

WMGF News

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November 30, 2008

Season Preview

by Mark Russo

With optimism, we begin a promising season of Husky men's gymnastics. Though we have endured a major setback, our team will contend for first place among the other clubs. After this year's Olympics, the rules now require even more difficulty for a reasonable routine, but we are adapting.

Early this summer, our best gymnast, Ivan Koveshnikov, over-rotated a Rings dismount while training at his home gym, the Multnomah Athletic Club. He landed on his head and neck in the loose-foam pit, cracking a neck vertebra. Although he suffered no paralysis, it was a huge scare and his doctors decided to fuse two vertebrae. Unfortunately, this injury takes Ivan out this season and maybe longer. We are all very thankful that Ivan is okay, but his future with the team is difficult to project. He still practices occasionally with the team, focusing on core and leg strength. The doctors advised delaying upper-body training until January, but they also said he could continue gymnastics. I hope he continues and attains his previous elite level, but the decision will be his.

New recruits joined the team and one former team member returned after a year and a half absence. Sam Softich from Mid-Columbia Gym Academy in the Tri Cities moved to Seattle to join our team. Coached by his dad, Joe, and his uncle, Len, Sam's explosive power (which we understand comes from his mom) means he could win Floor Exercise at

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The Washington Men's Gymnastics Foundation is a non-profit organization that exists to assist the Men's Gymnastics Team at the University of Washington.



Ivan Koveshnikov at Rocky Mt. Open

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Collegiate Nationals. He is also developing several strong vaults, but he will compete well on all six events, posting strong All-Around scores. Especially noteworthy is his excellent coachability. He executes his assignments and listens well to corrections. His size and quickness will help his long-term success, and I see him going far in this sport.

After having been coached by myself and Jeff Crockett for the last year, Bobby Miller now leaves the Cascade Elite age-group ranks to join our team. He brings solid All-Around scores and excellent routines on High bar and Vault. Bobby also is extremely coachable and has excellent swing basics. I look forward to getting him to an Elite level quickly. His size will also serve him well, meaning that he is small enough to enjoy an advantage in this sport but tall enough to look long on the event he competes.

Our third Freshman joins our team from the furthest away — Connecticut. Andrew Hill wanted to attend the UW because this school offers the combination of a good bio-engineering program and gymnastics. We agree with his choice as Andrew brings good scores on Floor Exercise, Rings, Vault and Parallel Bars. He is pretty strong on Rings, performing multiple crosses and a planche in his routine. Look out, we might have a new ring beast on our hands!

This freshman class represents 16 solid routines that will give our team needed depth and power to

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contend this year. I am looking forward to seeing how they handle the season.

Returning to the team is Joe Lawrence. In Joe's last year (2006), he qualified to event finals at Collegiate Nationals on the four events he competed. Joe rejoined the team in December of 2007 and spent the past year getting back into competitive shape. He looks ready and will get an early start on his teammates as he attempts to represent the USA at the Macabiah Games in Israel. Joe will attempt to qualify for this team in early December 2008. Later in the season, Joe will try to qualify to the USA National team during Winter Cup. He has the skills, and now that his "man strength" is kicking in, he can compete well on some of his previously weak events. I am very happy to have Joe back on the team. I know that it was difficult for him to stop previously, and later to decide to start again. But I am proud he was honest with himself and gave himself another chance. Joe will greatly aid the team with his competitive experience and giving us needed stability. He also looks ready to compete All Around as his legs have healed.

Good news for the Dawgs! Jon Chapman and Marc Miller remain from last year's team. Jon enters

his third year on the team and Marc his second. Jon will compete routines upgraded from last year and continues on a steady pace of improvement. Vault, Floor and High Bar routines have significant changes that will help Jon and the team reach the winners' stand. Marc has also upgraded those events, as well as Rings, where his greatest improvement appears. Marc's routine will smash what he did last year. I can't wait to see him hit it! The team also includes newcomer Kevin Smith, and old-timers Eugene Burton-Breazeal, Jennifer Umemoto and Jeff Crockett. Crockett looks to compete at the USA qualifier and qualify to go to USA Nationals, where he could break the barrier and join the National Team. He is training very well now and still doing mad skills on the High Bar. I am most impressed with his continued motivation and desire. He also became our first paid Assistant Coach since back in the day when the team was funded by the UW. Wow, we are progressing!

Take a look at our schedule on the back. If you can join us at any of our away competitions, please come have dinner with us after the meet. We would love to have you join our team for the night.

