

Gymnastics Federation of Bermuda

Long Term Athlete Development Plan



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Introduction

The Gymnastics Federation of Bermuda oversees the sport of Gymnastics. We want Gymnastics programs in Bermuda the BEST they can be for ALL participants.

Gymnastics, Running, and Swimming are ideal preparation for all future sports and fitness activities.

[Physical Literacy](#) is improving movement skills from infancy, permitting a child to progress confidently and safely into whatever sport or activity they choose.

Kids first learn to move their own body weight efficiently. Much later — and in other sports — we add apparatus, balls, bats, etc.



Goals

- Improving access to Gymnastics for everyone in Bermuda
- Athlete, coach, and officials' development
- Improving communication
- Gymnastics is safe, ethical, and fair
- An efficient and effective [Safeguarding](#) process
- Promoting diversity with equal opportunity for all
- Improving competitiveness in Olympic disciplines including Artistic, and — in future — Rhythmic and Trampoline Gymnastics
- Supporting non-Olympic disciplines including Parkour, Acrobatic, and Aerobic Gymnastics



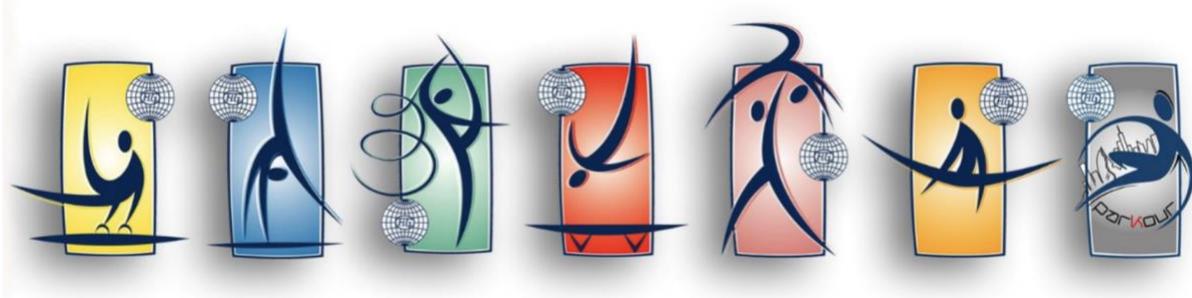
Gymnastics *Disciplines*

Olympic Disciplines

- Men's Artistic Gymnastics (MAG)
- Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG)
- Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG)
- Trampoline (TG)

Non-Olympic Disciplines

- Double-mini & Tumbling (TG)
- Aerobic Gymnastics (AG)
- Acrobatic Gymnastics (AcG)
- Parkour (PG)



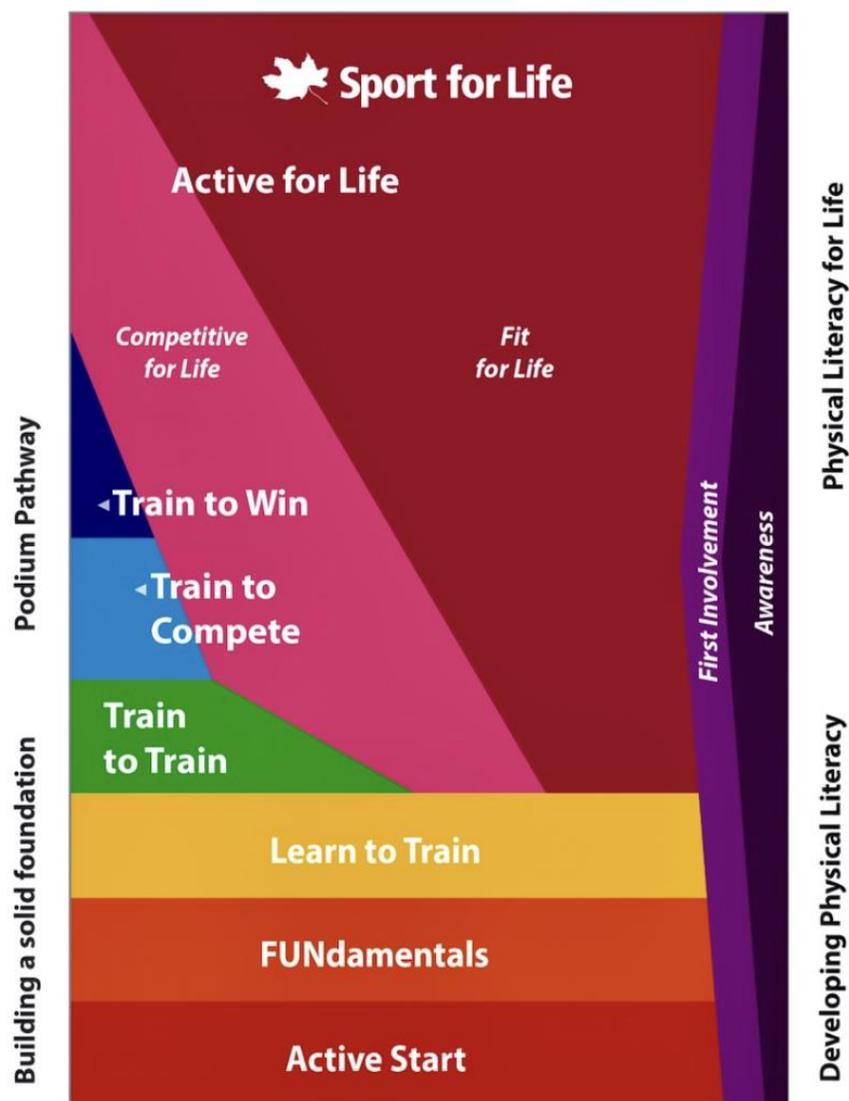
In addition, we support Gymnastics For All (GfA). This discipline includes non-competitive teams that display Gymnastics in events such as the World Gymnaestrada.



