

## CHAPTER 6 - XCEL COMPETITIVE PROGRAM

### I. OVERVIEW

The USA Gymnastics Xcel program was developed as an alternative competitive program offering individual flexibility to coaches and gymnasts. The goal of Xcel is to provide gymnasts of varying abilities and commitment levels the opportunity for a rewarding gymnastics experience. **The program allows a wide choice in skills to meet requirements so selection may be based on an individual athlete's strengths.**

**The focus of the Xcel program is sportsmanship, leadership, teamwork, and fun. The emphasis in the Xcel program is on correct technique, form, and performance.**

- A. If a gymnast has never competed in the USA Gymnastics Development Program Levels 1-10 and wishes to compete in any Division of the Xcel Program, she will need to register as an Athlete Member to participate.
- B. If a gymnast already has an Athlete Membership she is not required to change or purchase a new membership for Xcel. However, she must change to her appropriate Xcel division. This can be done on the athlete profile online through USA Gymnastics.
- C. Athletes competing in both Xcel and the Development Program in the same competition year must have the appropriate Xcel division OR Development Program level box checked on their athlete profile before participating in a sanctioned USA Gymnastics competition.

A gymnast may compete in a maximum of two (2) State Championships per competitive year (one per season), either at the same or higher division.

A gymnast is not required to compete in the All-Around. If she chooses not to compete in the AA, she must touch the event(s) she is NOT competing. Her scores may count towards team scores.

The Xcel program includes five competitive Divisions – Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, and Diamond. **In 2022-23 a Pilot Program for a sixth Division, Sapphire, will begin in Regions 3, 6, 7, and 8. Rules and documents related to this Pilot Program are provided under separate cover and may be found on the Xcel Page of the USA Gymnastics website.**

Xcel competitions are conducted throughout the United States and are organized by the USA Gymnastics State and Regional Administrative Committees. Each state has the jurisdiction to determine its state calendar, according to the needs of its members. An Xcel COMPETITIVE YEAR is defined as the period from August 1 through July 31. A COMPETITIVE SEASON is defined as that period from the first designated qualifying competition through the culminating Championships at each division.

### II. AGE REQUIREMENTS, ENTRY DIVISIONS, AND MOBILITY SCORES

- A. In the spirit of good sportsmanship, fairness to all athletes and competitive balance, the mobility system within the Xcel Program should be followed in the manner that it was intended:
  1. Before moving up a competitive division, every athlete should show proficiency at her current competitive division.
  2. Once a high level of proficiency is achieved at the athlete's current competitive division, she should strive to move up to the next competitive division, as long as it is done safely.
  3. For athletes to repeat a competitive division with the intent to gain an advantage over other competitors or teams IS NOT in the spirit of the Xcel Program or youth sports in general.
  4. No mandate scores are permitted at any competitive division.
  5. The Xcel program's purpose is to provide competitive opportunities for all athletes, regardless of their age, ability level, or training commitment in terms of hours and/or finances.
- B. Age Determination and Regulations
  1. All gymnasts must reach the minimum age for the division before competing in any USA Gymnastics sanctioned competition (see chart on the next page).

Example: Bronze State Championships date is Dec. 1; the last Bronze State Qualifier is November 17; the gymnast will turn the minimum age for Bronze (5 yrs. old) on November 28<sup>th</sup>. She is ineligible to compete in the qualifying meet, and therefore does not have the opportunity to qualify to the Bronze State Championships that season.

