

WMGF News

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December 6, 2013

Season Preview

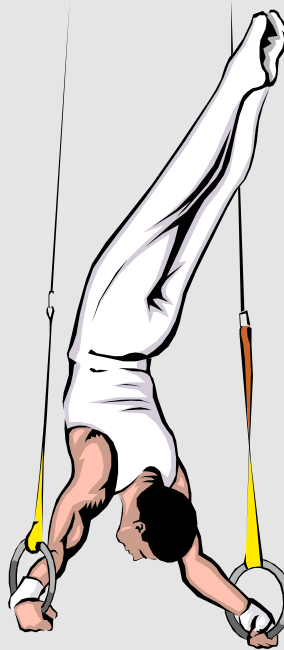
by Mark Russo

There is a lot of optimism surrounding our team this year due to the large group of freshmen who joined our program this fall. Six new gymnasts from California, Oregon, and Washington have blossomed our team to a total of 12 members. Our team effectively doubling in size has created a competitive practice atmosphere for the first time since our 2005-06 season.

We continue to be led by Peter Moser who enters his fifth year on the team. Although the start values – or difficulty – of his routines are the highest on the team, inconsistent performances have hindered him competitively. The new team members have helped motivate Peter to “compete” his routines in practices and he is more consistently performing at a higher level than last year. We are keeping our fingers crossed that this will translate into better routines on meet days once competition season rolls around. Last year, senior Greg Steward performed extremely well and placed higher in the all-around throughout the season. He was our most valuable gymnast last year and returns, but on a more limited basis, this season. The wear and tear of the sport on someone who is 6’1” and weighs 205 lbs is significantly greater than on the average 5’5”, 135-lb gymnast. Greg will compete on parallel bars and high bar at every meet, but we will use him sparingly on floor and vault to keep him healthy throughout the season. Greg has the ability to win high bar in a lot of meets this year; his routine

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is that good.

Also returning are juniors Franklin Stutevoss and Layton Oka, and sophomores Cory Tsai and Alex Maybruck. Franklin had off-season shoulder surgery and was not expected to be ready this season. However, doctors found less damage than anticipated – so good news for Franklin that he will be able to compete this year on floor and vault, which do not stress the shoulders too much. Layton has improved quite a bit this year as he begins to get his man strength. This is making a lot of skills easier for him and is helping him acquire ring strength moves also. Alex Maybruck will be in his second year on the team, but this is really the beginning of his second year doing full-time gymnastics. He has improved dramatically overall, though he is not yet ready to compete. He will be close to doing so by season’s end on floor, vault, and high bar. This will be Cory Tsai’s second year on the team, and if I had to choose a gymnast from last year’s team who was the most improved it would be Cory. Cory learned all the requirements on all the events with the exception of two on rings in just one year! Incredible really, especially because before last year, he had only really trained floor exercise for an exhibition team. My hat is off to Cory, and I look forward to him learning as much this season as he did the last.

This year’s freshman class that I alluded to earlier became as large

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Season Preview

(Continued from page 1)

as it is due to our recruiting efforts last year. Last season, Franklin Stutevoss set up a recruiting information station at an age-group meet in his hometown Portland, OR and it paid off in a huge way. A visiting team from Sacramento, CA called Extreme Gymnastics had three high school gymnasts in the competition; they met Franklin who talked up our program to them. From this meeting we coordinated a trip for them to come up, visit, and check our program out. It was great to have a recruiting plan in place that we were able to execute. Everything fell into place from there, and lo and behold, three new members from Northern California are on our team now. Justin Rowen is one of those California gymnasts, and you are going to be hearing his name a lot in these newsletters. Justin is a great athlete and a fearless gymnast who has incredible air awareness. He learns skills quickly and has the work ethic to maintain what he learns. Justin will challenge for top all-around on the team from the beginning, and will make a strong push to win Collegiate Nationals and eventually qualify to the highest-level meets in the country.

Wyatt and Daniel Zmrzel, also from Extreme, joined as well. Wyatt and Daniel are cousins and bring added depth to our team. Wyatt's strengths are his basics on pommels, parallel bars, and high bar. He has a strong work ethic and is learning many new skills on all the events. I can see Wyatt really excelling as his strength increases to match his basics, which is already happening this year. Daniel has shoulder and back injuries that he is waiting to get results about, and based on this information we will formulate a training plan for him. He is a good team player, and brings the team humor and intangibles like enthusiasm for making the annual team video.