Long Term Athlete Development

The Gymnastics Federation of Bermuda follows the Sport for Life framework. This is the lifetime plan, cradle to grave. Some children start Gymnastics as young as 18 months.

Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity



We use the stages developed by Gymnastics Canada:

1. Active Start
2. Fundamental Movement Patterns
3. Building the Skills of Gymnastics
4. Specialization in a Gym Discipline
5. Becoming a Consistent Competitor
6. Winning at All Levels
7. International Excellence and Podium Performances
8. Gymnastics for Life – Active for Life

1. Active Start

- *Begin at the beginning*
- *Preschool-aged children*
- *Safety is highest priority*
- *Age-appropriate activities*
- *Build confidence, independence, and self-esteem*
- *Build strong bones and muscles, improve flexibility, develop good posture and balance*
- *Improve fitness, promote relaxation, improve sleep, promote healthy weight*
- *Improve general physical and motor fitness*
- *Low priority on learning technical Gymnastics skills (e.g. splits)*

Active Start Gymnastics is preparing young children for all sports, activities, and human movement for the rest of their lives. Parents and caregivers assist in some classes with the youngest children



2. *Fundamental Movement Patterns*

- *Often called Recreational Gymnastics*
- *Philosophy → Fun, Fitness, FUNdamentals, and Friendship*
- *Teach small group social skills*
- *Acrobatic activities and games*
- *Children understand gym rules, related to safety and accepted social behaviour*
- *Sport ethics: fairness, acceptance, right to participate, etc.*
- *All are treated equally in every class*



Simple Gymnastics skills are introduced. Concepts like form, technique, etc. are low priority.

*All Gymnastics skills can be categorized in one or more of **6 Movement Patterns**.*

We use a breakdown first developed by Keith Russell.

Movement Patterns

- **Landings**
- Stationary Positions
- Spring
- Locomotion
- Rotation
- Swing



*We teach **Landings** first and best.*

One of the most valuable takeaways for a child is how to climb up and down, land and fall safely. Falling is a skill that can be learned and practiced.

3. Building the Skills of Gymnastics

Once a beginner has improved general physical ability and has a good understanding of the 6 Movement Patterns, they can choose to begin learning the basic skills.

- *Move into advanced non-competitive classes*
- *Physical and motor fitness will be specifically trained*
- *Building power becomes a priority*
- *BASIC Gymnastics skills are a goal. (e.g. Handstand, Cartwheel, etc.)*
- *Quality becomes a goal. (e.g. straight legs, pointed toes, etc.)*
- *Opportunities to perform in front of an audience are offered. (e.g. show-off day, end-of-year show, etc.)*
- *For older children, fun competitions could be introduced in-class*
- *No commitment to competitive Gymnastics*



4. Specialization in a Gym Discipline

- *Beginners can choose to join a pre-competitive class*
- *Start training a specific discipline. (e.g. Trampoline, Artistic Gymnastics, etc.)*
- *There may be a longer-term commitment (e.g. 9 months / year training)*
- *Training becomes more systematic*
- *Success is most often based on physical ability. Therefore, athletes will have specific personal targets for flexibility, strength, power, etc.*
- *More advanced skills are introduced*
- *Training should be focused and deliberate.*
- *Mental skills are introduced*

For older children, fun low level competitions could be planned. But competitions are still low priority.



