

# WMGF News

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February 28, 2014

## Mid-Season Update

by Mark Russo

The 2014 season is off and running for Husky Gymnastics as we have had three competitions so far. We have not been able to put forth our best team in competition yet due to injuries, but our depth this year has enabled us to field a full team at every meet. I'm happy that we've performed at a respectable level, but mostly I'm looking forward to what we can do with a full-power team.

We began by hosting the 31<sup>st</sup> Washington Open which serves as a season-opener competition for most of the boys doing gymnastics in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. For our team, it's a first chance to have routines judged and perform in front of a good crowd. With over 350 competitors, this year's Washington Open was the largest ever. The Huskies did a good job of staying focused and performing with poise. After the competition we hosted the Top Dawg Dinner, which has become our annual recruiting event for all the high school juniors and seniors attending the meet. It was a great chance to tell them about the unique experience our program can offer, and to hopefully inspire them to join our team after graduation.

Our first team competition followed on the next weekend at the Air Force Academy for the Rocky Mountain Open. We competed against Air Force, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Arizona State. Freshman Justin Rowen led the Huskies in the all-around and was our highest scorer on four events. Justin has really impressed us all with his strong work

## 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.



Cory Tsai at ASU

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ethic and ability to do high-level gymnastics with tremendous joy. It's great to see him improving with each competition. At this competition, we started competing on rings. Our next event was vault and we did very well, led by freshman Brandon Waller who stuck his Kasamatsu vault cold. Then onto parallel bars, where another freshman Max Soifer hit an extremely clean routine to lead us. We had started well, and at the halfway point we were doing great gymnastics, hitting routines. Then fatigue and slight dehydration began to affect our performances. Nearly all had a break in their high bar routine, and only Peter Moser could make his floor routine without a fall. Lastly, on pommel horse each gymnast had at least one fall. It left a bad taste in our mouths, finishing weakly. Lesson learned: We need to overhydrate here in Colorado to compensate for the overly warm gym and 6000-ft altitude.

#### Team results:

Oklahoma	443.15
Nebraska	423.70
Air Force	423.10
Arizona State	402.10
Washington	367.30

#### UW All-around:

Rowen	74.80
Moser	74.60
Moss	72.75
Waller	70.90

Between the Rocky Mountain Open and our second meet, the

(Continued on page 2)

## Mid-Season Update

Stanford Open, our injuries began to mount. Greg Steward (shoulder), Layton Oka (knee), Peter Moser (hand), and the day of the meet, Cory Tsai got food poisoning. Our depth would be tested at Stanford. Stepping up to fill the holes came Junior Franklin Stutevoss, himself recovering from off-season shoulder surgery, and freshman Wyatt Zmrzel. Wyatt performed on pommels, rings, parallel bars, and high bar while Franklin helped on floor, vault, and parallel bars. We were led again by Justin

Rowen who scored highest for us on four events (floor, vault, p-bars, and high bar) on his way to a team-leading all-around of

Team results:

Michigan	433.05
Cal	430.30
Stanford	429.90
Washington	363.65

UW All-around:

Rowen	75.25
Waller	74.75
Moss	71.40

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75.25. Freshman Brandon Waller was right on his heels with a 74.75 and a big improvement from his first meet. Max Soifer hit his pommel routine to lead us on this event. Even though our team score was lower than at our first meet, we looked better and definitely finished better. The Stanford Open is a high-energy meet with lots of

noisy spectators, and is a real treat to be a part of. This meet exemplifies what college gymnastics is all about.

As our team becomes healthier, I look forward to the return of Greg, Layton, and Peter to help us reach our potential high team score. It is great to have enough depth to absorb some of our injuries, and it will only help us to compete at our highest level. We will need our best for our remaining three competitions:

@ ASU February 22<sup>nd</sup>; @ Cal March 15<sup>th</sup>; and @ Collegiate Nationals in Annapolis, MD March 21, 22.

## *Your 2013-2014 Husky Gymnastics Team*



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

## Where Are They Now? What Ever Happened to Charlie Peters

by Charlie Peters

*Charlie has written a somewhat different article for this "Where Are They Now" column. He includes a brief history of Seattle area gymnastics "way back then" as well as the typical – "where he is now." I hope you enjoy this review as much as I did. It brought back many pleasant memories for me. –Coach Hughes.*

I was introduced to gymnastics during my freshman year PE class in high school. The sport intrigued me. Foster, the Jr.-Sr. High School I attended, had a gymnastic club, but not a team. Mr. Little, the gym teacher, asked me to join the gymnastic club. I couldn't do that because I was active in the "Big 3": football, basketball, and track. One thing led to another and I joined the club. After a couple of months Mr. Little said "I think you need to start working out at the Seattle Downtown YMCA, because I can't help you anymore."

