

WMGF News

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December 4, 2015

Season Preview

by Mark Russo

These days, I am finding it difficult to contain my optimism for this year's team. With three solid years of recruited gymnasts, our team is as strong as it ever has been. We are a team that contends and is making the step to the next level of collegiate competition. Last year, our goal was the respect that comes when your team can score 400. We accomplished that or greater two times last season, a 20-25 point improvement over the previous year. This season, we set our sights on the score of 420 where several teams that have been beyond our reach forever lie and cannot hear us coming. It is going to take a tremendous amount of work and a little bit of luck to accomplish our goal, yet I strongly believe it will happen.

This year's freshman class of five good gymnasts gives the team competition and depth that will make everyone better. Garrett Dee, 2015 Region 2 All-Around champion from Idaho, joined the team and immediately gave his strong work ethic to the cause. Garrett has tremendous drive in addition to being a dedicated teammate. He performs with attention to the details of form and landings. As he acquires skills, it is going to be tough to outcompete this guy.

The state of Oregon and Oregon Gymnastics Academy in Beaverton brings us Ben Fisher, a talented and late-blooming gymnast. Ben was coached by Leonard Spivey (UW alum circa 1982) when he was younger. Ben has tremendous potential and as his strength gains, his gymnastics will be something to see. Ben remembers corrections and translates those words into body coordination with a unique ease. As the season develops, I can see Ben becoming more and more of a factor in our team's rise.

Two international gymnasts joined the team this year after making contact with us over the Internet. Phil Chantler from Manchester, England and Michael Sibley from Vancouver, Canada bring their skills to this year's team. Phil prob-

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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.



Nick Kano at Nationals

Photo credit: Steve Moss

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ably does his most difficult skills on pommel horse but is also a good tumbler. Although he may not think so, he has a lot of potential on vault, parallel bars, and high bar. He has uprooted himself from his home halfway around the world to be here and "give it a go." Very impressive, and I am looking forward to him making lineup and helping the team.

Michael Sibley was recently named Canada's 2015 Junior Athlete of the Year! Though he comes to us with a leg injury from his junior days, we are hoping his recent medical fix will heal 100% and give him back to the sport full of the power he possesses. Michael will make his presence felt on the team this season, most likely on rings.

Last season at a competition we attended in Ft. Worth, Texas, we met Jacob Jarrett who was competing as an individual in our rotation. Jacob impressed us with his explosiveness and upper body quickness on several events. Team members and I invited him to join the team. He took us up on that offer and left his home in Louisiana to come to school up here. Jacob was taught good basics by his coaches and is a very polite and respectful person. As his strength increases, his future gets brighter.

For those that have been on the team for two or three years, firsthand experience of the team's improvement has provided a much-needed understanding of how the year progresses. Their fitness is greater than the newcomers and gives the team a solid base upon which to improve. This year's sophomores Nick Kano, Nathan Tsuji, and Carl Meader were vital to the team's success last year and are equally as important this year. Nick is becoming a world-class gymnast on rings while steadily improving on parallel bars, pommel horse, and high bar. Nathan has upgraded nearly all of his dismounts as well as shown his teammates how to perform with minimal execu-

(Continued on page 2)

Season Preview

(Continued from page 1)

tion errors. Carl keeps acquiring new skills, incorporating them into routines seamlessly and with a flair for the original. These three California boys are helping the team in numerous ways that will show up directly with improved event scores.

Third-year team members Max Soifer, Aaron Moss, and Justin Rowen comprise three quarters of the veterans on our team. These three have proven their value to the team with their consistent gymnastics and their help in recruiting. They are providing leadership in the gym and out at our fundraising events. Each is having to overcome an injury at this time but I am confident that by the competition season's beginning, they will be ready to compete and provide some of the highest-scoring routines for the team.

