

Welcome!

Welcome to Team UP!

We can't wait to see what this upcoming season has in store. We also understand that the start of a ninja's competitive journey can be especially stressful - and confusing - for parents. As such, we've put together a guide to try to make the process as smooth and simple as possible .

Go ahead and give it a read, and come back whenever you need to. Still have questions? That's 100% okay! Reach out to Laura Pyne at 717-877-2762, or aurapynepro@gmail.com. We're glad you're here!

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Parenting a Ninja 101

Heading into the season... we wanted to acknowledge that parenting a ninja can be hard!

Something we've learned as we've gone is that each athlete is different, has different goals, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and approaches... and that finding a groove just takes time.

That's okay!

As you start this journey, know that you're not alone, and that all the "veteran" parents are here to support you and your ninjas, and that they're in great hands with our team coaches.

This guide will cover a lot of logistics and details relating to the season, but we wanted to provide a couple extra helpful pieces of information here.

First: practice patience... your ninja's in the right spot! The first season for most ninjas is especially challenging. Learning how to work with the adrenaline that kicks in when a starting buzzer sounds, to deal with nerves, and to perform in front of an audience is hard. Even ninjas at the top of their game struggle with this, especially in the beginning. DON'T be surprised if they perform differently in a competition than you see at practice. Don't be surprised if a competition results in a score of 0 (we've all been there!). Stick with it, stay positive, and keep encouraging.

It's also important to note that sometimes calls from judges during competitions just don't go the way we think they should. If you have questions, talk to the coach who walked with your child during the competition. While parents can submit challenges to calls, it's often best to first talk to the coach, and even to let them make the challenge on your child's behalf. We represent our team and all of our team members when we travel to other facilities and always try to do so well. When frustrations are high, this can be hard but remember: we're all in it together!

Something else to consider as we start the season is goal setting. First of all: consider setting up a time to meet with Thomas or Jasper to allow your child to set some goals for the season. But, think about it at home as well. What are some things they'd like to accomplish this year? While all ninjas want to "clear" a course or "podium," those things take time. Instead, think about specific obstacles they'd like to tackle this year, and goals that don't relate to medals. Over time, these can evolve... but it's best to find things to celebrate along the way!

Remember: you're not alone. Parents that have been at it for a while would love to answer questions as we go!

NinjaWorks

NinjaWorks serves as a competitor tracking system for both World Ninja League (WNL) and FINA. While WNL is the league Team UP hosts and competes in as a team, it's worth knowing this ID matters for other leagues as well.

Creating an ID

To compete in any WNL competition - Tier 1 or Tier 2 - your child will need a NinjaWorks ID prior to registering. NinjaWorks IDs are free and - once created - remain the same for your child's entire ninja journey.

To get started, visit: www.Ninjaworks.com.

Once you're on the homepage, look for the "Sign Up" or "Create an Account" button and click on it.

Next, you'll be directed to a registration page where you'll need to provide some personal information for your child. This typically includes your child's name, an email address for the account, your child's birthdate and a password. Make sure to choose a strong password to protect your account.

After filling in the required information, click on the "Submit" or "Create Account" button. At this point, you may be asked to verify your email address by clicking on a confirmation link sent to your inbox. Be sure to check your email and follow the instructions provided.

Once your email is verified, you should be able to log in to your Ninjaworks.com ID using the email address and password you provided during registration. Congratulations, you now have a NinjaWorks ID!

You'll want to keep this log in handy, and may want to consider writing down the ID. Again, you'll need it to register for every competition.

*Please be sure to designate Urban Playground as your ninja's team. This allows our team to gain points at competitions for fun.

Divisions

The athlete's age on January 1, 2024 will determine the division in which the athlete will participate for the entire WNL season.

