



COBRA GYMNASTICS GIRLS COMPETITIVE TEAM

*USA Gymnastics
Xcel Program - Bronze, Silver, Gold,
Platinum, Level 8 & Viper Team*

2023-2024

Thank you for your interest in the Cobra Competitive Girls Gymnastics Team! Since 2012, Cobra has built a program to encourage and inspire athletes to evolve into well rounded gymnasts, keeping mental, emotional and physical well being in mind. Our team philosophy revolves around honoring healthy progress, physical skill building, mental and emotional growth and team camaraderie. Below you will find information about USA Gymnastics, Cobra expectations, tuition, fees, schedules and time commitments.

About Cobra Gymnastics

Shelby Barsalou, the owner and head coach of the competitive team has been involved in the sports of gymnastics, diving, snowboarding, dance and climbing most of her life. After many years of competing, training and coaching gymnastics, in addition to studying nutrition and mothering, she opened the gym in the Fall of 2010. The past twelve years have been an upward spiral of growth and adaptation, providing a place for grounded progress and exuberant celebrations of the sport. Coaching the team has allowed a depth and focus in the sport that weekly classes can not offer. As Cobra enters into the 12th year of hosting a team, she is delighted to continue providing Vermont with a well-balanced curriculum. Voted "Xcel Club of the Year" in 2022 and 2023 by the owners of gym clubs in the state of Vermont, we feel honored and seen as a progressive and healthy gym experience. Our program has grown beautifully over these years; the girls' achievements have proven that positive and healthy coaching tactics can truly build successful and confident athletes. Coaches Topsy King, Kymi Fahoury, Christina Depoin and Shelby strive to teach, build and honor your daughters so that they will tumble away from Cobra with life-long skills that can be woven into their futures.

Team Mission Statement

We aim to uphold a culture of gymnastics that embodies the whole child, including the advancement of their athleticism in addition to their emotional and mental well being.

Honoring their daily lives, including school demands, travel commutes and other activities, we aim to place our gymnasts on a team that will honor their level of athletic ability, gymnastics goals and their available time commitment for training.

Within the multiple levels of gymnastics in the Xcel program, there is room for development in skill, creativity and expression. We aim to create teams that will work together well and compliment each other during practices as well as during competitions.

Cobra's coaching staff is fortunate to include a range of styles, and in general, our focus is on skill development, proper progression and positive reinforcement. Gymnasts will be presented with boundaries and expectations resulting in developmental achievement and overall success.



About USA Gymnastics

Please visit usagym.org to read information about the sport of gymnastics.

-Under "WOMAN" the "gymnastics 101" tab is full of interesting facts about the sport, events and requirements!

-Under "ABOUT" the "guide to gymnastics" is a fun packet of great info!

USA Gymnastics is the national governing body for the sport in the United States. It gets this designation from the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Gymnastics Federation. Based in Indianapolis, the organization is committed to creating a culture that empowers and supports its athletes and focuses on its highest priority, the safety and well-being of the athletes. USA Gymnastics sets the rules and policies that govern the sport of gymnastics, including selecting and training the U.S. Gymnastics Teams for the Olympics and World Championships; promoting and developing gymnastics on the grassroots and national levels, as well as a safe, empowered and positive training environment; and serving as a resource center for members, clubs, fans and gymnasts throughout the United States. USA Gymnastics also provides continuing education resources for new and experienced coaches, instructors and professional members. USA Gymnastics encompasses six disciplines: women's gymnastics, men's gymnastics, trampoline and tumbling, rhythmic gymnastics, acrobatic gymnastics and gymnastics for all (aka group gymnastics).

USA Gymnastics is committed to creating a culture that empowers and supports our athletes. The organization has and will continue to take specific and concrete steps to promote athlete safety and prevent future abuse by vigorously enforcing the USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy, which requires mandatory reporting; defines six types of misconduct; sets standards to prohibit grooming behavior and prevent inappropriate interaction; and establishes greater accountability. Other efforts taken to strengthen that commitment include establishing a dedicated, toll-free number (833-844-SAFE), the safe sport email address (safesport@usagym.org), and online reporting to simplify the process for reporting; building a safe sport department that is developing a comprehensive education plan for members; and adopting bylaw amendments to provide the basis for further developing our safe sport programs and governance. The Athlete Assistance Fund, established by the National Gymnastics Foundation, provides financial resources for counseling services for any current or former gymnast who was a member of USA Gymnastics and suffered sexual abuse within the sport of gymnastics.

