

WMGF News

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December 1, 2009

Season Preview

by Mark Russo

This season brings a new group to the team. We are still led by last year's Sam Softich and Bobby Miller, now sophomores, and they will be joined by Junior Jon Chapman as well as three newcomers: Taylor Anthony (Mt. Baker Gymnastics, coached by former Husky gymnast Gordy Bylin), Kevin Smith from Seattle, and Jeramie Hardi (Cascade Elite Gymnastics).

Taylor has experience competing in the JO program and will be doing all-around for the Huskies. He has a very slight build – slender, wiry, and quick. I call him “Bird Light” because his skeleton is so light, he has the lightness of a bird. Teammates call him Mowgli for his uncanny resemblance to the Jungle Book character. We also call him Lord Anthony for the chin-high, fake nobility stance he strikes when waiting to ask a question. Taylor looks to help the Huskies this year by acquiring all the required elements of all six men's events. He also loves to make the team laugh, which is a nice ingredient to have when the road gets tough and we get going.

Kevin Smith joined our program a year and a half ago looking to restart gymnastics training he had begun years ago but discontinued while in school at Gonzaga. Through tremendous patience and hard work, Kevin is now knocking on the door to compete for the team on floor and vault. I am looking forward to seeing how he competes.

Jeramie Hardi was a JO National

WMGF

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.



Sam Softich in Minnesota

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Team member back in the day, and he finally joined our team this year after several years of recruiting. Jeramie is the real deal, and by that I mean he was born with all the ingredients to be a very good gymnast. At 5'2" he is short, quick, flexible, and strong. Now, with consistent training I can easily see him back in the national spotlight. Jeramie will give the team a third strong all-around score to combine with Sam and Bobby's to produce a three-headed dragon of scores that will propel us to the winners circle.

Returning competitors Jon Chapman, Bobby Miller, and Sam Softich provide the team with much-needed consistency and durability. Jon is HEALTHY for the first time in four years, and has trained hard over the summer to up his difficulty to help the team. High bar is his best event, and he now has a much-improved floor routine waiting to be displayed.

Bobby Miller had a very good freshman year, posting our highest all-around score of the season last year. This year he has increased his difficulty on nearly all six events and should do extremely well on parallel bars and high bar. Look for Huskies yelling, “Tastes great! Less filling!” when Bobby sticks his dismount landings this year.

Last year's 2nd place all-arounder at Collegiate Nationals, Sam Softich looks to improve on that placement this year, and that means... I can figure it out... he is going for the gold! From the way he is tearing through his fall

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Season Review

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workouts, I think this is very possible. Sam has a blue-collar-like attitude in the gym, and takes on the strength workouts as if they are a challenge to his personal morals. This honest young man has many great traits, most of which are on display during his floor routine. Come see the spring in this guy's tumbling!

Our goal is to knock Arizona State off their throne. Take them out behind the wood shed. Open a can of

whoop ---. Get the job done. We are training with that objective because we all know that all competitions being equal, we might as well win!

Our schedule this year is very similar to last year's. Please check the dates and if you're in the neighborhood, stop by and see us! Don't be shy – introduce yourself and come out to dinner with us after the meet. It's a great time... really!



Your 2009-2010 Husky Gymnastics Team

*Back row (left-right): Jeramie Hardi, Eugene Burton-Breazeal, Kevin Smith, Taylor Anthony, Peter Moser
Front row: Jennifer Umemoto, Bobby Miller, Jon Chapman, Andrew Inaba, Sam Softich*



UW Men and Women

—Intra-Squad—

Friday, Dec 11 7:00pm

Bank of America Arena

HOLD THE DATES!

**See us perform
at UW!**

Washington Open

7:00pm Saturday, January 9

Hec-Ed Pavilion Addition

Where is Everyone?

Please HELP!

We want to stay in touch with ALL of our former gymnasts, but unfortunately we have lost contact with many of them.

Do you have contact information for any of your former teammates?