It continues to be a tremendous honor for me to be the coach of these great people and help them accom-

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Your 2008-2009 Husky Men's Gymnastics Team

L-R: Jennifer Umemoto, Sam Softich, Kevin Smith, Jon Chapman, Joey Lawrence, Marc Miller, Andrew Hill, Bobby Miller

Where are They Now: Dave Nakanishi

by Dr. Eric Hughes

has done so much for Husky gymnastics? Dave provided such a definitive bio for this article (below), so let me simply add a few of my own remarks.

Beginning his junior year, Dave came on strong to become one of our top All-Arounders. In his senior year, he scored our highest scores on both Floor Exercise and Parallel Bars, yet Dave was respected as much for his personal qualities as for his performances. A coach would love to have a whole team of Dave Nakanishi's. Always friendly, positive and cooperative, Dave was a team member first and an individual gymnast second.

His contributions to Husky gymnastics continue to this day both in time and financial donations. He serves as President of our non-profit group and hosts our monthly meetings in the conference room of his dental lab, even serving us dinner prior to our meetings! Thanks Dave for your contributions of the past as an outstanding gymnast and those of the present as our top supporter. His personal statement follows.

Born 1953 in Seattle, I attended Lake Washington High School from 1969-71 where I wrestled as a sophomore. I discovered gymnastics through my physical education teacher, Bill Crow. Under Bill, gymnastics was truly a way of life. His teams were not the most talented, but between the cave exploring, rock climbing, kayaking and platform diving we remained a busy group. Any skills we lacked in the gym were made up tenfold in the experiences, skills and friendships we developed.

By my junior year in high school, I was performing adequately in the All-Around. Many of us supplemented our high school work-outs with evenings spent at the YMCA, meeting other like-minded gymnasts and furthering our skills. My senior year, our team became competitive in the state, and I placed second in the All-Around, in spite of a sub-par performance on my weak-event, the Pommel Horse.

The next year, Coach Hughes recruited me to the University of Washington. It was unreal and unnerving to be following in the footsteps of some of the world's best athletes—guys whose careers I had followed while in high school. My first developmental years were tough because I couldn't contribute to the team. Becoming a "Jack of all Trades" required that my Pommel Horse performance improve (considerably), so Dr. Hughes sent a pommel horse home with me for a summer. Still, despite the extra practice, sub-par Pommel performances persisted throughout my career, and even today I can't bear to watch the event.

My Junior and Senior years were absolutely the best years of my gymnastics life. I finally contributed to the team in the gym and navigating the academics of University life became standard procedure. I found time to hang out with some of my teammates outside of the gym, most frequently Jay Clark and Mel Cooley. Even after all these years, we still manage to find time to get together.

Presently, my life revolves around work and family. I own and operate a dental laboratory in Bellevue and I live in Woodinville. I've been married 28 years to my wife, Kim, and I have two girls in college. I attribute my passion for kayaking, fishing, and boating in the San Juans to my early experiences with the gymnastics crowd. I am also an active member of the Washington Men's Gymnastics Foundation along with a great group of U.W. alums and other enthusiasts of the sport — most notably Mark Russo and Dr. Eric Hughes. Both of these individuals continue to be the driving force of gymnastics in the region, and being part of this gymnastics family is an enviable relationship for those of us fortunate enough to be involved.

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plish their goals. We have a close team that works well together. There are many laughs mixed in amongst the hard work of practices and equipment moves. I feel we will have a competitive year, and if we hit our routines at 80%, we will **win** the Collegiate Nationals. This is our goal. Stay tuned, and thank you for your continued support!

