



ESCA WANDERERS GYMNASTICS ACADEMY

Developing the Talent of Africa



Operated by the Wanderers Gymnastics Club



WELCOME TO THE GYMNASTICS ACADEMY

ESCA Wanderers, in partnership with the Wanderers Gymnastics Club (WGC), offers a unique structured pathway for aspiring gymnasts. The ESCA Wanderers Gymnastics Academy offers student athletes the opportunity to develop their talent as they pursue a future in gymnastics, with the support of world-class coaching and education. Using the latest coaching philosophies and technologies, the ESCA Wanderers Gymnastics Academy offers individualised education with an elite high-performance gymnastics programme. ESCA provides students with practical and theoretical skills to achieve their goals both in the gymnasium and the classroom.



ERNST ACKERMANN:
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

ESCA'S TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

ESCA's unique Talent Development System comprises four pillars, each contributing to the holistic development of our student athletes and cultural performers.



Academic

Students are supported to attain, maintain, and retain a healthy work ethic towards their studies, while balancing their passions and other demands. As with any committed activity, time, patience, and perseverance are essential to achieving in all areas.



Co-curricular

ESCA collaborates with high performing, committed sports and cultural specific academies and industry specialists to offer our students quality technical and tactical training, and access to world-class facilities, networks and support.



Athlete Wellness

Physical conditioning, recovery and maintenance, together with mental strength and sustainability, are core ingredients needed for the holistic growth and development of a student athlete. ESCA students will have access to an array of wellness experts and services, building athletes who can navigate the complexities and demands that come with excellence.



Tertiary

Having the right skills, knowledge and resources is vital to making the best decisions for your education and career after school. ESCA supports its students by developing these skills, and by providing access to a network of opportunities available both locally and abroad.



THE GYMNASTICS TRAINING PROGRAMME



“Through play we learn, by participating we grow. In our performance we achieve, so in life we succeed.” - Bobby Budai

Established in 1888, the Wanderers Gymnastics Centre, also known as the home of gymnastics in South Africa, is our country’s longest running gymnastics club. Now, 134 years later, they have established the first gymnastics academy structure in South Africa and is a premier gymnastics training facility, dedicated to the development and nurturing of the finest gymnasts.

The high-performance training programme is catered to all artistic gymnasts looking to compete at national and international level. Through individualised programmes, student athletes are afforded the opportunity to focus on their gymnastics careers while immersed in a world-class academic education structure.

Since South Africa’s reinstatement into the International Gymnastics Federation in 1991, and consequently international participation, our members have been selected to represent our country across the globe in Austria, Australia, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Japan, Namibia, Puerto Rico, Serbia, the Congo, and Zimbabwe.

At present, WGC has members on the men’s junior national team, with the WGC manager appointed as the men’s high-performance director for Gymnastics South Africa.



OUR COACHING TEAM:

BOBBY BUDAI

Bobby Budai heads up the men's and women's programmes. Bobby is an internationally qualified men's coach and has been an international judge since 1993. He also is the men's high-performance director for Gymnastics South Africa.



Our men's coaches Chad Mclean and Nico Kruger are internationally qualified. Our senior women's coach is internationally qualified Mzikisi Sitali, assisted by Tshepo Tukane. As former gymnasts, all our coaches have a long and steeped involvement in gymnastics. Our team regularly collaborates with other clubs in Johannesburg to ensure that they remain abreast with, and influential in, the development of high-performance gymnastics in South Africa.



TRAINING HOURS

Females	Hours Per Week	Males	Hours Per Week
10 - 11 years old	18	10 - 11 years old	15 - 18
12-13 years old	21	12-14 years old	21
14 - 15 years old	24	15 - 17 years old	24
≥ 16 years old	27	≥ 18 years old	27

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

Lisa Pienaar joined Team ESCA in January 2021 as Head of Academics. In her 28 years in education, Lisa's personal philosophy has been to nurture each individual child to reach their full potential. She believes human beings are so much better when they are honest and authentic, and she believes that living ESCA's values of Empathy, Solidarity, Courage and Accountability helps each person who enters this school to become better citizens of South Africa, and the world. Lisa believes that children show up best for learning when they are seen and heard, and as the ESCA Principal, she encourages her teachers to make meaningful connections with each other and with their students.



Education at ESCA continuously assesses and monitors student performance, while ensuring that learning competencies progress so that they are on track to succeed in all areas of their development. Our team of qualified teachers and experts work together to facilitate a constructive environment which supports tenacity, encourages confidence, and a healthy, balanced work ethic. Building futures at ESCA informs our selection of the international curricula and methodologies which comprise our offering:

Cambridge International

ESCA is an accredited Cambridge International School. The Cambridge international curriculum sets a global standard for education, and is recognised by universities and employers worldwide. Our curriculum is flexible, challenging and inspiring, culturally sensitive yet international in approach. Cambridge students develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. They also gain the essential skills they need for success at university, and in their future careers.

