

**Advanced Rec
Program Handbook**



2026-2027

Introduction

We are excited to welcome you and your family to our Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) Program! Thank you for your interest in becoming part of our gymnastics community.

Your athlete has been given the opportunity to train with our skilled coaching team in an environment that encourages excellence, confidence, and personal growth. Through progressive training, athletes will develop advanced gymnastics skills while building strength, flexibility, coordination, endurance, and resilience.

Our program is designed to help each gymnast reach their full potential in a safe, positive, and supportive environment. We are committed to fostering not only athletic success but also valuable life skills such as perseverance, teamwork, respect, and self-confidence. We look forward to working with your athlete as they grow both in and out of the gym.



Goals of the Program

Self-discipline, dedication, determination, responsibility, and self-confidence are some of the individual qualities the WAG program aims to instill in athletes. As they progress through the program, they will also learn the value of setting long-term goals, working consistently toward them, and understanding that meaningful achievement often requires patience, commitment, and sacrifice.

Although gymnastics is an individual sport, our program thrives on a strong sense of teamwork. Athletes learn to support and encourage one another while developing essential social skills, including cooperation, respect, leadership, trust, empathy, and sportsmanship. We believe that fostering these qualities creates a positive training environment where every athlete can grow both as a gymnast and as a person.

Goals of the Program

The Grande Prairie Gymnastic Society WAG program goals are:

- To give athletes and teams the opportunity to benefit from a challenging level of training and competition.
- To offer a challenging and rewarding program that will stimulate the personal growth of each athlete involved.
- To develop the best athlete possible.
- To provide the opportunity for young athletes and teams to achieve their training goals.
- To proudly and tastefully represent Grande Prairie Gymnastics Society.

Program Staff

The following coaches are the primary coaches that will be working regularly with your athletes.

- Sara Woodlands
- Gracie Ferguson
- Samantha Ladwig
- Josee Couette
- Heather Young
- Terri Bateman
- Lyra Beaulieu
- Kim Sperling
- Elise Hartman
- Sari Krauskopf
- Xiao Mo Sun (sub)
- Alyssa Chamberlin (sub)



Important Dates

Advanced Rec Program

Event	Date	Description
Judging 101, Coaches Meet and Greet	TBD	Presentation on gymnastics judging and opportunity to meet program staff
Start of Season	September 8, 2026	2026-2027 Season begins
Fall Testing	November 2026	Coaches will complete skill testing sheets throughout November
Christmas Performance	December 20, 2026	Annual Christmas Show for all WAG athletes
Christmas Break	December 20-January 1, 2027	No training for advanced rec athletes
Spring Break	March 26-April 2, 2027	No training for advanced rec athletes
Year End Showcase	May 16, 2027	In house fun meet/show for advanced rec athletes
End of Season	June 26, 2027	Final day of training for advanced rec athletes
Year End Party	June 26, 2027	Year end Party for all WAG athletes
2027-2028 Tryouts	June 28 & 29 2027	Tryouts for all advanced rec athletes for 2027-2028 season



Training Expectations & Policies

Practice & Group Schedules

Group placement for the upcoming year will be assigned by our placement panel within the month of July. Please remember we are always looking at the best interests of all the athletes when placing athletes.

Training hours will differ from athlete to athlete depending on fitness level, age, maturity, and skill level. Practice schedules are set in July and will remain for the entire season. Program schedules will not be changed to fit individual athletes' schedules. We ask that all athletes commit to the full training program unless otherwise instructed by the coaches. Practices are structured in such a way that each training day is important. There are no make-up days provided for missed practice.

Additional & Outside Training

As a Grande Prairie Gymnastics Society member, any additional training camps must be approved by the Program Coordinator every season. Parent-led training decisions will need to be pre-approved through the Program Coordinator; this includes training with outside clubs and coaches. Summer camps or other special events may be permitted, please check with the Program Coordinator to ensure this is approved.