New on the team from Portland, OR by way of Metro Gymnastics is Brandon Waller. Brandon has very good basics and was taught well by his age-group coaches. He has the gift of spring in his legs and continues to amaze me and his team members with this skill. He will be an immediate contributor on floor,

vault, rings, and high bar and is working toward being competitive on pommels and parallel bars. Brandon is perfect gymnastics size and this points to a bright future in the sport for him. Max Soifer, originally from Maine but more recently Gig Harbor, joined our team at the end of summer. Before that, Max was training at Metropolitan Gymnastics in Tukwila. Max makes an impression on you with his strong work ethic and desire to get better today. His swing technique on pommel horse is very good, and I looking forward to seeing what he becomes on this event. He is also a good tumbler and will compete on vault as well. Max's shoulder is bothering him a bit right now and we are training around it. Hopefully it's not serious and he'll be able to contend for the all-around by season's end.

The sixth recruit this year became Aaron Moss, an upper-level gymnast from Cascade Elite, the gym where we train. Aaron has been training there since he began gymnastics many years ago. Now he is extremely talented and showing that talent daily.

He has five really good events; I am pretty sure he will compete on all five, as he executes his routines with very good form. He has taken well to the team environment and thrived, as compared with last year when he trained alone much of the time. Though Aaron is a youngster by most accounts, his competitive experience is equal to anyone on our team. I would call Aaron a "gamer" because

he loves to compete – which has helped the team tremendously since we are all competing daily in practice.

With 12 team members, each gymnast is competing for a spot on the competitive travel team, which is different from last year and previous years. This is a new situation for all team members, as the last time our team was this large was in 2005-06. That year we were deep with talent and we had a winning record in our competitions. It culminated with beating Arizona State at Collegiate Nationals for the collegiate club title. Though we are not quite as deep as that year's team, we are only one or two gymnasts away from that kind of season. I am looking forward to seeing how we do this year, and happy that we are on an upswing.



Left-right: Layton Oka, Wyatt Zmrzel, Brandon Waller, Daniel Zmrzel, Justin Rowen, Greg Steward, Aaron Moss, Cory Tsai, Max Soifer, Alex Maybruck, Peter Moser, Coach Mark Russo

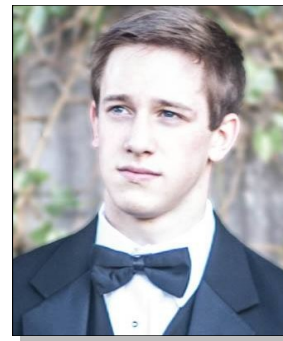
Freshman Face-off

By Greg Steward

This issue



Justin Rowen



Max Soifer

Hometown:	Rocklin, CA	Tacoma, WA
School:	Edmonds Community College	University of Washington, Bothell
Major:	Nutrition	Biology
Nickname(s):	Honey boo-boo, twinkle toes, Shrek	Zach
Why did you choose our team?	I like the team, I think Mark will help me achieve my gymnastics goals, and this team has perks that NCAA teams don't.	Mark is a great coach and I love Washington State.
What are your gymnastics goals?	To make it on to the USA national team, compete internationally.	To beat Arizona State University and go to the Maccabiah games.
Hobbies:	Eating, poker	All sports
Favorite food:	Ribs and mashed potatoes	My dad's roast chicken
Favorite movie:	Warrior	Zoolander
Favorite event(s):	Floor and high bar	Pommel horse
Favorite gymnastics skill:	Kohlman on high bar	Triple Russian on pommel horse
Reading right now:	I hate reading.	The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
Not many people know this about me, but:	I am terrified of any type of bug, especially bees and spiders	I grew up in Maine

In Praise of Coach Hughes

by *Charlie Peters*

For many years Coach Hughes has written articles about “Whatever Happened to” this and that former Husky Gymnast. I am writing this not about Whatever Happened to Coach Hughes, but about what Coach Hughes did for us. I cannot speak for all the gymnasts that were on the Husky Gymnastics Team, therefore, I will speak for myself and what Coach Hughes did for me, which many may find Coach Hughes also did for them.

I walked into Coach Hughes’ gym in the fall of 1966, fresh out of high school. It was a time when men’s gymnastics reigned supreme in Seattle. I wanted to be on the gymnastics team. I talked with Coach about my desire to be a Husky Gymnast. He let me say what I had to say, without interrupting me. When I finished he seemed to be a little perplexed as to how to tactfully answer my request. Here was this relatively unknown kid that wanted to work out with some very famous gymnasts he already had in his gym; Bob Hall, Mike Flansaas, Mike and Steve Lovell, Eigil Flaathen, Mark Peterson, John Anthony, Rick Fonceca, and many others. Gunter Bohrmann was the freshman coach and he already had three excellent all-around men on his squad; Yoshi Hayasaki, Sho Fukushima, and Bo Bennett. Coach was straightforward in his answer; “I don’t have a spot on the team for you, but you are more than welcome to work out with us.” That is what he said, and this is what I heard: “I will give you an opportunity and what you do with that opportunity is up to you.” Coach may not have had high expectations of me, but I had high expectations of being a Husky Gymnast, especially after having taken fifth as a team (one man team) and fourth in all-around in the previous state gymnastics championships.

