

# **Invercargill Gymnastic Club**



## **Women's Artistic Gymnastics Competitive Guide**

**Pre-comp to STEP 3**

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## **1. Introduction**

Welcome to the Invercargill Gymnastic Club (IGC) – WAG Steps 1-3 Competitive programme.

Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) consists of four apparatus – floor, uneven bars, balance beam, and vault. Your gymnast will learn skills and routines on these apparatus, with particular focus on strength, flexibility, artistry, and acrobatic skills. Gymnastics is renowned for developing diligence, focus and perseverance.

This guide contains most of the information necessary for you and your gymnast to successfully take part in the Women's Artistic Gymnastics programmes at IGC.

IGC = INVERCARGILL GYMNASTIC CLUB

WAG = WOMENS ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

STEP = STRIVING TOWARDS EXCELLENCE in PERFORMANCE

## **2. Training**

Please ensure that your gymnast is at the gym facility ready to begin classes, five minutes prior to start time (no more than 15 minutes early please as we can't guarantee a coach will be there to supervise them). Gymnasts are to wait for their coach at the side of the gym until called.

If your child is going to be arriving late or absent from training, please contact their coach to let them know.

WAG STEPs 1-3 train for 40 weeks each year, following the school terms. As a rough guide, the hours of training per week for each level are:

- Pre-Comp – 1 day per week
- Step 1 – 1 day per week
- Step 2 – 2 days per week
- Step 3 – 2/3 days per week

As they progress throughout the year, the amount of training hours may increase. Holiday training sessions may also be offered (depending on coach availability).

Training generally consists of:

- Warm up
- Stretches
- Time on apparatus
- Stretches
- Warm down

Warm ups vary from group to group and coach to coach, depending on the skill and development level for each individual group. They also depend on the time of year. Leading into competitions, there will be more focused drills and repetition of routines, with more relaxed games at other times, or as a reward after competitions.

Conditioning is an extremely important part of gymnastic training. This includes fitness, strength, and flexibility training. IGC coaches are trained in conditioning and flexibility training - proper, regular conditioning ensures the gymnast has the physical ability to support moves required of them now and in the future. At times it will be hard, tiring, and sore (especially for splits / flexibility training).

All gymnasts are expected to put in their best effort, and train as if they are competing at all times. Competitive GymSports are not just physically demanding, they can also be psychologically challenging. We recommend you encourage your child to talk to their coach if they have concerns, as this builds trust and understanding which is essential for the future. It is important that during training the gymnasts listen to their coaches and communicate with them. At IGC we have a Code of Conduct for Members / Athletes which sets out our expectations in regards to respect and responsibilities (see Appendix).

Competitive gymnastics is a highly disciplined sport, but with support and encouragement your child will end up loving it all.

### **3. Training Attire**

When training, gymnasts must wear appropriate form fitting clothing such as a training leotard (not the competition leotard) or fitting shorts/t-shirt. Many gymnasts also wear gym shorts over their leotards, or tights underneath when training (especially in the winter).

Gymnasts are allowed to wear thermals/polyprops during the colder months, but please ensure these are tight fitting for health and safety. Any loose fitted clothes will be asked to be taken off for safety reasons.

Similarly, no zips, buckles, buttons, or jewellery. These can be dangerous to both gymnast and coach, or damage equipment. Please ensure hair is tied back for each session.

Second hand leotards are for sale through the club – please ask your coach, or contact the administration officer, if you want more information on these. There is also a Facebook group called '*Gymnastics Leotards Buy and Sell – New Zealand*' which is a great place to buy second-hand training leotards.

#### **4. Snacks**

Always bring your own named, full drink bottle. If your child is involved in the longer training sessions, they will need to bring something quick to eat and full of energy, to snack on at the halfway break during these sessions.

Gymnasts are encouraged to eat afternoon tea on the way to gym so they have fuel for training. Gymnasts training for 3+ hours will have a snack during training and should have a healthy snack prepared. The coach will let the group know whether they will be given a quick couple of minutes between every apparatus to have a snack, or given a small mini break in the middle of training. Please ensure that all snacks are bite sized snacks that will give the gymnasts energy for training, rather than a full meal or more sugary snacks. Fruit, muesli bars, crackers and veggies such as carrot sticks are the ideal snacks for training.