The Divisions are as follows:

Kids: Ages 6-8

Mature Kids: Ages 9 & 10

Preteens: Ages 11 & 12

Teens: Ages 13 & 14

Young Adults: Ages 15-17

Adults (Amateurs): 18 & up

Masters: Age 40 & up

Elite: 15 & up - (Tier 1 only)

Power Rankings, Points, and Badges

You may hear chatter around the gym about Power Rankings and Badges.

Once your child has completed 5 WNL competitions in a given season, they'll begin to have a Power Ranking Score. This score starts at 1500 for new ninjas. For ninjas who have competed in the past, the score starts with the previous season and is weighted (though none of us quite understands the process, the WNL site says it is similar to Chess scoring). The power ranking score correlates with different "badges".

The power ranking is more for fun than for anything else. However, if your child competes in 12 competitions throughout the season, they'll receive an actual badge/patch, that matches their power score, at World Championships.

Power ranking is based on how your ninja is expected - based on past experience - to perform compared to others at the same competition, in the same division. If they're expected to do well, and place lower than expected, the score drops. If they're not expected to place high, but do better than expected, the score will go up. If they perform right around where they're expected it may slightly change in either direction (this is what we've come to understand, though a more detailed explanation is available on the WNL site).

More relevant to the season, perhaps, are "points."

At every competition, each competitor - separated by age group and gender - has the opportunity to earn points for the season. The first place competitor receives 10 points, 2nd receives 9, 3rd receives 8... down to the 10th place finisher. These points are accumulated throughout the season, creating "rankings" for the entire season.

After 12 competitions, a ninja's lowest points can drop, being replaced by higher points. For example, if a ninja earned 1 point in a competition earlier in the season, but receives 3 points in his or her 13th competition, the 1 point would drop and be replaced by the 3.

If a ninja's points place them in the top 25% of their region (we're the NorthEast region), they'll earn a spot in the Premier League, which you can read more about at www.worldninjaleague.org.

A few things to note for beginner ninjas: our region (the Northeast region) is VERY large.... This means that there are often 20-30 or more children in each age division at each competition. It also means that many ninjas do not score points at competitions and that is COMPLETELY fine. We're mentioning it here only because you're likely to hear talk about it as the season begins!

WNL Waiver

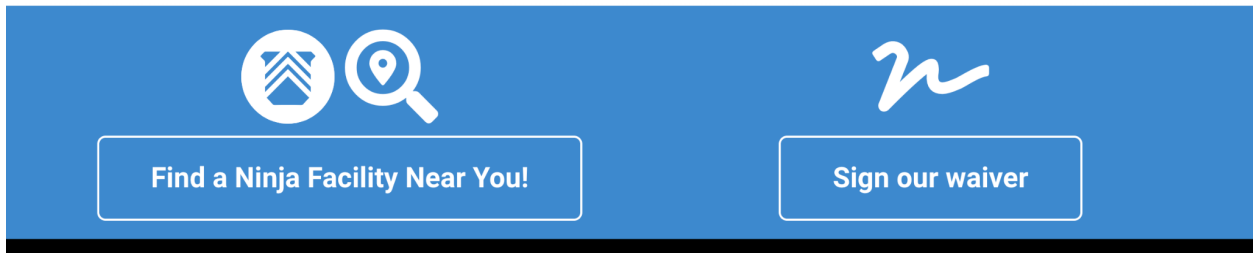
For your child to compete, they'll need to have a WNL waiver on file for the year. While registering for competitions you'll also be asked to sign a waiver for each gym, the WNL waiver is separate and must be completed each year.

To fill out your child's WNL waiver, you must have your Ninjaworks ID on hand.

From there, visit www.worldninjaleague.org.

Scroll to the bottom of the page.

Click on "Sign our Waiver," and follow the steps. This only needs to be completed once for the season.



While you're here, consider signing up for emails by clicking "sign our waiver." This way you'll receive emails from WNL as Regionals and Worlds rolls around.

WNL Certified Coaches

Unlike other leagues, for an adult to walk with a child on any WNL course, they must have a WNL coaching certification on hand.

