HOW TO GET STARTED WITH TOPS IN YOUR GYM
TALENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (TOPs)
The Talent Opportunity Program is a talent identification system for female gymnasts ages 7–10 and their coaches that is implemented by the Developmental Team Coordinator under the direction of the International Elite Committee (IEC). Its purpose is to assist the coach with early identification of potentially talented athletes and to nurture and assist in the development of these athletes and their coaches and to provide competitive opportunities.

Every year, during the months of June and July, gymnasts age 7-10 are evaluated on physical abilities and basic skill testing at the state level. A USA Gymnastics TOPs State manager selects specific dates and sites.

Athletes who qualify are invited to participate in the TOPs National Testing, conducted in the month of October, where each athlete will be evaluated on the physical abilities tests and basic gymnastics skills. Athletes who qualify are invited to participate in the National TOPs Training camp, which takes place at the National Team Training Center in December of each year.

WHY YOUR CLUB SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE TOPs PROGRAM

Participating in TOPs is not required to reach the highest levels in the sport, but the skills and abilities measured in the TOPs program have proven to be reliable predictors of a young athlete’s potential. Even athletes who do not participate in state or national testing can gain much from the foundational training and conditioning portion of the program. The TOPs program assists in the development of these athletes and their coaches to provide competitive opportunities in Junior Olympic, Xcel, Hopes and the Elite program.

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR TOPs ATHLETES

TOPs testing is done on both physical abilities and basic skill testing. The physical abilities manual along with videos are available on the USA Gymnastics website. Many of the physical abilities tests are used in strength and conditioning programs within many gyms. Many coaches use strength and conditioning as a “fifth event” within workouts and it would be easy to incorporate all the TOPs physical abilities testing into their training. The sprint test is only done at National TOPs testing and not the state testing.

HOW TO START A TOPs PROGRAM IN YOUR GYM?

Many successful TOPs programs have 5 –10 athletes training for TOPs. Gyms usually have a dedicated coach who trains separately with these athletes normally 1 – 2 times a week. Very often the TOPs athletes will train during off times at the gym, such as Friday night and Sunday afternoon. It is best to keep your numbers to an exclusive group of athletes, some clubs have tryouts for TOPs and other simply extend an invite to join the TOPs program.
The basic skills are age group designated and can be found on the USA Gymnastics website with both text and videos for state and national TOPs testing.

It is quite easy to add these basic skills to “optional time” for compulsory gymnasts after they have completed their assignment during training and start working optional skills to take them to the next level within the JO program.

The progression of the TOPs basic skills complement the skill requirements of the Junior Olympic program which makes it easy to add into your current training.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED**
- Spring Floor
- Low/high beam
- Uneven Bars
- Minimum 12 foot rope climb
- Stopwatch
- Leg lift bar — preferably a stall bar

“TOPs provides a great framework for expecting excellence in basics and conditioning. Having such a strong foundation has helped our program achieve success from the beginner competitive levels to the most advanced.”
—Sarah Korngold, Paramount Elite, Van Nuys, Calif.

“TOPs is a great foundation and creates an exciting atmosphere in the gym when building strength and flexibility. The skills that are required for each age on each event are a tremendous guide for determining the expectations of high-level gymnastics.”
—Kittia Carpenter, Buckeye Gymnastics, Columbus, Ohio
WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON TOPs?
Most states have a TOPs State Manager. The list of TOPs State Managers are on the USA Gymnastics website along with their e-mail address. They would be your first contact for more information, test dates and sites. All the TOPs information available is on the USA Gymnastics website.

LINKS/REFERENCE ARTICLES, MATERIALS, VIDEOS, ETC.
- Current info on TOPs — https://usagym.org/pages/women/updates/TOPs.html
- TOPs Physical Abilities — https://usagym.org/pages/women/video/TOPs.html
- TOPs State Managers — https://usagym.org/PDFs/Women/TOPs/TOPs_statemanagers.pdf
- USA Gym TOPs Webinar — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b2Apkx0kQc&feature=youtu.be
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<tr>
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<th>Famous Gymnasts That Did The TOPs Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Morgan White</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Courtney Kupets</td>
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<td>Chelsie Memmel</td>
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<td>Ashley Miles</td>
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<td>Tasha Schwikert</td>
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<td>Katie Heenan</td>
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<td>Cassidy McComb</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Kristal Uzelac</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Carly Patterson</td>
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<td>Ashley Priess</td>
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<td>Alicia Sacramone</td>
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<td>Kytra Hunter</td>
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<td>Shayla Worley</td>
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<td>Cassandra Whitcomb</td>
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<td>Mattie Larson</td>
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<td>Samantha Shapiro</td>
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<td>Jordyn Wieber</td>
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<td>Amanda Jetter</td>
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<td>Gabby Douglas</td>
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<td>Kennedy Baker</td>
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<td>Aly Raisman</td>
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<td>Lexie Priessman</td>
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<td>Nia Dennis</td>
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<td>Amelia Hundley</td>
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<td>Polina Schennikova</td>
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<td>Christina Desiderio</td>
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<td>Norah Flatley</td>
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<td>Ashton Locklear</td>
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<td>Megan Skaggs</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Ragan Smith</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Gabby Perea</td>
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