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2. For invitationals and qualifying meets below the State Championships, the Meet Director may determine the age divisions and must publish such information in the pre-meet information.
3. For all meets under the jurisdiction of the State or Regional Administrative Committees, the respective committee may determine the method of determining age divisions. There are two options:
  - a. Age groups for the season: established by specific ages (i.e., 8-10 yr. olds, 11-12, etc.).
    - 1) In this case, the age divisions should be determined and published PRIOR to the competitive SEASON and the only adjustments that may be made during the season are sub-divisions of the age groups.
    - 2) The gymnast's age for the competitive season is determined by the date of the final day of competition at the culminating championship meet for that level. Exception: The gymnast must have reached the minimum age for her level prior to entering any qualifying competition.
    - 3) The gymnast must compete with the age division as designated for the entire season.
    - 4) Published results MAY NOT include the gymnast's date of birth.
  - b. Age groups for each competition: established by dividing the athletes by actual birth date into approximately equal groups according to a pre-determined number of age divisions or by a pre-determined maximum number of athletes per age division.
    - 1) Meet Directors must publish or post online the meet schedule with age divisions as soon as possible after the entry deadline.
    - 2) Published results MAY NOT include the gymnast's date of birth.
4. If a gymnast competes in the wrong age division, **her scores are invalid for all All-Around, Individual Events, or Team Awards**; however, the score achieved may be used for division mobility.
  - If, due to valid unforeseen circumstances, a gymnast is unable to compete with her designated age group, she may compete on another day (or in another session) with the approval of the SACC. She will not be eligible for ANY awards. Her score may be used for mobility or qualification purposes (if qualification is by score, not placement or percentage in a given age group) to the next meet.

XCEL AGE/ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND MOBILITY SCORES OVERVIEW CHART			
Division	Minimum Age Requirement	Pre-requisite Scores	Entry Division from the Development Program <sup>^</sup>
Bronze	Reached 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday	None	Development Program Levels 1,2
Silver	Reached 6 <sup>th</sup> birthday	None	Development Program Levels 1,2,3
Gold	Reached 7 <sup>th</sup> birthday	None	Development Program Levels 3,4
Platinum	Reached 8 <sup>th</sup> birthday	31.00 AA at Gold Division or 8.0 IES	Development Program Levels 5,6,7
Diamond	Reached 9 <sup>th</sup> birthday	31.00 AA at Platinum Division or 8.0 IES	Development Program Levels 7,8,9,10

\* See for specifics of dropping back in the next section

<sup>^</sup> **Must have competed all-around at a minimum of one (1) sanctioned meet at the specified Development Program level to enter in the appropriate Xcel Division.**

C. Entry into Xcel Divisions

1. Gymnasts who have no previous competitive experience may enter at Bronze, Silver, **or Gold Division** at their coach's discretion.
2. Gymnasts currently competing in the Xcel program must follow the chart above for mobility.
3. Any athlete who has previously competed in the Xcel Program, but has been inactive for one or more years, must contact their State Administrative Committee Chairman for proper entry regulations. The options are:
  - a. Remain at the Division at which they last competed.
  - b. Move up one Division if they achieved the mobility score during their last season.
  - c. Move down one Division without petitioning.