I started working out at the Y early in 1963. Now, the Y was Gymnastics Central, back in those days. It was the only place where one could practice, and hope to improve, if he didn't compete for a high school. George Lewis coached the women, among whom were some greats; Dale McClements, Louise Grant, Joyce Tanac, Linda Rodella, Cleo Carver, Lonna Woodward, Caroline Pingatore, and many others. I, however, didn't have one coach – I had a bunch of them; mostly they were active and former Husky gymnasts. Mike Flansaas gave me a tremendous amount of encouragement along with needed coaching. I competed in my first meet that spring, and after that I was hooked. From then on I would take the bus downtown and workout 6:00pm-9:00pm Monday through Friday, and 9:00am-noon on Saturday. That summer I went to Camp Waskowitz for a two-week gymnastic training camp, that included a lot of hard work and evening fun. That camp was filled with a couple of hundred gymnasts from all over Washington, Oregon, California, and Canada. It was "The Place" to go for advancement in gymnastics.

The following school year (sophomore) I gave up all other sports, except football. Football practice ended at 4:30, in plenty of time for me to get to the Y by 6:00. I believe it was this year Bo Bennett and I became good friends. He drove all the way from Tacoma to work out at the Y. I competed in many meets that year, including meets in Canada. I believe it was also the year Gunter

Bohrmann started coaching at the Y. Gunter later attained coaching fame at Kent Meridian High School. I also joined the Greater Seattle Gymnastic Club (GSGC), and what a thrill that club was for a guy that didn't even have a high school gymnastic team. This was also the year I became a card-carrying Amateur Athletic Union member. If you wanted to compete you had to compete in AAU-sanctioned meets.

Let me tell a little more about the GSGC. It was the brainchild of George Lewis and Dr. Hughes, and it was made up of all the men and women gymnastic greats in the Seattle area. Some of the men were Mike Flansaas, Mike & Steve Lovell, Bob Baumann, Rick Fonceca, John Anthony, Charlie Denny, Bill Crow, Jim David, Bo Bennett, and many others. I will never forget Wes



Charlie back in Hec-Ed

Tanac, the smallest of them all. He wasn't very old, but he could do back handsprings all the way down the sixty-foot tumbling mat to an amazed and cheering crowd. The George Lewis & Eric Hughes Comedy Team was always a crowd pleaser at those events. We would perform anywhere people would pay to see gymnastics. We never knew what conditions we would face, concrete floors and low ceilings, to mention a few. The proceeds went to a fund that was used to send a dozen or so gymnasts on trips around the world.

The first was to New Zealand, the second to the Far East (I was on this one), and the third to South America. We also had an annual picnic, which was the picnic of all picnics – with food to eat and equipment to play on, or should I say a chance to try to outdo one another on instantaneous challenges. We were just one big happy family working toward attaining the almost-impossible: winning national championships and competing in the Olympics. Yes, we had our mothers along with us too – mostly it was Mrs. Tanac, Mrs. Carver, and Mrs. Woodward. Those ladies could stitch up a pair of pants lickety-split.

I ended my junior year competing in the Canadian Junior National Championships and taking 2<sup>nd</sup> on p-bars and 3<sup>rd</sup> on side horse. My senior year was a duplicate of my junior, except I wanted to compete in the Washington State High School Gymnastic Championships. That was almost an impossible dream because Foster didn't have a gymnastics team. I had to get the Athletic Director to petition the state athletic commission to recognize

(Continued on page 4)

## Where Are They Now: Charlie Peters

*(Continued from page 3)*

Foster as a sanctioned gymnastic team. Mr. Little became the coach and Foster became a one-man-gymnast team that had never competed in any high school meets whatsoever. My first meet that year was the state championships. I placed on four events and was fourth in all around. Foster took fifth as a team, and actually beat out Kent Meridian, Gunter's team. I wonder which team Gunter was rooting for the most, since (in reality) he was coach for both teams. Not everyone in high school gymnastics was pleased with what I accomplished. Two years later they changed the rules – a squad had to have at least three gymnasts and the team had to compete against other teams in dual meets to compete in the state championships. I still chuckle about that – I guess I caught them off guard.

My next step was to compete for the Huskies, because that was my only road that would have led to competing in the Olympics. The fall of 1966, I walked into Dr. Hughes' gym and asked to join the team. He might have thought at first I was joking. But, he appeased me and said I could work out with them. The freshman squad was made up of Bo Bennett, Bob Baumann, Sho Fukushima, Yoshi Hayasaki, and myself. I believe it was the only freshman squad that almost won the annual Varsity-Alumni-Freshmen meet. The alumni were great about helping in the gym; both Mikes, Eigil Flaathen, and Bob Hall were among the many that helped us hone our skills. Hide Umeshita and Tomi Ozora, two other Japanese, would join the team in successive years. It was delightful having Mauno Nissinen, from Finland, as a roommate the year he won the NCAA national all-around championship in 1969. He kept our pact that at least one of us would compete in the 1972 Olympics.

It was the era of a wonderful mingling of cultures, where there were no political, racial, or geographic barriers between gymnastic friends. It was an era when a high school football hero, Jack Heavner, became a Husky gymnast. It was an era of fun for all and one that has been called "the golden years" of Husky gymnastics. A discussion about gymnastics in Seattle, way back when, wouldn't be complete without mentioning the after-meet celebrations (whether we won or lost) to the chagrin of Coach Hughes – and the traditional Friday-night poker games.

