

Gymnastics SA



Gym-JETS

Junior Elite Talent Squads

Gymnastics
South Australia



Junior Elite Talent Squads

The purpose of this program is to identify and then develop talented gymnasts to the level where they are able to represent Australia at international competitions. Boys and girls, from all over Adelaide, identified as having a special potential in gymnastics, have been selected into this program. High-level gymnastics requires an extensive training schedule, which, under normal circumstances, involves significant sacrifices for children in terms of 'normal' home lives and schooling. This unique partnership between DECS and GSA allows the selected children to pursue their gymnastic dreams without those same sacrifices.

The children in the High Performance Program attend the special class at Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School. A carefully structured school day allows for early morning training, at the South Australian Gymnastic Association. The gymnasts are collected by one of the class teachers at the end of training and driven directly to school in our bus. A 'normal' school day follows which ends mid afternoon when they are transported back to the gym to continue their specialist gymnastics training.



Training hours

The amount of training each child does depends on her or his age and development. Initially gymnasts participate in two sessions per week after school from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. As gymnasts progress, morning sessions from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. may be programmed. They are also likely to be involved in five afternoon sessions from 3:00 p.m. onwards. It is expected that a full program be achieved before 6:00 p.m. thus allowing for quality family time. Since weekly training programs may involve up to 35 hours, this could not be achieved without this arrangement.

Talent ID

The GSA coaches pursue a rigorous talent identification program throughout the primary schools of Adelaide. While gymnastics is for everyone, high performance gymnastics is like any other high performance sport and will favour certain body types. Many children (8000 in a normal year) are screened in an effort to identify the children who possess those special physical attributes that will allow them to achieve at the highest levels of the sport. A small percentage of these children are invited into a trial 'Talent Squad'. This short-term program offers the children an opportunity to try this approach to gymnastics before making any major commitment. As gymnasts develop, their progress is constantly monitored with a view to eventual inclusion in the GSA High Performance Squad. Gymnasts of primary school age who are selected into the GSA High Performance Squad are then required to attend the Gym Focus Class at Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School.



Gym-JETS is a Junior Development Program. Further progression to the AIS in Canberra is possible through identification by the National Coach at Competitions and periodic assessments during training sessions.

Elite Gymnastics Management Team (EGMT)

The program is closely monitored by GSA and DECS. A management committee (the EGMT) representing both bodies oversees the program. This committee comprises the School Principal of Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School, class teachers, program manager, GSA State Director, high school co-ordinator and parent representative. The EGMT meets monthly to discuss program issues, and reviews and updates policies and procedures when necessary. Parents may approach any members of the team about issues and concerns.

Management Team – Gym-JETS Gymnastics Program

The Management Team consists of:

Principal Ascot Park R-7, Gymnastics Focus School, State Director, Gymnastics SA, Program Manager, Class Teacher, Focus Class, Hamilton Secondary College and Parent Representative.



Rationale

The ultimate aim of the program is to produce gymnasts of national ranking, who will represent Australia in international competitions - Commonwealth Games, World Championships, Olympic Games - whilst enabling them to continue living in South Australia. The only alternative for talented children up to now has been to go to the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra - a daunting idea for any 10-15 year old child. Too often in the past high performance gymnasts have had to lead two lives, one at school and the other in the gym with little co-ordination between the two aspects of their development. Sacrifices were invariably made which compromised either or both their schooling and gymnastics. Moreover, the constant relocation between many schools and the training gymnasium discouraged the establishment of true friendships during the important developmental years. The Focus Program addresses these concerns by providing a program that co-ordinates schooling and training commitments. This ensures boys and girls are able to enjoy the friendship of peers and quality family time.

Advantages and positive outcomes for general students

Reviews and surveys of the Focus School over time consistently reveal:

- improved physical fitness and co-ordination, and attitudes to it.
- improved attitudes to learning



- improved peer interaction.
- encouragement to succeed.
- access to specialised programs and equipment regardless of background, finance and ability.
- support for social justice.

