

# LAKEVILLE SPARKS GYMNASTICS



Team Handbook  
2025-2026

# *Welcome to the team!*

Welcome to the Lakeville Sparks team! This is the competitive team for the Lakeville Youth Gymnastics Association (LYGA). The team competes through the Midwest Amateur Gymnastics Association. This program is for youth gymnasts to compete using the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) gymnastics rulebook. The goal of this competitive program is to prepare gymnasts for a successful high school gymnastics career by creating a strong foundation of basic skills. While being a part of this competitive program, your daughter will learn many life skills that can be applied beyond the gym, including:

- Goal setting
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Discipline
- Toughness
- Determination
- Respect
- Dedication
- Friendship
- Self-confidence
- Work ethic
- Overcoming fears
- Persistence

# *Coaches*

## **Anna Yunker**

Anna has been involved in gymnastics for most of her life. She competed for Lakeville High School gymnastics from 1998-2003, winning five state team championships. From 2004-2009 Anna was an assistant coach at Lakeville North and South High Schools, working primarily on uneven bars. Anna joined the Lakeville Youth Gymnastics coaching staff in 2012. Anna graduated from the University of Minnesota in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance, Human Resources and Industrial Relations, and Insurance and Risk Management. In 2011 Anna graduated from Hamline University School of Law. She currently works as an associate attorney at Everett & Vanderwiel, PLLP, where she practices municipal law, representing Minnesota cities and counties in civil litigation. Anna and Sammy both help run the LYGA.

*Favorite Event:*

Compete: Vault

Coach: Bars

## **Sammy Cosgriff**

Sammy has been involved with gymnastics for the majority of her life, including competing in the USAG program for 2 years and 6 years in MSHSL. After college, she rejoined gymnastics by joining the Lakeville Youth Gymnastics Association staff in 2016. Sammy graduated from the University of Minnesota in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics. She currently works as a legal assistant with the State of Minnesota / Office of Administrative Hearings.

*Favorite Event:*

Compete: Bars

Coach: Floor

# *Communication*

Emails will be sent out with all team information as needed; please make sure that we have the correct email address(es) on record. Competition information will be sent out as soon as the coaches receive it. Competition information generally is not sent out until one to two weeks before a meet. If you have questions or concerns, please bring them to our attention as soon as possible. We are happy to answer your questions or explain something to you. We also really appreciate feedback!

Communications will also be sent out via a GroupMe group chat. Links to that will be sent separately to families.

If you have information that may help us better coach your daughter, please do not hesitate to talk to us. Let us know if she has an injury or if she's mentioned that something hurts. That will allow us to tailor her workouts to avoid injury or minimize discomfort. Let us know if your daughter is frustrated, having a hard time with a skill, or feeling burnt out. We can help!

*Email:* [Lakevillegymbooster@gmail.com](mailto:Lakevillegymbooster@gmail.com)

*Sammy's Phone:* 952-217-6900

(Please only use this if it is an **emergency** or you need to contact a coach during practice). We aim to reply to emails within 24 to 48 hours.

## *Parent Expectations*

1. Be supportive of your gymnast! Gymnastics is hard and often can be very frustrating. The best thing you can do is be supportive. Leave the coaching for the coaches. In the words of Gail Sacramone (2008 Olympian Alicia Sacramone's mother): "Remember, it's their dream... not yours."
2. Volunteer! Parents run LGBC. It is crucial that every family volunteers in some way to help keep the program running smoothly. There will be a sign up for volunteer positions for this coming season.
3. No flash photography at meets! Flash photography is distracting to gymnasts and can be dangerous for a gymnast in the middle of a skill. Flash photography can also result in a large team score deduction or disqualification of the team at a competition.
4. Please have your child arrive to practice on time. We start warm up for practice promptly at 6:00pm on weekdays and 12:00pm on Saturdays, as soon as the High School team has left the gym. If your gymnast is not at practice on time they will miss valuable instruction time.
5. Expose your child to gymnastics! Encourage her to watch high school, collegiate, or elite level meets. These meets are not only fun to watch, they can increase your athlete's motivation, and can teach her a lot of valuable information about the sport. USA Gymnastics has its own YouTube channel with videos of major elite meets and routines throughout the last several years. The NCAA gymnastics season starts in January and many of the meets are televised on the SEC Network and Big Ten Network—these are great opportunities to watch some amazing gymnastics! The University of Minnesota has a women's gymnastics team, and each team hosts a number of meets each year at the Sports Pavilion on the U of M campus.

