



# MEMBER SERVICES

## PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS: THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING RECORDS

**Record keeping is an important responsibility** for all gymnastics clubs as well as individuals. USA Gymnastics would like to take this opportunity to remind you of this responsibility and reinforce the importance, consequences, and requirements.

Record keeping is a risk management consideration and vital to protect you and your business from a liability standpoint. Keeping signed waiver and release forms, athlete membership forms, and other records is not only good business practice, but also a requirement in the area of USA Gymnastics athlete/introductory athlete forms. The USA Gymnastics Athlete Membership forms must be completely filled out by the athlete and his/her parent and the club owner and kept on file at the gym. This form serves as an agreement between the athlete (and his/her parents), the gym club, and USA Gymnastics and it is required in the case of injury or the need to use the secondary insurance coverage benefits. Even if athletes are registered online, clubs must see to it that these forms are completed and kept on file. The same goes for waiver and release forms and other forms and notices that gyms collect on their participants.

Records are often helpful in terms of documentation, but are essential in the case of lawsuits. Attorneys or others may request certain forms as proof of membership, release, medical conditions, etc. Protect yourself and your business by making sure forms are completed and keep them organized and in a safe place.

Keep in mind that an injured minor may be able to bring suit after he/she becomes an adult. Because of this fact, records should be maintained even following termination of the relationship with the program participant. You should see local legal assistance in determining the proper length of time for retaining records. Continue reading for further record keeping tips and requirements of USA Gymnastics.

### Tips to Maintain Proper Record Keeping

Most club owners and administrators understand the importance of practicing proper record keeping as it applies to the day to day operation of their gymnastics businesses. Unfortunately, some club owners and administrators often fail to follow such practices when it applies to the applications and registration of their USA Gymnastics introductory/athlete members.

Failure to follow proper record keeping not only places the gymnastics club and USA Gymnastics in poor legal liability situation, but also causes confusion and frustration on the part of the athlete and the athlete's parents. Reviewing the tips below is a great way to ensure that your business and its clients will not be caught in an unfavorable legal and/or financial situation.

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- Print the introductory/athlete membership application form(s) from the USA Gymnastics website prior to registering any athlete(s) in your club. Ensure that the form is completely filled out by the parent, athlete and the club administrator. All USA Gymnastics membership application forms are available on the USA Gymnastics website at: USA Gymnastics Membership Forms. A new athlete/introductory athlete form **MUST** be completed each new competitive season regardless of how long an athlete has participated with your club.
- Ensure that a copy of the completed introductory/athlete membership form is given to the parent (s) of each athlete for their personal recording keeping. As a reminder, the completed application form is a signed legal contract between USA Gymnastics, the parent, and the club. Therefore, it is important to provide the proper documentation to all parties involved.
- **NEVER** register an introductory/athlete membership online unless you first have the completed form(s) in possession and on file in the club at the time of registration. Failure to complete this vital step, often leads to forgetting to obtain the form. As a reminder, USA Gymnastics can audit a club at anytime and request copies of the completed introductory/athlete membership application forms. Don't be caught off guard; be prepared!
- Contact USA Gymnastics **IMMEDIATELY** following a mistake made in online registration. All USA Gymnastics memberships are Non-Transferable and Non-Refundable; however, USA Gymnastics understands that mistakes can happen from time to time. Clubs may accidentally click the wrong athlete's name when registering their athletes online. In the event of an online registration error, USA Gymnastics **MUST** be notified within 72 business hours. Under certain circumstances, a refund or transfer may be granted. Please keep in mind that when such incidents occur you may and will be requested to submit the completed introductory/athlete membership application forms of those you wish to have the introductory/

athlete membership. USA Gymnastics may not be able to process a request if proper forms are not submitted to the National Office in the time guidelines requested. Please also note that USA Gymnastics **CANNOT** provide any refunds or transfers on introductory/athletes that have already competed with the current membership, switched gymnastics locations, or stopped participating in the sport of gymnastics.

- Ensure proper communication between the individuals collecting the introductory/athlete membership application, and the individual actually processing the actual membership application payments. Often Member Services receives calls from clubs stating that there was a mistake in communication between the individual collecting and the individual processing payments and therefore, a mistake in registration occurred. While USA Gymnastics respects such errors, we often cannot resolve the errors that may occur in these situations.
- Notify Member Services of any changes/deletions to your club roster list. Maintaining a proper club roster with USA Gymnastics is an important way to avoid mistakes in the future. Send changes to Member Services via email at [membership@usa-gymnastics.org](mailto:membership@usa-gymnastics.org) or via fax to 317-692-5212. All changes will be completed with 24-48 business hours.
- Ensure that you have obtained and keep on file a current athlete/introductory athlete membership form for any new athlete/introductory athlete that has joined your club that may have already been paid for this season. It is the current club responsibility to ensure that they have a completed membership application form, regardless of club affiliation at the time the registration was paid. Maintain the form in the athlete club file.

For any questions or concerns regarding the proper maintenance of USA Gymnastics application forms; please contact USA Gymnastics Member Services **at 800-345-4719 or via email at [membership@usa-gymnastics.org](mailto:membership@usa-gymnastics.org)** . ✨