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4. Any gymnast who has had previous competitive experience in programs outside of USA Gymnastics must petition to enter at **Platinum** and above by submitting a formal written request to the State Administrative Committee.
  5. Any gymnast who has had previous competitive experience in USA Gymnastics and who is a minimum of **14 years of age or at least a Freshman in High School** is eligible to petition by submitting a formal written request to the State Administrative Committee for entry into Platinum or Diamond. The petition must be accompanied by a video that demonstrates her skill level.
    - Athletes (US citizens or Non-US Citizens) who have resided outside the US, have competitive experience outside the US, and now reside in the US, are eligible to petition by submitting a formal written request to the Regional Xcel Chairman for entry into the Xcel Program at Platinum or Diamond. The petition must be accompanied by a video that demonstrates the skill level for which she is submitting the petition and proof of residency outside the US. For additional information on foreign athlete participation, please refer to Chapter 2.
  6. Since the Xcel program is an alternative/separate program, IT CANNOT BE USED TO SATISFY MOBILITY REQUIREMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.
- D. Dropping Back through the Divisions
1. The State Administrative Committee must determine, prior to the beginning of the competitive year, a designated "declaration" date for each division. The highest division in which the athlete competes in a sanctioned competition after the "declaration" date designates her division for the remainder of the current season.
  2. If the athlete competed at an Xcel State Championships (or higher) and wishes to drop back through the divisions, her coach must submit a "reason for change" letter.
    - a. For Bronze, Silver, and Gold Divisions, the "reason for change" letter is sent to the State Administrative Committee Chairman to be considered by the State Administrative Committee.
    - b. For Platinum and Diamond Divisions, the "reason for change" letter is sent to the Regional Technical Committee Chairman to be considered by the Regional Administrative Committee.
- E. If a Development Program Level 8 or below athlete wishes to enter the Xcel Program in a Division below the allowable Division, her coach may submit a "reason for change" letter to the State Administrative Committee Chairman for approval. If a Development Program Level 9 or 10 athlete wishes to enter the Xcel Program in a Division below the allowable Division, her coach may submit a "reason for change" letter to the Regional Technical Committee Chairman for approval.
- Valid reasons would include injury, illness, or other extenuating circumstances that would have prevented the athlete from continuing to train at the level at which they previously competed.

### III. ALTERNATIVE COMPETITION EXPERIENCES

- A. Individual Event Specialists: the mobility score for advancement to the next division for Individual Event Specialists at Gold is 8.0 per event to move to Platinum, and at Platinum is 8.0 per event to move to Diamond.
- B. Athletes who are limited in the number of events in which they can perform due to a permanent physical handicap (verified by a physician) may petition to qualify to higher division by achieving an average score equal to the average of the All-Around qualifying score for that division.
- C. Status for competing as an IES to qualify to the next higher meet must be declared at the time of entry to the qualifying meet, not during or after the conclusion of the competition.

### IV. GENERAL PETITION PROCEDURES FOR USA GYMNASTICS XCEL COMPETITIONS

- A. Petitions may be considered for the following reasons:
  - Injury, Illness or family tragedy (e.g., death, natural disaster)
- B. If an athlete is injured prior to a qualifying meet, but is capable of competing in one, two or three events, she may compete in the qualifying meet without jeopardizing her right to petition to the next competition.
- C. The coach (or club administrator) is responsible for submitting all necessary documentation for the petition on behalf of the petitioning athlete.
- D. Entry fees for petitioned athletes should be submitted by the entry deadline. If the petition is denied, the Meet Director must refund the entry fee within three weeks.
- E. Injury Petition Forms are posted on the USA Gymnastics website under Women's Program – Forms – Petition Forms: <https://usagym.org/PDFs/Forms/Women/injury2021.pdf>
- F. Specific procedures for State and Regional competitions are in the sections for those events.

<b>COMPETITION</b>
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**I. TYPES OF COMPETITION**

Overview of types of competition available to the divisions:

Division	Local	State Championships	Regional Championships
All Xcel Divisions (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, Diamond)	X	To be determined by the State Administrative Committee	To be determined by the Regional Administrative Committee

