

WMGF News

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April 18, 2014

Season Review

by Mark Russo

The Washington Men's Gymnastics Team completed its 33rd competitive season as a collegiate self-funded team on March 19th and 20th at the Naval Academy, performing at its highest level this year. Leading up to this performance, the team showed improvement in the second half of the season. Our team score was 25 points higher this year versus last, validating the large gain the team attained.

In late February, we dueled Arizona State at their home gym in front of more than 5000 screaming fans. It was great to be competing in front of so many people. We had our best meet to date and began our upward trend to the end of the season. Max Soifer started us off with two solid routines on Pommel Horse and Floor, scoring 12.85 and 13.20, respectively. Max has done a great job this season on these two events, with cleanly executed and consistent routines. Justin Rowen took the lead on our next two events, vault and rings, scoring 14.05 and 13.10 respectively. Justin stuck his vault and performed a solid ring routine when we really needed a strong score on that event. On the parallel bars, Brandon Waller stepped up and scored highest, though Franklin Stutevoss had the cleanest routine of the night with only 0.35 in execution deductions. Great job by the Oregonians! Justin led the high bar team though it wasn't his best routine. We left Arizona with our highest team score so far, but slightly unsatisfied

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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.



Greg Steward during event finals at Collegiate Nationals

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with what we left on the competition floor.

Team	All-Around
ASU 409.25	Waller 76.65
UW 375.85	Rowen 76.20

Three weeks later we traveled to Cal Berkeley which was great to see again after a 20-year hiatus. Our team was back at full strength after several early-season injuries. Greg Steward and Peter Moser would bolster our lineup and make competition in practice fierce. This meet had great energy to it and we performed well as a team, with lots of support and cheering. Our practices leading up to the meet were good as we were hitting our first routines in practice. I could feel we were ready to do well based on this. Freshman Aaron Moss led the Huskies this time with strong performances on floor, 14.45 (team season high score) and parallel bars. His all-around score of 76.7 was his highest of the year. Throughout the year, Max Soifer has led the team on pommels, Justin Rowen on rings and high bar, and Brandon Waller on vault – and this is exactly what happened at Cal. We did do our best to date showing our improving trend. It was a great reward for having good practices.

Collegiate Nationals turned out to be a fitting end to our season of improvement. We scored our highest team total of the season. In his last meet for the team, Peter Moser started off on floor for us with a hit routine scoring 13.95, a great start. On to pommels where – no surprise

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Season Review

– Max Soifer led the way for us again. We stumbled on our ring dismounts. No one performer separated himself from the others though Peter Moser had the highest score, 12.6. Justin Rowen led the vault scorers with a 13.9 he received while attempting a new vault. Super-clean routines by Brandon Waller and Greg Steward on parallel bars led our team and propelled both of them into event finals on Saturday. At horizontal bar, senior Greg Steward performed his last routine as well as he ever has and led the team scoring at this event with a stuck-landing on his dismount. It was a great way for Greg to cap off his career with the team!

I was proud of our team performance, one that was helped by the competitive forces at work during our practices this season. This was the single biggest reason for our season of improvement. Every day in practice, the guys had to compete to have a place on the competitive team in the actual meets. This set the tone of our daily practices and made us better on a daily basis. The challenge to our program is to continually have enough gymnasts so that we do have to compete every day of every season. Some years, when our region does not

produce enough upper level gymnasts, we have to recruit from outside our region as difficult as that may be. It takes more time and a few more dollars, but having a team with enough depth to overcome injuries and have competition daily make the team improve dramatically. I am extremely motivated to see our team improve to what I see as the next level, a team score of 400 or better.

Collegiate Nationals Results

Air Force	426.70	Brandon Waller	77.75	10th
William & Mary	422.75	Justin Rowen	77.30	12th
Army	414.60	Aaron Moss	76.60	13th
Navy	413.65	Peter Moser	74.80	15th
Arizona State	405.85			
Springfield	403.10			
Washington	383.65			
Brockport	185.70			

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 Denny**

by Charlie Denny

Charlie's major accomplishment in gymnastics was winning the national AAU championship on the flying rings. He omits this accomplishment in his write-up below. The Amateur Athletic Union's (AAU) national meet was THE most prestigious meet in the US at the time, while the AAU was the national governing body for gymnastics in the 1960's. Charlie also doesn't mention that he was the Pacific Northwest college trampoline and flying ring champion in 1959. When I started coaching gymnastics in 1950 there were 10 events in all college meets – the six events we have now plus trampoline, tumbling, rope climb and flying rings. In the flying (or swinging) rings, the competitor was supposed to maintain an arc of 45 degrees. Charlie was a "big swinger" and always maintained an arc greater than the other competitors and therefore his dismounts were higher, more spectacular, and scarier. Charlie was the first national champion in gymnastics for the UW, and since flying rings were dropped as a gymnastic event after his win in 1962, he will always be champion and can never be dethroned. Coach Hughes

