

As the cool nights return and the leaves are just beginning to show signs of their fall brilliance, the Cobra staff and students look forward to the 12th season of Cobra Gymnastics.

After years of deliberation and contemplation, I finally decided to move forward with construction on our gym ceiling. When I chose the building back in 2010, I knew there would be a day that the girl's talents and physique would outgrow the ceiling height. A few years ago, I had hoped to expand the gym by 2,500 square feet, but after reality of costs and staffing set in, I settled for the engineering feat of increasing the ceilings instead. The skill the team girls were restricted from doing is called a "giant", so the irony is not lost on me that we needed a "big" renovation. Many thanks to Joe Giancola and his crew for getting the job done during our Summer/Fall closure. As most things in gymnastics take time, so does construction. We think the delay in opening is worth the wait and are so excited to remove all boundaries from our team's training and skill sets! So our new dates for Session One are September 20th-February 5th!

Part of our motivation to grow has also been our recent pairing with Burr & Burton Academy's newly formed high school gymnastics team. We are their home gym, and look forward to hosting their training practices again this season along with a few home meets during the winter season. BBA's gymnastics team hold the 2021 Vermont state title, and we plan on swinging and flipping our way to another title this year!

As for Cobra itself, the past 18 months have certainly shown us our true grit. We successfully hosted classes, practices and camps during the Covid pandemic and even came away with a Vermont state team title from our Diamond Xcel Team, our most advanced level. This season our team is 50+ strong and we look forward to a full schedule of local competition and hopefully a traditional state championship meet in March 2022.

We currently have one of the strongest staff groups we've ever had and are all thrilled to be starting the 12th season of Cobra together. Our veteran professional staff include myself, Gail McGann and Topsy King along with returning pre-school coach, Ali Christenson (Natowich). We welcomed Kymi Fahoury this summer and are delighted that she will be coaching full time and all levels this year. Returning instructors (and all current or retired team girls) include Sierra McDermott, Karena Kuehl, Emma Parker, Maleah Jones and Nadia Tarbell. Our desk staff welcomes back long time team manager, Annie Kuehl in addition to adding Shannon Mabey and Tabitha Wilson (both team Moms) to the mix! Cobra continues to be a member of USA Gymnastics, the governing body for the sport of gymnastics in the United States and all of our coaches continue to be trained under the USA Gymnastics programs.

As all things evolve, we will begin our second year without regularly scheduled yoga and dance classes. When Covid forced social distancing, we successfully transformed our dance studio to a mini-gym and have decided it is too enjoyable to return the space to a studio full time. While nothing is permanent, we do plan on hosting some dance workshops and events in the future to continue to honor all parts of the passions we hold, both in gymnastics and dance.

This season we are also able to return to 17-week sessions and look forward to the development and progress that the long sessions allow. Our recreational program skill lists have been revised and all coaches look forward to teaching and growing skills and drills with our grade school aged students.

We are happy to again host a great pre-school program and with the additional space in the mezzanine and studio (plus Coach Ali) we are so happy to offer more pre-school evening classes. This year we are also excited to bring back Saturday open gyms for ages 4+

At this time, birthday parties are still by request only, but we are working on finding full-time party staff so we can accommodate and celebrate with our local kids.

Thank you to all for your support during the pandemic; your faith in our abilities to keep your kids safe (both emotionally and physically) has been felt far and wide. We are returning to masking indoors and will continue to do so until a larger percentage of our young population can be vaccinated.

Cheers to the changes that the Fall bring us, the reminder to let go of what no longer serves us and the visual beauty and magnificence of this world we live in. Let our goals be expansive, our compassion run deep and our love for each other and this community raise us to our true potential.

My best, *Coach Shelby Barsalou*