**II. GENERAL REGULATIONS**

A. The State Administrative Committee (SAC) determines:

1. If State Championships for all Xcel divisions will be conducted.
2. If sub-divisions within Divisions will be offered, such as first year competitors and veterans, or if a team competition will be conducted separately from the State individual competition.
3. The qualifying requirements for State Championships.
4. The competitive schedule for State Championships.
  - a. It is recommended that a reasonable period of preparation be provided between seasons.
  - b. May conduct one annual State Championships, or one Fall and one Spring State Championships.
5. Number of Judges used for USA Gymnastics Sanctioned Competitions.
6. Qualified Judges:
  - All Xcel Divisions may be judged by an optional rated judge member.
  - Compulsory rated judge members may judge Bronze, Silver and Gold divisions.
  - Xcel Bronze/Silver/Gold Rating: The J110 – Xcel Bronze/ Silver/Gold Judges’ Course is a prerequisite for non-rated competitive coach members to judge Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The WJX1: Xcel Bronze/Silver/Gold Judging Exam must also be passed in order to receive an Xcel Bronze/Silver/Gold judges rating.
  - Non-rated competitive coach members may judge Bronze and Silver divisions.
  - The SAC determines if any additional criteria will be used for State qualifying competitions and State Championships.
  - a. A minimum of Level 9 rating is recommended for Diamond division.
  - b. If there is a lack of qualified judges, the assignor must contact the RTCC for permission to assign a lower rated judge, if necessary.
7. Entry Fees for State Championships:
  - a. Maximum being \$85.00 (Bronze, Silver, Gold)
  - b. Maximum being \$95.00 (Platinum and Diamond).
  - c. Unless approved change by the Regional Administrative Committee Chairman (RACC).
8. Individual Awards for State Championships: with a minimum of 40% for individual awards.
9. Team Awards for each Division: (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, Diamond). Divisions should NOT be combined for Team Awards.
  - If a state does not have enough gymnasts in one or more Divisions to have a team competition, Divisions may then be combined for team awards. In order to do this, the State Administrative Committee Chair must request permission from the Regional Administrative Committee Chair.

B. The Regional Administrative Committee (RAC) determines:

1. If Regional Championships will be conducted and which divisions will participate.
2. The qualifying procedures/requirements, format and schedule of the Regional Championships.
3. Individual and team awards for the Regional Championships.
4. Number, rating, and selection procedure for judges for the Regional Championships.

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### C. Local Meets

1. Local Meets are not under the organizational responsibilities of the SAC; i.e., Meet Directors may set dates, entry fee and gate fee, may contract their officials (using the USA Gymnastics Contract) or by requesting the services of the state's judging contractor, and may conduct team competition.
  - Includes dual/triangular meets between clubs, inter-squads, and invitationals.
2. May be used for:
  - a. mobility only, or
  - b. qualification to the State Championships, at the discretion of the SAC.
3. May have only one club (team) competing to obtain a Sanction.
4. Any non-rated competitive coach member is only allowed to judge Bronze and Silver Divisions. All other Divisions must be judged by a judge member. The SAC determines if any additional criteria will be used for State qualifying competitions and State Championships.
  - a. For any competition using only a one-judge panel, it is recommended to have a floating Meet Referee, if possible.
  - b. For all Divisions, one-judge panels are allowed for mobility purposes.
5. Results from local meets need to be mailed or e-mailed to the State Administrative Committee Chairman (SACC) or designated SAC representative and the Meet Director of the State Championships.

### D. STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. Are under the total jurisdiction of the SAC and SACC.
  - The format and number of athletes must be approved by the RXCC and RTCC.
  - The Meet Director must utilize the USA Gymnastics Meet Reservation System for registration (not to accept payments) and utilize the pre-printed Coaches' sign-in sheets during the competition.
2. May be conducted for all divisions, at the discretion of the SAC.
3. May be conducted in the fall and/or spring for all divisions, at the discretion of the SAC.
  - For those divisions that have a Regional competition, the respective State Meet must be scheduled a minimum of three weeks prior to the Regional meet. Any deviation to that guideline must be approved by the RACC.
4. The SAC determines the number of judges per panel, selects the judges and Meet Referee, and may determine the event assignments. It is recommended that the SACC ask the Meet Referee to make the event assignments.
5. A current Xcel gymnast who competed in the same division the previous year and competed in the previous year's Regional Championships (and fulfilled the qualification requirements or achieved a score equal to or greater than the current year's respective State Championships qualifying score) may directly enter the current year's State Championships in her respective division.
6. Entry forms and fees for Xcel Regional meets must be filed and paid (with a club/company check), unless an electronic entry system is in place, to the USA Gymnastics designated official at the qualifying meet, who will forward them to the Meet Director of the next meet. Entries for Regional meets must be submitted to the designated USA Gymnastics personnel at the respective State Championships. Each club must be prepared to pay for all their qualifiers with one company check per level.
7. Petitions To State Championships
  - a. NO petitions are allowed if the qualification to the State Championships is by a percent of a percent or a designated number of each age division and not by score.
  - b. If a gymnast is unable to compete at the Sectional or any local State-qualifying meet (or cannot compete in the All-Around at State Championships due to injury or illness prior to or during the State Championships), her coach may petition the SAC to allow the athlete to directly enter the State Championships, if the following requirements are met and documentation is included with the petition form:
    - 1) If there is a qualifying score: A photocopy of the results of one sanctioned meet from the current season showing a score, which is equal to or greater than the State qualifying score.
      - If the gymnast competed in the same division in the previous season and qualified to the State Championships or above, she may petition with the previous year scores from State or above meets.
    - 2) Written request from the coach.