For official team competitions, either Jasper or Thomas will be on hand to walk with your child.

If you plan to attend additional competitions, other parents who are certified coaches may be available. Current UP parents that hold certifications include:

- John Pyne
- John Romano
- Laura Pyne

Laura and John will also be at several Tier 2 competitions, if any pre-team members would like to compete in additional competitions throughout the season.

If you have questions about the certification process, please talk to Laura or John Pyne.

Registering for Competitions

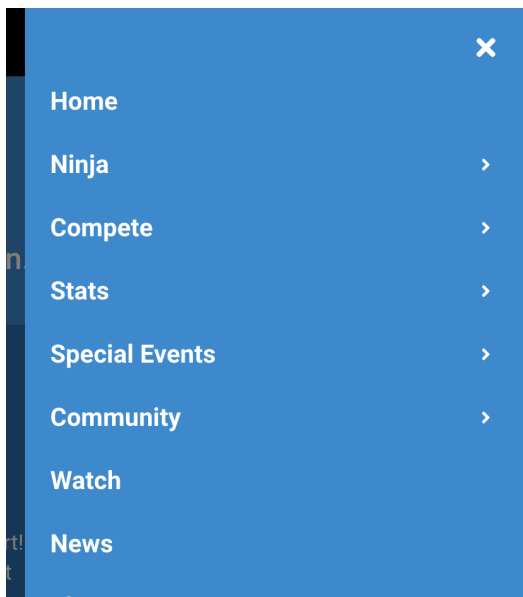
Before we begin, it's best to be honest. Registering for competitions is one of the more frustrating parts of the season!

Like everything else, if you are confused, overwhelmed, or stuck, PLEASE reach out to one of the parents who has been at it a bit longer. We're all happy to help!

To begin, visit www.worldninjaleague.org.

Click on the 3 lines in the top right header.

Click on "Compete."



Select either Tier 1 or Tier 2.

From there, you'll be brought to a schedule for the season.

Date ^	Facility	Competition	Format	Region	Location
September 9-10	Gripz Gym	WNL IX Tier 1 Qualifier #2	Skills	US - Midwest	Southfield, MI
September 9-10	Gripz Gym	WNL IX Tier 1 Qualifier #1	Flow Course	US - Midwest	Southfield, MI
September 16-17	MLab Ohio	WNL IX Tier 1 Qualifier #1	Flow Course	US - Midwest	Columbus, OH
September 22	Obstacle Ninja Academy	WNL IX Tier 1 Qualifier #1	Skills	US - Southeast	Orlando, FL
September 23-24	Obstacle Ninja Academy	WNL IX Tier 1 Qualifier	Flow Course	US - Southeast	Orlando, FL

In this view (on a desktop, mobile views vary), you'll be able to see the date of each scheduled competition, the location, the format (which we'll get to later), and the region.

To select a specific competition - beginning with those we'll be attending as a team - click on the gym name, to bring up details about the competition.

Below, we've pulled an image of what happens when you click on our first Tier 1 Team competition, at Jump Climb Extreme:

Saturday September 23

Wave	Time
Kids	9AM
Mature Kids	1PM
Preteen	5PM

Sunday September 24

Wave	Time
Teen	9AM
YA Masters	1PM
Adult Elite	5PM

[Register Here](#)

Pay attention to the date for your ninja's division, and the time. It's important to note, however, that these times often shift depending on the registration numbers. When it changes, you'll generally receive an email from the gym if you have registered (these emails are important to hold onto and check leading up to a competition!)

What's most important, from this page, is the green "register here" button.

For each competition, you'll select the register here button, which should take you to the sign up page for that competition. In certain cases, the button may not be there, in which case, you'll want to visit that gym's actual webpage, and look for their "competition" tab or button.

