



### **Bringing Back Navy Women's Gymnastics**

The Naval Academy has a long history of Gymnastics, with a Varsity Women's Gymnastics Team which competed until 1993 and Club Women's Gymnastics Team which existed through 2001. The Navy Women's Gymnastics Extracurricular Activity (ECA) was formed in the 2014-2015 school year, by Marine Captain, Michaela Connally when she was a Second Class Midshipman. Shortly after her graduation, Jeff Barlow, a former private club owner in Annapolis and level 10 coach, was invited to coach the team in 2017. In 2018 the team expanded and included a few men on the roster and re-branded as the Co-Ed Gymnastics team. Since being stationed at the Academy in 2022, Capt. Connally had a successful first season coaching with Jeff Barlow.

Though both men and women can compete in The National Association Of Intercollegiate Gymnastics Clubs (NAIGC), it is the highest possible level that female gymnasts are able to compete as midshipmen since the defunding of both the Varsity and Club Teams.

The team has continued to compete across the east coast since its establishment, routinely traveling to compete at George Washington University, Penn State, and James Madison University. The Navy Women's Gymnastics ECA competed at NAIGC Nationals in 2016. Due to lack of funding and the cancellation of NAIGC Nationals in 2020 and 2021, the women's team did not compete at the national level again until 2023 in which they placed 12th out of 40 teams in the Nation, as well as individual gymnast placements in the All Around and Individual

Events. The team is hoping to travel to Albuquerque, New Mexico for this year's Nationals Competition.

Since the ECA Gymnastics Team's inception, it has shared facilities with the Men's Varsity Team thanks to the generous and continuous support of the Men's program. The team's Meet Entry Fees are funded by the Midshipman Welfare Fund, and the team continues to fundraise to build their reserve account to cover the remainder of their expenses. Reserve accounts are non-Budget Accounts that remain with the organization year to year from funds derived through fundraising, voluntary contributions, donations or ticket sales. Over the course of the past several years, the team has steadily increased in its competitiveness due to the commitment of the gymnasts and consistency of the team's practice schedule, despite its ECA status and limited funding.

The team has been coached by volunteer coach Jeff Barlow since 2017. Coach Jeff Barlow is a former private gymnastics club owner, is a former professional member of USA Gymnastics, and has coached both men's and women's gymnastics at a Junior Olympic level for over 30 years. The current Officer Representative is Captain Michaela A Connally, who established the Women's Gymnastics ECA in 2014, spent two years as the team captain before graduating and commissioning into the U.S. Marine Corps in 2016.

The team has big goals but is looking for support from former members of the Women's Club and Women's Varsity teams. Both coaches are impressed by the depth and skill level of the team this year and are unified in their efforts to someday see the team recognized again as a sanctioned Club or Varsity Program. In order to move toward this goal they need opportunities to showcase the talent and competitiveness of the team. Any way that you can support this team, makes a difference and is greatly appreciated.

How to help:

- Like "Navy Gymnastics Club" on Facebook
- Follow their [Instagram](#) @navycoedgymnastics
- Attend one of their meets! Schedule to be released on Social Media Pages!
- If you would like to donate to their team:
  - Make checks payable to the U.S. Treasury.
  - Write "MWF – Coed Gymnastics ECA" on the memo line of the check.
  - Mail checks to:

Comptroller-Gift Fund  
181 Wainright Road  
Annapolis, MD 21402