

WMGF News

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February 15, 2013

Mid-Season Update

by Mark Russo

Our season began this year with the largest Washington Open I've ever been a part of. Over 350 youth gymnasts from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho competed at our annual meet to mark the start of the competitive season. Back when I was on the team, the Open had a strong alumni competitive group along with other adult competitors, outnumbering the young guys competing. Now, times have reversed the field with only our team representing the adult gymnastics group. I always hear from coaches, judges, and the gymnasts themselves how much they enjoy the opportunity to see the young gymnasts competing on the same floor as the big guys on our team. You get to see the full spectrum of gymnastics all at once. For our team, it was the first chance this season to get judged and scored – always a good wakeup call to see where we have improved and need to improve.

Each team, each season has a slightly different feel or dynamic. This year's team has a lot of camaraderie. Because all six competitors do the all-around, there is a strong team feeling like we are all doing the same thing to support this team. Due to the Christmas and New Year's holidays, not all our team members practiced while they were back at home, so not everyone competed the all-around at the Washington Open. Peter Moser, Greg Steward, and Franklin Stutevoss were ready to do routines on all six events and did so with expected flaws common at this early time of the season. Freshman Cory

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.



Franklin Stutevoss
at Hec Ed

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Tsai competed for the first time in his life. He competed on Floor and Pommel Horse, and I believe the adrenaline he felt before and during his routines was like nothing he had felt before. It's great to see someone experience the thrill of competition and how they handle it. Cory will continue to improve throughout the season and pick up more events to compete as he assembles routines in practice.

On February 1st we hosted the Air Force Academy for the first time since I have been coach, alongside the UW women who hosted Arizona. This was a historic meet for me in that Air Force is the first varsity program to come up to the UW to compete with us – breaking the ice, so to speak. Next season, we will continue to bring up another team from the NCAA ranks. The competition went flawlessly with both men's and women's meets finishing simultaneously. Air Force has many more gymnasts than us, so many in fact that they can use specialists to fill most of their competitive slots. They destroyed us in the team competition and took all the events as well. Our team's best performer was Peter Moser who hit routines on rings, vault, and high bar, followed by Greg Steward who had good routines on floor, rings, and high bar. German exchange student Jakob Bochmann competed for our team for the first time and did commendable routines on parallel bars and high bar. Freshman Cory Tsai made the jump to competing all

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Mid-Season Update

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around this meet and did a respectable job for his first time. Franklin Stutevoss competed a much improved floor exercise and a more difficult vault. Layton Oka showed routines on all six events for the first time as a Husky. By my estimation, we are about where we ended last season, with seven more weeks to go in this season – so I believe we should improve to a higher level than last year.

UW.....354

Air Force 403

Our next competition is against our main rival Arizona State. We look to improve our team score by at least ten points down there. Then during March, with improved execution and slightly more difficulty, I believe we can reach our potential team score of 375 points at one of our three competitions that month.



*Peter Moser on Rings,
UW vs. Air Force home meet*

Your 2012-2013 Husky Gymnastics Team



Your 2012-2013 Husky Men's Gymnastics Team
Back row (left-right): Franklin Stutevoss, Greg Steward, Jakob Bochmann, Cody Tsai
Front row: Layton Oka, Peter Moser, Alex Maybrook

Where Are They Now? An Update on Husky Alum **Mark Buckingham**

by Coach Hughes and Mark Buckingham

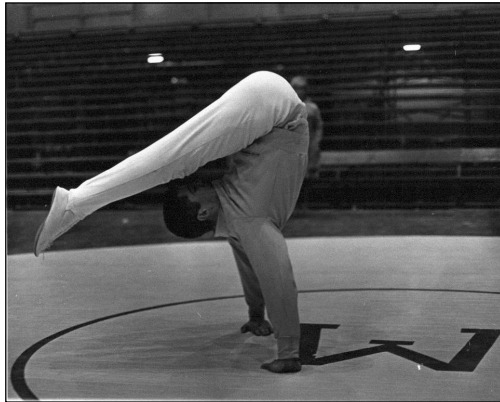
Most of this article was written by Mark himself, but he didn't say much about his personal accomplishments as a gymnast. Mark was a highly-recruited gymnast out of Highline High School. In his senior year he dominated the State Championships, winning the all-around and three events – floor, vault, and p-bars, and placing second on high bar. In his freshman year at the UW he was voted Most Promising Gymnast. In 1965, he placed fifth on vault at the NCAA Championships. Throughout his career at UW, he was a consistently solid all-around gymnast.