The only fourth-year team member this season is Brandon Waller, who is healthy after missing last season with the second knee injury of his career. Brandon is not fazed by this second setback and is improving, or I should say picking up where he left off before he got hurt on a rapid ascent to high-level skills and routines. His positive nature and quick-

witted puns are great ingredients for a well-balanced, fun team. I, personally, am very impressed with his development gymnastically and as a team leader. This guy has gotten all that our program offers and is ready, once this season concludes, to take it out into the "Real World." Watch out, world!

I believe we are poised to accomplish new heights of gymnastics this season. I am feeling the joy of an improving program and looking forward to reporting back to you of our accomplishments this coming year. All could not be possible without your help and we truly are grateful for your support. We have all had a hand in building the team to this level, and watching it perform gives me the satisfaction of knowing we are on the right path. Hopefully you will also get an opportunity to see the team in action this coming season. I highly recommend it either at one of our away meets, or for our dual meet in Portland this year in February against our biggest rival, Arizona State.

UW – Unity Wins!



*Happy Holidays from your 2015-2016
Husky Gymnastics Team*



Justin Rowen, Garrett Dee, Nick Kano, Ben Fisher, Phil Chantler, Aaron Moss, Michael Sibley, Max Soifer, Nathan Tsuji, Jacob Jarrett, Carl Meador, Brandon Waller, Coach Mark Russo, Assistant Coach Giancarlo Mora

Meet the Freshmen

by Max Soifer and Brandon Waller

Garrett Dee

Garrett Dee, a Nampa, Idaho native, is without a doubt the hardest-working athlete I have ever met. When asked what his best event is, he explains that, "I don't have a best event." Garrett is an all-around gymnast and he says, "I don't like to favor events in gymnastics because I want to make sure I am a well-rounded gymnast."

Academically, Garrett is on the Pre-Med track at Shoreline community college with plans to transfer to the University of Washington.

Do you have a guilty pleasure song, if so what?
Anything by Coldplay, Coldplay is my jam.

What is your favorite quote?
"I'm just here so I won't get fined." – Marshawn Lynch

What is your proudest gymnastics moment?
Qualifying for JO nationals for the first time in 2012.

Do you have any hobbies, if so what are they?
Camping and watching movies.

Michael Sibley

It's hard to look around the gym and not see Michael smiling and dancing around the gym; even though he recently had shin surgery, he lets nothing hold him back. Michael is a very strong athlete from North Vancouver, BC with very high aspirations.

When Michael isn't in the gym he enjoys skateboarding, which is "THE true passion" according to him. He also enjoys music and hanging out with his friends. In school Michael is studying Mechanical Engineering.

Most exciting gymnastics experience?
The Canada Winter Games 2015 was such an amazing competition with great people and the environment was electric.

What is your best non-gymnastics memory?
Going to Whistler, BC with friends to watch a mountain biking competition just before leaving for college.

Who is your favorite celebrity?
Jhené Aiko.

What's the best part of being on the team?
The best part of being on the team is training with all the guys and having a team vibe.

Phil Chantler

Pommel specialist Phil Chantler out of Manchester, UK decided to make the journey half way across the world to join our team this year. If that doesn't show dedication, I don't know what does. Phil is a huge sports fan. He roots for Manchester City FC and the Jacksonville Jaguars (we're still try-

ing to convert him into a Seahawks fan).

What is your favorite song?
Live forever, Oasis.

What are you studying in school?
Physical Education.

What is your favorite gymnastics skill?
Arabian Double.

What is your favorite cheat day food?
In England - custard creams, in the US - Chocolate chip Eggo waffles.

Jacob Jarrett

Our most recent recruit, Jacob Jarrett, comes all the way from Shreveport, Louisiana. Jacob, as his family sometimes refers to him, is attending Shoreline Community College while on the team, and plans on pursuing a major in Micro Biology. While often quiet around other people, Jacob speaks volumes with his precise movements and impeccable lines on his favorite events: Parallel Bars and High Bar. His first encounter with Washington Men's Gymnastics was meeting the team at Metroplex in 2015.