Electronics & Valuables

Electronics such as cell phones and other devices are not to be used during practices. If the coaches are instructing an athlete to contact their parents, they may use the gym phones or be permitted to use their cell phone. Video and photos of training sessions are not to be recorded on personal devices and are not to be posted on social media, unless approved by the coach. This is very important for the protection of individual and team privacy. It is not possible to monitor valuables brought into the gym. Please leave all valuables at home. We do offer lockers which can be locked each practice, all locks must be removed after each practice. We recommend leaving all valuables at home, Grande Prairie Gymnastics is not responsible for any lost or damaged items.



Training Expectations & Policies

Training Attire

Athletes must train in a gymnastics bodysuit to ensure safety for the athletes and the ability for the coaches to correct their body positions and spot skills safely. Athletes in advanced rec groups must purchase a team training suit. Training suit design may change every year. Shorts are optional but must be fitted spandex. Hair must always be tied up and off the face during practice. **For safety reasons, any hair that touches the floor when the athlete is upside down must be placed in a bun.**

If your athlete wears glasses, a glasses strap or other securing device is required for practice and performances. **No loose jewelry in the gym at any time, this includes permanent bracelets, anklets, or necklaces.**

Absences & Holiday Training

Gymnastics is a demanding sport that takes full commitment from both parents and athletes. It is essential that all athletes attend all practices, events and registered fun meets.

If there is a scheduling conflict, it needs to be communicated to the Program Coordinator as soon as possible. We always do our best to accommodate, but this is sometimes not an option.

During the year, we do not train on statutory holidays. Advanced rec groups do not have training during Spring Break or Winter Break. There will be weekly Summer Camps offered to pre-developmental groups; these camps are not included in program fees.

If you already have travel plans made for the upcoming year, please let the **Program Coordinator** know ASAP, as any time away is going to affect the athlete's training plan, and the coach needs to accommodate for this.



Athlete Evaluations

Athlete evaluations will serve to determine the gymnast's practice level. Athletes will be expected to work hard throughout their training to develop their physical and technical skills. A good attitude and work ethic are valued as much or more than the actual technical progress itself.

Athletes in the advanced rec program will be placed in their level following tryouts. This is the level that they will be working on to progress throughout the wag program (please refer to page 22 for the program flowchart).

Any changes in levels or groups are at the Program Coordinators' discretion.

Athletes in the advanced rec program will be required to try out in the spring each year. Placement in the program is not guaranteed from year to year.



Program Fees

Each member of the Grande Prairie Gymnastics WAG Program is expected to promptly pay their program fees. If a payment plan is chosen, monthly fees must be paid by the 1st of every month for the duration of the program. The program runs from September until end of June or September-September (depending which group your child is in). The total annual fee can be paid up front, or will automatically be split into equal monthly payments based on the length of the program. Fees cover the athlete's training cost which includes regular practice, as well as facility and administration costs, coach's wages and coach's travel expenses. Monthly fees do not cover any costs related to competition & practice leotards or personal travel expenses.

All advanced rec families are to have a valid credit card on file at all times. The payments will come automatically off your credit card on the 1st of each month. If you wish to pay cash or debit, you may do so at the front desk, but this must be done before that date or your credit card will be charged.

If payments are declined there will be an additional \$25 charged to the account. If the account is not paid by the 15th of the month, the athlete will not be allowed to participate in programming. If two payments are late, the remaining amount of the program will be required in full immediately and the payment plan will no longer be offered.

Upon registration, there is a mandatory AGF membership/insurance fee. The Alberta Gymnastics Federation (AGF) registration fee allows your athlete to be in the gym.