I took coach up on his offer to workout with the team, with no promise of ever having a place on the team. I guess I was what was called a “walk-on.” There were already four members on Coach Gunter’s Freshman Squad, and no need of any more; Bo, Sho, Yoshi, and Bob Baumann (trampoline). I had saved up enough money, from a summer job, to put me through one year of college and after that I didn’t know if I could financially afford college. I had worked out with the team for a few weeks and one evening, at the end of workout, Coach Hughes pulled me aside. He said “I want to put you on the Freshman Squad.” I was elated that I was going to be a Husky Gymnast. Then, not long after that, he pulled me aside again. This time he said “I am going to give you a partial scholarship, which will pay for your tuition.” I knew with the partial scholarship I would be

able to complete my college education – without the scholarship it was questionable. I wasn’t the only one that was able to get a college education because of Coach Hughes’ scholarship program.

I was thrilled to wear the gold jersey of a Husky Gymnast and compete for the University of Washington; it was a dream come true for a kid that came from a high school that didn’t even have a gymnastic program. That year was the first year the Freshman Squad almost beat the Varsity Squad in the annual Freshman-Varsity Meet. That Freshman Squad was a sight to behold and some eventually went on to become national champions. Yoshi, as a freshman, was voted the University of Washington Most Outstanding Athlete that year. The following year all those freshmen went on to become part of the Varsity Squad.

Over the years, Coach Hughes made it possible for many gymnasts to attend college that otherwise wouldn’t have been able to. Through his genius as a coach and scout he was able to grab many to be part of his team. He also enabled and empowered many of his gymnasts to become national champions, both all-around and individual events. Coach never limited us, but always encouraged us to excel. Coach was not afraid to give people a chance and give them the opportunity to prove themselves both on and off the gym floor. He also was able to impress we young gymnasts that age was no inhibitor to performance; I don’t think he ever lost a handstand-pushup contest at the end of workouts, and none of us ever “let him” win.

There were some important lessons I learned from Coach Hughes, though he didn’t teach us life’s lessons. Hard work pays off and the harder you work the better the payoff. Quitting or giving up is not an option. When you fall down get back up, wipe the dust off, and do it again. You can fulfill your dreams if you are willing to work hard to fulfill your dreams. The harder you work the more you will be rewarded. Those are lessons I have carried with me all my adult life, since leaving Coach Hughes’ gym in June 1969. This walk-on gymnast thanks Coach Hughes for blessing him with so many fond memories of the time he spent as a Husky Gymnast.

Respectfully,
Charlie Peters
Husky Gymnast, 1966-1969
Co-Captain, 1969-70 Season





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Mark K. Oliver

President & Founder - Senior Investment Advisor

Where Are They Now? An Update on Husky Alum **Ron Hunter**

by Ron Hunter and Coach Hughes

1968: A year noteworthy for the debut of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood on PBS, the assassination of both Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy... and I had just graduated from high school and was off to do gymnastics at the University of Washington.

Living only three hours from Seattle, I had a long familiarity with coach Hughes and the UW gym program as I had attended and competed in the Northwest meets as well as attending the Highline summer gym camp. I had just won the Canadian Junior championships in the summer of 1967 and was really excited to be offered a gymnastics scholarship. I was going to be on the same team as Yoshi, Sho, and Hide, who had been my heroes.

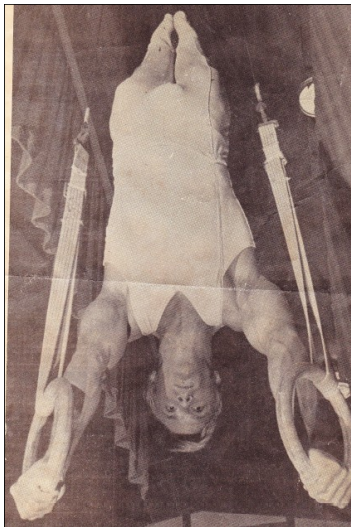
Right after my graduation from high school, I moved to Seattle and worked the summer before starting school as a gardener at the UW so I could start training. I also had the good fortune to move in with one of the assistant coaches Mike Flansaas and his wife Dale, and so spent my freshman year living with them.

