

VEGA Comets Rec-Optional 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 our home and to be an integral member of this community.

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 Rec-Optional Team. And thanks again for joining our VEGA family. We look forward to getting to know you.

The VEGA Coaching Staff

Contact Information

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Office Hours

Monday thru Friday from 10am to 6pm.
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What is Rec-Optional?

The Rec-Optional 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 year long team and financial commitment. To enter the VEGA Rec-Optional program, each athlete and their family must be invited to test, be evaluated, and ultimately, be 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 to 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 and crying have no place in a team/competitive environment, and will only bring the spirit of the team down.

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 reevaluate whether or not Rec-opt 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.

Parents must allow the coaches to coach their athlete without side coaching by the parents during class.

Please applaud your athlete, but do not speak with them during their class. 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 your involvement they will ask you outside of class. In many gyms, parents are not allowed to hear (and sometimes, to see) the training because of the potential distraction 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.

Program Director Carol Willson

Coach Alex Kuzmin

Coach Randy Fox

Coach Abby Willson

We believe in diversity. So, over time, each athlete will likely 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.

Payment/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.

Tuition is based on a 48 week year. Tuition for the 08/09 season is \$178/month for the 6 hour groups and \$156/month for our 3 and 4 hour groups. If a gymnast misses a number of workouts due to a conflicting activity, tuition will not be prorated. 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. It is the parents' responsibility to check their account and file routinely. In order to facilitate communication, each family should provide VEGA front office with a current E-mail address that is checked regularly.

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- opt 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 \$150, gym bag \$30. 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. This cost varies depending on the music selected, and the amount of time needed to learn a routine. In general you can expect to pay \$150 for floor choreography and \$50 for beam choreography, plus private lesson time to learn the routine. Music is additional. This process will begin early in the summer session. A schedule will be determined by Coach Carol. Payment is due at time of choreography session.
5. Meet fees. Meet fees are \$50 per meet and must be paid according to the Rec- opt 08/09 meet fee schedule to be posted mid July 08. We compete approximately 6 times per season. State meet fees are around \$60. Unless otherwise arranged, meet fees will be automatically charged to your monthly tuition bill based upon the schedule to be posted in July.
6. All fees are non-refundable.

Competition

Meets are nearly all held on Sundays. 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.

The judging standards for Rec-opt are a bit more lenient than USAG standards and scores tend to be somewhat inflated and inconsistent. Improvements are on the horizon as the program grows in our state and the league is better able to refine and standardize 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.

How come other athletes on the team are working on harder skills?

Athletes learn and progress at different paces. Older athletes are better prepared to work on learning skills through routines. Younger athletes have the advantage of starting from the beginning, and building a strong foundation. This results in less injury and in strong bones and muscles. But it also requires them to work on basics long after parents feel they have excelled and are capable of harder skills.

Gymnastics is NOT a quick sport. Pushing an athlete too quickly often ends in injury and self-doubt. Athletes will be ready in their own time. And yes, your coach will recognize that time and let you know. Sometimes this can take months but most often it takes years. We want your child to excel and to feel great about the process. We do not want athletes who are moved too quickly and then fail in front of their family, their teammates, their audience and most importantly, in their own eyes. At VEGA we are building an excellent team of competitive, confident, safe and kind gymnasts.

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 a Rec-Opt invitational meet each year in December. This meet is 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-Opt team to be used for an end of year celebration.

- Parents are required to work a minimum of one session at the 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.
- Each athlete’s family must donate items worth \$20 retail value to be used for the raffle. Items must be appropriate for girls 5-16 years of age.
 - VEGA encourages you to solicit donations from local stores or organizations. We will also provide a generic donation request if you have companies you wish to solicit by mail.
 - If you do not like soliciting donations you can simply give \$20 to the raffle fund to be used by the raffle committee chair to purchase raffle items.
 - Donations or funds must be received by raffle chair no later than November 10.

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/no cell phone use 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 of preschoolers are expected to be waiting in the lobby when classes are over and parents of older students 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, changed to another class time to accommodate their schedule, and/or 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.

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 WALL.

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).

Rec-Opt competitive teams are a year round team and financial commitment beginning July 1st through June of each competitive year.

I _____ acknowledge receipt of Rec Op parent's handbook.

I understand the financial responsibility of my child being a Rec Op team member
_____ initial

I understand the rules of conduct for my child
_____ initial

I understand that I am responsible for volunteering to work a minimum of one session during the VEGA rec op meet.
_____ initial

I understand that I must solicit raffle donations totally \$20 retail value or donate \$20 to the raffle fund.
_____ initial

Signature

Date

Athlete's Name