## *Gymnast Expectations in the Gym*

1. You are expected to work hard and try your best EVERYDAY!
2. Bring a water bottle and running shoes to practice everyday.
3. Be supportive of all of your teammates. It does not matter if you are going to be going to LNHS or LSHS in the future, you're still teammates!
4. Be honest and respectful to coaches, teammates, and yourself. Cheating on a conditioning or workout assignment is one of the biggest forms of disrespect to coaches, teammates, and yourself.
5. Clean up after yourself. Remember we share this gym with the LNHS gymnastics team. Put mats back where you found them. Bring your water bottle, shoes, and clothes home every night.
6. Listen carefully and try to remember corrections your coaches give you. We cannot help you improve your skills if we are giving the same correction on every turn. Ask questions if you need help or don't understand. We're here to help you succeed!

# *Discipline*

It is our hope that we never or will rarely have to use disciplinary actions, but in case it is needed, below is a list of potential disciplinary actions. This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list. Disciplinary issues such as, cheating, talking back, bullying, lying, etc., may result in:

1. The gymnast may have to start the assignment over again.
2. The gymnast may have to forgo rotating to the next event, and repeat the workout at the current event.
3. The gymnast may be asked to leave the event for the day.
4. The gymnast may be asked to take a timeout.
5. The gymnast may be asked to leave practice and go home early.
6. The gymnast may have to have a parent-coach meeting.
7. The gymnast may be removed from a competition.
8. The gymnast may be suspended or removed from the team.

The last three disciplinary tasks listed are used as a last resort when/if other actions have been unsuccessful.

## *Meet Expectations*

1. Cheer for everyone, even if they are not on your team. When everyone cheers for each other, it creates a more supportive and exciting atmosphere.
2. Be respectful of other teams, coaches, and judges.
3. Be aware of where you are walking. Some gyms are very small, be sure you are not walking in front of another competitor or a judge.
4. Step outside the gym for a minute or two if you're feeling really frustrated or disappointed. Gymnastics is a very subjective sport, and we cannot control the scores that judges give. Remember you are in control of two things: how you perform and how you react to the score. Also remember that your reactions reflect on you, your teammates, your coaches, and your parents. If you're feeling upset, it's okay to step outside the gym for a minute until you feel better.
5. Stay positive. It is okay to make a mistake at a meet, everyone does. It is also okay to be disappointed about a mistake, but keeping a positive attitude is important because you will likely have more routines to compete before the competition is over. We understand if you get upset during a meet, but it's best to try and put it behind you to continue supporting your teammates and competing.
6. Have good sportsmanship. You are not always going to get a medal, and that's OKAY! We want gymnastics meets to be more about the experience than what place you get in a meet. You are more than a ranking or a medal!
7. Bring a water bottle and a healthy snack with you to meets. NO unhealthy food is allowed during the meets. Healthy food gives you the proper energy and nutrition to give your best performances. Most meets last for several hours, so you'll want to have some snacks with you in case you get hungry.
8. Get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy breakfast before the meet, it will help you perform better!

# *Competition Information*

## **Teams**

The Association sets a limit of having no more than ten gymnasts per team. Due to this rule we must split into multiple teams during competitions. It is likely that one team will compete in one division, and the other team will compete in another division. Gymnasts will be coached and treated the same regardless of the team they are on. The gymnasts will practice, stretch, warm-up, and compete together; only on paper will they be listed as separate.

Our team name is “Lakeville Sparks.” When we split into teams for competition, they will be listed as “Lakeville Sparks Blaze” and “Lakeville Sparks Fire.”

Before the competition season begins, the coaches will calculate each gymnast’s start value potential on each event. Gymnasts will be placed on their teams based on their cumulative start value across all four events.