Our freshman (red shirt) team also had a talented gymnast from Japan, Tomi Ozora, who although not reaching the level of Yoshi, Sho, and Hide etc. was a gifted gymnast and a valuable addition to our squad. One of my training memories of our other assistant coach Eigil Flaathen was the time he said I would never be better on pommel horse as my butt was too large. Not sure if he was right but to be on the safe side I kept my routine conservative (no behind-the-back moves). I was an all-around competitor, but my best event was rings and in my freshman year I got to be the varsity team alternate to the Pac 8 conference championships in Los Angeles (UCLA, I think). Hugely exciting.

I lettered each year but my best performance was in my senior year. I earned a bronze medal on parallel bars at the conference championships, behind Steve Hug from Stanford and Tomi Ozora from our team. That year our team also won the conference and went to the NCAA Nationals at Iowa State. I was team captain that year, and as it was 1972 with "Flower Power" in full bloom, our team had a variety of hairstyles – some involving ponytails. Coach Hughes lost many nights' sleep worrying about how we would look and be regarded compared to "clean cut" Midwestern teams at the Nationals. I can't remember how we placed, but notwithstanding our less-than-conservative appearance we

presented ourselves well.

Note from Coach Hughes: In addition to the team going to the Nationals, Ron himself qualified for the NCAAs as an all-around competitor, and at the end of the season he was elected the Outstanding Gymnast for the Huskies.



Back in competition days

Outside of the gym in my junior year I rented an apartment with Lars Kolsrud, a gymnast from Norway. He and I had formed a friendship in my sophomore year and he has remained my close friend ever since.

Lars was only at UW for two years, but in 1973 after I had returned to Canada and he to Norway, we reunited in Moscow at the World Student Games where we were each representing our respective countries. It was a complete surprise to each of us that the other was there but once we met I spent most of my free time with the Norwegian team.

I studied Mechanical Engineering at UW but decided that I would like to try the

law, so after graduation with my B.S. in Mechanical Engineering I was accepted into the University of British Columbia Law School and returned to Canada. I graduated in 1975 and moved to a smaller city in the interior of BC just as Bo Bennett, a former Husky, was leaving that community. I finally settled in Victoria, BC (the capital of our province), married, and raised my family. I have two sons who are finished with school and out in the world. I practiced law in Victoria and was one of the founders of a medium-sized law firm which continues today.

I didn't continue with gymnastics after university but have remained an avid skier, bicycle tourist, runner, and hiker.

In 2010 I retired from Law, and together with my wife Helga and our two German Short-hair Pointer dogs, left Victoria and moved to a semi-rural community on the ocean approximately



Ron and his wife, Helga

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Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution* to WMGF in the amount of:

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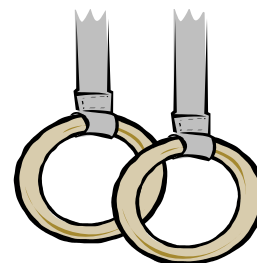
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Where Are They Now: Ron Hunter

(Continued from page 6)

70 miles north of the city of Vancouver. Here we are building a home, hiking, skiing, boating, and enjoying our life.

I have nothing but wonderful memories of the UW and all the team members and coaches. There were others in the gym who were also mentors... most notably Kanati Allan (a former UCLA gymnast), Bob Hall, and Gunter Bohrmann (both former Washington gymnasts).



New Fundraising Opportunity



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Check out smile.amazon.com for more information and to get set up.

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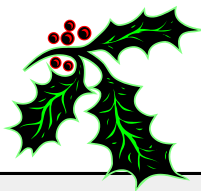
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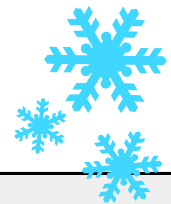
In This Issue...

Season Preview, Where Are They Now, and more...

December 6, 2013



*Happy Holidays from your 2013-2014
Husky Gymnastics Team*



Washington Men's Gymnastics

2013-2014 Meet Schedule

(local meets in bold)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>January 5</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>Washington Open</i> 	<i>Marv Harshman Court Seattle, WA</i>
<i>January 11</i>	<i>6:00pm</i>	<i>Rocky Mountain Open</i>	<i>US Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, CO</i>
<i>January 25</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>Stanford Open</i>	<i>Stanford University Stanford, CA</i>
<i>February 22</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>at ASU</i>	<i>Arizona State University Tempe, AZ</i>
<i>March 15</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>at Cal</i>	<i>UC Berkeley Berkeley, CA</i>
<i>March 20,21</i>	<i>5:00pm</i>	<i>Collegiate Nationals</i>	<i>US Naval Academy Annapolis, MD</i>

Please contact Mark Russo for updates: 206-524-9480 or team@wmgf.us