

Competitive Squad Programme

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1. Mission Statement:

At Wings Rhythmic Gymnastics Club, our competitive rhythmic gymnastics squad is dedicated to cultivating excellence, teamwork, and personal growth. We strive to create an environment where each athlete can develop their skills, unleash their artistic expression, and achieve their highest potential in the sport of rhythmic gymnastics.

Our mission is to foster a culture of dedication, discipline, and sportsmanship among our athletes. We aim to instill in them the values of respect, integrity, fair play and perseverance, both on and off the competition floor.

We are committed to providing top-notch coaching, comprehensive training programs, and opportunities for competitive exposure at regional, national, and international levels. Through a focus on skill refinement, physical conditioning, and artistic development, we aim to empower our athletes to perform with grace, precision, and confidence.

Our goal is to create a nurturing and inspiring environment that fosters passion for the sport as well as respect and understanding of the complexities and the high technical demands of it.

The club operates under the progress over perfection mentality, meaning that it's participants are expected to progress in all areas despite the external circumstances towards their personal best.

Together, we embrace the journey of continuous improvement, aiming not only for success in competitions but also for personal development, self-discovery, and the joy of rhythmic gymnastics

2. Membership Criteria:

Membership is at the discretion of the head coach. Physical and psychological maturity, physiology, fitness tests, past performances, work ethic, cognitive capacity, behaviour, punctuality and attendance will be taken into consideration. The head coach will invite the participant for a trial and evaluate how they train before making a decision about offering a formal invitation.

Preparing for competition requires more than talent. Gymnasts willing to participate in the competitive programme should:

- Train more than 8 hours a week. Training sessions may be increased during competition seasons.
- Attend 80% of training sessions unless they have a medical reason or extenuating circumstances.
- Purchase their own FIG approved apparatuses and competition gear, as these are the only ones accepted in competition. These should be the correct size.
- Go to competitions organised by the club or any other competitions where the gymnast is qualified or appointed to compete.
- Have a good work ethic and be able to pay attention during training in order to keep up with the technical skills coached. If the attention and motivation of the gymnast decline, they can always access one of our more fun-based, laid-back programmes such as Development or Recreational.

3. Commitment:

The club funds more than 50% of the competitive squad pro bono. We offer these opportunities for those who are willing to commit to the sport and the club under the guidance of club coaches and support staff. The competitive squad has a limited number of spots and they will be offered to those who are willing to take advantage of the opportunities we offer.

4. Conduct and Sportsmanship:

Respect for the Coaches

Both parents and gymnasts are expected to respect the professional decision of all qualified coaches. It is important to understand that our coaches aren't volunteers, they are highly qualified staff; many of them with relevant third level education and extensive experience in their relevant fields. All coaches in the club have been trained in group and behaviour control. Parents and gymnast are encouraged to bring to the attention of their coaches and safeguarding officer anything to do with the participant's welfare. However, development matters, choice of skills and elements or session delivery methods that do not affect the welfare of the gymnasts must be respected by all club members.

Fair Play

The club takes fair play very seriously. Members are required to compete with integrity and adhere to the rules and spirit of the sport. This applies to both gymnasts, staff and parents. Avoid any form of cheating, unsportsmanlike conduct, or disrespect toward opponents.

Grace in Victory and Defeat:

- Gymnasts are encouraged to congratulate those rivals who excelled at any event the club participates in if the context allows for this.
- If the outcome of the performance at an event is not what the gymnasts expected, she/he still has the responsibility to exercise emotional control. While it is important to label and embrace any unwanted feelings in competition, disruptive behaviours such as throwing apparatuses on the floor, distracting other competitors or tantrums will not be tolerated.
- Medals and trophies are not a right for the gymnast to receive. Medals and trophies are earned. Gymnasts will need to learn to accept competition results no matter the outcome and take them as feedback for the next event. It is vital for competitive members to take ownership over their own training and set realistic goals for themselves. WRGC coaches will assist the gymnast doing this, but it is ultimately up to the gymnast to play a part in the outcome of the event and accept it with dignity.