## **Floor routines**

### *Compulsory Routines*

In your gymnast’s first year, she will compete a compulsory routine on each event (note: this is a general rule, and there will be exceptions from time to time for gymnasts who are capable of more advanced skills in their first year of competition). Some gymnasts may get a new routine or skills added to an existing compulsory routine throughout the season, if they are ready. A coach will talk with your daughter if this is the case.

Compulsory routines are designed to help a gymnast master crucial basic skills before moving onto more advanced skills. Learning a new routine is hard—compulsory routines allow for multiple gymnasts to practice their routine together and help each other remember it. Many gymnasts compete compulsory routines for more than one year, on more than one event.

There is no additional charge for choreography or music for the compulsory routine.

### Optional Routines

For gymnasts who are ready, they will be taught their own personalized routine. Generally speaking, a gymnast may receive their own individual routines beginning with her second year on the team.

Gymnasts who will be competing a new and individualized floor routine should begin looking for floor music in June. By mid-July, gymnasts getting a new floor routine need to bring two to three music selections to the coaching staff. The coaches will help each gymnast make her final selection. Gymnasts need to give the coaches a complete, final copy of the selected music (without words) by August. This gives the coaches enough time to choreograph and teach the gymnast the routine before the season begins.

Popular places to find floor music are:

- [www.Youtube.com](http://www.Youtube.com)
- [www.jumptwist.com](http://www.jumptwist.com)
- [www.energymusic.com](http://www.energymusic.com)
- [www.gymnasticstracks.com](http://www.gymnasticstracks.com)
- [www.floorexpressmusic.com](http://www.floorexpressmusic.com)

Once your gymnast has her floor music picked out, then she can sign up for a time to have her floor routine choreographed. These sessions usually last about two hours. Gymnasts typically keep their personalized routines for 2-3 years. All the team coaches choreograph floor routines. Based on the style of music, the coaches will decide who will choreograph each routine. The choreography fee for optional routines is \$100. You are also welcome to hire a private choreographer to choreograph your daughter's routine. We just ask that it be someone who has experience choreographing gymnastics floor routines, since there are specific requirements and elements that need to be included.

### **Meets**

In September, the coaches will attend the annual board meeting where they will register the team for competitions. When we register the team for a competition, we will know the weekend that it is on, but we will generally not know the exact location or time until one to two weeks before the meet. The coaches will send out an email in the beginning of the season with the meet dates.

### **Additional team fees**

- Association annual gymnast registration fee
- Meet entry fees
  - We typically compete in 5-6 meets each season
- Meet coaching fees
- Competition Leotard
- Warm up Leotard
- March-in Jacket

### **Other details:**

- March-in pants
  - We require the gymnasts to wear any full-length BLACK yoga/spandex leggings with their team jacket for march-in.
- Team overnight (optional)
- Divisional Meet
  - The Divisional meet is similar to a state meet. Teams are ranked based on the average of the top 3 scores throughout the season. Approximately the top 50% of Association teams in the state will qualify for a Divisional Meet.

### **What to bring to a meet**

- Grips and wristbands
- Water bottle
- Tennis shoes
- March-in jacket
- March-in black capri leggings
- Warm up leotard
- Competition leotard
  - Please keep this in a plastic bag. Sometimes things can get spilled, and no one wants to compete in a wet competition leotard (yes, it has happened before!)
- Hairbrush, hair spray, bobby pins, and extra hair ties.
- Healthy snacks

### **Meet presentation**

- Hair must be tightly pulled back and away from face. If you have long hair, consider putting it in a bun, so that it doesn't get in your way. Remember, it's a deduction to brush your hair out of your face!

- NO nail polish
- NO earrings
- NO glitter
- NO headbands
- Gymnasts are allowed to wear ribbons in their hair, as long as they are secure. It can be distracting (or even a deduction) if they fall out.

## *Competition Requirements*

For a gymnast to compete an event at a competition, she needs to be able to show a coach one full routine on each event at the practice preceding each meet. If a gymnast cannot show a full routine the day before a meet, she will not be allowed to compete that event at the competition the next day. This is for the gymnast's safety. This is also a policy that will follow them throughout their high school gymnastics career. In the event that a gymnast cannot show the coaches a full routine on each event, the coaches will send her parents an email following practice that informs them of the decision to remove that event from their child's competition.