What are your favorite non-gym hobbies?
Fishing, Hunting, and 5k Running.

What is your favorite moment from your gymnastics career?
Placing third at Metroplex in 2013.

What is your favorite skill to perform on any event?
A Diamidov or Tkachev.

What is your favorite quote?
"Citius, Altius, Fortius" (Faster, Higher, Stronger).

Ben Fisher

Our newest recruit from Oregon is Ben Fisher, our first recruit from Region 2's Oregon Gymnastics Academy. Currently attending UW Bothell, Ben is thinking about pursuing a major in Business Management. He is also an all-around competitor, but specializes on his favorite event, floor.

What is your favorite way to kill time?
Gaming.

What is your least favorite event to compete on?
The Still Rings.

What is your favorite Movie or TV Show?
Game of Thrones.

What is your favorite quote?
"If I had asked what people wanted, they would have said 'Faster Horses.'" -Henry Ford

Season Kickoff Dinner!

by Eugene Burton-Breazeal

What a sun-filled, warm reception for the new and returning members of the 2015 team! The annual Team Dinner went down without a hitch Saturday afternoon, October 3, 2015. Many thanks to Dave Nakanishi for hosting this year at his gorgeous property located in the wonderful Puget Sound waterfront in Anacortes, Washington! The BBQ and Sides were a fun variety of burgers, brats, dogs, chips, salads, and Eugene's specialty "...Betty's Brownies," and Head Coach Mark Russo brought his traditional assortment of amazing homemade pies. Glad to see good food and family events remain a top priority of our Dawg Pack!

It was a beautiful sunny day, and as always an environment of amazingly talented athletes and friends. Numerous alumni and coaches like Dr. Hughes and the more recent departures like Franklin Stutevoss were in attendance. Saturday was the largest Husky gymnastics family gathering and most promising kickoff dinner we've had in years, quite possibly all time. Good luck to our rivals at Arizona State University as they have no idea what is about to descend upon them in early

2016. Mark and the Foundation Board members have looked forward to the day when our athletes would train and compete both on and off the podium for key roster spots!

Shortly after grill master Rick Chapman shut down the grill, Head Coach Mark Russo shared a little about his passion for gymnastics, vision for the organization, and in a timely manner introduced this year's team including our new Assistant Coach, Giancarlo Mora. Many of you who were not in attendance were either mentioned by Mark himself, or brought up in conversation with other athletes and alumni, but it is you who have made this all possible. Thank you! We all need to thank Mrs. Michele Chapman for doing the majority of the coordination for this particular function. To Michele, we are sorry you took a most unfortunate fall from a Segway while touring with your husband Rick. May you heal fast, and may your next trip be more graceful and forgiving!

For those who missed out on the food, friends, family, lawn sports, and fishing, we hope you can make it next year. Please expect an invite around the same timeframe in 2016!

Editor's note: This issue's team photo was taken at this event.

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Does your employer have a gift-matching program? Check if they do - it could be an easy way to increase your gift to WMGF!

Corrections...

A few donors were inadvertently left off of last month's Annual Report mailing. The WMGF would like to acknowledge and give a huge **THANK YOU** to:

\$500

Mace Brady • Eigil Flaathen • Lars Kolsrud

Due to an error by the me in not recording these donations, they were not included in our Annual Report. I, personally, would like to apologize to you all for this oversight and want all to know that we are very grateful for all of your donations! Thank you sincerely Mace, Eigil, and Lars!

-Mark Russo



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Mark K. Oliver

President & Founder - Senior Investment Advisor

Where Are They Now? An Update on Husky Alum Dale Burson

by Dale Burson

I was a Husky gymnast from 1970 through 1973. I was on the JV team as a freshman and then contributed enough scores here and there in floor exercise, vault, and parallel bars to letter the following two years as a varsity team member. My main claim to fame is that I was the first Husky to do a double-back somersault on floor in competition. It wasn't great, but I like to remind people that at that time we did floor on wrestling mats placed over a very unforgiving surface. I enjoyed the road trips, especially the 1972 Pac-8 meet in Pullman and the nationals in Iowa, but overall the highlight for me was sharing the team experience with such a wide variety of interesting people, from the foreign exchange stars to my fellow supporting players.