*Please call or email Coach Hughes at the
WMGF Missing Persons Department:*

206-632-2151
gymcankay@hotmail.com

Where Are They Now? An Update on Husky Alum Mike Flansaas

by Dr. Eric Hughes

In one of my recent phone conversations with Mike Flansaas, I asked how he got started in gymnastics. Interesting story. In junior high school he was turning out for pole vault and the 440 in track, but while riding his bicycle one day he ran into a car and broke his jaw which had to be wired together. This made it difficult to breathe for track so his coach had him go to the gym to climb the rope. Rope climbing was a gymnastic event back then, so Mike got involved with gymnastics and never looked back. He went to Highline High School as a sophomore and was on the best team in the state. As a junior, he was transferred to a new high school, Glacier, which had just opened. However, it had no gymnastics team so he started going to the downtown YMCA a few times a week to work in George Lewis' program. The coach at Highline, Bob Sarver, allowed him to travel with his team but compete for Glacier. Glacier's one-man team earned enough points to place second in the state meet when Mike was a senior. (Team scoring in those days: first 11 points, second 9 points, third 8 pts, etc. etc. down to 10 places.)

Mike was born in Whitefish, Montana in 1944. His family moved to Seattle when Mike was two. He enrolled at the UW on athletic scholarship in the fall of 1962 as an accomplished all-rounder and P.E. major. In 1964 he placed seventh at the NCAA Championships in vaulting. In 1965 he became academically ineligible and was red-shirted for the year – the year we placed second to Penn State at nationals. His best year was 1966 when he won the conference championship in vaulting and was elected captain for 1967. Also, in the summer of 1966 Mike was a member of the Husky team (some graduate students were included) that toured Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii. That year, the Huskies won the national team championships of both Australia and New Zealand.


One of the things I have always regretted in my coaching career is not using Mike at the nationals in 1965. He became eligible at the end of winter quarter so could have competed at the NCAA meet which was the first week of spring quarter. Because he had missed the whole dual meet season we decided jointly that it would be unwise to use a whole year of eligibility for that one meet. In retrospect, I believe that was a poor decision. I'm convinced that with Mike's points we would have beaten Penn State and been national champions. No one remembers who comes second in

an athletic event. A championship would have been a great accomplishment for the UW and a real honor for Mike.

Mike married Dale McClements in 1965. Dale was a national all-around champion, a member of the U.S. World Team, and an Olympian. They had four daughters, all of whom were involved in gymnastics for awhile. Three are now living and working in Reno near Mike and one is in Anchorage near Dale. They have four grandchildren. Sometime after Mike and Dale divorced, Mike married Cheryl and helped raise her young daughter.

Mike moved to Reno 40 years ago to coach the University of Nevada-Reno gymnastics team. After their program was dropped he opened his own gym – The Reno School of Gymnastics, which still exists today under a different name and owner. In 1983, Mike took a job with Circus Circus Casino and worked there for 18 years until he semi-retired in 2001. During that time he continued to coach gymnastics part time and still coaches nine hours a week at Flips USA Gymnastics. Mike has been involved in gymnastics his whole life and has given back more than his share.

Some quotes from Mike's email to me:

- *"I've been here in the desert for 40 years now. I haven't witnessed any tablets being delivered from the mountains but have seen some miraculous things in Reno."*
- *"Being in Reno afforded me the opportunity to see many old nasties from time to time. The Finn (Gary Finne) was a frequent visitor. He would show up parked in front of my house asleep in his car. Anyone who knew Gary would understand. He was always a hoot. Over the years I've seen Eigil Flaathen, Bo Bennett, Mike Lovell, Rick Fonceca, Jan Hardin, Charlie Peters, Yoshi Hayasaki, Dale Shirley, some of the girls from the Y and of course Coach Hughes. I'm sure there are some I've missed. Blame it on Alzheimer's."*
- *"I have two classic vehicles. Eat your heart out all you enthusiasts. One is a 1953 Chevy pickup that is almost restored; the other a 1969 Caddy convertible in mint condition. I enjoy the looks of envy when I take them out on the road."*
- *"I'm looking forward to playing more golf, gardening, and coaching. I would also like to hear from all of the  nasties of the*

THANK YOU 2008-2009 DONORS!