Most recently, a 2002 survey by the Education Department of Flinders University, found that the majority of Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School students had a positive body image coupled with high esteem. Ascot Park girls in particular were the only group of girls out of seven schools that had a positive body image.

Advantages and positive outcomes for GSA High Performance Squad gymnasts

An Education Department review found the following advantages and positive outcomes for high performance gymnasts attending the Gym Classes at Ascot Park Primary School.

- Access to high performance expertise and training program whilst maintaining a high educational standard, all integrated into the one structure.
- Access to the Marion Recreation Centre and the best gym facilities in SA.
- Convenient training times before and after school, enabling students to have family time.



- Top coaches who are dedicated and have long-term goals for the students
- Vastly improved and fast developing skills culminating in good results in competitions.
- Very caring, happy atmosphere.
- Students held in high esteem by their peers.
- Children are able to participate in high performance programs without moving interstate.
- Children are not isolated because of high achievement and training expectations. They are part of the school.
- By being in a single class, with two teachers, students support and stimulate each other and teachers are in tune

Entry Procedures into Gym-JETS

The focus class at Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School has been specifically established to support high performance gymnasts. To be selected into the fulltime program, primary school children are required to attend the gym focus class at Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School. Therefore certain procedures need to be followed.



Enrolment

- Referral from manager of Gym-JETS program for inclusion in a focus class at Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School (Years 2-7 only).
- Report from previous school forwarded to Principal of Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School (which covers the following points)
 1. Outline of academic achievements, learning skills and social skills
 2. Ability and commitment to develop self-directed learning
 3. Evidence of student being able to accept responsibility for own behaviour
- Commitment from parents to maintain communication with school and gym re:
 1. Notification of absences, lateness and early departure
 2. Regular review of progress
 3. Emotional needs of student
 4. Physical needs of student



Selection

To be selected and maintain a position in the full time program (currently over 19 hours a week), primary school children (Year 2-7) are required to attend the Gym Focus Class at Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School.

Placement in class

Continuation in the gym focus class is subject to fulfilling the requirements of a fulltime training program. Gymnasts are expected to adhere to training programs organised by the coaches. Due to the structure of the training program, missed sessions cannot be rescheduled. Students who withdraw or are on a reduced training program may enrol or be transferred to the appropriate mainstream class at Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School

Withdrawal

It is expected that at least four weeks' notice be given of intention to withdraw from the program. Full term fees are required to be settled. Reimbursements for early withdrawal cannot be made. A review of the child's gymnastic development and academic progress is required prior to withdrawal. This will involve the student, parents, coach, gym program manager, focus class teacher and school principal.



Appeal process

Families wishing to appeal against any of the procedures in the Gym-JETS program should initially use the documented school grievance process. Should that not resolve the issue, families may appeal in writing to the Principal of Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School. That appeal will be directed to the District Superintendent for determination.

Student Participation

A typical day

A normal school day involves morning training, collection from the gym by one of the teachers on the school bus, a carefully structured school day, transport back to the gym and further afternoon training. The classroom program is organised to ensure that students access all areas of the curriculum. The learning program is based on integrated studies that allow students to experience a wide range of learning activities. The students are involved in all whole school activities such as assemblies, performances and Sports Day. Where viable, they participate in sporting clinics provided through the school.

Responsibilities

School

The school and teachers of the Gym Focus Class have a commitment to:

- Provide a stimulating, success oriented environment
- Build good relationships with parents and students
- Maintain regular communication and ensure that parents have all relevant information about their children's education.



Coaches

Coaches have an especially important role. Their task is to:

- Prepare gymnastics to ensure each child has the opportunity to achieve their highest gymnastic potential
- Provide a safe and enjoyable working environment
- Plan activities to ensure appropriate progression in the teaching of skills
- Closely supervise activities
- Keep adequate records, regularly review progress and report to parents

Families

The Gym-JETS offers a total education experience incorporating both school and gymnastics.