Xcel Programs

The Women's Xcel Program is an alternative USA Gymnastics competitive program offering individual flexibility to coaches and gymnasts. The goal of Xcel is to provide gymnasts of varying abilities and commitment levels the opportunity for a rewarding gymnastics experience.

At Cobra, over the past ten years, we have participated in both the Developmental Program (formerly the Junior Olympic or "JO" program) and the Xcel Program. During the Covid season, we opted to move to Xcel for 100% of the team as it provides us with more flexibility in routines at all levels in addition to a less rigorous training schedule for the athletes. We encourage multi-sport athletes at Cobra and the Xcel program's relaxed scoring and requirements allows our gymnasts to continue to train and compete in multiple sports.

The Xcel program currently offers five levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond and a new level, Sapphire in it's pilot year. With the exception of the Bronze level, USAG offers a Regional competition for Xcel athletes. They must qualify at the State meet and typically must score in the top eight (regardless of age group) to attend.

Placement of Athletes

Coaches will be placing athletes on the appropriate team based on previous competition experience, gymnastics ability, strength, flexibility, attitude, coach-ability, future goals and commitment level. During the summer months, we will evaluate the girls on flexibility, strength and skill level. Our goal is to set up our athletes for success. There is room for growth within each level as most levels have a broad range of acceptable skills. Our gym goal is to have these levels established by the middle of August.

Practice Times

2023-24 Schedule:

All practices are 3 hours long with the exception of the Monday Bronze practices that will be 2 hours and 30 minutes.

- Bronze Team will practice 5.5 hours per week.
- Silver Team will practice 6 hours per week.
- Gold Team is required to practice 6 hours but are encouraged to practice 9 hours per week. *Hours in the gym will effect competitiveness throughout the season.*
- Platinum Team must train 9 hours a week.
- Level 8 team must train 9 hours a week with additional conditioning hours available.

Holiday Practices

We will have practices strictly for the team over the December and February Breaks. *We do not hold practices during Thanksgiving or April Break.* Two practices each break are included in annual tuition fees for all teams. These are non-refundable. Additional practices will be available for an additional fee if space allows. There will be a sign up link for those dates and times.

Team Week- Mandatory for athletes and parent(s) 5:00-8:00pm

The days of September 13th (Gold +), 14th (Bronze) and 15th (Silver) are designated team only. Each team will come just ONE night during that week. We will have mandatory parent meetings and hope to answer all team questions during that week including but not limited to policies, meet schedules, contracts and payments questions. We will expect all sizing sheets to be submitted by that time. All other Cobra classes will begin on September 18th.

Competitions/Meets

We are happy to be planning a traditional year of competing after two years of restricted Covid competitions. Our first meet in a non-sanctioned Cobra meet and our second meet in December is for returning athletes only.

Bronze & Silver Teams have the potential to compete in seven meets per season, December-March. All other teams will compete once or twice per month during the competition season. Gold, Platinum and Diamond teams may be eligible for more travel meets if Covid restrictions allow. Silver+ may qualify for Regionals. This will add an additional, but not mandatory meet in April or May.

Meets are typically scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays. Attendance at all meets is not required but is encouraged for team spirit, competitive consistency and goal achieving accomplishments. The meet director (not Cobra) will send out the schedule 2-4 weeks in advanced of the date of the meet, each level/team will have a meet that lasts approximately three hours. Meets can be as early as 8am or as late as 5pm.

All gymnasts must participate in **two** sanctioned meets throughout the season in order to compete at the State Meet in March (*during Covid times, only one sanctioned meet is required to qualify for States*). To become eligible for the State Meet in March, an All-around qualifying score of 31.0 is required for all levels.