The minimal skills that a gymnast will need to be able to show the coaches the day before a meet in their routine:

### Vault

FHS or higher on a vault level of 110 or above (accommodations of vault height will be made on a case by case basis.)

### Bars

A full routine consisting of at least:

- Pull over
- back hip circle
- squat on
- long hang pull over x2
- back hip circle
- sole circle dismount.

### Beam

A full routine including:

- Back walkover on HB

- Back tuck dismount
- Full turn
- Tuck jump  $\frac{3}{4}$
- Cartwheel
- Handstand
- Pike jump-wolf jump or split jump-wolf jump connection

### Floor

One full routine with all tumbling passes and jump connections made.

## *Gymnast Health*

### **Rips**

No one likes rips, but let's face it, they are a part of gymnastics. Everyone will get a rip at one point or another, especially when they begin to train more advanced skills. Steps can be taken at home to help treat and prevent rips:

1. Trimming calluses or shaving them down using a pumice stone in the shower can help prevent rips.
2. If a gymnast gets a rip she can use an ointment such as Tiger Balm, Neosporin, Hand E Balm, Vitamin E, etc. on the rip at night while they sleep. The gymnast should cover her hand and the ointment with a cotton mitten, sock, or band-aid. This will help keep the moisture in.

### **Grips**

Grips DO NOT prevent rips! They are meant to help a gymnast better grip the bar for more advanced skills. Don't be surprised if your daughter still gets rips from time to time. Under all grips, gymnasts will need to use wristbands. Cotton wristbands are the most popular, but some gymnasts choose to wear neoprene wrist bands as they tend to help prevent wrist rips more than cotton do. Any gymnast that uses grips needs to have a grip bag to store them in. This helps prevent grip mix up with teammates and loss of grips in the gym.

### *Palm Guards*

Any gymnast can use these if they please. They are fairly inexpensive and can be purchased at Step-n-Stretch in Burnsville.

### *Dowel Grips*

Any gymnast who has a consistent kip can use dowel grips. These grips are more expensive (they can cost anywhere from \$35-\$50) a pair. We recommend that gymnasts who get dowel grips, bring them into the gym before stretching out the finger holes or wearing them, so that the coaches can ensure you have the proper size. Once grips have been worn, they cannot be returned or exchanged, so this is very important! A rule of thumb for purchasing dowel grips is that when the grip is laying flat on the hand, the un-stretched out grip should go up to the first knuckle on the middle finger. The grips are made of leather, so they will stretch out after some use. You do not want them to be the perfect size in the beginning, because after some use they will be too big for the gymnast.

## **Injuries**

Inform coaches of all injuries that happen in or out of the gym, no matter how small they might seem. If a minor injury occurs, we can tailor the gymnast's workout to not aggravate it further. If a more serious injury occurs, parents will be called to come pick their gymnast up.

If an injury does occur, please care for it at home. It will help it heal faster. Remember the acronym R.I.C.E.:

R- Rest

I- Ice (20 minutes on/ 40 minutes off)

C- Compression (such as an ace bandage)

E- Elevation (above the level of the heart)

With an ace bandage, always wrap from bottom up, this helps push the swelling up and out of the joint. We do not want to trap it in the joint. If an injury is nagging on and on, the coaches may request that a gymnast goes to a doctor to have the injury looked at. This is a precaution to ensure that a minor injury doesn't turn into a major

injury. If this is the case, we will require that the gymnast bring the coaches a physician's note of athletic clearance.

### ***Recipe for a Gymnast***

*Add iron and steel  
To beauty and grace  
Stir in the will to win  
With a bright smiling face  
Blend in love  
For a Sport  
And a friendship within  
Fold in bruises and bumps  
On the surface of skin  
Mix in soft flowing arms  
And straight pointed toes  
With a twist of the head  
To complete the pose  
Pour in loyalty and dedication  
For the rest of the team  
For the gymnast is striving  
To fulfill  
A dream*

*Lakeville*  
Gymnastics●