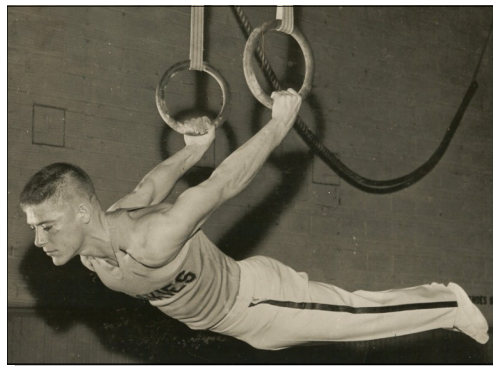
I was born in Yakima, Washington and grew up in Kennewick. At Kennewick High School I had my first experiences with gymnastics as a member of the school team, which included half-time performances at basketball games. I spent my first college year at Columbia Basin College and transferred to the UW in 1956, and began working out as a member of the UW gymnastics team.

Like Charlie Peters (who was featured in the last newsletter), I reached back in time for inspiration and nostalgic moments that I think are unique to our time there and not experienced by current team members.

For example, I would arrive daily at Hec Edmundson around 3 pm and open the storeroom where the apparatus and mats were stored. Next it had to be organized in our end of the gym since the other 2/3 of the gym was reserved for the basketball team's workout. Stray balls and players constantly showed up in our end and I occasionally torpedoed a few while swinging on the rings. Saturday mornings I spent time in the gym teaching tumbling and trampoline to budding young gymnasts including Brian Sternberg, John Anthony and Jimmy David who went on to become Husky greats.

Our team was NW Collegiate champions for most of the years of 1956-60. At away meets our method of transportation was the UW's ski bus, which ran downhill quite well. We played Hearts in the bus on our journeys to away competitions, and Coach Hughes became quite adept at the game.

My competition ended in 1962 when I competed at the National AAU Championships, which were held in the ice arena on the grounds of the Seattle World's fair in Seattle. Because the ceiling was too high to hang the rings (just think about that arc of movement), a scaffolding was built so the rings could be hung at the proper height of 23 feet. It certainly added to the drama of the performance as it swayed noisily throughout the routine. Luckily I was able to hang on to win the gold medal in that event.



Charlie back in Hec-Ed

A highlight of those years was "working out" with the Greater Seattle Gymnastics Club and George Lewis. As Charlie Peters stated, it was a big family and we were having some fun. Bill Crow, Coach Hughes and I developed some pretty cool clown routines for the trampoline and gave performances all over the area along with performances on swinging rings. One of those clown routines is part of the archives at the Seattle Center and appeared during the program honoring the 50-years celebration in 2012. An outstanding memory for me is when during a flying ring routine at an exhibition at Kent-Meridian H.S., Coach Hughes announced that I had become a father that morning to enthusiastic applause from the audience.

After finishing at the UW, I took a teacher-coaching job at Issaquah H.S. I was lucky enough to be the faculty advisor to the Foreign Exchange Club, which hosted three Japanese student-gymnasts: Yoshi Hayasaki, Hideaki Umeshita, and Tomi Ozora, who went on to the UW after graduating from Issaquah. It was a privilege to get to know these outstanding young men and the families of my gymnasts who hosted them while they spent their year at Issaquah H.S. The experience also encouraged my wife and me to become "parents" to several other young men over the years. We had six more Japanese students, a Saudi student, and one from Thailand join our family for periods of a few weeks to a

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Where Are They Now?

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year, although none were gymnasts. After ten years at Issaquah, a new school opened up in Kent and I helped to open Kentridge H. S. as teacher and coach.

In 1970, I transferred to teach at the Kent Continuation High school, where students who had dropped out, failed or been turned off by the regular system could find both academic and personal support. After 16 years there, I retired. I highly recommend retirement. An avid reader, I am known to mosey off to the library nearly once a day in search of the latest good book.

My wife Linda and I are actively involved with our four sons and our five grandchildren who all live close, except the youngest in Arizona. Those living here grace us with their presence for dinner nearly every Friday night to enjoy their Opa's good cooking. They provide us with unlimited entertainment and good vibes. Our youngest grandson, Quinn, joins us for breakfast each school day morning, with Linda then walking him to

school, until recently, when Charlie has taken over the delivery service.