Meets are broken up into levels so our entire team will never compete in one session. We will most likely have 2-5 different sessions per meet weekend. Your gymnast is only required to attend their meet, they are welcome to stay for additional meets to cheer on their teammates.

Meet costs, times, rotation groups, and athlete order is decided by the meet directors, not the coaches. For awards, age groups are up to the meet director, decided by the number of athletes in attendance. At the State meet, the age groups will follow the State rules (see below).

Vermont Qualifying Scores and age groups for the Xcel Program are as follows:

Bronze age groups - 5-7, 8, 9, 10, 11/12, 13/14, 15+

Silver age groups – 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, 15-18, 19+

Gold, Platinum, Diamond Age groups – 5-7, 8–10, 11/12, 13/14, 15-18, 19+

Qualifying score – 31.0 to states, Event specialist qualifying score 8.0

Volunteering

At the Cobra Meet,

Meet & Coaching Fees

Meets fees pay for the judges, venue, awards and meet gifts. Meet entry fees run from \$60-\$140 per meet, per gymnast. Specialty theme meets are more expensive, but will include meet gifts and enhanced experiences. Meet fees will be paid by the parents. **The meet fees are non refundable if you do not attend the meet.** Cobra registers for meets many months in advance. It is important that you inform the front desk if you are NOT attending a meet **by November**, if possible. Each meet director sets a non-refundable deadline date, this is not under Cobra's control. If you have to cancel within four weeks of scheduled meet, you will not obtain a refund. If your child is ill or becomes injured close to the meet date you are still responsible for payment.

When available, there are Team competitions at meets in addition to the individual awards. The top three Cobra scores from each level will be counted toward a team score. Trophies or banners are awarded. There is usually a \$35 charge for each team. For example: if all five levels are competing, we have five teams and will be charged \$175 to enter into the team competitions. This fee will be divided by the entire team and charged accordingly. With the team this season, that would add roughly \$3 to each child's meet fee. This is a very exciting part of the meet as it unites the girls toward one goal. Check out our trophy and banner stash in the gym!!

Coaches fees include compensation for their time in addition to travel and hotel accommodations (when applicable). Two or sometimes three coaches are hired for each meet. This year, Coaches Shelby, Topsy and Kymi will attend meets.

Coaching Fees, Team Fee (per meet) and Meet Fees *combined* in previous seasons ranged from \$400-900 with a steady average of about \$500.

We will be using previous year's numbers to estimate meet costs. This payment will be divided and added into your monthly tuition bill. If there are any overpaid fees, **we will credit your tuition** in May. **If there is a remaining balance, we will charge you accordingly in May.**

Leotard & Warm Up Fees

Long sleeve leotards and custom warm ups are exciting and showcase our team at competitions. The Silver team will continue to use the long sleeve Ozone leotards for the 2022/2023 competitive

season. Bronzes have a tank leotard designed by Quatro, a leotard company out of England and Gold+ have a leotard designed by Sylvia P, a company based in Australia. Our practice tank leotards will be designed and produced by US based company, Destira.

Silver leotards will be available on consignment. Please have your current Silver team gymnasts try on her leotard now to decide if a new leotard is necessary. No one wants a wedgie during competition!!

As of last year, black shorts are being allowed as part of the competition uniform. We will not make this mandatory as some girls do not like wearing shorts, but for those that do, we welcome the concept. The shorts must be lycra and non-branded on the waist. Only one small logo is allowed.

We will be re-ordering the custom warm up jackets this season for all gymnasts. Unless your daughter has grown out of hers from last year, she does not need a new one. We will also order new tights/leggings or use our consignment shop or use the ones from last year.

USA Gymnastics Membership Fee- MUST BE DONE BY THE PARENTS!

