

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

Overview of weeks 1 to 4 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.

Term 5 started with a bang for our gymnasts as week 1 was our badge week! This is always a crazy week for our coaching team as the badge scheme involves lots of different equipment including lots of hand held equipment such as hoops, ribbons and balls. Your gymnasts should have brought home one or two badge slips with them when you read them it will explain what your gymnast had to complete to the badge, there are 10 activities on each and the gymnasts have to complete 8 to pass the badge. (Remember you have until the 12th of November to pay for the badges)

Blue gym

Beam – In the beam area we have been looking at forward rolls, this can not only be a very scary skill for our gymnasts to perform but also a very difficult skill to land standing up on the beam. Our side stations broke down the skill with practicing the end of the skill by rocking backwards and standing up and rolling along the floor foam beams to build our gymnasts confidence and also encouraging our gymnasts to look for the end of the beam before they roll to hopefully roll in a straight line.

Floor – Here we have been working on our headstands as this is one of the skills in some of the floor routines in the Christmas competition for those gymnasts who have entered. Headstands are an interesting skill which for some gymnasts comes naturally while others have to spend some time learning. We start by teaching our gymnasts a headstand with their knees tucked in as this is a more stable base once they can do this we then encourage our gymnasts to straighten their legs and work on different ways of getting in and out of the headstands. To compliment the work and to give their heads a rest the side stations involved core arm strength activities. Lots of progress was made by all our gymnasts here with most gymnasts now able to hold a tucked headstand for a few seconds before falling!

Strength and Flexibility – For the past four weeks our gymnasts have been playing a conditioning team game to see which team can complete the most of each exercise in 30 seconds and adding all the scores up to see who the overall winning teams were. This activity has shown use who the competitive members of the classes are which in many cases resulted in come very interesting counting especially with the younger gymnasts (we have seen 100 sit ups in 30 seconds!) But overall all the gymnasts tried very hard.

Track and trampette – In this area our focus has been handstand flat backs, this is a very important skill progression to learn as it is a building block for handsprings on floor and the handspring vault. One of the side stations here was small arm circles while holding bean bags, many of our gymnasts

thought this was going to be an easy task until they had a go and then complained about how hard it was and how much it hurt their arms. We also had a station for our gymnasts to work on holding their handstands which is an ongoing process but I did see improvement here from many of our gymnasts.

Red gym

Floor – This is our non sprung floor and on here we have been carrying on our work with our cartwheels. For those who can we have been adapting our plans for one handed cartwheels. It is lovely to witness our gymnasts land their cartwheels or one handed cartwheels for the first time and to see the shock in their faces when they do so. There is always a lot more work that can be done with cartwheels even when our gymnasts can land them we will then work with our gymnasts on the technique and presentation on the skill and see if we can challenge our gymnasts by performing their cartwheels on a line or a beam and even working on some free cartwheel progressions (cartwheels with no hands!)

Bars – On the bars we have been looking at swinging and adding a hop of their hands when they are behind the bar which are called regrasps. Lots of children can manage a small swing on the bar but due to the fact that they swing in the wrong body shape it is hard to make their swings bigger. We have worked on the shapes we need which are dish and arch shapes (hopefully your gymnast can show you what these shapes are if you are unsure!) We have explained to our gymnasts in which part of the swing we need to see each shape which makes the skill not only technically correct but also makes sure they don't kick their feet on the lower bar, once they have understood this we have been adding in the regrasps. One of the major complaints we always have from our gymnasts about swinging on the bars is how much it hurts their hands so the side stations involved more of the dish and arch shape work to give their hands a little rest between the bar stations.

Vault – For the past few weeks we have been looking at the handstand flat back vault with our gymnasts. We have had different adaptations in our plans for the different ages and abilities of our gymnasts. For all of our classes we have looked a springboard use and trying to make sure our gymnasts only jump once on the springboard, this can be a tricky skill to master and an even hard bad habit to break because of this we try to add this least one station of this in each vault plan. We have also looked at the handstand which have done by having their feet raised on a block and kicking to handstand and falling flat on their backs on a mat on another station. On the vault all of our gymnasts started off with squatting onto the vault and then kicking to handstand flat back on the mat and for those that could we asked to run and jump straight into handstand flat back on the vault. For many of our younger gymnasts this did resemble more of a forward roll but all groups tried hard to see a handstand at some point in the skill.

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 our forward rolls and dive forward rolls. We had

lots of variations of rolling set up here from rolling onto a mat, rolling over or off a little foam block and our gymnast's favourite of rolling onto the cloud mat at the end of the fast track. Lots of fun and laughter has been had on here as well as some hard work when trying to stand up from their rolls with their feet together which it a lot more difficult than it sounds.