events as notified by the coaching staff is mandatory. Absences are discouraged. Make-up classes for Rec- Optional absences are not provided.

Viewing Gallery

The viewing gallery in the main gym is provided as a courtesy to our VEGA families. Please do what you can to help us keep it clean. Siblings must be supervised by parents and behave appropriately at all times. For their safety, **PLEASE KEEP CHILDREN FROM CLIMBING ON THE GLASS PARTITION.**

Vending Machines & Snacks

Change may be obtained from the front office if someone is available. Snacks are sold during office hours. Vending machine is owned and serviced by Corwin Beverage Company. VEGA does not maintain the stock or change from the vending machine.

Food & Drink

Food or drink is not allowed anywhere in the facility except in the viewing gallery. If an athlete brings a drink or food into the gym it will be disposed of (water bottles OK).

VEGA Comets Parent Commitment Agreement

I _____ acknowledge that I have received and read the Rec Op team handbook available to view and print online at www.vegagym.com.

I understand that Rec Op competitive teams are a nine month team and financial commitment beginning June 1 through March of each competitive year.
_____initial

I understand the financial responsibility of my child being a Rec Op team member. I understand that should I chose to leave the program during the commitment period that I am still financially obligated through the end of the commitment period.
_____initial

I understand the rules of conduct for my child and myself.
_____initial

I understand that I am responsible for volunteering to work a minimum of one session during all VEGA hosted Rec Op meets.
_____initial

I understand that should I fail to fulfill my meet volunteer obligation that my account will be charged \$50.
_____initial

Signature /Date

Athlete's Name

VEGA Comets Athlete Commitment Agreement

I have read the Athlete's responsibilities and meet etiquette sections of the Team handbook.

I understand how to behave in practice and at meets.

I understand that if I do not follow the rules in practice or at a meet I can be asked to leave practice, be prevented from competing or after a third strike can be asked to leave the team.

I understand that gymnastics is both an individual and team sport and that my actions affect my team.

Athlete Name (Please print) Date

Athlete Signature