Athlete Membership is valid for one competitive year, from August 1 through the following July 31. Parents must register athletes via the USAG website, visit "MEMBER SERVICES" and click "become a member". Even though your daughter is a minor, she will join the "women's program"

USA Gymnastics Member Services Department

Phone Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm ET

1-800-345-4719 toll free membership@usagym.org

For the 2021-22 competitive season (August 1, 2021 - July 31, 2022)

Cost - \$63; First-time athletes \$25

Online Registration:

Parent/guardian of minor athletes or adult athlete may register online by logging in with their own username and password. Members joining at any time during the year will receive benefits for the remainder of the competitive year.

Benefits

- Event participation eligibility
- Top-of-the-line accident participant, catastrophic and general liability secondary insurance coverage at USA Gymnastics sanctioned events
- USA Gymnastics Membership card
- Discounts on congresses for athletes 15 years and older
- Discounts on robust educational programs, including a professional certificate program, for athletes, coaches, judges, recreational instructors, club owners and administrators
- Complimentary access to various courses including the U100 Fundamentals of Gymnastics Instruction and the U103 USA Gymnastics Fitness Course
- Competitive pipeline for women's artistic, men's artistic, trampoline & tumbling, rhythmic and acrobatic disciplines including developmental programming in each discipline
- Dedicated Safe Sport policies and procedures, educational programming, and disciplinary processes to help protect athletes and enforce a healthy culture

Tuition & Attendance

It is expected that ALL Cobra Team Members participate in the program from **September through the end of April**. Some Xcel gymnasts (Silver +) may qualify to the Regional Championships which will extend their competitive season until May. *If Xcel gymnast qualify for Regionals we expect them to keep up their competitive training schedule through Regionals. If they choose not to, we will not attend Regionals with that athlete.* We also perform in the Cobra

Show in May. A reduction of practice hours is acceptable the last six weeks of the season, but please keep in mind this is one of the most exiting parts of the season. The girls are strong and ready to learn new and thrilling skills after the competition season. *Two weeks advanced notice is required when dropping a practice day.* Year round participation is not required to be on the Xcel team however, it is encouraged.

Tuition is calculated for the 32-week season, plus team week and holiday practices. Monday holidays are taken out from those enrolled in Monday practices. This amount plus meet fees are paid monthly; ten monthly installments, September-June. You may choose to pay in full or in two payments, September & January. All monthly team payments are due on the 20th of each month. A \$15 late fee will be charged after the due date. After 30 days, if no attempts to make a payment have been communicated, an additional late fee will be added to your bill and your gymnast will not be allowed to participate in practices or meets. No credit will be given for these missed practices. If your child is opting to retire from the team, you must follow the TEAM drop procedure of Cobra and submit, in writing, a notice of drop *two-weeks* in advance.

We can not credit missed practices. There is no exception. If missing due to *illness, injury or meet conflict*, you may schedule a make-up with us via email or at the front desk. Please log into the parent portal to record advanced absences. When signing up for team, you are agreeing to the schedule as is. We spend many hours developing our staffing and lesson plans around the planned roster/level. If you or your gymnast choose to miss practice due to a school event or vacation we are not responsible for the time missed in the gym. Please consider the meet schedule when choosing to take your daughter out of the gym. Missing practices the week of the meet is stressful for both athletes and coaches.

Depending on the injury, we expect injured athletes to attend practices and use our modified injury lesson plans. Working through injury is difficult, but the support of coaches and teammates is paramount to an easy transition back into the gym.

Please keep both physical and mental wellness in mind throughout the season. The girls do not function well when ill, please keep them home and use the illness make-ups.

If the gym is forced to closed due to weather we will do all we can to open other practices for make-ups, but there is no guarantee of make-up time.

Floor Routines & Private Lessons

All Bronze and Silver teams will learn their floor and beam routines during practice times. For any new Xcel Gold, or any Platinum or Diamond who are due for a new floor routine, one 90 minute private lesson (two hour for Diamond) in the Fall will be required for choreography. This will be during the week, during school hours. Team girls will keep their floor routine for two seasons. *A \$110 fee will be due at the time of the lesson.* This fee includes choreography, written notes and any necessary touch ups throughout the season. *Music is not included.* This is a very reasonable price for floor choreography. Coach Shelby is the primary choreographer. You are responsible for finding/purchasing music. We use energym.com and floortracks.net frequently, but there are many sites available. **Please do not send youtube links.** The music needs to be received in itunes format at least three days in advance of the lesson. If your daughter is having trouble finding music, please consult with Shelby. Video recording the routines is encouraged and up to the family to execute.

