

Jersey Special Gymnastics Club

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Dear Roy

Recently a new sports organisation was formed, The Gymnastics Association of Jersey. I was elected as President and it is in that role that I am contacting you.

I am writing on the suggestion of Deputy Andrew Green who attended a presentation on the future use of Fort Regent Leisure Centre. He felt it appropriate to ensure you were fully aware of the needs of the sport of gymnastics for a designated venue.

You know of my own club's problems in finding a suitable venue for training and that we have found some sort of solution in Greenfields. The other three clubs in the Gymnastics Association of Jersey have had, and continue to have, similar problems with finding a venue that enables them to train at least on a par with their mainland counterparts and properly prepare for competition. The majority of clubs on the mainland have access to high class facilities for all or part of their training programmes. The only way that gymnastic clubs on Jersey are able to access the kind of facility that will allow the practice of high level skills is to travel off Island. Given the expense of travel this is not a viable proposition.

For the sport to grow and to raise standards, a designated facility that will allow the safe progression on to higher level skills is essential.

Currently, the Queen's Hall at Fort Regent can be set up as a good competition venue. Events there have already been held successfully and the response of visitors has always been very positive. With the purchase of some additional matting for parallel bars and a proper pommel set up it would be possible to stage events with a full range of equipment at an appropriate standard and continue to invite clubs to Jersey. The Gymnastics Association of Jersey is desperate that this facility is kept available in any development of Fort Regent.

But the sport needs a training facility that will match this competition venue and again I would ask on behalf of the four clubs in Jersey that consideration is given to

providing such a facility in any development of Fort Regent. A facility that is an up-to-date training venue dedicated to gymnastics all year round.

I am sure you appreciate the benefits of taking part in any sport, but I would like to ensure you are aware of the statistics of the existing gymnastics programmes in Jersey.


There are four clubs who offer training to gymnasts from pre-school to veteran ages, from beginner and recreational classes to international levels.

There are 550 gymnasts training and a total of 52 people coaching, the majority of whom are volunteers. In total there are 72 sessions taking place per week in a variety of venues and 87 hours of training carried out weekly.

Clubs stage local competitions often involving opposition from the mainland and further a field. They attend regional, national and international competitions. All this with a great amount of success but often limited by the lack of a good training venue. If you do not have a sprung floor for six months of the year or a proper vault run up, for example, then you do not expect to win medals in those events. Similarly, if you do not have a safe landing pit to practice for the bars or the rings.

For this sport to take off to another level there is a need for a centre of excellence where gymnasts can train and raise the bar, something for the gymnasts and coaches to aspire to. It is something the Gymnastics Association of Jersey is aiming to achieve and if there is an answer in the development of Fort Regent then we do not want to 'miss the boat'.

Regards



John Grady

President

Gymnastics Association of Jersey

CC Deputy James Reid, Minister for Education, Sport and Culture
Derek De La Haye, Assistant Director, Education, Sport and Culture
Arthur Falle, Regent Gymnastics Club
Jackie Hill, Jersey Gymnastics Club
Tory Du Mond, Du Mond Gymnastics Academy
Gary Buesnel, Jersey Special Gymnastics Club