#### **5. Safety and Rules**

Please refer to the Member / Athletes Code of Conduct, and the Parent / Spectators Code of Conduct (Appendix). These are also displayed at the gym, available on request, or on the IGC website.

We expect these to be obeyed at all times, no exceptions.

Please be aware that children not in classes must not play on the equipment, this is a safety hazard and children will be asked to move, even off the edge of the floor. In addition, the gymnasts must wait off the floor until called by their coach to start a session.

There is an IGC Information Folder containing all club policies and other information, available to be viewed in the IGC office, and on the IGC website.

#### **6. Injuries / Sickness**

If your child has an injury, please talk to your coach and keep them up to date with prognosis, and health professionals' advice. The coach will ensure that training complements any prescribed rehab programmes, plus we can still do other things to ensure your child can join in.

It is easier to return after an injury if you've kept in touch, both physically and psychologically, and all rehabilitation must include continuing to attend training and performing other drills or conditioning on uninjured parts of the body.

If a serious injury occurs at gym (i.e. more than a minor fall, bump or bruise), you will be advised of what happened and what action the coaches took. There is always a first aid trained coach present when classes are underway. If the injury is very serious, and you are not at the gym, you will be contacted, so please ensure you advise the Administration Officer if your details change.

If your gymnast is feeling sick, we ask that they stay home until they are feeling better.

