

Dear Gym Owner,

I am writing to you today on behalf of USA Gymnastics as part of an effort to obtain accurate and useful information concerning ethnic and gender diversity in gymnastics.

All Olympic sports as well as the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) are governed by the provisions of the Amateur Sports Act as overseen by the U.S. Congress. This means that USA Gymnastics and all the other Olympic sports must comply with all Federal laws that deal with the issues of gender equity, open access, non-discrimination, and so on.

As a first step in insuring compliance with all Federal regulations, the USOC is requiring the National Governing Bodies (NGB's) for the various Olympic sports to provide accurate information concerning minority and gender participation levels within the sport. The problem facing USA Gymnastics and the other NGB's is that this information is not readily available.

It is obvious to all who take even a cursory look at gymnastics participation levels across the country that USA Gymnastics has a gender inclusion problem. Our problem is not the lack of opportunities available for female athletes that is typically a concern central to these types of initiatives. Instead, our challenge is that gymnastics traditionally has a lower percentage of male participants. This fact will not be difficult for USA Gymnastics to establish through the use information generated through the Athlete Registration process.

But minority participation levels are another matter. We can all readily identify ethnic athletes among current and not so current stars in the gymnastics world: Lynch, Dawes, Humphries, Chow, Bhavsar, Schwikert, and many others. But these anecdotal examples do not tell the whole story of ethnic athlete participation across the membership of USA Gymnastics.

This is where you come in and why USA Gymnastics needs your help.

We would like you to take a few moments to sample the participants in your gym on a typically busy night during the week. The more times you can do this, the more accurate the information will be. Using this information as a starting point we can then extrapolate percentages for male, female and minority participation within your entire gym.

The information reported will look something like this:

Total gym enrollment at the time of the sample: 300
How many kids were in the gym at the time of the sample? 60
Date of sample: June 11
Number of females Females 46
Number of females Males 14
Number of Caucasian 42
Number of African Americans 8
Number of Hispanics 2
Number of Asians 4
Number of Middle Easterns 0
Number of American Indians 0
Number of Unknowns 4

In addition, we would like the same information summarized for all your competitive teams that participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned events. These would include men's and women's artistic, sports-acro, trampoline and tumbling, rhythmic, and general gymnastics.

Of course, your numbers and percentages will vary and may vary greatly from the example presented above. That sample was taken last Thursday night at one of the gyms at Buckeye Gymnastics. This sample included preschool students, boys and girl's recreation gymnastics classes, and a trampoline and tumbling class. The total number of students in the gym was reduced for simplicity's sake.

Your help in this Member Club survey will enable USA Gymnastics meet the USOC requirements, but it will also help us identify populations that might, in fact, be underrepresented within our clubs and programs. If that turns out to be the case then we will work to develop strategies to help increase those populations. If you agree that gymnastics training is of tremendous importance in the physical, mental and emotional development of children, then what better way for us to effect a positive influence on the next generation than to expand those opportunities to all the children in our communities?

USA Gymnastics is considering ethnic origin as part of the Athlete and Professional Membership registration process so we use can self-identification as a more accurate indicator of our membership composition.

Please complete the on-line reporting form as soon as possible.
You can find the form at [Diversity in Gymnastics](#)

Thank you for your continuing support of USA Gymnastics.

Sincerely,

David B. Holcomb
Buckeye Gymnastics, Inc.
USA Gymnastics Executive Committee