



## Gymnastics Meets: What to Expect JO (Compulsory & Optionals) and Xcel

### MEETS

#### Meet Scheduling:

- Coaches will provide general meet schedules; block the entire weekend until you know when your child competes.
- 1-2 weeks in advance of the meet, coaches will give you the exact day/time your child will compete.
- Your child will typically compete on one day during either a morning or afternoon session
- Arrive 30 minutes before the registration/open stretch time
- Expect to spend at least 4 hours at the competition

#### Preparing for the Meet:

- Arrive to the meet dressed in competition leotard and team warm ups
  - Remember: judges may take score deductions if undergarments/sports bras peek through at the edges
  - No jewelry or nail polish is allowed (can also result in deductions, and jewelry is a safety hazard!)
- **Bags:** Midwest does not require purchase of matching bags. I recommend a small bag (the drawstring bags work well) for the following:
  - A bag to carry shoes/socks and warm ups during the competition
  - Flip flops (not required, but if they leave the floor to go to the bathroom during the meet, sometimes flip-flops are a good idea depending on the location!)
  - Extra hair ties
  - Small healthy snack (after the meet while waiting for awards, etc.)
  - Water bottle
  - Gymnastics gear like grips/wristies (for higher levels)
- **Entrance fee:** bring cash. Many meets are moving towards offering credit card, but some are still cash only and it depends on the location if there is an ATM around. There may also be concessions and Shout outs for purchase. Gymnasts get in free (we already paid for them to be there!), but all family/friends will pay an entrance fee.
- **Snacks for yourself:** Some meet locations will have concessions (when it's at the State Fairgrounds typically full concessions are open as well as beer/wine!). Some aren't as great on the food options, so I usually bring snacks/waters for myself.



### Arriving at the Meet:

- Your schedule from your coach will usually give you registration time, march-in/open stretch time, and competition start time. Arrive 30 minutes before the earliest time given.
- Gymnasts can go right down to the gym floor when they see their coach (parents not usually permitted on the gym floor -- you can find seats anywhere in the seating area).
- Sessions run back-to-back throughout the day, so if you are not the first morning session, remember that parents from the earlier session will clear out and you can take their seats at the beginning of your later session.
- Most meets have two “sides” to the floor (multiple sets of equipment). Check at the cashier/registration desk and ask which side Midwest/Level is located and choose your seating area accordingly! The sides are usually marked somewhere (Side A/B, etc.). Sometimes we know this in advance and coaches will communicate.
- Some meets require the gymnasts to register, some don't. Check when arriving.
- **Shout-Outs:** Almost every meet will have an option to purchase a “shout out” or “good luck gram” for your gymnast. This is optional and just something fun to do (an announcer will read your message out loud (e.g., “Good luck today, Sarah! We love you!”) and then it will come with some little treat of some kind (candy, fuzzy socks, a flower, etc.). These are usually \$3-\$10 each. I usually go find that table and do this right when I get there!
- **Meet Gifts:** Most meets will have some type of giveaway for all registered gymnasts (a t-shirt, a pillow case, socks, laminate stickers, etc.). Coaches get these and distribute to the girls after awards.

### The Meet:

- **March-In:** The teams all march in together and then they do “open stretch” as a team before they break into small groups for the events. All of the events are going on at the same time, so it feels like a lot happening all at once!
- Coaches will divide the girls up into smaller groups (usually) for rotations through the events. Look for your gymnast on the floor to see where she will start (bars, beam, floor, or vault).
- Wherever your gymnast starts, she will then rotate through the events in the following order: vault, bars, beam, floor. (e.g., if she starts on beam....she will do beam, floor, vault, and end on bars.)
- When your gymnast's group first starts an event, there will be a timed warm-up where they do a few practice runs of the routine on that apparatus before the official judging begins.
- **SCORING:** After your gymnast finishes on each event, the judges will submit their scores to the meet coordinator and there are usually electronic screens on the floor that will flash the scores up.



**HELPFUL TIP:** Download the MyUSAGym app on your phone. Most meets will have live scoring that populates into this app throughout the day so you can always find scores almost in real time even if you missed when it flashed on the screen. You can also save your gymnast as a favorite and then keep track of her scores and enjoy watching the improvements from meet to meet!