This is where it gets slightly confusing, as each gym has their own process for registering. Some of them require a log in (which you'll create the first time you register for an event at their gym). Hold on to these log-ins to make future registrations easier. In most cases, you'll be asked for your ninja's ninjaworks ID, and may need to select a wave. Sometimes, there will be a fee for spectators. Sometimes you'll be able to sign the waiver during registration, and sometimes they'll ask you to sign their waiver at a different link. Take your time and keep breathing, it really does get easier!

Once you're registered for a given competition, you should receive a confirmation email that may also provide helpful information about that gym and the competition day.

We also recommend following the gyms you'll be competing at on Facebook, and checking their events pages. If they've created an event for the competition, marking that you'll be attending will allow you to view helpful information leading up to competition day!

As a general rule, each competition generally costs between \$60 and \$90 per athlete. Some gyms do offer "early bird" discounts for registering early.

It's also important to note that some gyms do fill up. If there's a competition you'd like your child to compete in, or one on our team schedule, registering as early as possible to avoid being waitlisted is highly recommended.

Course Walkthroughs and Preparations

Our coaches do an excellent job of preparing ninjas to compete!

But, there are things you - as a parent - can do to help the process.

First - as mentioned previously - follow any Facebook pages or events relating to upcoming competitions. In most cases, gyms will post walkthroughs the evening before a competition so you can view the course ahead of time. In some cases, these will also be emailed out.

When a walk through video becomes available, take the time to watch it with your ninja in a calm setting. Talk about each obstacle, specifically where the starting platforms are, where the ending platforms are, and what's off limits. Keep it casual and remember: the coaches will be there to support them the day of the event! The walk throughs are meant to be informational, not stressful!

Some ninjas prefer to wait until the morning of the competition to view the walkthrough video. As you progress through this season, you'll find a rhythm that's best for your ninja and his or her personal goals.

Remember to get adequate rest the night before competitions and to eat well the night before and morning of. What feels like a "short" run to us - as spectators - is more taxing than it looks: start your ninja on the best foot possible and encourage them to relax, do their best, and have fun!

DURING the event: if you'd like anyone to watch from home, live streams are generally available on the WNL Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/worldninjaleague>). In certain situations, they may announce that the live streams are in an event page, or on the gym's Facebook page, but, the WNL Facebook page is the place to start.

Qualifying for WNL Regionals and Worlds

At each WNL competition throughout the season, the top 3 competitors in each division qualify for regionals (for that respective geographic region). The best part about this, is that if a child has already qualified for regionals, that spot drops down to the next non-qualified competitor.

In the beginning of the season, when no one is qualified, this means the top ninjas at each competition tend to earn their regional spots. But, by the end of the season, it's much easier to qualify, as the spots continue to drop down.

Do not stress if your child does not qualify until late in the season, *if qualifying is one of their goals*.

As mentioned above, our region is the NorthEast region, which covers gyms in Central/Eastern PA, Maryland, New Jersey and the Greater NYC metro. Athletes are technically allowed to qualify in multiple regions—by qualifying in a competition in that specific region (such as the New England or MidWest regions), however athletes are only allowed to compete in one Regional Championship.

Tier 1:

In WNL's Tier 1 League, regional competitions take place in the spring (usually in May), with a world's event that is slated to take place June 21-23. Last year's NorthEast Regional Championships took place in Lawrence Township, NJ (just outside of Trenton, NJ) and last year's World Championships took place in Greensboro, NC, but this year's locations have yet to be announced.

Any child that qualifies for regionals can compete for a spot at the WNL World Championships. At the Regionals competition—which is typically run as a “Flow Course”—the top 16 to 40 ninjas in each division will qualify for World Championships, depending on the size of the region. In the Northeast Region last year, 40 from each division made it to Worlds. Just like regional qualifications, if a child qualifies for Worlds but does not register, the spot passes down: this means that even if your ninja does not qualify for Worlds the day of the competition, a spot could still open up for them as long as they competed!