In the summer between junior and senior high school, my neighborhood friend Don and I entertained ourselves at the new business in town. Probably a dozen trampoline beds at ground level were arrayed in the moist Seattle air under a large flat roof. Safety? What safety?

As I began high school thinking of football tryouts as an end or running back, my brother, a varsity tackle, incurred a serious concussion. Immediately, my search resumed for a sport in which I could participate during high school years that would allow my 140-lb body to at least grow to adulthood and fly airplanes. Don suggested we try gymnastics, even though it only had one trampoline. However, there were other pieces of equipment in the gym, and there were girls in the gym next door. He ended up quitting a couple of months later, but I was hooked.

The tutelage of Coach Bob Sarver, a former assistant coach at the UW, together with the bulk of the previous year's starting varsity, provided us beginners with a firm foundation and a daily competitive environment. (Interesting how much coaching and spotting occurs gymnast to gymnast, isn't it?) One summer while at Highline I was allowed to keep the pommel horse at home. Weather was not a concern under the carport. Most of our state-winning team graduated, leaving their shadows to become the starters in my senior year. We fielded a competent and consistent enough team to win the state title again.

Just how I was blessed to be offered admission to UW with my less-than-stellar academic achievement is a



Mark in his competition days

mystery to me to this day. Thank you, Coach Hughes. Working out with some of the national collegiate contenders and premier coaching of now-Dr. Bob Schwarzkopf and Dr. Eric Hughes was an inspirational experience. A highlight of my time as a Husky had to be our team placing second in the 1965 NCAA Finals.

Surely, of longer-lasting consequence to an aspiring athlete than individual achievement must be the development of lifelong habits like, but not limited to, faith, honesty, persistence, discipline, leadership, loyalty, and service. Many of those character traits were championed in Boy Scouts and Washington Men's Gymnastics.

After the NCAA Finals, through a special UW program, I was able to enroll in a German language study in Cologne and incidentally I was able to attend workouts at the Sporthochschule to stay in shape.

My eligibility ended in 1967, but I continued to work out at the UW and graduated the following year with a major in geography and a minor in German.

Graduation led me to two years coaching/teaching at Issaquah High School, then to develop a new program in the South Kitsap District with Greg Krupski. After several team members had become competent in some fundamentals, we were able to implement a series of district age group boys/girls gymnastics clinics involving some 300 kids. Two years later things changed:



Mark and Lorraine

1) the boys program languished, and 2) Krupski left me with the girls program! A great helper became the newly-acquired reel-to-reel video machine. It took a while to understand the girls' compulsory routines, coaching and managing girls, and girls gymnastics in general. Not until then did I realize and appreciate woman's coaches like the great George Lewis and our own UW gymnast Mike Flanssas.

After six years teaching/coaching, my other passion, flying, won its unrelenting siren song. To reach my goal of piloting airliners required a circuitous route including: 1) banner-towing over Germany's Ruhr, a well-

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Where Are They Now: Mark Buckingham

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known WW2 allied target, 2) target towing/demonstration for NATO over infamous NAZI V-1 and V-2 launch sites near Hamburg while flying a British-Korean war fighter. Occasionally, live tracers indicated gunners' over-exuberance. Often we were looking down the barrels of Soviet warship cannons as they used us for "free" radar target practice.

My odyssey of a flying career continued stateside with Evergreen, Braniff, and Frontier Airlines, and then Pacific South Airlines. At my initial PSA class, I was shunned as the "The Airline Pariah" due to having experienced five airline bankruptcies in my sordid career. PSA merged with USAir which subsequently navigated two bankruptcies before my retirement 20 short years later. Tired or not, at age 60, now raised to 65 years, the airline pilot is put out to pasture or retired.