A more recent highlight for us was the celebration of 50 years of marriage in 2012 with a 17-day cruise through the Panama Canal, which was a dream come true for me. We also celebrated at home with a garden party for family and friends at the beautiful Soos Creek Botanical Garden where Linda volunteers each Thursday morning.

Interview with the Washington State Chairman: Jeff Crockett

by Peter Sawyer

Jeff Crockett is dedicated to gymnastics. He competed eight years for the Washington Huskies team (during which he introduced a new move on high bar) and also served as its assistant coach. Then he moved to Eastside Gymnastics where he's been coaching preschool through Level 10 for the last five years. This past year he took on a new role as USAG's Washington State Chairman. We wanted to learn about Jeff's new experience, so we took a few minutes of his harried schedule during the State Championships to ask.

WMGF: So Jeff, why did you want to become the State Chair?

Jeff: I want to make a difference in this sport and be in a position to help it not only survive, but to grow and thrive as a world-class sport. Also, I wanted more scope; more visibility into the whole "behind the scenes" activities of USAG gymnastics. I want to see more of how it all works.

WMGF: And after a year, what have you learned?

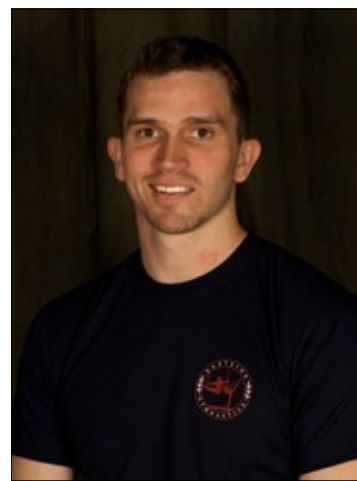
Jeff: Really, I've only just scratched the surface. I've gotten to see more of how other states work, and I attended the Regional and State Summit this past fall, where I got to bump elbows with the directors of USA Men's Gymnastics. It's really interesting.

WMGF: What's your impression of USAG? Are they doing a good job?

Jeff: Yes, I think so. They are constantly trying to find better ways to create a more cohesive, top notch program that will help foster even better National Team Members. While at the same time they work to provide programs that will increase participation on all levels.

WMGF: How about their activity in promoting men's gymnastics?

Jeff: Yes, they're always looking at new ways of promoting the sport and I think they're moving in the right directions on that as well.





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Interview with the Washington State Chairman: Jeff Crockett

(cont)

WMGF: What are some things you're hoping to accomplish as chairman?

Jeff: It's a little hard to quantify, but I'd like to see a change in the excitement level for our sport among coaches, judges, and parents. I want Washington State to be a leader in Region 2 as well.

WMGF: How's that going?

Jeff: I think I am seeing glimpses of a renewed level of enthusiasm, and I like to think I'm helping influence that.

WMGF: What are some of the things you've done so far, or are hoping to do?

Jeff: Well this year for example, we've changed how coaches and judges are voted as "Coach/Judge of the Year". Coaches are voting for judges, and vice-versa. My thinking is that judges really have more opportunity to observe coaches during a meet (since the other coaches are busy coaching), and likewise coaches see the judges working more than judges do. I'm hoping that inspires people to more actively pursue those awards.

I've also introduced three new State Awards: Small and Large-Team Compulsory Staff of the Year, and Optional Coaching Staff of the Year. These awards are won by a point system based on the results from the State Meet each year.

We're also re-introducing the State Clinic, which includes creating a team of top Level 5 and 6 gymnasts to become a "developmental team", and hopefully give younger kids something to aspire to. The Level 7's already have the Regional Clinic they can strive for.

We've codified many of the processes for the State, like hosting the State Championship, in order to bring more consistency, and I also created a Washington State Website (<http://usagymwa.com>), where people can find information about meet schedules, results, clinics, awards, club info, and it even includes a page for parents!

WMGF: Are those things working?

Jeff: Well it's going to take a few years before we really see changes, but I'm optimistic.

WMGF: Jeff, thank you. It's great having you in this new role, and we're looking forward to seeing the results of your efforts.

Jeff: Thank you.

Follow the Team!

The guys have done a great job this season keeping our fans updated with frequent posts to our Facebook page.

Franklin Stutevoss has worked particularly hard to ensure high-quality videos of the guys' routines are online, as well as making shorter posts telling us about what's happening with the team. It's a great way to hear from other fans too.

Check us out at:

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April 18, 2014



Please join us for the 2014
**Washington Men's Gymnastics
Team Banquet**

Season re-cap! Slide Show! Dinner! Dessert!

*A chance to get together with friends from many
eras of Husky Gymnastics*

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Date: Saturday, 5/17/2013

Time: 1:00pm

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