

IDEAS ON HOW TO RUN A GYMNASTICS PROGRAM

By Steve Kafka

I. Fill the gym, motivate, be organized!

A. FILL THE GYM WITH ATHLETES – must have 20 frosh each year

- 1. Personal letter to each boy on each level at start of season**
- 2. Bulletin board, display case in the school hallway**
- 3. Morning announcements**
- 4. Posters all over school, locker room, hall, cafeteria**
- 5. 8th grade visitation night, show video, get names of boys**
- 6. Demonstrations- boy scouts, grade school, junior high, parents night**
- 7. Ask girl gymnasts for freshman boy's names – send a letter**
- 8. Talk to kid in class, hallway, lunch – you look like you could be a good gymn.**
- 9. Each of your gymnasts must bring in a new kid**
- 10. Give reward to gymnast who brings in an athlete and he lasts a week**
- 11. Age group or park district program**
- 12. PE program–start one, easy(pull ups, dips, headstands, rolls), video, 2 days**
- 13. As soon as new guy enters, help him, vault board, front flip, handspring over a mat, tell him he could be good, you will teach him everything**
- 14. Put float in parade- let town see you have a gymnastics program, publicity**

II. MOTIVATION

A. What do you have to offer to make kids want to participate?

- 1. Toys in the gym, p. bar blocks, horse bucket, ring machine, ring rocker, strap bar, bungi cord for ring's, tumble trac, foam pit (made one at GE)**
- 2. Give motivational speech everyday – why we are here**
- 3. Record board – school records on every event, every level**
- 4. Poster board to record everyone's scores at each meet plus event score**
- 5. Post written expectations for each event ex. Fx-frosh flip flop back, soph – layout back, jr. – full twist, sr. – double full**
- 6. Contests and games – handstand hold, handstand walk, headstand, L, centipede, four person push ups,**
- 7. Horse – add on circle contest , everyone does one, then 2, then 3**
- 8. Have to hold 5 second L to leave at end of practice or more cal**
- 9. Candy day – piece of candy for new trick, hit routine, etc.**
- 10. Announce each day at end of practice person who has learned a new trick**
- 11. Routines for exercises–Jim must hit high bar or whole team does 20 situps each boy on varsity will have designated routines and exercise**
- 12. If stick dismount send team home**
- 13. Team clap, team cheer, haircuts, team identity- feel special, part of group**
- 14. Weekly awards – courage, determination, extra effort, desire, strength**
- 15. Circle board – 5 circles, 10 etc., put name under when I see them do it**
- 16. Post how to score a gymnastics routine**
- 17. Parents night – have practice at night and bring parent, give parents all info you want, then let them watch son practice**
- 18. Parent boosters – t-shirts, awards banquet, hospitality rooms, signs**

19. End of season program – school records, team members names, team history, newspaper articles, just like a yearbook – 20 pages
 20. Nick names – goofy, bambi, muscles, flex, Jiffy, Mr. Blue
 21. Posted team and individual goals in the gym
 22. Watch horse sets, if they hit, I do push ups, if they miss, team does push ups, horseman doesn't do the exercise
 23. Sock routines – throw socks at horseman while doing routine
 24. Pictures of gymnasts doing tricks in the gym
 25. Hand out motivational articles and sayings – preparation, confidence, etc.
 26. Don't issue warm up until they have learned a trick you want them to learn
 27. Posters in the hallway for each home meet and announcement
 28. Wear tuxes to school the day before the state meet. Make deal with tuxedo rental to pass out coupons for prom tuxes.
 29. Program for home meets, athletes names, records, high scores this year, how to get team score, etc.
 30. Make home meet interesting – announce scores, 1st place finishes, competitor's names, who's on what event
 - a. be aware that parent's and AD's are watching
 31. Post team rules in the gym
 32. Post proper behavior for meets in the gym
 33. Post schedule and calendar of work out times, dates
- B. Saturday practice – usually not a good practice day**
1. Show gymnastics video's, especially of your old team who has made state and show them, they can do same thing
 2. Do large numbers of repetitions, circles, swing handstands, crosses, etc.
 3. Team games and contests, circuit training
- C. Trick contest**
1. Divide whole team into two teams, if they learn an A move = 1 point, a B move = 2 points, C move = 3 points, a requirement adds another point, keep track on poster board all learned skills, reward individual winners with a prize and award team winner with pizza, kids that don't learn anything do extra cal

III. ORGANIZATION – have a plan!

- A. Post on wall where everyone will go at all times in the gym. , Frosh to horse , Soph to floor, varsity – AA to h. bar, etc. Keep to time schedule.**
1. All around 3 events a day, add horse circles on non horse day
 2. 40 – 45 minutes each event
 3. 15 minutes of aerobic exercise and strength at beginning of practice
 4. 30 minutes of stretching and strength at the end
 5. If you have 5 gymnasts on an event and you stay at the event for 45 min., each gymnast has 9 min. on the event. In 9 minutes you may get the athlete on the event 6-10 times, since the all around man only goes to the event every other day, you may only get 30 touches a week, if you have meets it is even less, if you are not organized and waste time your gymnast will be unprepared for the next meet.

- B. Know exactly what you want them to work on each day.**
 - 1. Work out sheets – 10 round off, 10 handspring, 10 handstands, etc.**
 - a. Have them mark down skills done. Ex. 100 circles**
 - b. Make it different each day if you can**
 - c. Kids don't know what work out means, must write down all the things you want them to do**
- C. Have a seasonal plan**
 - 1. Know what you want each athlete to learn**
 - 2. When will you add the new skills**
 - 3. What meets to prepare for, which one's for new tricks, good routines**
 - 4. Beginning of season- easy routine, hard cal, repetition**
 - Middle of season – tricks, easy routine**
 - End of season – add new skills , routines, repetition, pressure routines**
- D. Goals**
 - 1. Post individual and team goals in the gym and when you want them accomplished – gymnast must know what you want him to learn and do.**
 - Short term and long term goals that are attainable and measureable.**