Just prior to retirement we acquired a small four-seat airplane for instructing students and maintaining my pilot currency. However, the main thing I captain now is my John Deere. Our business, Mt Rainier Nobles, a u-cut Christmas tree farm, keeps us moving all year round. Don't know how long my wife Lorraine will continue

working, but she keeps me in nails and lumber on the farm as we complete two buildings. The 40-year restoration of our 1962 Porsche Roadster is nearing completion and other treasures beg attention thereafter.

We've been blessed with five kids and five grand-kids thus far. Taylor seems to be the only one interested in pursuing gymnastics. How can I tell, you ask? At times she doesn't walk where she's going, she cart-wheels there.



Mark's scenic Christmas tree farm

2012-2013 WMGF Alumni Scholarship Recipient **Greg Steward**

by Mark Russo

This past fall, Senior Greg Steward was awarded the WMGF Alumni Scholarship. Greg is the epitome of what our program produces: hard working, reliable leaders, in the gym and out. It has been an amazing sight watching and coaching Greg as he resurrected his gymnastics career from the ashes. Greg struggled in the gym as a youngster and then eventually quit gymnastics altogether. Three years later he joined our team as a tall, thin freshman. He took to the air, so to speak, immediately immersing himself in air sense drills and finding the joy of gymnastics again. From there, he has excelled on all the events, his best probably being floor, vault, and high bar. Not only has he found his gymnastics but also his voice and a strong leadership style shown in his commitment to the team by coaching as well as being the athlete representative on our WMGF Board. In school, Greg has nearly completed all his coursework for a biology degree and will be looking to work in the physical therapy field after graduation. Greg is very thankful for, and certainly deserves, the financial aid of the \$4,500 scholarship and is a prime example of the outstanding people who have been involved in our program.



Greg Steward



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Meet the Team: An Interview with Freshman Cory Tsai

by Greg Steward

What is your gymnastics history?

I started taking gymnastics lessons at Eastside Gymnastics (then Gymnastics East) the week before my third birthday. My parents told me they signed me up originally because I had too much energy and was always climbing up and over things around the house. I tried all the “other” sports too; T-ball, soccer, swimming, basketball, ultimate Frisbee, but gymnastics is the only one that’s stuck over all the years.

How did you hear about the UW team?

Jeff Crockett, former UW Men’s team gymnast, is one of the coaches at Eastside Gymnastics. During the summer before my senior year of high school, he started talking to me about what I had in mind for continuing on with gymnastics in college. I realized I hadn’t really thought much about the fact that I wouldn’t be able to keep going to Eastside. Jeff suggested I look into the UW team.

What are your favorite events?

Gymnastics wouldn’t be the same with only five events, so I do enjoy all of them for different reasons. Floor is probably my favorite. I really enjoy the feeling of freefall, and I spend more time in the air on floor than I do any of the other events.

What are you studying in school?

I’m studying Electrical Engineering at UW. A lot of my family members are electrical engineers who graduated from UW and now work at Boeing. I want the degree, but for the career I’m focused more on building full sized, street legal electric cars. I’m working on a gas to electric conversion right now that my dad will eventually be able to drive 60 miles a day round trip to work and back.

What is your favorite part of being on the team?

The best part about being on the team is the support I get from everyone. They’re a great group of people that are always there to make sure your practice, and day, is the best it can be. I find the team most helpful because I’m new to competition this year. Before joining the UW team I did recreational gymnastics, so doing routines on all the events, and following the code of points is all new to me. All the guys are always offering me advice on how to improve, and what I’m doing right or wrong. It’s really reassuring; I’m going into my first

competition season knowing that I have a coach and a team of friends both there to support me.

What are your gymnastic goals?

I just want to stick with the sport as long as I’m able to, and keep improving and getting new skills. As for specific skills, I have a general goal of being able to do both skills that are common and recognizable to people with only limited knowledge of the sport, as well as skills that look confusing (and are therefore awesome!).

What is your favorite type of food and why?