Supportive Behaviour:

Offer support and encouragement to teammates during training, competitions, and challenging moments. Create a supportive atmosphere where everyone feels valued and included.

Address conflicts or disagreements with maturity and respect. Engage in open and constructive communication to resolve issues, seeking guidance from coaches when necessary.

Responsibility:

Take responsibility for your actions, decisions, and commitments. Honour training schedules, attendance requirements, and uphold the standards set forth by the club and coaches.

Understand that as a member of the competitive squad, behaviour reflects not only on oneself but also on the club. Represent the club with pride, demonstrating the highest levels of sportsmanship and professionalism.

Continuous Improvement:

Embrace a growth mindset, seeking to continually improve skills, technique, and attitude. Embrace feedback from coaches and strive for personal and collective advancement. WRGC prioritises progress over perfection. Club staff will never expect or demand perfection and will coach under the principle that progression is not linear and everybody will have good and bad days.

However we expect fitness tests, competition results, and behaviour and mental skills evaluations to reflect an overall upwards trajectory.

Coaches will review and make changes when necessary to make this possible. If the motivation, attendance, commitment or training density and volume get in the way of this progress the club will contemplate option of relocating the gymnast in a more suitable programme.

Adherence to Policies:

Follow the club's policies and guidelines, including those related to training, conduct, competition participation, and other team-related activities.

5. Training and Skill Development:

If a gymnast is to reach their full potential, the planning must be specific to their individual needs. There are many individual factors which should be taken into account, some of the most important are: age; gender; physical maturity; skill level; goals; strengths and weaknesses.

Different gymnasts will respond differently to slight changes in the training programme. It is not always suitable for a whole group to have the same programme. Some gymnasts may require more emphasis on strength, while some should spend more time on flexibility or psychological preparation for example. Individual needs, aspirations and abilities will need to be considered and it is good practice to profile your gymnasts to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

For an outsider looking into the world of rhythmic gymnastics, it may look like a pretty dance with multiple displays of flexibility. However, gymnasts willing to compete will be judged by trained professionals with a deep understanding of the demands of the sport. Rhythmic gymnastics is by nature a sport that requires an outstanding amount of endurance, muscle memory and repetition. Gymnast won't spend the 10+ hours of training repeating a 1,30 minute routine. They will instead start by working on their muscle activation, stamina and endurance; proceed to work on core stability flexibility mobility and body control and continue to develop technical skills.

WRGC commits to the recommended training and skill development process designed by British Gymnastics and adopted by Gymnastics Ireland and apply this to planning annual, cycle, weekly and daily plans that are tailored to the gymnasts' level and use all the resources we have available to make sure these are effective. The coaching process will involve the following:

- **Tactical preparation:** Essentially, the tactical preparation aspect of the needs analysis identifies a gymnast's current level and requires the coach to realistically define key objectives. The technical, physical and artistic preparation factors involves the process of identifying the key areas to develop in order to achieve the objectives.
- **Technical Preparation:** In a sport like gymnastics, technique is central to performance. Consequently, as a coach, it is important to profile the gymnasts' movements to enable improvement areas to be identified. There are

a number of quantitative and qualitative methods that can be employed to assess a gymnast's technical performance.

- **Physical Preparation:** We are the only rhythmic gymnastics club in Ireland with a personal trainer available to the competitive gymnasts. Physical preparation is key to execute skills properly and avoiding injuries. Gymnasts will have to do a fitness test every cycle so we can spot their strengths and weaknesses and track their progress and efforts through the cycles.

Novice	Pre-Esprit, Esprit, Junior and Senior
<p>PAT test: The PAT shows what the demands are for the development of the flexibility and power skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection of test exercises is based on experiences over many years and is an extract from training programs for the development of the physical ability prerequisites for performance. • The test exercises for flexibility are focused of the level of development of the passive and active flexibility of the hips and shoulders. • The test exercises of the power skills are based on the determination of the level of development of the explosive power for leaps and jumps, the special endurance, and the level at static and dynamic components of exercises. • Current knowledge about the level of education in many countries shows that the development of the performance prerequisites of flexibility and power should have more attention. • Based on their capability, gymnasts have the possibility to obtain a score of 1.0 to 10.0 points per test exercise. Such control procedures offer the possibility to compare one's personal score with the best score for each test component. 	<p>BQT test: The British Qualification testing is a strength and conditioning testing programme for rhythmic gymnasts that combine different physical components in order to assess the most important muscle groups and movements required in rhythmic gymnastics.</p>