5. *Becoming a Consistent Competitor*

- *At this stage the athlete has made a serious commitment to their sport*
- *Progress in competition is an important goal*
- *Athletes clearly understand their target routines and the plan to achieve them*
- *For those athletes going through puberty, modifications to the plan are often made. (e.g. less jumping and landing on hard surfaces, etc.)*
- *Coaches understand that athletes develop at different rates. Training plans must be personalized.*
- *Monitoring is important*
- *Communication with the parent(s) on progress is essential*
- *Emotional health and happiness must be monitored, as well*
- *If there is any reduction in motivation — especially during puberty — changes should be made to the plan*
- *Positive body image, self-esteem, and confidence are goals*

Results are important, but not that important. Many Olympic champions were not the most successful athletes at age group levels.

6. *Winning at ALL Levels*

- *Athletes are self-directed and independent*
- *Striving to achieve specific goals. (e.g. qualify to a higher level, qualify for a team, etc.)*
- *Skills have reached a level where safety, training equipment, medical support are essential*
- *Athletes will travel internationally and need to adapt to different environments and apparatus*
- *Mental skills should be integrated into training. (e.g. imagery, concentration, positive self-talk, etc.)*
- *Gymnasts have a sound knowledge of competition rules, competition protocol, and judging requirements*
- *Gymnasts should understand doping control*
- *Gymnasts should have fixed their training nutrition by this stage. Food is fuel. Good fuel leads to good performance.*
- *Learn to put aside distractions*
- *Gymnasts should have a social media plan*



7. *International Excellence and Podium Performances*

- *Athletes are representing Bermuda*
- *Consistent, disciplined training and competitions expected*
- *The medical support team is increasingly important*
- *Top athletes sometimes train less on the apparatus, spending more time on recovery and physical training*
- *With international success comes recognition, media attention, and the possibility of sponsorships / endorsements*
- *By this point, the athlete has more input into the training plan. Increasingly, the coach and support team are advisors.*
- *With sport such a big focus, it's important to maintain other interests, school, friends, etc.*
- *Top international gymnasts consider competing in the NCAA or other international leagues*



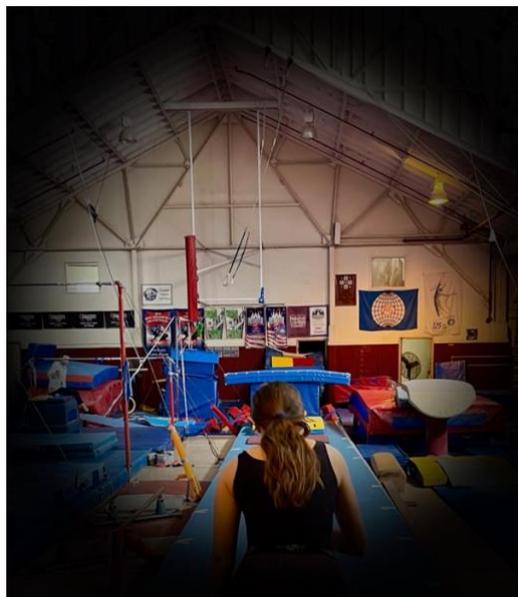
Athletes already should be looking towards the (distant) end of their competitive career. And considering future transition to coaching, judging, management, etc.

8. Gymnastics for Life – Active for Life

The Gymnastics Federation of Bermuda recommends everyone continue with Gymnastics training throughout their lifetime. We welcome adult beginners.

Anyone with any kind of disability, as well, could benefit.