Chalk may be required for some athlete's training. Each chalk block costs \$2, or you can purchase a punch card at the front desk for \$20. If your child uses chalk, they will need a bin or a bag to keep their chalk in. Spray bottles are also recommended but not required. Chalk bins, spray bottles and grip bags are not available at the gym and must be purchased elsewhere. **Please speak to the Program Coordinator if you would like recommendations on what to purchase.**

Program Fees

Advanced Rec Program

Group Name	Session Dates	Program Length	Hours per Week	Cost of Enrollment*
Carthwheel Crew	Sept - June	10	3	\$1,500.00
Tumble Tribe	Sept - June	10	3	\$1,500.00
The Bounce Bunch	Sept - June	10	3	\$1,500.00
Handstand Heroes	Sept - June	10	3	\$1,500.00

*Prorations will be made for groups scheduled on statutory holidays.



Communication & Fundraising

Parent Communication

All communication between coaches and parents will be communicated through the SportsYou app (please ensure you download the SportsYou app). Instructions on how to access this app will be given to parents/guardians prior to the first day of practice. If you have questions or concerns about your child, please contact your child's coach before or after training. If you have concerns regarding coaching or other outstanding issues, please contact the Program Coordinator. Any concerns regarding program fees can be directed to our front desk staff.

Gym-Wide Fundraising

As an established society, we are fortunate to have a long-standing partnership with the Swan City Rotary Club, which provides us with the opportunity to participate in gym wide fundraising events. Grande Prairie Gymnastics is a founding member of the Cash and Camping and the Cars for Christmas Lotteries, now owned and managed by the Swan City Rotary Club. Our partnership with the Rotary Club helps us keep our fees competitive by using funds raised from these lotteries to offset coaching costs for our competitive programs. Shifts for gym wide fundraisers are mandatory. The number of hours of fundraising work will be proportional to the number of athletes in the program and the number of children a family has in the specified programs. (i.e. If a family has two daughters on the competitive team, the parents will have to work twice the number of fundraising hours.) You will be notified well in advance when you are required to participate in fundraising duties. Families will be required to sign up for these shifts using the sign-up link emailed to you. Volunteer time slots fill up fast, so please check your email regularly. Buying out your volunteer hours for \$180 is also an option. If your athlete voluntarily decides to leave the program partway through the year, you are still responsible for the buyout of your hours.

Events

Special Events

Our program hosts an annual Christmas Show and Year End Showcase at the gym and is mandatory for all advanced rec athletes to attend.

Please note performances at the beginning of the season are typically shorter as athletes learn fundamentals, new skills and begin preparing their routines. Performances will grow in length as the season continues. This progression is important for all athletes and safety.



Events - Performance Schedule

Advanced Rec Performance Schedule

Name	Location	Dates	Eligibility
Christmas Show	GP Gymnastics	December 20, 2026	Mandatory
Year End Showcase	GP Gymnastics	May 16, 2027	Mandatory

Please note that dates are subject to change.



Practice & Performance Gear

Training Suit and Accessories

WAG training leotards will be mandatory for advanced rec athletes. This is not included in the program fees and can cost approximately \$50-\$75. This will be a yearly purchase. These suits can be worn for any practice; there will not be a scheduled day for each group. These suits will also be worn for all performances. Suits must be paid for before they will be ordered. Administrative staff will communicate when to pay and what amount.

Athletes may require grips and wristbands for bars. Grips are available for purchase at the gym, but are not permitted unless an athlete can do a consistent kip. This will be communicated to each family as an athlete becomes ready. Outside purchasing of grips is not permitted.

Practice suits are not permitted to be sold to athletes outside of the WAG program until their cycle is complete.

Hair for Performances & Fun Meets

Performance hair will consist of a high ponytail/bun, with no hair touching the shoulders. It must be slicked back, no flyaways or hair on the face except for clean, short bangs that do not interfere with the eyes. Hair must be able to stay in through all routines. This is not the time to try a new hair-do, as we do not want to have hair falling out during their performance. Clips and bobby pins must match the athlete's hair color (as close as possible).

The pictures below are examples of hairstyles for performances and shows. Please use these as a reference.