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- 3) A Licensed Medical Professional's written verification of the illness or injury and date of release for return to gymnastics activity.
- c. If an athlete who is unable to compete at any Sectional or local State-qualifying meets in the current season (or cannot compete AA at such events) due to injury or illness and is also lacking scores from last year's season due to injuries but has previously qualified to and competed in the State or above division competitions at the same level, an injury petition may be considered under special circumstances by the SACC. If necessary, the RTCC and the RXCC will be consulted. The petition must include:
  - 1) A copy of meet results from the previous State or Regional competition with scores, which are at least one point higher than the current State qualifying score.
  - 2) A current video.
  - 3) Written request from the coach or parent.
  - 4) A Licensed Medical Professional's written verification of the illness or injury and date of release for return to gymnastics activity.
- d. Petition Deadlines: petitions to the State Championships must be received no later than the Wednesday after the last qualifying meet is held. Petitions MUST be sent to the SACC by e-mail or Express Mail.
  - 1) The petitioner will be notified of the approval or denial of the petition by the SACC no later than one week before the competition.
  - 2) The SACC will notify the Meet Director of the approval or denial of the petition no later than one week before the competition.
  - 3) If a petition is accepted but the gymnast is unable to compete, the coach MUST notify the Meet Director and the SACC.
8. USA Gymnastics Xcel Awards for State Championships must be ordered from the national medal company by the SACC, or designee. Awards should be ordered a minimum four (4) weeks before the competition.
9. Results from State Championships need to be mailed or e-mailed to the RACC and RTCC, Regional Meet Director, and the SACC of the respective state within 72 hours.
10. The State Championships Director must send a Financial Report to the SACC within 60 days of the completion of the meet.

### **E. REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

1. Are under the total jurisdiction of the Regional Administrative Committee (RAC).
  - a. The format and number of athletes must be approved by the RXCC and RTCC.
  - b. Entry fees for Xcel Regional Championships are determined by the RAC and must be approved by the National Administrative Committee Chairman (NACC).
  - c. The Meet Director must utilize the USA Gymnastics Meet Reservation System for registration (not to accept payments) and utilize the pre-printed Coaches' sign-in sheets during the competition.
2. May be conducted for all Xcel divisions.
3. State team competition may be conducted as a separate competition (with a designated number of athletes qualifying by rank order) or as part of the individual competition in which each state designates which individual's scores will count toward the State team score.
4. If a state has no qualifiers in a particular division to Regionals, the gymnast with the highest AA from the State Championships (from any of the age divisions) will be invited to compete at the Regional meet, regardless of the score.
5. The RAC may guarantee up to 120 gymnasts to Regional Championships if there is an insufficient number of athletes who achieved the qualifying score.
6. The RAC selects the judges and determines the number of judges per panel.
7. If the number of athletes in one age division requires that two sessions of competition be conducted, the Meet Director shall conduct a random draw by team to fill the sessions.
8. Regional Meet Directors must send regional meet information to the State Championships Director, with copies to the RXCC, RTCC and RACC at least one week prior to the State Championships.
9. Entry forms and fees for Regional Championships will be collected by the USA Gymnastics designated official at the State Championships and sent to the Regional Meet Director, unless an electronic entry system is in place.
10. Petitions to Regional Championships
  - a. There are NO petitions to Regional Championships if qualification is by a percentage or by specific number of athletes.