Mark Russo



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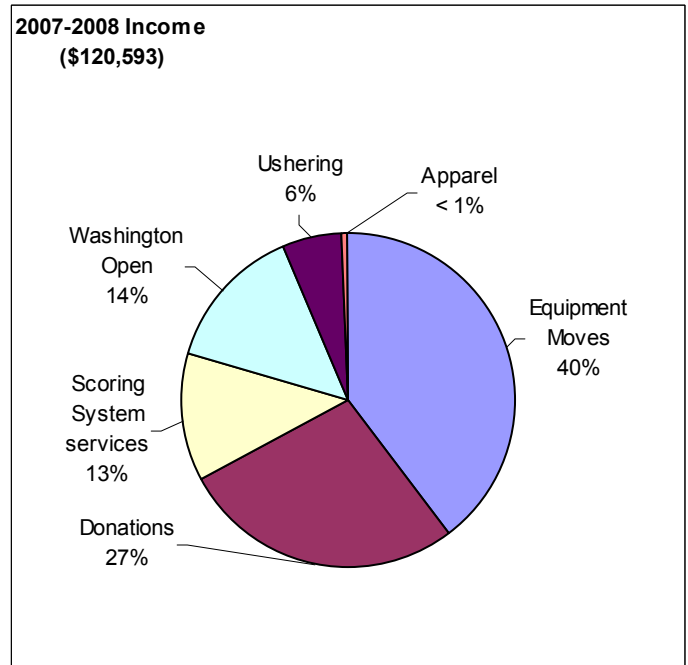
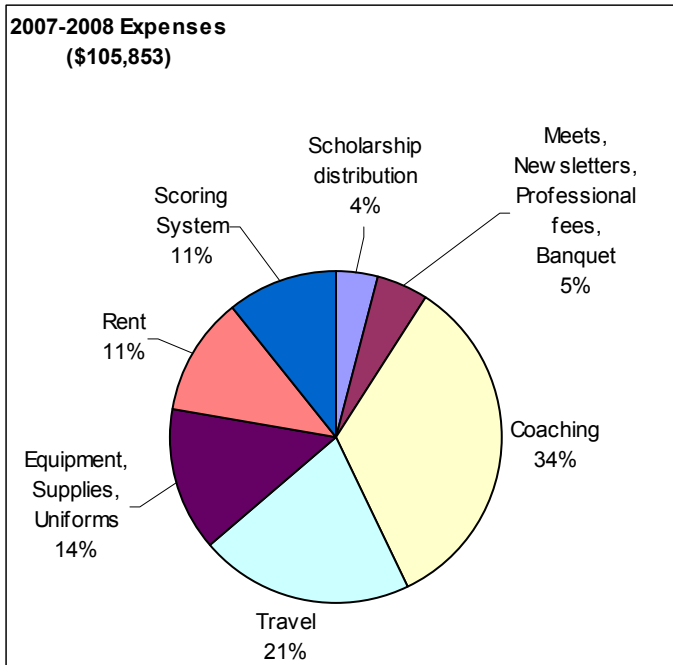
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Where are They Now: Daniel Luna

by Graham Gordon

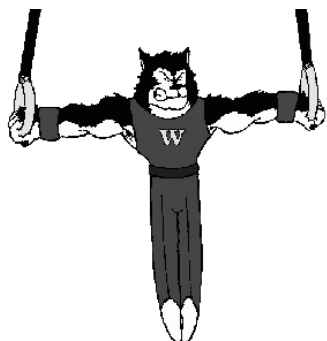
Daniel Luna graduated from the University of Washington in 1995 and has been a member of the WMGF board for more than 10 years. He recently made a big change in his life by taking a leave of absence from his job at the Boeing Company, and headed to the Far East. No not Bellevue, not even Spokane. Daniel went so far east that he had to travel west to get to the Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy with Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo, Japan. He thought about graduate school for quite a while and has always been interested in other cultures and languages, so he took this as an opportunity to spend more than just a vacation in a foreign country.



He's been very busy with his coursework and remembering how to study after more than 10 years out of school. He lives in a small dorm room on campus that is only about 18 square meters (193 sq. feet), and uses public transportation to get around town. A culture class has been introducing Daniel to such things as Zen meditation, Japanese cooking, and the traditional tea ceremony. He has also had some time to visit the local izakayas (bars that serve food) and karaoke bars with friends from school.

He stays connected to friends and family back in the States through the Internet and Skype (Internet telephone). You can follow his experiences through the blog he authors at http://iamthesalamander.com/tokyoblog. Daniel still hopes to find a local gymnastics gym where he can work out and hopefully reclaim another set of long forgotten skills.

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November 30, 2008

Washington Men's Gymnastics

2009 Meet Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>January 3</i>	<i>Washington Open, University of Washington</i>	<i>Hec -Ed Pavilion Addition, Seattle, WA</i>
<i>January 10</i>	<i>Rocky Mountain Open, US Air Force Academy</i>	<i>Colorado Springs, CO</i>
<i>January 24</i>	<i>Minnesota/ASU/Calgary</i>	<i>Minneapolis, MN</i>
<i>February 5-7</i>	<i>Winter Cup/Black Jack Invitational</i>	<i>Las Vegas, NV</i>
<i>February 21</i>	<i>Pacific Coast Classic</i>	<i>Oakland, CA</i>
<i>February 28</i>	<i>Southwest Cup</i>	<i>Tempe, AZ</i>
<i>March 26-28</i>	<i>Collegiate Nationals</i>	<i>Williamsburg, VA</i>

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