Additional Fees

Additional Approximate Fees Breakdown

Item	Approximate Cost	Recurrence
Annual AGF Membership/ Insurance	\$65	Annually
Training Suit	\$60	Annually
Grips	\$85	As needed
Wristbands	\$20	As needed
Chalk	\$2	As needed

Training suits are re-designed yearly.
Optional gear to be announced at a later date.

Athlete Disciplinary Procedure

Please note: the following steps are intended to deal with disciplinary issues only, at the coaches' discretion.

1. Coach addresses issue immediately with the individual athlete.
2. Athlete may be sent home if the situation or behaviour recurs. No mandatory meeting will be held at this time, unless requested by the coach or parent. Parent or guardian requests for meetings must be made and completed within 72 hours of the incident. All meeting requests must be made through the Program Coordinator.
3. If the situation or behaviour occurs again, a mandatory meeting will be arranged with the parent or guardian by the Coach or Program Coordinator, held within 72 hours and must include the parent/guardian, coach(es), and athlete.
4. If the situation or behaviour is still not resolved, the athlete will be suspended or terminated, and another mandatory meeting with the parent or guardian, coaches, and the athlete will be scheduled and completed within another 72 hours.
5. The athlete will be removed from the program.



Roles and Responsibilities

Parents and Guardians

Your role is every bit as important as that of the gym, coaches, and the athlete. It is important to know the commitment level required for parents. Most parents minimally drive their athlete to the gym twice a week however this number can be as much as 6-7 times a week. This is outside of the weekends spent at gymnastics competitions.

As a member of the WAG program within the Grande Prairie Gymnastic Society, it is mandatory for at least one parent or guardian to complete the Respect in Sport certificate. More information regarding this will be sent out in the welcome package.

If you need to get a message to your athlete during practice, please talk to the front desk staff and the message will be relayed. Parents are NOT permitted on the gym floor during practice or competition. Parents must refrain from coaching, or commenting from the side lines or stands during any training session, or competition. If your child is not paying attention or messing around, we realize it is tempting, but this is the job of the coaches.

Please understand that we have a large program and face-to-face progress reports are not practical. If you have a concern you are also welcome to set up a meeting with the Program Coordinator as explained below.

We feel that communication with parents of our athletes should be open and flowing. We will contact you via email, sportsYou, or another communication channel if implemented with important information. Please ensure to update us should your email address change.

If you have any questions regarding the gym or your athlete, please email the Program Coordinator at sara.woodlands@gpgymnastics.com.

Under no circumstances should a coach be contacted on their personal telephone, personal email or personal social media accounts.



Roles and Responsibilities

Athlete Code of Conduct

As a member of the Grande Prairie Gymnastics WAG team, I agree to:

- Be in the gym—ready to go—on time for training.
- Treat all coaches, parents, and other athletes with courtesy and respect.
- Be responsible and prepared for training, wearing proper attire including bodysuit, hair tied up off the face, and no loose jewelry.
- Communicate with coaches any (training or coaching) problems, injuries, or illness at training, meets, or other events.
- Not use foul or abusive language at any time.
- Work with coaches and other athletes in maintaining a safe, clean, and positive training environment.
- Demonstrate proper sportsmanship (includes positive and appropriate attitude and behaviour).
- Refrain from publicly demeaning or speaking negatively of others or Grande Prairie Gymnastics.
- Not use cell phones or other electronics during training or competition unless in emergency situations or at the coaches request. This includes taking video of my skills during practice, especially for use on social media.

When I am attending a gymnastics event or otherwise representing Grande Prairie Gymnastics, I agree to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared.
- Project a positive image of the club by maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct.
- Refrain from expressing displeasure with judges or other officials by any means other than the accepted protest procedure.
- Refrain from making comments to a judge, meet official, or any other participant, with regards to a coach or athlete's abilities, routines, or execution during a competition.
- Refrain from disrupting, distracting, or in any way interfering with the performance of an athlete during competition or training.
- Follow dress codes specified by the coach when traveling to or from or participating in any activity sponsored or sanctioned by the club.
- Be supportive of teammates and all other athletes. Encourage team spirit at all times.
- Abide by policies regarding alcohol or drugs (zero tolerance) set by the Alberta Gymnastics Federation.
- Abide by the rules and policies set by the coaches at all Club-sanctioned events.