Strength Training Guidelines & Order of Training	Strength Training Principles (for all tissues)	Sequencing Strength & Power Training
Train for safety – landings, core, proprioception Large muscle groups first Muscle Balance Skill specific patterns Maximum force and speed (power)	Specificity Progressive Overload Recovery Reversibility Individualization Variation Diminishing Returns	Muscular Endurance Speed with low force Muscle hypertrophy Specific strength Power – strength with low speed Power – maximum force and speed

- **Psychological Preparation:** It is important to develop the psychological factors associated with peak performance and incorporating them into the gymnasts' training:

- High levels of motivation
- Ability to optimise levels of arousal/anxiety
- High levels of concentration
- High levels of self-confidence
- High levels of determination

WRGC commits to delivering psychological skills training to your gymnasts for performance enhancement purposes. If a gymnast has great technique and optimal physical conditions but they aren't equipped to perform under pressure, to concentrate during training, or they are not motivated enough to show up to training in difficult times their performance will suffer.

If a gymnast is dealing with clinical issues or suspected to be dealing with one, she should be referred to her GP or a clinical psychologist.

There are four predominant strategies used to train the psychological skills associated with peak performance. All of these are included in the cycle plans of the competitive squad. These include:

- Goal setting
- Imagery and visualisation
- Self-talk

- Relaxation
- **Artistic preparation:** The club is lucky enough to have a Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) graduate ballet teacher to assist with choreographing routines, and helping with artistic components. No other rhythmic club in the Republic of Ireland has fully qualified ballet teacher dedicated to the assistance of artistry requirements. Below are the artistic components that need to be trained and will be evaluated in competition:

<p>Character</p>	<p>The movements have a clearly-defined style emphasizing the gymnast's unique interpretation of the character of the music; that style or character of movement is developed from the beginning to the end of the exercise. This identifiable character is recognized by the body and the apparatus movements throughout all of the exercise, prioritized in a variety of ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation movements before the Difficulties • Transitional movements between Difficulties • During DB and/or the exit from the DB • Body waves • Stylized, connecting steps linking DB, R, DA • Under the throws/during the flight of the apparatus • During the catches • During rotational elements • Changes of levels • Connecting apparatus elements emphasizing the rhythm and character • During DA elements
<p>Dance Steps</p>	<p>A Dance Steps Combination is a specific sequence of movements with the body and apparatus dedicated to expressing the stylistic interpretation of the music: therefore, a Dance Steps Combination must have a defined character in the movement. It is choreographed according to the character, rhythm, tempo and accents of the music. The stylized movements of the body segments, the tempo and intensity of the movements, and the choice of modalities of travelling should be carefully selected for the specific music on which they are performed.</p> <p>The construction of movements should aim to include all the body segments, as fitting for the specific music, including the head, shoulders, hands, arms, hips, legs, feet, etc.</p>