Tier 2:

In WNL's Tier 2 League, the Regional competitions take place in late winter (usually in late February), with the Tier 2 Worlds Championships slated to take place around April. Last year's Tier 2 NorthEast Regional Championship took place in Brooklyn, NY, while the Tier 2 World Championships took place in Austin, TX, but this year's locations have yet to be announced.

Similar to Tier 1, at Tier 2 Regionals, the top 16 to 40 ninjas in each division will qualify for World Championships, depending on the size of the region.

There are more ins and outs here regarding different regions and options. If you would like to chat more on the subject, reach out to Laura or John Pyne.

WNL Rules and Course Types

WNL offers 4 course types for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 athletes. Each ninja tends to prefer different formats, so trying them all out is a great way to get started!

The course types are:

- Full
- Flow
- Challenge
- Skills

While we could try to give an overview of the course types, the best place to start is really the WNL site itself.

A great overview of course types lives at: <https://worldninjaleague.org/formats/>

Flow and Full are the courses we will likely see the most of this year.

Each course has the same points system for season points and contributes to power rankings in the same way, so it is generally a matter of availability and preference. In the most basic of terms, paying attention to the course and rules for each obstacle during walk throughs, then taking each course 1 obstacle at a time is always the best approach, regardless of the format.

As a competition approaches, the coaches will prepare the athletes and make sure everyone is on the same page regarding strategy and an understanding of the rules.

Have questions? Let us know.

Other Leagues

Yes - there are leagues outside of WNL!

While our team's focus is WNL, and this is the league in which we host competitions, other leagues with other World Championship events do exist.

The three that you may hear most about are: the Ultimate Ninja Athlete Association (UNAA), the Federation of International Ninja Athletics (FINA), and the Ninja World Cup.

Each hosts qualifying events semi locally (excluding World Cup: individuals who qualify for worlds in FINA, UNAA, or WNL, qualify to compete in the World Cup), and has its own set of rules and competition format. Instead of outlining them here, links are below, should you want to learn more!

- FINA: <https://fina.ninja/>
- UNAA: <https://ultimateninja.net/>
- World Cup: <https://www.worldobstacle.org/ninja-championships/>

Future Outlook for the Sport of Ninja

This is a great time to join the fast-growing sport of Ninja. New athletes, gyms and leagues continue to pop up all over the country due to the popularity of the sport overall and its visibility catalyzed by prime-time television programming (American Ninja Warrior and Ultimate BeastMaster)

Additionally, Ninja has rapidly vaulted onto the international stage as, just in the past year, it has now been recognized as an official “Sport” by the International Olympic Committee. This was done in conjunction with a decision to add Ninja/Obstacle Course racing to the Olympics in 2028!! Starting with the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, Ninja will be one of the 5 sports with the Modern Pentathlon program—Swimming, Running, Fencing, Shooting and now Ninja/Obstacle Course racing—(instead of Equestrian). This decision opens up the door for Ninja to be considered as a standalone program/event as early as the 2032 Olympics.

Useful Links

WNL: www.worldninjaleague.org

Tier 1 Schedule: <https://worldninjaleague.org/tier-1-schedule/>

Tier 2 Schedule: <https://worldninjaleague.org/tier-2-schedule/>

Course Formats: <https://worldninjaleague.org/formats/>

WNL Rulebook: <https://worldninjaleague.org/rulebook/>

Season Standings Tier 1: <https://worldninjaleague.org/tier-1-standings/>

Season Standings Tier 2: <https://worldninjaleague.org/tier-2-standings/>

WNL Code of Conduct: <https://worldninjaleague.org/code-of-conduct/>

WNL Getting Started Guide: <https://worldninjaleague.org/get-started/>

WNL Facebook (Where to watch livestreams): <https://www.facebook.com/worldninjaleague>

USA Ninja Association (National Governing Body of Ninja): <https://usaninjas.org/>

Ninja Guardians Facebook Page (Ninja parents from around the world):
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2366774653638088>