Traditional private lessons range from \$40-\$50 per hour or \$65 per semi-private lessons. *We only allow private lesson for those gymnasts who show proficiency and dedication during practice times.* Private lessons times are rare; 3-4pm on weekdays, Sundays or vacation weeks can be made available.

Communication

The primary source of communication is via team emails. Shelby will try to limit these to monthly “newsletters”, but on occasion an event, opportunity or change arises and will send emails of shorter nature. It’s recommended you make a Cobra folder within your inbox so you can reference past information easily. *This document you are reading is good to reference!*

Please be aware that you are joining a community and you are responsible for understanding the content, procedures and methods that we use for our team program. This includes understanding how to use the parent portal for payments. I understand there is a lot of information to remember and questions will arise. There will be parent meetings in early September, and casual mid-Winter and late Spring meetings. *Please email questions; if we have already shared the information you are asking about, we will direct you to that source. We are not being rude, just resourceful.* Otherwise a staff member will answer within a day or two.

The parent portal has a record of our newsletters and the Facebook group has documents saved as well. Please feel free to reserve time with Shelby or a coach after practice or during daytime hours. We’d be happy to give you the time you need. Gymnastics is a complicated sport and many questions will arise! As much as email is an enticing way to express concerns, it can become emotionally confusing. *We will not receive email complaints*, please request a phone call or face to face discussion if you feel out of harmony; we would love to connect and try to assist and support.

Annie is our team manager so please direct billing questions to Shelby or to Annie. If you are asking about gymnastics skills or meets, please direct those questions toward Shelby. As stated in the contract, anything regarding emotions, doubts, major injuries, etc need to be handled in person. Speculation, assumptions and gossip are not a healthy solution and should be avoided at all costs; please do not engage. Face-to-face discussion can solve almost all questions and/or ease worries.

While the children and families are extremely important to us, the staff must also claim our personal space and family time. *Please only use the Cobra email or Cobra phone to communicate for business purposes.* Personal texts on weekends, after practices or meets are not encouraged. We will share our cell phone numbers for travel/meet purposes, but please do not use those numbers or our personal Facebook accounts to communicate with staff. We normally do not check emails from Saturday afternoons-Sunday night, so we thank you for your patience. Shelby attempts to take Monday and Thursday mornings “off” until at least 12noon as well. Tuesdays are often a catch up day for Shelby as she is not coaching, so reach out if needed.

The Cobra Gymnastics Team Facebook group is a fabulous way to ask last minute questions about meets, leotard swaps, lost items, ect. Please be sure to join the group if you haven’t already. Team documents are also saved there for easy access.

Lastly, a reminder that many of our team parents have been “on team” for many seasons. When you have questions about your daughter as a beginner team gymnast, it is often helpful to find an experienced team parent to help ease the trepidations you may have about advancement, skill development and gymnastics in general.

Any girls in middle school or above are welcome to write to Coach Shelby via email, but **MUST** always include or “cc” their parent onto the email. According to Safe Sport, we must always have parental supervision for any communication. We will not connect via social media with the children. Please help your girls learn discernment regarding email and what is appropriate to write about and what can be simply left for a quick conversation during practice.

Marketing

Newspaper articles are published at least four times during the season. If you take any photos during the meets and have captured a high quality shot, please submit it to us by Sunday night or Monday morning. Action shots are great, but podium or posed medal/trophy shots are fabulous as well. We love seeing our girls in the news, but it takes a quick turn-around effort on our parts to see this through and any help with the photos is appreciated.

Thank you for supporting your daughter's passion for gymnastics! The depth of growth that we can achieve through the opportunities inside of competitive gymnastics are plentiful. The staff and I are honored to coach your daughter; we aim to build her skills and confidence.

My best,

Coach Shelby

**Owner and Head Coach
Cobra Gymnastics & Dance Center**