	Each composition must have a minimum of 2 Dance Steps Combinations of 8 second each.
Expression	<p>A gymnast transforms a structured routine into an artistic performance based on her expressivity. Body expression is a union of strength and power with beauty and elegance in the movements. Beauty and finesse can be expressed by the ample participation of the different body segments (head, shoulders, trunk, rib cage, hands, arms, legs, as well as the face) in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supple, plastic, and/or subtle movements which convey character • facial expression which communicates an emotional response to the music • emphasis of the accents • intensity of the character of movements <p>Regardless of the physical size or height of the gymnast, movements of the body segments are performed with maximum range, breadth and extension.</p>
Dynamic Changes	<p>The speed and intensity of the gymnast's movements, as well as the movement of her apparatus, should reflect changes in the tempo and dynamism of the music.</p> <p>Compositions with less than 2 Dynamic Changes will be penalized</p>
Special Effects	<p>The union of specific elements with specific accents creates an effect that is recognizable by the viewers; the purpose of such effects is to contribute to the original relationship between specific music and specific movements developed by the gymnast. DB, R, and DA are placed on specific musical accents which are strong, clear and can best match the energy and intensity of the Difficulty.</p>
Use of the Floor Area	<p>Travelling is wide and comprehensive through the floor area, so that the entire floor area is covered by the movement of gymnast, who must travel to all parts of the floor area (although not necessarily touching the physical four corners).</p> <p>The directions in which a gymnast travels should be varied across the floor and not a repetitive back-and-forth in the same pathway.</p>
Unity	<p>One or several severe technical fault(s), which breaks the unity of the composition by forcing the gymnast to halt the performance of the composition or to stop portraying an artistic image for several seconds, is penalized one time as an overall penalty at the end of the exercise.</p>

<p>Connections</p>	<p>All movements must have a logical, intentional relationship between them so that one movement/element passes into the next for an identifiable reason. Elements are joined smoothly and logically without prolonged preparations or unnecessary stops which do not support the character of the composition or which do not create an effect.</p> <p>Elements which are arranged together without a clear purpose become a series of unrelated actions, which prohibit both the full development of the story as well as the unique identity of the composition. Such connections are defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties linked together without a clear relationship • Transitions from one movement or Difficulty to another that are abrupt, illogical or prolonged.
<p>Rhythm</p>	<p>The movements of the body as well as the apparatus must correlate precisely with the musical accents and the musical phrases; both the body and apparatus movements should emphasize the tempo/pace of the music.</p> <p>Movements which are performed separately from the accents or disconnected from the tempo established by the music are penalized 0.10 each time, up to 2.00 points. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When movements are visibly emphasized before or after the accents • When a clear accent in the music is “passed through” and not emphasized by movement • When movements are unintentionally behind the musical phrase • When the tempo changes and the gymnast is in the middle of slower movements and cannot reflect the change in speed (off the rhythm)

6. Competition Participation:

Club competitions will be open to all gymnasts. WRGC is in the developmental stages of event organising and self-regulation. Previously, when being more involved in GI competitions, there were three main competitions available for our club:

- Open age Competition
- Grading Competition
- National Series

For 2024, we are planning on organising three club competitions to make up for these:

- St. Patrick's day Competition
- Wings Cup
- Christmas Cup

In addition, there will be international events, controls and display opportunities.



Events will get more official, effective and attractive progressively through the year. We ask for patience while we develop and fund better opportunities for our gymnasts.

Competitive gymnast are required to participate in all club competitions unless they have a **doctor's note** or proof of extenuating circumstances. If the gymnasts and their support system cannot prove they are committed to attend local events, they are not eligible to attend any more challenging and official events.

About International Events:

Unlike in most countries, Ireland doesn't have county or regional championships and there is no vetting to the competitive scene. The number of participants in Ireland is exceptionally low as it is still in early development stages. This affects the perception of performance, especially in young gymnasts.

The club believes that going abroad will give members a more realistic expectation of where they are in their journey and a more informed decision of where they want to be. In most tournaments and cups there are two full panels of judges with a lot more experience, which means that their scores will be more accurate, more fair and informative. In addition, a more diverse pool of competitors will provide a better learning experience.

Please note that not all international events will be suited for all gymnasts. Some international Cups are very demanding in terms of performance and not suitable for beginners. Therefore, depending on the cup, the club may select only the gymnasts that are better suited to participate.

Another point to be aware of is that depending on the country and their level progression and standards, the competition entry may be under different levels. For example, level 2 gymnast may compete in the recreational competition section in competitions in certain countries.

Any event that requires overnight stays need to comply with the WRGC Travel Policy.

7. Communication and Feedback:

- The main channel of communication is through email. For general queries, safeguarding and fee information please contact

secretary@wingsrhythmicgymnastics.com

- For technical information and questions about competitive squad matters please contact

headcoach@wingsrhythmicgymnastics.com

There are also drop-in times to discuss issues or ask queries that are too complicated to deal with on email and/or messages. These include progression, performance, motivation problems, group change, behaviour, injuries, event, attendance, training agreement and safeguarding.

