

Term 5 – Monday 10th October to Sunday 18th December 2022.

Overview of weeks 5 to 8 Each week our gymnasts will visit two different pieces of equipment either in the blue gym or red gym (the colour refers to the colour of the carpet) using rotations allows our gymnasts to experience all the apparatus within our four-week timetable.

I wanted to start this blog with a huge well done to all of our gymnasts who took part in our Christmas competition they have been trying very hard at remembering and performing their routines in class and this really showed with the great performances they gave in the competition. Our next competition will be in late April so keep an eye out near the date for more entry details

Blue gym

Beam – In the beam area we have been looking at cartwheels. Many of our gymnasts love to cartwheel everywhere they can but it can be very challenging to land it on the beam. We try to encourage our gymnasts to get their feet to go over their heads which we call a square cartwheel, instead of their feet going around the side which makes it a lot harder to land. Our gymnasts are all at different stages with their cartwheels especially when it comes to putting them on the beam so some have been working on bunny hops along and over the beams while others have been cartwheeling on all beams.

Floor – Here we have been working on our handstands and handstand forward rolls. Depending on which stage each of our gymnasts was at with these skills changed which aspect of the skills we focused on. For those who struggle with rolling we concentrated on this and encouraged our gymnasts to tuck their heads in when rolling and worked on standing up without their hands we added in some handstand preparation work for some variety. For those who can already roll we concentrated the work on handstands and trying to join the roll at the end and rolling at the right time so they don't roll to late and falling flat on their backs, I have seen great improvement from all the gymnasts on floor which has been nice to witness

Strength and Flexibility – For the past four weeks our gymnasts have been playing a mat conditioning game. This involves splitting the group into two teams around a safety mat each and competing against each team to see which team can perform the different strength exercise first. We like this game in the gym because the gymnasts work really hard as they want to win and forget that they are doing strength work. This game also helps our gymnasts work on their team working skills which are not only helpful for their gymnastics but also in everything they do.

Track and trampette – In this area our focus has been jumps and turning jumps. Some of our gymnasts think this is a really easy activity but once they have a go especially with the turning jumps they have realised they are much harder than they thought. It is always interesting to watch how many of our gymnasts can keep their legs straight when jumping in a straight line but when adding in a turn all sorts of weird things start to happen which usually ends up with our gymnasts landing in a

heap on the floor! With some guidance from our coach team in some cases even asking our gymnasts to turn in the other direction, our gymnasts have corrected this and I have seen some lovely turning jumps on as a result.

Red gym

Floor – This is our non sprung floor and on here we have been working on bridges and bridge kick over's. This is always the skill the gymnasts want to learn but it can be a very difficult to complete because a lot of flexibility is needed in the gymnasts shoulders which can be a problem for some of them. To try to help with this some of our side stations were directed at shoulder flexibility, the gymnasts never enjoy these activities because they hurt but once you explain that they are very important to help them to achieve their bridge kick over's they will normally carry on the activity.

Bars – On the bars we have been looking at pull up rounds. On the bars there are only a few skills our gymnasts can work on because it is the hardest apparatus to complete as a lot of strength needed for every skill on the bars. The pull up round is a very tricky skill but important skill as this is how our gymnasts get onto the bar and is needed before we work on any other skills on the bar. To help with our gymnasts strength the side stations involved arm and core strength activities and we also tried a new prep I had seen of completing a half pull up round from lying on their backs holding a floor bar and lifting a soft ball over their heads with their feet. This prep worked well for some of our gymnasts while other didn't quite grasp it yet so I will include this in the plans again for the next time we do the skill.

Vault – For the past few weeks we have been looking at straddle on and straddle over vaults. Most of our gymnasts find this skill easier than the squat on or squat through vault because their feet and legs don't have to be together but it can look scruffier because their legs should be straight. We have been working on all the different aspects of the vault in our side stations with run up dills, springboard use, straddle onto low blocks and the landing off the vault before adding it all together on the vaulting station. Many of our gymnasts and perform all the different stations but struggle to add it altogether in the vault, we will carry on with this work next time our gymnasts visit the vault.

Tumble – This is our fun area which involves both our fast track (long trampoline) and our air track (long bouncy castle) and we have been working on some back flick preparation work. Back flicks are a very advanced skill to perform but we thought it might be nice for our gymnasts to try something fun and have a go at the preparation work for the skill. This involved lots of jumping onto their backs on mats which they have loved and even some supported back flicks over our foam rollers which has been a hit with our gymnasts.