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- b. If a gymnast is unable to compete at the State Championships (or cannot compete in the All-Around at State Championships) due to injury or illness prior to or during the State Championships, her coach may petition the RTCC (or Regional Technical Assistant, if so designated) to allow the athlete to directly enter the Regional Championships, if the following requirements are met and documentation is included with the petition form:
    - 1) A photocopy of at least one pre-State, sanctioned meet results from the current season (at the division to which they are petitioning) showing a score at least one point (1.00) greater than the regional qualifying score.
      - If the gymnast competed in the same division in the previous year's Xcel Regional Championships and her AA score was at least one point (1.00) greater than the current Regional qualifying score, she may submit her last year's Regional score as her pre-State meet score.
    - 2) A Licensed Medical Professional's written verification of the illness or injury and date of release for return to gymnastics activity.
    - 3) Written request from the coach.
  - c. If an athlete who is unable to compete at the State Championships (or cannot compete AA at State Championships) due to injury or illness is also lacking scores from both the current and last year's season due to injuries but has previously qualified to and competed in Xcel Regionals at the same division, an injury petition for the same division may be considered under special circumstances by the RTCC and the RXCC. If necessary, the SACC and the National Chairmen (NXCC and NTCC) will be consulted. The petition must include:
    - 1) A copy of the meet results must be included with the petition form. The scores from the previous Regional competition must be at least one point higher than the current Regional qualifying score for the division.
    - 2) A current video that is sent to both Regional officers.
    - 3) A Licensed Medical Professional's written verification of the illness or injury and date of release for return to gymnastics activity.
  - d. The RTCC (or her/his appointee) will handle the petition, in consultation with the RXCC and the SACC. If an agreement cannot be reached, the RTCC will make the decision.
  - e. Deadlines for Petitions to Regional Championships:
    - 1) Coaches must notify their RACC and their RTCC by e-mail NO LATER THAN the Monday following the State Championships of any athletes they intend to petition to their Regional meet.
    - 2) The complete Injury/Illness petition form (found online at <https://usagym.org/PDFs/Forms/Women/injury2015.pdf>). The request in writing from the coach and official results are due the Monday following the State Championships by 5:00pm local time. All other required documents (physician's note) are due the Wednesday following the State Championships by 5:00pm local time. Also send a copy to the SACC.
    - 3) The Entry form and fees must be sent directly to the Meet Director, specifically marked as "Petition pending". If the petition is denied, the RTCC will contact the Meet Director, who will refund the entry fee.
    - 4) If the gymnast was injured at the State Championships, the entry fees and form should be given to the USA Gymnastics officer who is designated to collect Regional entries at the State Championships, unless an electronic entry system is in place. (Fees will be returned within three weeks if the petition is not accepted.)
    - 5) The petitioner will be notified of the approval or denial of the petition by the RTCC a minimum of one week prior to the Regional meet.
    - 6) The RTCC will notify the Meet Director of the approval or denial of the petition.
    - 7) If a petition is accepted, but the gymnast is unable to compete, the coach must IMMEDIATELY notify both the Meet Director and the respective RTCC.
11. Awards:

USA Gymnastics Xcel Awards for Regional Championships must be ordered from the national medal company by the RACC (or designee). Awards should be ordered a minimum of four (4) weeks before the competition.
  12. Results of Regional Meets must be e-mailed within 72 hours to:
    - SACC in that region, the RXCC, RTCC, and RACC.
  13. The Meet Director must send the Financial Report form within 45 days (or otherwise designated time) to the RACC.