- *Gymnastics for fun and fitness*
- *Gymnastics training helps other sports and activities*
- *Social participation*
- *Give back to the sport. (e.g. teaching, coaching, administration, marketing, promotion, volunteering, etc.)*



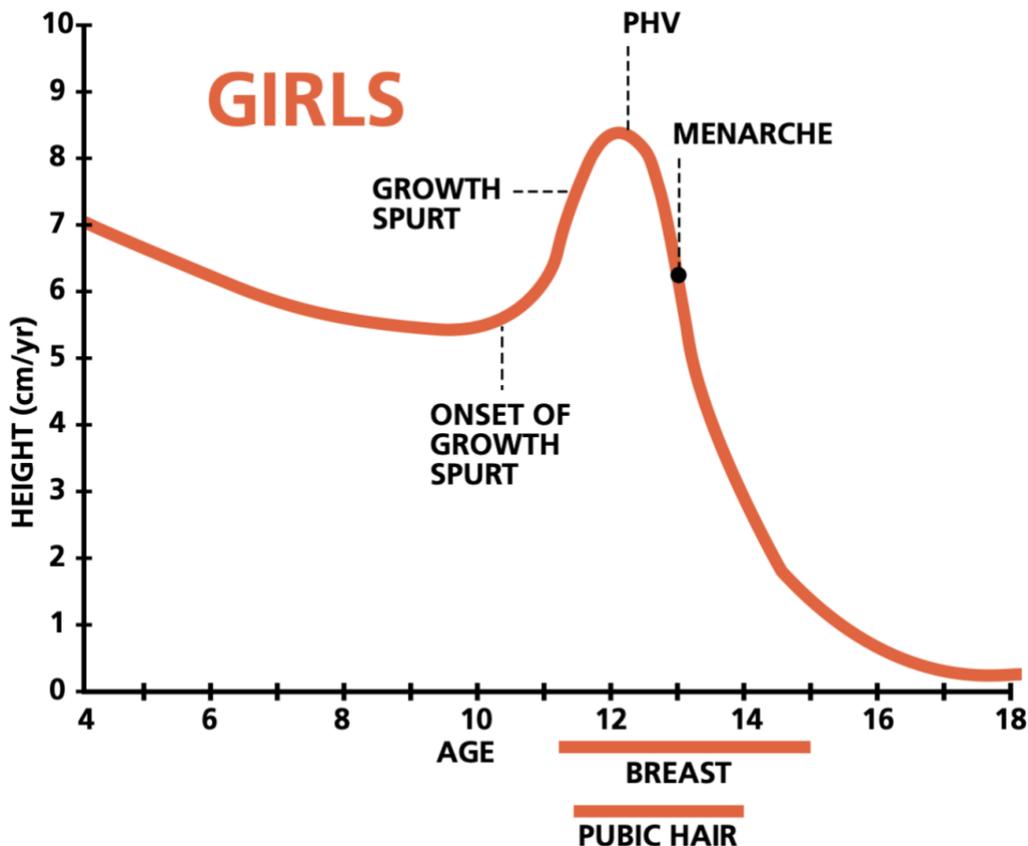
Safeguarding

Gymnastics is a youth sport, the majority of our athletes very young.