Before fall quarter was over, I was on a partial scholarship and in my junior year it was upped to a full scholarship. I was voted the Most Inspirational Gymnast my freshman and sophomore years. My junior year Bo

and I were elected co-captains for the 1969-70 season, which would be the senior year for both of us. Everything seemed to be going my way near the end of my junior year. I was in seventh heaven, until I walked into my apartment after judging the state high school championships and saw a letter from the President of the United States. I wondered what he wanted with me and hesitated for the longest time to open the letter.

It was my Draft Notice. The hardest thing to accept was that my gymnastic career would soon be over and the goals I had worked so hard to achieve would never be. I will never forget the picnic everyone gave me the weekend before I went into the Navy. It was the kind of send-off that has forever been imbedded in my mind. I'll never forget the lessons I learned while in gymnastics. It is alright to fall down, but it is not acceptable to stay down. The harder you work the better you get. Where there is a will there is a way. If it is worth working for, then it is worth working for with all that you have. The hardest lesson, by far, is that sometimes we have absolutely no control over our circumstances, but life does go on. I fondly remember all the years I spent in gymnastics and I cherish the memories of each and every friend I had while I competed. There may be better friends than gymnasts, but I don't know where they are to be found.

Here is what has happened to me since leaving the U of W. I served six years on submarines. My career in the Navy had its ups and downs, in more ways than the literal. After my stint in the Navy I returned to engineering and I have been a designer/drafter since 1975. I also spent a few years making grips for competition shooters, and had over 40 national champions win with my grips. I have also managed to break an arm and go through two hip surgeries in my later years. My wife and I raised four beautiful children, which turned into nine grandchildren, and those nine have turned into seven great-grandchildren. I now have a couple of passions in my life; public speaking and writing. I still weigh the same as when I competed, however the mass has somewhat displaced itself. I have two published books ("The National Debt? The Sinking of America!" And "Tea Time Has Arrived, We the People versus Washington Bureaucracy," both are highly political in nature – with complete disregard and abhorrence for both major political parties. I am now working on my third book about President Kennedy's assassination. My latest project is restoring my grandfather's 1955 Chevy Step-Side Pickup. And that ends the story of the way it was and what happened to me.



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## Meet the Freshmen: Brandon Waller and Wyatt Zmrzel

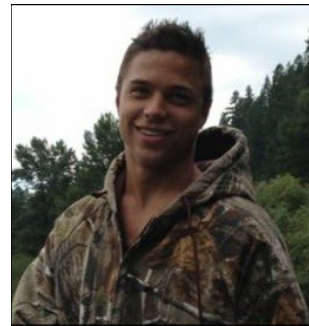
### Brandon Waller

Hometown ..... West Linn, OR  
 High School ..... West Linn High school  
 Major ..... Environmental science  
 Nickname ..... Billy  
 Favorite Event ..... Floor and vault  
 Favorite Food ..... French Bread  
 Least Favorite Food ..... Mashed Potatoes  
 Favorite Movie ..... Lord of the Rings: Return of the King  
 Favorite Trick ..... Butterfly full on floor  
 Hollywood Crush ..... Ellen Page  
 Favorite Book ..... Game of Thrones  
 Artist ..... Imagine Dragons  
 Why UW? ..... I'd miss the rain.  
 Siblings ..... 2  
 Craziest thing  
   you've ever seen ..... Someone diving into a lake off a building.  
 Most scared of ..... Bees  
 Indoors or Outdoors? ..... Outdoors  
 Greatest Achievement ..... Placing at nationals  
 Favorite Quote ..... "Do not go where the path my lead, go instead where there is no path to leave."  
 Age started gymnastics .... 5  
 Best thing about being  
   on the team ..... Competition atmosphere  
 Something most people  
   don't know about me .... I had juvenile rheumatoid arthritis when I was three, and was bedridden for eight months.



### Wyatt Zmrzel

Hometown ..... Loomis, CA  
 High School ..... Del Oro High School  
 Major ..... Business  
 Nickname ..... Zmrz  
 Favorite Event ..... High bar  
 Favorite Food ..... Sushi  
 Least Favorite Food ..... Fast food  
 Favorite Movie ..... Never Back Down  
 Favorite Trick ..... Yamawaki on high bar  
 Artist ..... My Darkest Days  
 Why UW? ..... After I visited UW to check out the team and coach, I liked it and decided to come here.  
 Siblings ..... 1  
 Indoors or Outdoors? ..... Outdoors  
 Greatest Achievement: .... Making new tricks through my gymnastics career.  
 Age started gymnastics .... 5  
 Best thing about being  
   on the team ..... Getting to work together and to push each other into achieving our goals.



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In This Issue...

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

February 28, 2014

## 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>	<b><i>Washington Open</i></b>	<b><i>Marv Harshman Court Seattle, WA</i></b>
<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