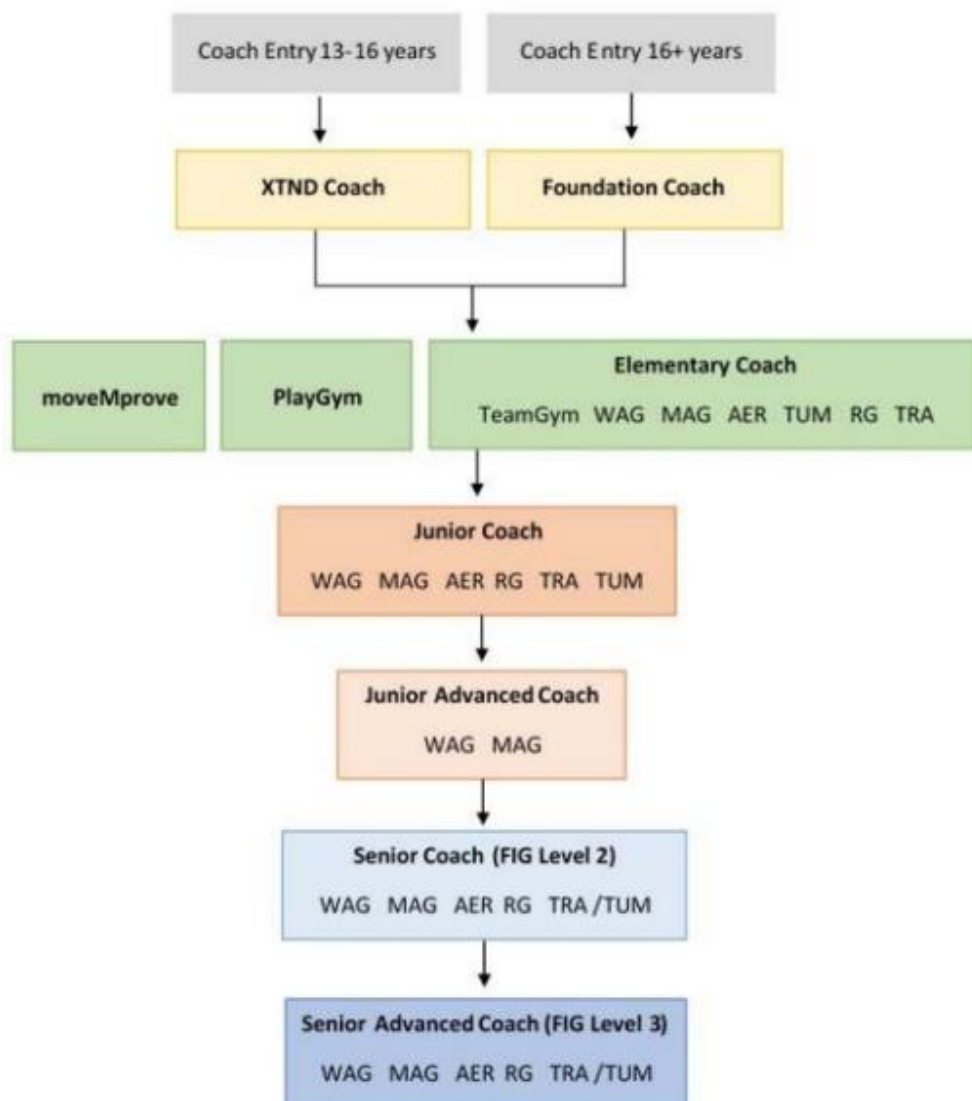
## 7. IGC Coaches

As your gymnast moves through the STEPs framework, they may have different coaches at each level. Your coach will decide on their preferred form of communication and let you know – this is often through Facebook or messenger groups. They usually be the coach for each training and competition, so you and your gymnast will get to know them very well throughout the year.

All of our coaches have some gymnastics and/or teaching background, with many of them competing in gymnastics until a very high level. Some are also judges. All have various coaching and judging qualifications or are working towards completing their qualifications.

You will notice that most of our coaches are young, many still at high school. This is because Artistic Gymnastics is a very much a youth sport, and many artistic gymnasts stop competing in their teens, but remain with the sport as coaches. We have a Junior Coach Coordinator who oversees these coaches and can be contacted through the administrator if you have any questions or concerns.

Gymnastics NZ Coach Education Pathway



## 8. Understanding Competitive Gymnastics

The competitive STEP programme at IGC is an invitation-only programme. Gymnasts will be selected to enter the programme through their current classes and trial days which will be advertised during the year as required. In competitive gymnastics, gymnasts will learn;

- Skills and routines for their current level
- Upgraded skills for the following STEP
- Physical preparation and stretching
- Overcoming fears and barriers
- Time management and goal setting
- Teamwork, problem solving, and supporting others

The Junior STEPs (1-3) compete compulsory routines and skills. The Intermediate STEPs (4-6) compete optional routines with mostly compulsory skills. The Senior STEPs (7+) have optional routines and can build their routines around their strengths. Gymnasts from STEP 1-8 compete in age divisions (Unders and Overs), so they are only competing against other gymnasts in a similar age group.

STEP	1st Age Division	2nd Age Division
1	up to 8	9+
2	up to 9	10+
3	up to 10	11+
4	up to 11	12+
5	up to 12	13+
6	up to 13	14+
7	up to 13	14+
8	up to 14	15+
9	No age divisions	
10	No age divisions	
<b>International</b>		
Junior	up to 15	
Senior	16+	

## 9. Competition Uniforms

All gymnasts must wear competition attire and club tracksuits when competing.

Each STEP group wears matching leotards which are available to borrow or purchase from the club (new or second hand). There is a Uniform Coordinator who will be in touch regarding sizing and ordering if necessary. These can be paid off in instalments if the initial outlay is a concern.

Gymnastics NZ have additional requirements for attending competitions:

- Hand grips, bandages and wrists wraps are permitted. They must be securely fastened, in good repair and should not detract from the aesthetics of the performance. Bandages must be beige, or skin coloured where practicable
- Loose jewellery (bracelets or necklaces) must not be worn, but small stud-type earrings are permitted
- Hair must be tidy, off the face, and securely fastened
- As of 2020, Gymnastics NZ decided that athletes may individually choose to wear fitted shorts,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length, or full length leg coverings of a single colour (black or main colour of the club). No visible branding is permitted

## **10. Competitions**

Competition season usually begins around May. Gymnasts will have the opportunity to travel to competitions out of town, if the dates are complementary to our own club competitions and if the coach believes the gymnasts are 'ready' to compete. At the junior levels, gymnasts will be invited to approximately 4-5 competitions, usually in the lower half of the South Island. Please note – if your club fees are not up to date, the gymnast will not be allowed to enter.