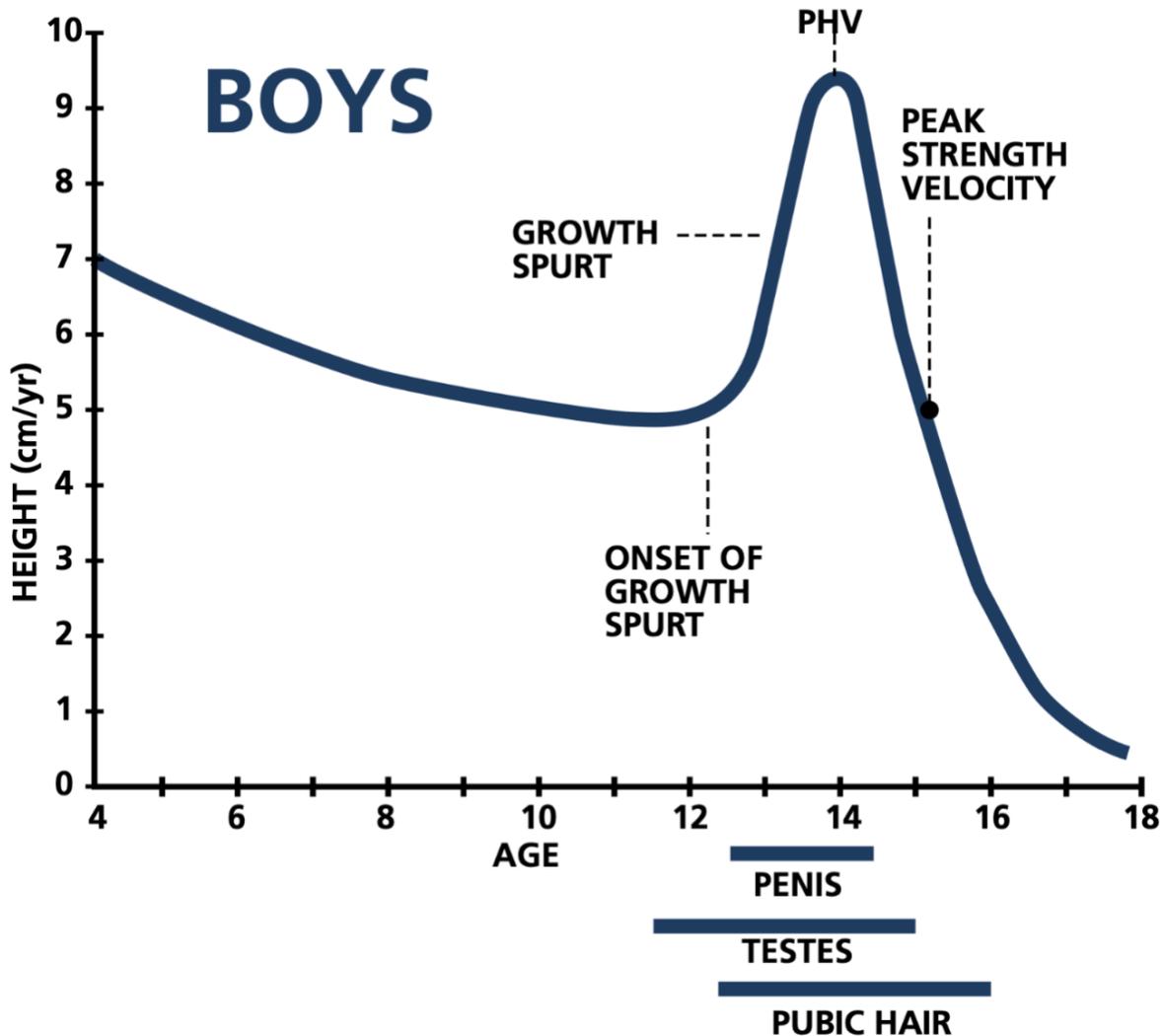
Of course all adults in our system support the healthy growth and development of children.

A challenge for some of our athletes occurs during peak growth velocity.

Though chronological age and developmental age vary from individual to individual, of greatest concern for girls is age 10-14. Training loads may need to be reduced.



As boys tend to mature a little later, training loads (especially hard landings & takeoffs) may need to be reduced from age 12-16.



Those charts from Ross & Marfell-Jones, 1982 are widely used in Gymnastics coach education around the world.

If anyone in our Federation has any concern about health or safety of a gymnast, please follow our [Safeguarding](#) process.

Monitoring

The Federation will update a PLANNING Excel Spreadsheet into the future with specific numeric targets and dates.

References

All sports in Bermuda were asked to update and improve their long term planning in 2023. That process was put in place by consultants with [Sport for Life](#).



From Canada, Sport for Life recommended we review our documents against the internationally respected [Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity](#) plan created by Richard Way and Istvan Balyi.

In 2023, Bermuda Board volunteer consultant [Rick McCharles](#) led our revision. Rick is one of the authors of the Canadian Gymnastics coach education program, well versed in this content. The previous planning document for the Federation was created by Anna Balada. Anna's document was originally titled:

**"BERMUDA GYMNASTICS STRUCTURE AND
ATHLETE PATHWAY"**

Those who fail to plan ... are planning to fail.

Rick next reviewed the excellent [Gymnastics Canada Long Term Athlete Development](#) documents.

In addition, we recommend these sources for more information on Planning:

- [Bermuda Olympic Association \(BOA\)](#)
- [Bermuda Department of Youth Sport and Recreation \(Y&S\)](#)
- [International Olympic Committee \(IOC\)](#)
- [International Gymnastics Federation \(FIG\)](#)
- [Pan American Gymnastics Union \(PAGU\)](#)
- [Caribbean Gymnastics League \(CGL\)](#)
- [GymnasticsCoaching.com](#)
- [RecGymnastics.com](#)

Documents:

- *Long-Term Athlete Development Canada*
- *A Case-Study of Systemic Abuse in Sports Perpetrated by Larry Nassar*

Published

Published March 14, 2024 by the Gymnastics Federation of Bermuda.

This [plan](#) is easily accessible from the Federation home page.

This website version is official. And up-to-date.

The Federation will be making changes to our Plan ongoing. It's a living document.

*[Contact us](#) if you have any questions or suggestions.
GymFedBDA.bm*