Parents have a responsibility to:

- Show an active interest in their child's gymnastics and schooling
- Assist all sections of the program (Gymnastics S.A. and the School) in establishing a set of shared values and expectations.
- Support the implementation of the program policies, including payment of fees (School – Services & Materials charge, Bus transport to Gym, Gym term fees – coaches, hire of gym.... Fund raising and/or extra cash payments.)
- Maintain open communication

Communication

Open and honest communication is paramount in strengthening the teacher/ coach/ parent partnership, which is vital for the ongoing success of the gym program. Teachers welcome parental input to the class program. Parents are welcome to the classroom at all times. The diary is an important vehicle for maintaining the home/school link. Students use the diary for daily



reflection of their learning. Parents are requested to use it to inform teachers of reasons for absences, appointments and issues that will affect their child's learning. The gym also uses various channels of communication. General notes are sent via 'note pockets'. Parent squad meetings are held regularly with coaches. School and gym personnel encourage parents to discuss issues as they arise to ensure early and effective resolution. Teachers and coaches can be contacted through phone, personal contact or e-mail.

Information Night

A combined Gym/ School Acquaintance and Information evening is held early in the school year. Topics discuss include:

- Information and expectations of both school and gym
- Learning programs
- Health issues including nutrition and physiotherapy
- Parents' role in both the school and gym.

Gym Class Transition

Children identified and invited to become a part of the Gym- JETS are able to access a transition period in the gym class. Through negotiation with the school, parents can arrange for children to spend one day a week in the classroom.



Transition to High School

Hamilton Secondary College is our partner school, providing for high school aged members of the Gym-JETS. During term 4 each year, the Principal of Ascot Park R-7 Gymnastics Focus School convenes a meeting for parents planning to send their children to Hamilton to meet the College Principal and key high school staff. This is an opportunity for parents to discuss how to best meet the curriculum needs of their children.

Gym Assembly

A highlight of the school calendar is the annual gym assembly. These are visually dramatic and spectacular events reflecting the school ethos of *gymnastics for all* and the enduring values of excellence, equity, diligence and community participation.

They provide an opportunity for the school's gymnasts to prepare themselves for performing in front of large audiences. They also reaffirm our identity as a school with a special focus, celebrate our success at the local level and very importantly are a statement of excellence achieved by our state school system. At the same time, the assemblies are an opportunity for prospective sponsors of the program to view the talents of young boys and girls who aspire to elite performances. It is also an opportunity for representatives of local, state and federal government to be invited and appreciate this unique project.



Highlights

In pursuit of excellence, Gym-JETS has produced outstanding results. The most notable performances include:

Jacqui Dunn, Kylie Halliday, Sandi Carmichael, Jeb Silsbury, Sam Offord, Rebecca Stoyel

Australian Representative in Women's Artistic Gymnastics starred at the 1994 Commonwealth games, winning Gold on the Uneven Bars, silver in the All-round and Bronze in the Team Event

Honour Board – APPS Award

In 2003, the school initiated a Gymnastics Scholarship to encourage students to continue on with their gymnastics program.

Winners to date are:

2003 Sean O'Hara

What else do the Gym-JETS do?

Gym-JETS are often invited to perform displays at public events. Recent displays include:

Royal Adelaide Show

Public Education Week

Marion Learning festival

Government House



Fundraising

The term fees collected do not fully cover the costs of running Gym-JETS and therefore additional funds need to be raised to ensure the viability of the program. Parents are required to support the program through involvement in the activities of the fundraising committee. The committee is chaired by a parent representative, and meets monthly to discuss activities to support the program.

School Bus

Running and servicing costs for the school bus, used almost exclusively by the Gym-JETS program, are heavily subsidized by the school. An annual fee set by school council meets only a small portion of the costs incurred. Further funding opportunities are sought through donations, parent fundraising and commercial sponsorships.

Competitions

Gymnasts are prepared for physical ability, skill and full competitions during their training hours. Initially competitions are conducted internally, and when ready, gymnasts are entered in interclub and State events. Competitions are an integral part of preparing a gymnast for future State and National representation.