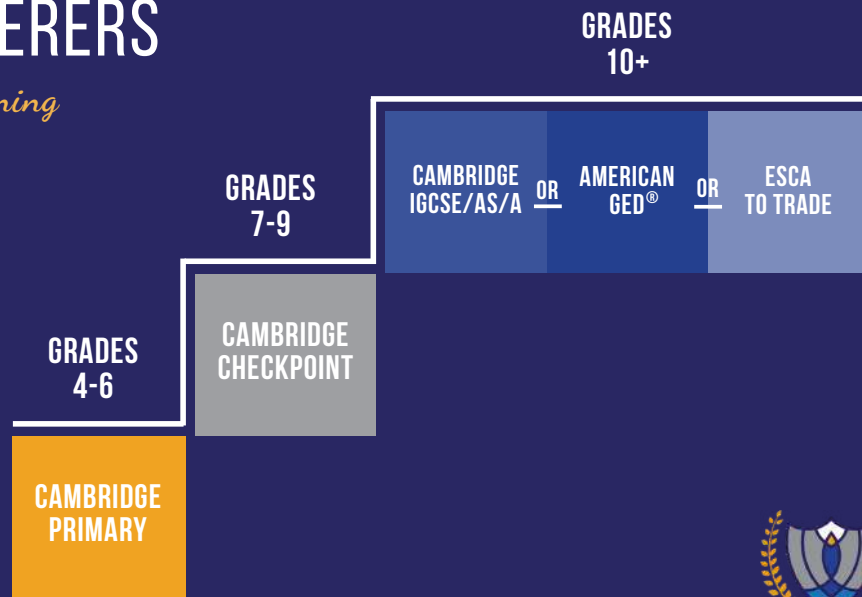
GED®

The American GED®, available to students once they complete Grade 9, is widely considered the closest foreign equivalent to the South African National Senior Certificate. It allows students to apply for further education both locally and abroad upon completion. The GED® is tailored to each student's knowledge level and learning pace, with personalised lesson plans which accelerate learning. The GED® curriculum is skill-based, ensuring that students apply the skills that they have learned practically.



ESCA WANDERERS

The Ladder of Learning



GOOGLE CLASSROOM

The integration and daily use of technology is a necessary skill which students need to master to function at all levels of our constantly developing society. As a proud Google school, Google Workspace handles all virtual components of curriculum delivery at ESCA. The Google Classroom is a live interactive environment which supports and augments the student's campus experience, serving as a record of curriculum progress, and a resource to support learning.

INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Accountability is one of ESCA's core values. We teach our students to be responsible for their learning within the flexible bounds of the ESCA learning ecosystem. The academic day at ESCA includes independent study sessions that afford students the latitude to focus on necessary schoolwork at school (limiting the amount of time spent on school work after school hours). Achieving requires effort, and students must apply themselves to reap the benefits of that commitment. During these sessions, students can plan, prioritize, and problem-solve their academic workload, content, and homework, while at school with access to their teachers and under the supervision of their mentor.



ATHLETE WELLNESS

The ESCA Mentorship Programme is designed to allow high-performance students to excel in all areas of their life while learning skills that will benefit them in their future endeavours. ESCA student athletes are paired with a mentor who has competed in sport at the highest level, one who understands what it takes to pursue one's dreams as a competitive athlete. Nicole Gillis heads up ESCA's Mentorship Programme. With a Master's degree in Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior from the University of Tennessee (USA), Nicole has worked in high-performance settings both in the United States and in South Africa. She completed her undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Science – Kinesiology) at the University of Arkansas (USA) whilst also being a student athlete on the University of Arkansas' Swimming and Diving Team. For eight years, she was a member of the South African National Diving Team.



NICOLE GILLIS:
HEAD OF ATHLETE WELLNESS

The role of the mentor is to support high-performance students during weekly meetings, to guide them in developing the skills needed to be prepared for the demands and stresses that face at school, and during training or competing. We acknowledge that being a high-performance student comes with certain challenges that our mentors are well equipped to give guidance and direction on. This includes ensuring our students get the necessary support from, and access to, various professionals including biokineticists, chiropractors, nutritionists, and mental performance coaching, where necessary.

THE VALUES THAT GUIDE US

E

Empathy:

To share someone else's feelings or experiences by understanding what it would be like to be in that person's situation.

S

Solidarity:

Unity of an aligned collective that produces or is based on a community of interests, objectives, and standards.

C

Courage:

The quality shown by someone who takes the challenge or faces something difficult, even though they may be afraid.

A

Accountability:

The obligation to account for activities, accepting responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent way.










THE FUTURE-FIT PROGRAMME

ESCA has developed a unique programme which teaches our student athletes the practical and theoretical skills required in personal, sport and business spheres. The ESCA Future-Fit programme directs and supports our student athletes in developing essential personal mastery tools.

Producing competent and capable professionals who embody ESCA's values by exercising Empathy, operating in Solidarity, displaying Courage, and taking Accountability, requires a programme that includes:

 Living an active and healthy lifestyle	 Brand and image	 Personal and professional portfolio building
 Athlete career pathway guidance	 Basic personal finance skills	 Time management skills
 Personal planning and goal setting	 Growth mindset and mindfulness	 Study and academic skills

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The objective of the ESCA Wanderers Gymnastics Academy is to develop artistic gymnasts (men and women) who represent South Africa on the continent and abroad.

- The eligible age groups start at 7 years (class 1) to adult (senior).
- All individuals seeking to enter the Academy may do so by invitation only.
- Applicants are evaluated according to age-appropriate requirements.



COME VISIT US TO FIND OUT MORE!

Developing the Talent of Africa

21 North St, Illovo, Sandton, 2196, South Africa	(010) 035 3600
hello@esca.org.za	www.esca.org.za