Tuesday 4:00- 5:00 pm

Wednesday 4:00- 5:00 pm

Friday 4:00-5:00 pm



Parents need to communicate any absence or tardiness in advance of the session in order for the coaches to plan appropriately. This communication needs to be through email.

Communication Disclaimers

1. As a legal guardian, coaches are required to inform you of anything putting your child in danger or under harm. However, according to the ***Children's Act 2005***, we

are expected to respect the participant's privacy in any topics that do not put the child in any danger or harm.

2. The professional decisions of staff are not subject to debate and it won't be disclosed prematurely for approval to anyone that is not employed by the club.

3. Same goes for judges or any role fulfilled by staff external to the club.

4. WRGC does not take responsibility for information of events external to the club. If parents are looking for clarification on already delivered information or further communication on matters that are out of the club's hands, they should contact the responsible party directly. The contact information for organisers of events or other partnerships will be delivered in advance from now on and it will be the parent's responsibility to save access to this contact information since the club cannot confirm this information will be re-sent on request during busy work periods.

5. The club cannot deliver personalised communications in line with each parent's preference. Email is the main way of communication. The parent is responsible to check their inbox in a timely manner and make sure that mass emails aren't marked as spam. This applies to communications about payments too.

8. Financial Responsibilities:

Although the club funds the majority of the squad's costs, being part of a competitive squad in such a demanding sport doesn't come without costs. This costs include but they are not limited to the following:

- Competition attire that is compliant with FIG rules
- Insurance costs
- Competition entry fees
- Event travel costs
- FIG approved apparatuses
- Extra training costs

Squad members may also need to financially invest on the following depending on the circumstances:

- If the gymnast experiences pains/ aches that need to be consulted by a professional, visits to the physiotherapist may be required. WRGC reserves the right to refuse to coach a child that that challenges the club's safety policy.
- If the parents of a gymnast believe their child would benefit from extra training, extra feedback outside training hours or additional exercises that will add session planning or administrative time outside of their working hours, they should be prepared to cover the costs of a private lesson inside or outside the club. Online private coaching has become increasingly popular in recent years and parents should be aware this is an option too.

9. Code of Conduct and Discipline:

There are specific codes of conducts for parents, coaches and gymnasts that can be found on our website and that have already been circulated. Members are expected to be familiar and comply with these.

10. Review and Amendments:

There will be a mandatory extensive review made every two years where all staff involved in the squad and gymnasts will be involved in the process. Changes will be made when needed and circulated to parents at the start of every second year.

The club reserves the right to review and change the policy as needed at any time. Any random changes will try to be avoided so there isn't constant changes that are hard to keep up with. However, if necessary, the club has the ability to make changes at any given time if this helps running the competitive squad appropriately.

11. Acknowledgment:

All squad members and their guardians to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the policy, signifying their commitment to adhere to it.

If these terms and conditions are not met, their coach will give a warning to the gymnasts and parents. If these are still not met after the warning, WRGC will redirect the member to a more suitable programme and no longer be in the Competition Squad.

I _____, parent/guardian of _____ agree with the Terms and Conditions of the Competition Programme and we are willing to comply with these.

Appendix 1: Competitive Squad Compatibility Checklist

- Is the participant mentally ready for the demands of this programme?
- Is the participant able to keep up with the attendance requirements while having enough time for school, homework and studying?
- Is the participant committed enough for this programme?
- Is the participant ready for increased technical, physical and artistic demands?
- Does this programme and policy align with the parent's and participants philosophy?
- Is the support system of the gymnast (parents, carers, extended family...) have the resources to transport them to the gym and back for every training?
- Are other extra curricular activities going to allow for time to commit to this programme?
- Is the household ready for the financial commitment of this programme?
- Does the participants and their parents trust and the coaches enough to respect their decisions in regards to performance and progression in the sport?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, you may want to reconsider this joining programme. There are other programmes within the club that may suit the participants' needs better such as the Development Squad and Recreational Programme.