There is an entry fee for each competition, this will be invoiced separately and varies depending on the club/competition. If you travel out of town to compete, coach costs for transport & accommodation will be split between the families attending, and this will be invoiced after the competition, along with any judge fees incurred.

Gymnasts will compete alongside other gymnasts in the same STEP, both from their own club and other clubs. This is the individual competition in which there are placings on each apparatus and an 'All-Around' total score. Gymnasts scores may also count towards the team competition – when 3-4 gymnasts from a club form a team. This is not a separate competition, rather it is just an accumulation of a team's top 3 scores on each apparatus for a team total.

### Understanding the Scoring System

A gymnast is given two scores at a competition - the D score and the E score. At the Junior WAG level their compulsory routines are all out of 15.0.

#### *D Score (difficulty) – out of 5.0*

In STEP 1-6 the gymnasts have compulsory routines and elements that they need to try and achieve within their routines. Each of these elements has criteria that it needs to meet for that skill to be counted. For example, it might be holding a skill for 2 seconds, getting a cast to a certain height on bar, or leaps showing a certain degree of split. Each of these elements add up to a 5.0 D score. For every element that does not meet the requirement, points are deducted.



*E score (execution) – out of 10*

This is judged based on how well the gymnasts perform their routines. Every bent knee, flexed foot, wrong shape will result in deductions which can range from 0.1-1.0.

If you need more information on your child's score, please ask their coach, who will be able to advise you. You may not question the judges.

## 11. Ribbon Reward Scheme

From competing, gymnasts can earn coloured ribbons depending on their scores. This is a great personal reward system, as it rewards improvement between competitions. If their mark improves significantly on an apparatus, they will get a ribbon, regardless of their competition placing i.e. in their first competition, the gymnast will be awarded a ribbon for each apparatus, colour dependent on the score they achieved. Thereafter, the gymnast will be awarded additional ribbons if their score on an apparatus improves to a higher score group. A gymnast is not awarded a ribbon if their score decreases from their personal best.

Ribbon Colour	STEPS 1 to 6
Gold	14.000
Red	13.000
Blue	12.000
Green	<12.000

## 12. Progression through the STEPs Programme

It is recommended gymnasts enter at pre-comp level or STEP 1 and progress at their own pace up through the STEPs. Before progressing, the gymnast must be physically, mentally and emotionally ready to handle the demands of the training and skills required in the next STEP.

The club and/or coach is responsible for ensuring a gymnast is adequately prepared for the STEP in which she is competing. As each STEP builds upon the foundation of skills and requirements of the previous STEP, the gymnast must have achieved the minimum score before considering the readiness factors for the next STEP.

This minimum score must have been achieved on two separate occasions. STEPs 1 to 6, both occasions may be from the gymnast's home province. STEPs 7 to 10, one of these is required to be outside the gymnasts' home province.

Progression	
STEPS 1 to 4	Minimum 50.000 Distinction 56.000
STEPS 5 to 6	Minimum 50.000 Distinction 56.000
STEP 7	43.000
STEPS 8 to 10	43.000
Junior International	
Senior International	

Factors which must be considered before allowing a gymnast to progress include, but are not limited to:

Factor	Comment
Physical preparation	Does the gymnast have the strength, flexibility and other physical preparation required for the next STEP, including solid foundation of skill development?
Skill readiness	Can the gymnast perform consistently in training, all the elements and requirements to compete the STEP?
Psychological readiness	Is the gymnast ready to handle the psychological demands of the training and requirements for the next STEP?
Stage of development	Regardless of physical preparation and skill level, is the next STEP appropriate given the gymnast's childhood stage of development and growth?
Outside factors	Is the next STEP appropriate given the gymnast's obligations, demands, desires and limitations beyond gymnastics? ( <i>Family, education, work, extra-curricular, financial etc</i> )

Once all factors have been considered, and the prerequisite of a minimum score in the previous STEP has been fulfilled, the gymnast may move to the next STEP, but is not required to do so.