Roles and Responsibilities

Parent & Guardian Code of Conduct

As a member of the Grande Prairie Gymnastics WAG team, I agree to:

- Assist my child in arriving on time for training and arrange for them to be picked up from training on time.
- Inform the coaches when and why my child will be missing or late for any training sessions or events, and of any problems, injuries, or illness.
- Inform coaches of any conflicts (vacation or otherwise) in regards to upcoming competitions or events.
- Pay all fees on or before the date specified by the club.
- Treat all coaches, athletes, and parents with courtesy and respect.
- View training from the viewing area only, do not talk to athlete during training and do not disturb the training session.
- Only approach a coach before or after training (not during), with concerns, questions, or comments, especially at competitions.
- Follow the “chain of communication” in regards to any concerns, questions, or complaints.
- I will be positive and supportive of my child’s training and I appreciate that any technical and/or negative (along with positive) feedback should come only from the coach.
- Refrain from discussing individual issues with other parents, especially in settings with athletes, coaches or other parents around. Each athlete is an individual with unique needs, and the information at hand may be incomplete or inaccurate.
- Absolutely refrain from “rumor-mongering” or discussing any coaches/parents/athletes that are not in attendance.
- Complete all my fundraising duties as required.
- Commit fully to the annual training program and agree to make my monthly payments on time and in full, even if my child leaves the program voluntarily partway through the year. 10-month program athletes are still expected and encourage to train as much as they can throughout the summer months.
- I will not encourage the practice of gymnastics skills outside of the gym with the exception of conditioning and stretching requested specifically by the coach.
- I agree to check my email and SportsYou regularly and respond in timely fashion (if necessary) to any important communication from the gym.



Roles and Responsibilities

Coaches Code of Conduct

As coaches of the Grande Prairie Gymnastics WAG Program we agree to:

- Provide a positive and nurturing environment for all participants.
- Ensure a safe environment by selecting activities, establishing controls, and completing lesson plans that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved athletes.
- Prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes.
- Ensure decisions are taken equitably and provide athletes (and the parents/guardians of minor athletes) with the information necessary to be involved in the decisions that affect the athlete.
- Act in the best interest of the athlete's development as well as the best interest of the team.
- Know one's limitations in terms of knowledge and skills when making decisions, giving instructions or taking action.
- Ensure all coaching credentials are current and up to date. This includes but is not limited to, NCCP courses, and first aid.
- Submit a clean criminal record check every 3 years (Over 18 only)
- Be prepared to act quickly and appropriately in case of emergency.
- In the event an injury occurs I will provide first aid, as well as document the injury in an incident report, and disclose the incident to the parent of the athlete.
- Recognize the power inherent in the position of coach and respect and promote the rights of all participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality (right to privacy), informed participation, and fair and reasonable treatment.
- Respect the principles, rules, policies, and procedures in force.
- Attend staff development meetings, clinics, and other professional activities to improve coaching performance.



Policies

Chain of Command & 24 Hour Cool Down

We will enforce a 24 hour cool down period for all concerned parents or guardians. The parent of guardian must respect the 24 hour cool down period and bring their issue to the coach or Program Coordinator 24 hours after the situation to be discussed in a calm, collected manner. We will make every effort to respond to your concern within 48 hours from the first point of contact, or prior to next practice, but under special circumstances there may be a longer waiting period.

