

**When being evaluated for a team in May, the question you all want to know is... has my child “truly mastered” the level?** Is my child at the high end of that level, therefore being able to fully participate in every aspect of a routine? Yes, there will be exceptions, such as an amazing base that is needed for a higher level stunt to go up.... or a amazing flyer that is needed for an elite stunt... but those are few and far between. Has your child mastered the level? Can they do the hardest stunt? Can they be the last tumbling pass? Are they physically AND more so mentally ready to move up? Are you as a parent ready to move up? Higher levels require more practice, more commitment, more mental coaching, and coming in extra outside of scheduled practice. With each team placement we take into account, absences, sickness, commitment, accountability, attitude, parent communication, and good account standing.

### **LEVEL 1**

Most elite level 1 athletes are working and cleaning back handsprings without a spot... they have beautiful back walkovers, front walkovers, specialty skills so they could be the first pass or the last pass. They can now concentrate on perfecting their jumps, but can be 100% a successful part of a level 1, 2 1/2 minute routine including all elite stunting!

### **LEVEL 2**

A level 2 athlete is working back tucks... as they have “mastered” the standing BHS, back walkover BHS, and the Round off BHS series. They can incorporate all level 1 skills into level 2 combinations. They are fully a part of the routine and even have their moments to shine. They can execute elite stunting at the chest level and can execute entry level stunting above the head.

### **LEVEL 3**

A level 3 athlete many times is working layouts and standing tucks without spots. They have mastered not just the round-off handspring tuck, but beautiful standing series BHS, a punch front, and an aerial. Jumps to BHS and elite level 2 stunting are a must. They are mentally ready for a demanding elite level 3 routine. The routine will be fast paced and difficult. The mental aspect of the coaching is raised and the athlete should have great self discipline. This is one of the largest jumps in levels with both tumbling and stunting. This level requires more discipline and extra work outside of practice.

### **LEVEL 4**

Level 4 athletes are many times twisting in classes while throwing a hollow technically beautiful layout, can land 5 or more standing tucks in a row, and are capable of doing any part of a true level 4 routine. They have solid execution on BHS tucks, and Jump BHS tuck. A true level 4 athlete should be able to master any level 1,2 or 3 tumbling combination into a technically sound layout. This level requires extreme mental and physically capabilities. At level 4, every lower level skill in both stunting and tumbling should be mastered. At this level, the commitment and dynamic from athlete and

parent truly changes. Everyone must be all in and ready for extra work, extra practice, late nights, and anything it takes to get the job done. The level 4 athlete and parent must be mentally “all in” to compete successfully at this level. This level is where the all star scale tips. It is both difficult and demanding.

### **LEVEL 5**

Level 5 athletes are working higher, more elite twisting skills, can land a solid jump to back with their feet together and the fulls they throw in the routine are technically solid. They are mentally and physically capable of hitting a fast paced, high energy routine with multiple tumbling passes. They will put many extra hours in the gym, added tumbling practice, and be willing to mentally push themselves to the limit. This athlete should be in their top physical shape and extremely team oriented. At this point the athlete must be self driven and willing to do what it takes for the success of the team.

### **LEVEL 6**

And the Level 6 athlete... these are the athletes throwing doubles, trick thru to full, standing full, multiple jumps to back and are at the top of their game mentally and physically. The parents are “all in” and ready for anything that comes their way. Extra practices, late nights, and be able to juggle it all. This is the tip of the mountain and takes a very long and demanding road to get there.

Look at it this way... if they have not mastered a level completely, then why put the stress on an athlete to attempt to do tumbling skills at a level they have not mastered and then be expected to elite stunt, jump and dance for a full 2 1/2 minutes? Why not allow them the year to be the shining star, to build their confidence and feel a full part of the routine.

**The other side of the coin....** “my child has all level 3 tumbling but it’s her first year of cheer”. Do you truly want your child on a team doing complex elite stunts at the risk of hurting herself or others around her? Just because we are a successful gymnast, doesn’t mean we know the proper progressions of safe stunting, jumps, choreography, standing and running combinations, or performance. Trust the coaches to put your athlete where she will do her best and be safe.

There will be always be exceptions to the rule, but again, those are few and far between. As coaches and parents, we have to look at the bigger picture. Yes, we want to challenge the athlete, but we also want to consider what that challenge is and how it will impact them. 99% of the athletes we ask, would want to be on a team where they are 100% involved and the shining star rather than going up a level where they may not be in the tumbling section or jump section, but you will probably stunt and dance... they want to be on the team they can be 100% involved in. They want their moment...

Trust the process... you don’t have to agree with the process, but you have to trust it. This sport is hard enough, but if it’s not fun and at the same time building confidence, then your child will not successfully continue on the allstar path.