



INCREASING PROFESSIONALISM

>>> By now, most people are no longer maintaining their New Year's Resolutions. But Increasing Your Professionalism is something to work towards all year long.

Here are a few tips to keep you going.

By Carisa Laughon, USA Gymnastics Director of Educational Services

Coaches, instructors, club owners, administrators, judges, and others are all considered "gymnastics professionals." The definition of a professional is, "characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession and/or exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace" (Merriam-Webster). Being a true professional encompasses many areas and requires continued maintenance. Here are suggestions to help you with this New Year's Resolution.

FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

• Ethics:

includes everything from respecting others, playing fair, exhibiting confidentiality and resolving conflicts, to using your authority appropriately and showing concern for the success of your athletes and others. (see the USA Gymnastics Code of Ethics)

• Proper attire and personal grooming:

For class and practice sessions - wear a neat, clean staff shirt, athletic pants or shorts (professional length), athletic shoes, long hair pulled up, minimal or no jewelry. For competition - wear staff shirt and warm-up suit. For sanctioned competitions, coach and judge attire is defined in the Rules & Policies.

• Plan activities:

lesson and practice plans can help you run organized and effective classes and/or practices.

• Continuing education:

professionals attain basic and advanced certifications to develop their competency as a coach, instructor, or

judge and continually educate themselves to maintain and enhance their expertise.

• Communication (both written and verbal):

maintain positive communication with athletes, parents, co-workers, and supervisors.

• Punctuality:

arrive at work before your scheduled start time so that you can be prepared to begin on time.

• Know your students:

remember their names, understand their skill level and how best they learn.

FOR CLUBS

• Clean your facility:

clean the gym and keep it cleaner throughout the year. A clean facility presents a better appearance for clients as well as helps avoid injuries and illnesses. Don't forget to maintain the outside of your facility, especially parking lots and sidewalks.

• Maintain a safe facility:

regularly check apparatus' and equipment for wear and tear, needed maintenance, and replacement.

• Conduct staff meetings:

host regularly scheduled staff meeting to address safety, cleanliness, emergency plans, class and practice lesson plans, schedules, and more. ✕