ACROBATIC GYMNASICS

How to Start an Acro Program and Develop Your Pre-Team
What is Acro?

- Acro is the combination of:
  - Artistic Gymnastics
  - Pairs Figure Skating
  - Cirque du Soleil Acrobatic elements
Pair/Group Definitions

Women’s Pair

Men’s Pair

Mixed Pair

Women’s Group (3)

Men’s Group (4)
Exercise Definitions

- Balance Exercise
  - Static elements, pyramids, and lifts
  - Showcases strength and flexibility
  - Individual elements show flexibility, strength, and agility
Exercise Definitions

- Dynamic Exercise
  - Partner throws and pitches
  - Catches, re-catches and dismounts
  - Involves flight and motion
  - Individual elements show tumbling and leaps
Exercise Definitions

- Combined Exercise
  - Balance elements
  - Dynamic elements
  - Demonstrates athletes versatility
Benefits for your gym

- Adds an additional program to your gym, setting you above other gyms
  - Quickly and inexpensively!

- Unique advertising and marketing for your gym

- Attracts new athletes and retains your current athletes

- Provides more choices for students

- Offers more competitive outlets

- Captures additional revenue
Benefits for the athletes

- Gymnasts can do acro in addition to current disciplines
- No weight or size consideration for athletes
  - All body types are needed
- Fewer age limitations which leads to a wider window of opportunity to accomplish goals
- Less training hours
- Helps athletes build life skills and lifelong friendships
Educate Your Clients!

- Create a Bulletin Board
  - What is Acro?
  - Pictures
  - Definitions

- Show Videos
  - Run videos on your lobby tv
  - Best way for people to understand what it’s all about

- Bring in a Local Club to Demo
  - Contact a mentor club in your area to bring their athletes to introduce the sport to your rec and team athletes
Give them a taste!

- Spend the last 5 minutes of each regular gymnastics class working on basic level 4 and 5 skills

- Give them a challenge!
  - Put skill pictures on the wall and challenge your students or team athletes to re-create the skill

- Incorporate acro skills into your team demo or summer camp
Recruitment

- Begin in your advanced rec classes
- Focus on pulling from tumbling classes as well as gymnastics
- You will need to recruit various ages and sizes
Sell it!

- Send home an “invitation letter”
- Provide ALL info including days/times/costs and what the class will focus on
- Give your email and ask for a response either way so you can track your recruitment process
- 6 is a good number to start with
Typical Training Hours

- Pre-Team – 2x week for 1-2 hours
Equipment

- Acro Blocks are the only “acro specific” equipment you need
- You can do shapes on a low balance beam as well
Training your Staff

- For the most part, Acro Pre-Team skills are the same shapes and basic tumbling elements as regular gymnastics.

- Focus on floor/tumbling/trampoline with the addition of blocks and basic acro skills.

- Proper hand grip on blocks is important.

- Utilize USAGym routine videos.
Block Positions

- Videos
  - Tuck
  - Pike
  - Straddle
Typical Practice

- Warm up – 15min
  - Cardio, stretching, splits

- Tumbling Stations – 15min
  - Cartwheel drills
  - Handstands
  - Rolls
  - Boulder drills
  - Bridge kickovers

- Blocks – 15 min
  - Tuck, pike, straddle, standing
  - Incorporate contests

- Acro Skills – 15 min
  - Level 5 pairs/trios
Typical Practice

- Trampoline/Tumble Trak – 15min
  - Jumps
  - Tumbling

- Conditioning – 15min
  - Stations
  - Races
  - Combine with trampoline
  - Conditioning cards

- Adjust times for a longer practice

- Rotate activities for a shorter practice

- Keep things moving!
Skill Progression Ideas

- Videos
  - Organization
  - Progressions
Plan an Exhibition

- Towards the end of the session plan a “show and tell” for the parents
- Incorporate blocks
- Use compulsory music and incorporate simple parts of the level 5 routine
- Follow up with information about the competitive team
  - Give each pre-team family free admission to your home meet
Contact Information

- Sarah Thomas – National J.O. Chair
  - sarah@sportsacrobatics.info

- Elizabeth Millard – Acro Program Director
  - emillard@usagym.org

- Luan Peszek – Vice President of Program Development
  - lpeszek@usagym.org