In exceptional circumstances, the decision may be made to progress a gymnast who has not completed the previous STEP. This may be due to the gymnast achieving a Distinction score (56.00 or higher), or a coach believing they meet the readiness factors and will succeed at the next STEP.

Ultimately, progression to the next STEP is at the Coach's discretion and they have final say.

### **13. Parent Expectations**

While our focus is on coaching the athletes, your support is vital to creating a positive training experience for the gymnasts.

We do ask that parents play a supporting role in their child's gymnastics by celebrating their successes with them and encouraging them to work hard. This extends to being encouraging towards all gymnasts, both at training and competitions. Negative behaviours, remarks, or conversations are not beneficial to anybody and can ruin a child or parents experience in the sport.

While we encourage gymnasts to work on strength and flexibility, we do strongly discourage parents teaching skills at home. Gymnastics skills are very complex and should only be taught with the safety of the gym equipment, coaches and correct techniques.

As a parent, please keep communication open with your child's coach. If something is worrying you, or you have any questions regarding their training, it is important you can recognise this and bring it to our attention. We do our best to make training a positive experience, and your support and positivity is key to this.

Competitions are a very big fundraiser for our club, and without the support of parent volunteers, these cannot be run successfully. Nearly all of the jobs we require volunteers for can be done with little, or no, gymnastics knowledge. All jobs will be explained before you start. You could help with setting up and packing down equipment, running the canteen, or recording scores. Ideally you should volunteer to record scores for a different session so that you can still watch your own child compete.

#### **14. Fundraisers and Executive Committee**

We are always looking for members to join our Executive Committee, so please consider putting your name forward to the Administration Officer who will pass on your details to a committee representative to get in contact.

The Executive Committee is responsible for day to day organisation and financial running of Invercargill Gymnastic Club, and meet during the third week of every month.

We hold occasional fundraisers throughout the year, usually to fund new equipment for the gym. Support for these fundraisers may be providing donations for raffles, selling tickets or fundraising items, or responding to 'Requests for Volunteers' which are emailed out to all Members, so please let us know when and where you can help.

#### **15. Administration**

Administration Officer : Jo Miller

Gym Facility : 22 Conway Crescent, Invercargill, 9812

Phone : 03 217 2829      Email : [info@invercargillgym.com](mailto:info@invercargillgym.com)

If you have any issues with enrolments etc, our Administration Officer is available to assist you. Her hours are 2 - 5pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours, please feel free to email.

**Fees/Money:** Our preferred method of fee payment is via internet banking. Please ensure that you include a clear reference, preferably the child's family name, so that all money can be cross referenced to your account.

For cash or cheque payments, please ensure the payment is securely enclosed within an envelope, clearly named, and placed in the fees box at the gym facility or handed in to our Administration Officer. If you have any queries or concerns about fees or finances, please discuss these with our Administration Officer as detailed above.

## **16. Club Contacts**

The main points of contact at the IGC will be your child's coach or the Administration Officer, predominantly via email unless requested otherwise.

### **Child Safety Officer**

IGC also have a nominated Child Safeguarding Representative / Officer who can be contacted for any concerns relating to gymnast wellbeing and safety.

Jenny Scott –

Phone : 0272271785

Email: [jennys@limehills.school.nz](mailto:jennys@limehills.school.nz)

Our full Safeguarding Policy is available to download from our website:

<https://invercargillgym.com/about-us/policies/>

*We hope this guide has given you enough of an overview to further understand and enjoy your child's involvement in competitive GymSports, and to open the lines of communication between us.*

*Thank you for your support,*

*The IGC Executive Committee and IGC Coaching Team*

# Invercargill Gymnastic Club Inc.

## - Code of Conduct -

## Members/Athletes



Invercargill Gymnastic Club (IGC) is fully committed to **safeguarding** and **promoting** the **wellbeing** of all its members. The club believes that it is important that members, coaches, officials, administrators, parents and spectators associated with the club should, at all times, show **respect** and **understanding** for the **safety** and **welfare** of others. Therefore, all members and athletes associated with the Invercargill Gymnastic Club should comply with this Code of Conduct.