The Grande Prairie Gymnastic Society is requesting that parent concerns and complaints be addressed and channeled respecting the following chain of communication:

For concerns regarding athlete's coach, please contact:

1. WAG Program Coordinator: (Sara Woodlands): sara.woodlands@gpgymnastics.com
2. Executive Director (Cassie Bigelow): edirector@gpgymnastics.com

For concerns regarding your athlete's gymnastics or well being:

1. Coach of athlete
2. Program Coordinator
3. Executive Director
4. Board of Directors/Parent Liason

For concerns about fees, payments etc. please contact the front desk:

Email: Info@gpgymnastics.com
Phone: 780-539-1414

Contact Information

WAG Program Coordinator: sara.woodlands@gpgymnastics.com (Sara Woodlands)
Executive Director: edirector@gpgymnastics.com (Cassie Bigelow)
Board: board@gpgymnastics.com



Policies

Injuries

Although Grande Prairie Gymnastics provides an extremely safe training environment, injuries may still occur. Every athlete has sport-related accident insurance through their Alberta Gymnastic Federation membership.

In the case of a very light and simple injury, the coaches may prescribe a time-out before resuming training. If a more serious injury happens during a practice session, the coaches will call the parent or guardian at home or work to inform them and arrange transportation. For administrative purposes, a written report will be completed of the incidents leading to the injury and a description of the perceived nature of the injury. The coach will provide a verbal report to the parent or guardian, and the parent or guardian will be required to sign the written report. In this instance, the coach may request that the parent or guardian contact a doctor within 24-48 hours of the injury to get a professional assessment and seek advice regarding appropriate treatment.

For your child's safety, before the return of an athlete that has been subject to modified training or time off for ANY reason, we require that you provide a medical note 100% clearing your child to return to the program, stating the date of your child's expected return to full-time practice. During injury recovery, if possible, the athlete should continue to attend practice in whichever capacity they can.

If an injury occurs and the doctor has been seen, please discuss the injury and the doctor's recommendations with your coach. The coach will then come up with a modified training plan to accommodate the injury. The athlete must continue to condition where possible, and stretch during this time, as well as work on any skills or choreography they are allowed to do.

Fees will not be prorated for injuries as athletes are expected to continue attending training. If an injury is extensive beyond the norm, please talk to your coach to work out specific training adjustments that need to be made.



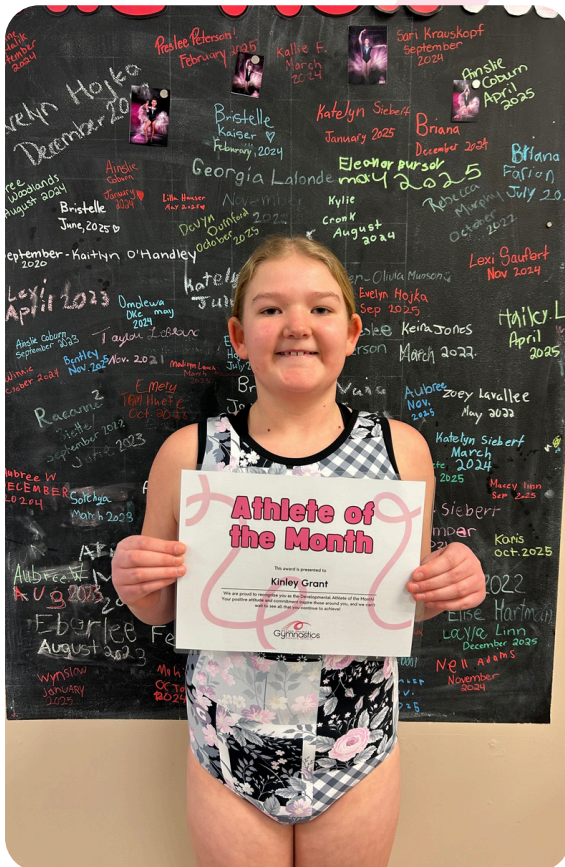
Policies

Refund Policy

If Grande Prairie Gymnastics cancels your class due to enrolment or scheduling issues, you will receive a full refund with no additional administrative fees.