- **AWARDS:** I can't help you with understanding deductions and why a routine gets a certain score (kudos to anyone who has the skill to understand this, and there are pages and pages of guidelines on the USA Gymnastics website!), but here are some helpful resources and a few general points.
  - A 10.0 is the highest score at each event. Your gymnast will receive four individual scores, that add together for her "all around" score.
  - Awards are usually in a separate area of the gym. Once your gymnast finishes all four events, you can gather your belongings and head over to the awards area. Coaches will bring the team over where they sit together for awards.
  - After awards are over, I usually tell my gymnast to wait down on the floor for me to come get her (or my bigger kids now just run up to the seats and find me).
  - **Individual Awards:** handled differently depending on the program (JO or Xcel) and level.
    - JO Level 3: typically all gymnasts will have their name called up at the awards ceremony and are given a ribbon/medal. The order in which they call their names is usually lowest-to-highest for the all-around score, but they don't otherwise name the top scores individually at this level.
    - JO Level 4+: awards are broken by age groupings and level (each meet is different, but your child could be in the "Level 5, age 10 and under" category, for example). Each level/age grouping will call the top places to the podium for each individual event, and then for the top places for all around. Each meet is different for the number of places that are called out.
    - Xcel Program: awards typically work the same as the JO Level 4+ for all Xcel program gymnasts.
  - **Team Awards:** usually the top 3-5 all-around scores from each team are added together to calculate the team's overall score for the meet. The top 1-3 teams are then awarded a Team Award for the meet. This is typically divided by Level, but not by age group.



## Competitive Program, Additional Info

This is more than you probably want to know right now, but at some point you'll wonder about this, so I'm including some information that I wish I understood at the beginning!

- What are all the different teams?!?
  - Both the JO (Junior Olympic) and Xcel programs are sanctioned programs through USA Gymnastics.
  - Both programs get the same competitive experience and ability to compete in front of a judge.
  - JO has strict requirements (age, skills, time commitment, etc. and fees are generally higher), whereas the Xcel program is intended to provide a more flexible environment for gymnasts to progress at their own pace with a less rigid commitment.
  - Xcel Levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, Diamond
  - JO Levels (see below):
    - Compulsory: Levels 3-5
    - Optionals: Levels 6-10
    - Elite
  - Midwest is proud to offer both programs and one of the Booster Club goals for 2019-2020 is to make it feel like we are all **ONE TEAM!**
  
- JO: What is Compulsory vs. Optionals vs. Elite?
  - **Compulsory** gymnasts (Level 3-5) learn and compete the exact same routine as everyone in that same level across the country (i.e., every Level 4 JO gymnast learns the exact same floor routine -- same music, same everything!).
  - **Optionals** gymnasts (Level 6-10) have guidelines from USA Gymnastics for the skills needed at each level and routines are built for each gymnast (by coaches/gyms) to ensure that the required skills are included.
  - **Elite** gymnasts are those who are on, or are training to be on, the USA Nationals team (typically with Olympics aspirations/skill -- like Suni Lee and Lyden Saltness from our gym!).



- **Mobility Scores (moving up levels):** Most gymnasts will stay at their same level for at least one season, if not more. This is up to your coach and is based on skill level **(Please trust your coaches to make these decisions! They know best!).** There are also minimum scores needed to move up into some levels (“mobility scores”).
  - Rule Book:  
[https://usagym.org/PDFs/Women/Rules/Rules%20and%20Policies/2018\\_2019\\_w\\_rulespolicies\\_0212.pdf](https://usagym.org/PDFs/Women/Rules/Rules%20and%20Policies/2018_2019_w_rulespolicies_0212.pdf)
  - JO program:
    - See Rule book p. 79. To move up higher than Level 4, gymnasts must achieve a minimum score at a sanctioned meet at the prior level. Moving from Level 3 to Level 4 is based on your coach’s assessment (no minimum score required) (e.g., Gymnasts must get a 34 at Level 4 before they can move to Level 5).
  - Xcel program:
    - See Rule Book p. 31: mobility scores are required to move into the Gold, Platinum and Diamond levels (see page 48 of rule book) (e.g., gymnasts must get a 31 at the Silver level before moving to Gold).



- **State and Regional Meets:** gymnasts must qualify to compete at the state or regional meet. To qualify for State, you can get the qualifying score at any of the other sanctioned meets leading up to State. To qualify for Regionals, you must get the qualifying score at the State meet.

Level	State Qualifying Score (achieved at any sanctioned meet during the season)	Regional Qualifying Score (achieved at the State Meet)
JO Levels 3-5	32	No Regionals meet for Levels 3-5
JO Levels 6-10	32	34
Xcel Bronze-Silver	34	35.5
Xcel Gold	34	34
Xcel Platinum-Diamond	32	33.5

I got this information from the following sources and I make no representation of accuracy!  
Coaches can verify and answer questions about scoring/move-ups/meets.

State Meets:

[https://cdn4.sportngin.com/attachments/document/a77f-1648408/Minnesota\\_State\\_Handbook\\_10\\_.pdf?\\_ga=2.95650076.1647410156.1565455189-1444955590.1561310584](https://cdn4.sportngin.com/attachments/document/a77f-1648408/Minnesota_State_Handbook_10_.pdf?_ga=2.95650076.1647410156.1565455189-1444955590.1561310584)

Regional Meets: <https://www.region4gymnastics.com/regionals>

**Finally, when in doubt, remember we've all been there in our first year wondering what is happening! Reach out to any parent, board member, or just give me a call/email!**

~ Nicole Faulkner

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