### DESIREABLE BEHAVIOUR:

- Control your temper.
- Work equally hard for yourself and for your team.
- Always warm up and stretch properly to avoid injury.
- Be a good sport. Acknowledge all good routines and abilities and treat all athletes as you would like to be treated.
- All members must respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Be prepared to lose sometimes. Be a fair winner and good loser.
- Do gymnastics for “the fun of it” and not just to please parents and coaches.

### OFFICIALS/RULES/COACHES:

- Play by the rules.
- Never argue with an official or question a judge. If you have any queries discuss with your coach at an appropriate time.
- Remember to discuss with or forewarn your coach of absences, or ring and leave a phone message at the club.
- Arrive at the gym club ready to begin training on time, and report to your coach as you arrive.
- Do not begin training unless instructed to do so by your coach.
- During the session, you must not leave without advising your coach.
- At the end of the session you must leave the gymnasium and not linger on equipment.
- Co-operate with your coach, teammates and other athletes. Without them there would be no training or competitions.

### EQUIPMENT:

- Do not use equipment that does not have appropriate safety mats or equipment.
- Do not adjust equipment unless under supervision/instruction of a coach/teacher.
- Do not use equipment that is not designed or intended for your session.
- WALK between equipment and stations unless told to run.
- Always check before crossing the vault strip, or walk around.
- Replace equipment to the correct area upon completion of your class.
- Ensure the equipment room is left tidy.

### ATTIRE:

- Wear appropriate clothing (no buckles, belts or buttons, loose clothing or zips on any bars), have hair tied up/tidy and bring water to each training session. No jewellery (except 1 pair of studs).
- At competitions, wear the appropriate uniform, have hair tidy and arrive early as advised.

### GYMNASIUM:

- The kitchen, office and area behind the pit are out of bounds.
- Do not use glasses or cups out of the kitchen.
- The equipment room/alcove may only be accessed by coaches, or at the coaches' direction.
- Use the changing room to store drink bottles and clothing.
- No shoes, food or drinks/bottles on the floor.
- Please use rubbish bins provided and advise coach if full.

# Invercargill Gymnastic Club Inc.

## - Code of Conduct -

### Parents/Spectators



Invercargill Gymnastic Club (IGC) is fully committed to **safeguarding** and **promoting** the **wellbeing** of all its members. The club believes that it is important that members, coaches, officials, administrators, parents and spectators associated with the club should, at all times, show **respect** and **understanding** for the **safety** and **welfare** of others. Therefore, all parents and spectators associated with the IGC should comply with this Code of Conduct.

#### DESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR:

- Ensure that you and your child are aware of and adhere to the responsibilities as per the **Members/Athletes and Parents/Spectators Codes of Conduct**.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others, regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Show respect for your athlete's competitors.
- Encourage children to participate if they are interested.
- Remember children are involved in sport for their enjoyment, not yours.
- Applaud and congratulate all athletes regardless of the outcome.
- Focus on participation and increasing skills.
- Demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility and appropriate social behaviour
- Don't use foul language, or harass athletes, coaches or officials.
- Be positive. Never ridicule or yell at your child or other children for making mistakes or losing a competition..
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities and avoid use of derogatory language based on gender, race or impairment.
- Encourage and guide athletes to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.
- Please participate fully by offering to assist with events, fundraising, the Executive and competitions whenever possible.

#### OFFICIALS/RULES/COACHES:

- Accept decisions of judges as being fair and called to the best of their ability. Do not raise issues of disagreement publicly.
- Encourage your child to learn the rules and participate within them.
- Remember to discuss or forewarn your coach of absences, or ring and leave a phone message at the club.
- Athletes must arrive at the club ready to begin training on time, and report to their coach as they arrive.

#### EQUIPMENT:

- Only enrolled Members are to use the equipment and only during their session times.
- Siblings must NOT use the equipment, floor, or the pit, as there is a high risk of injury to them and the gymnasts.
- Supervise your children at all times.
- Please check the lost property regularly.
- Ensure your child has appropriate attire, drink bottle and hair is tied up for each training session.
- Share the responsibility of tidying the gymnasium after each session and after competitions.
- Replace equipment to the correct area upon completion of your class.
- Ensure the equipment room is left tidy.