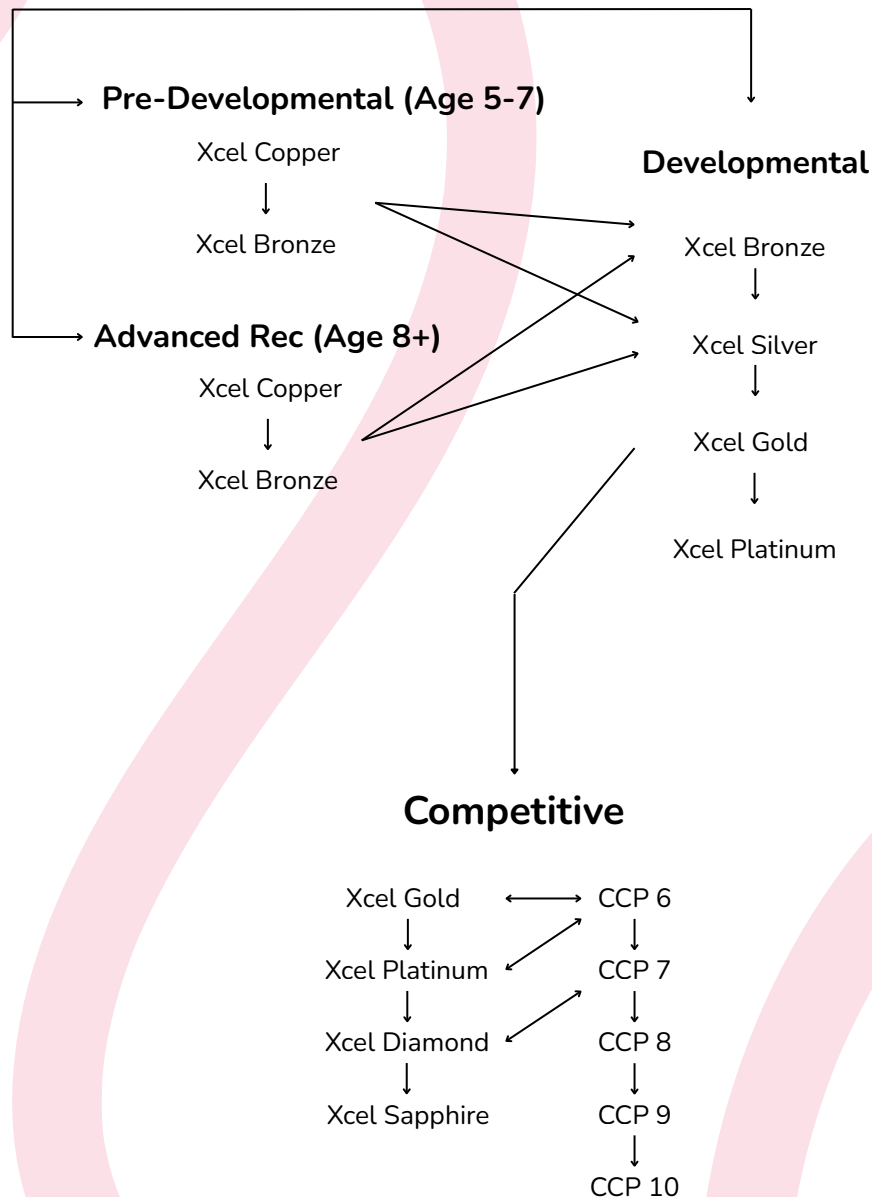
If withdrawing for any reason after the start of the season, one month's written notice is required, and only fees for the months after withdrawing will be cancelled. If you are currently in a month that has been paid, no partial refunds will be given for that month, and the next month will be considered the full one month's notice.

If paid in full, a prorated refund based on the above policy (less the Alberta Gymnastics Federation Fee) will be given when written notice of cancellation is received.



Women's Artistic Gymnastics

Program placement is offered to athletes who successfully meet evaluation standards.



Placement between Advanced Rec, Pre-Developmental, Developmental, and Competitive programs are determined at the discretion of the WAG coaching staff. Placement and level is for the entirety of the season.