Recently I’ve taken a liking to Thai food because there are a lot of Thai restaurants open on The Ave when I get back to Seattle after practice. I’ve been developing a taste for really spicy Thai food too. In the past, I couldn’t handle really spicy food but I have a couple Thai friends here that picked on me for it. That of course had to be changed, so I

just started ordering food with a five star (the highest) rating of spice. The plan is to continue doing this until I’m used to it.

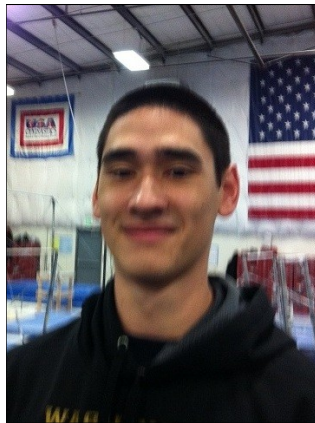
If you could talk to one person from history, who would it be and why?

I would choose Nikola Tesla, the inventor, engineer, and physicist. So much of the technology we rely on today just wouldn’t exist without the work he put in to understand the world around us. Electricity is as useable as it is today because of him. Plus he has his own SI unit named after him, called the tesla. It’s used for measuring the strength of a magnetic field. He’s a cool guy. If you like using things that plug into the wall or use AC current, you should thank him if you ever get the chance to talk to one person from history.

What is your favorite skill?

My favorite skills involve height and time to enjoy the freefall. When I’m having a really good day tumbling I like building up power in a tumbling run and then exaggerating the opening of a simple back tuck so I can see how high up I am. As far as an actual skill, I like the feeling of a solid back double full. I have a lot of favorite skills to watch other people (with much higher skill levels than me!) do, including well done roll-outs

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Cory Tsai

THANK YOU!

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Meet the Team: Cory Tsai

(Continued from page 6)

on floor, release moves on high bar, and any twisting double-backs either on floor or as a dismount.

What is the hardest part about this sport for you?

The hardest part for me is balancing my time with school and life in the dorms. When I was at home I was able to get everything done faster, because everything I needed (other than the gym!) was right there. Now I have to leave my dorm building to get food or find a good place to study. This quarter I'm continuing to figure out things that make dorm life easier.

Besides gymnastics and school, what else do you spend your time doing?

When I have time outside of the gym and school, I'm still pretty active. I like snowboarding, longboarding, rock climbing, and my electric car conversion is probably still several hundred working hours away from being finished.

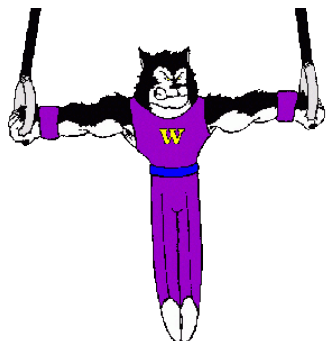
What are you looking forward to most this season?

This season I have a lot to look forward to. I'm really curious to find out how I like competition. Coming out of our first meet gave me a better understanding of just how much adrenaline I'll get to deal with. I'm also really looking forward to all the traveling and sight-seeing we'll be doing at our away meets. It will be really cool to compete with gymnasts from all over the US.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

French Polynesia. I've done a lot of powerkiting on land, sometimes with a mountain board (off-road skateboard with inflatable tires), and it's a lot of fun. Basically you fly a giant, parachute-shaped kite and it pulls you around the beach. I've wanted to try the water version for a while now, but I'm not a big fan of being cold. Plus I've always loved going to the beach.

WMGF
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Seattle, WA 98105



In This Issue...



Mid-Season Update, Where Are They Now, and more...

February 15, 2013

Washington Men's Gymnastics

2012-2013 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>February 1</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>vs. Air Force</i> 	<i>Hec Ed Pavilion Seattle, WA</i>
<i>February 16</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>at ASU</i>	<i>ASU Tempe, AZ</i>
<i>March 1</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>at Stanford with Cal</i>	<i>Stanford University Stanford, CA</i>
<i>March 15</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>at Air Force</i>	<i>US Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, CO</i>
<i>March 22,23</i>	<i>5:00pm</i>	<i>Collegiate Nationals</i>	<i>College of William and Mary Williamsburg, VA</i>

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