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Last year was one of the best years we have had in terms of the level of donations you gave to the Washington Men's Gymnastics team. We are extremely grateful. We understand that the economy was not the greatest; yet you still gave to this valuable tradition, this hard working group of gymnasts, this dedicated family of gymnastics. You may have been part of this team as a competitor or supporter, or both, and we appreciate your hope that this program continues to grow and prosper. We are committed to making this program a winning, fun, and respectful one. With your help, it is happening right before our eyes.

Scholarships were unheard of ten years ago. Pay a head coach? No way, 15 years ago. Travel around the country to compete? Not a chance, 20 years ago.

Where will we be five years from now? Definitely in a better place than we are now. Why? Because of people who care about this program and its impact on them. Again, I thank you all for your donations of time and money. We are all in this together, so let's do it right!



THANK YOU!

To contribute, please clip and send this portion of the newsletter to:

WMGF
5529 27th Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98105

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

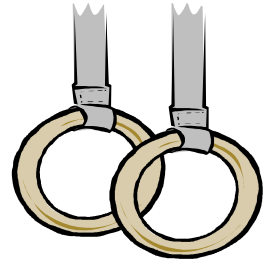
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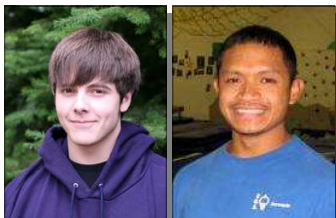
2009 - 2010 Scholarship Recipients

Bobby Miller and **Jeramie Hardi** will receive **WMGF Scholarships** this season. Bobby begins his second year on the team and proved an extremely valuable member last season. Bobby will receive \$3,000 this year to offset his schooling costs. Jeramie Hardi is beginning his first year on the team and will receive \$4,000 this year for his education. We look for tremendous gymnastics from these two individuals, as well as good academic curricula and higher learning from their respective schools.

Jon Chapman is the winner of the **Dr. Eric Hughes Scholarship** for this coming season. Jon will receive \$3,000 from this endowment fund established

by Dr. Hughes himself specifically for University of Washington student gymnasts. Congratulations Jon, Bobby, and Jeramie!

We are thankful that the WMGF is able to provide scholarships to these deserving young gymnasts and hope to give more in the future (UW tuition recently rose to \$7,000 per year). If you are interested in donating a scholarship to one of the gymnasts, we will gladly attach your name directly to the scholarship and give your donation fully and directly to a deserving gymnast from our great program! Thank you for all of your support! It really does make a huge difference.



WMGF Scholarship recipients
Bobby Miller and Jeramie Hardi



Dr. Eric Hughes Scholarship recipient
Jon Chapman

WMGF
5529 27th Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98105



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December 1, 2009

Washington Men's Gymnastics

2009-2010 Meet Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>December 11</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>Intra-squad with UW Women's Team</i>	<i>Bank of America Arena, Seattle, WA</i>
<i>January 9</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>Washington Open</i>	<i>Hec -Ed Pavilion Addition, Seattle, WA</i>
<i>January 16</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>Rocky Mountain Open</i>	<i>US Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, CO</i>
<i>January 23</i>	<i>1:00pm</i>	<i>Minnesota/ASU/Calgary</i>	<i>University of Minnesota Minneapolis, MN</i>
<i>February 4</i>		<i>Winter Cup/Black Jack Championship</i>	<i>Sport Center of Las Vegas Las Vegas, NV</i>
<i>February 20</i>	<i>2:00pm</i>	<i>Pacific Coast Classic</i>	<i>Oakland Convention Center Oakland, CA</i>
<i>March 20</i>		<i>UW vs. ASU and Air Force</i>	<i>University of Arizona Tucson, AZ</i>
<i>March 26,27</i>		<i>Collegiate Nationals</i>	<i>US Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, CO</i>

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