I got my start in gymnastics around the age of six. I was taking swim lessons at the Olympic Swim School near our home in north Seattle and began hanging around the trampoline center next door to the pool that was operated by future Voice-of-Husky-Gymnastics Jim Lang. That led to Dr. Hughes' gymnastics classes at the UW.

I had a lot of fun in the gymnastics classes and am grateful my dad was willing to keep paying the fees and taking me to the gym. Several of the varsity gymnasts served as instructors. I remember Lew Landers trying to explain which way I should rotate in twisting skills based on which hand I led with for cartwheels. He did his best and I don't blame him that I did it wrong for the rest of my career. I also remember frustrating Gary Finne with my inability to do a muscle-up on rings. He decided it should be called a "tendon-up" in my case because there was no evidence I had any muscle. I never improved much in that area, but had more success with tumbling.

I started going to the summer gym camp at Camp Waskowitz in 1959 and kept going back every summer for several years. It was a terrific social experience and was my kind of gymnastics – all trying new tricks and no complete routines. The best part was tumbling on a downhill incline. It made everything so much easier.

I went to see the 1962 AAU nationals when I was ten and watched Jim David and Hal Holmes compete for the tumbling title. That was the first time I saw somebody do a double-back somersault on the floor and I always wanted to do one myself someday.

At some point in the early sixties, I was invited down to the YMCA to join a "midget tumbling" act that was part of the Gymnastics Spectacular shows put on at local schools by the Seattle Gymnastics Club to boost the sport. Being in the show was fun, but the highlights for me were watching the older gymnasts do their thing. I remember the crowd getting into counting along as the guys competed against each other to see who could do the most double leg circles on pommel horse and how much we all enjoyed the comedy trampoline act. I continued going to the YMCA on a regular basis and met more members of the local gymnastics community. That's where I first met some of the gymnasts I would later

encounter as competitors or teammates in high school.

My high school, Nathan Hale in north Seattle, had a pretty good intramural gymnastics program and the coach, Bob Julin, let me practice there occasionally when I was still in ninth grade at the junior high school across the street. Bruce Brinton was our star at the time and later did pretty well at the UW. I dislocated my wrist the summer before my freshman year in high school so got off to kind of a slow start but by the time I was a senior Nathan Hale had a good team and won the team championship in only our second year competing at the state level. I won the all-around in 1970 and my friend and teammate Dave Jackson won it the next two years. The school dropped the sport soon thereafter but it was fun while it lasted.

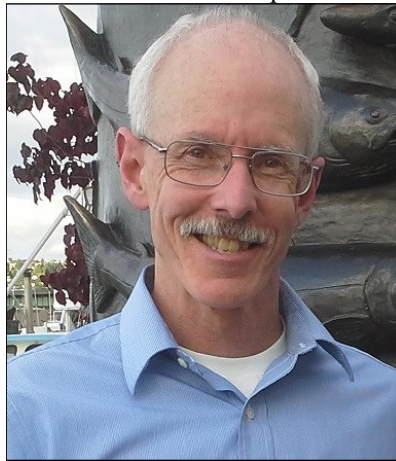
After completing my degree in Economics in 1975, I married my wife Melody and took a job with the Treasury Department in Washington DC as a transactions analyst in the bureau that handles savings bonds and other government securities. At the time the total public debt was about \$500 billion, compared to \$18 trillion today. It seems ridiculous now but

there was some concern among my co-workers in 1976 that the budget might be balanced and we'd all lose our jobs. After two years, Melody and I decided that DC wasn't for us so we bought a van, quit our jobs, and had a fun cross-county road trip back home. I found another Federal job with the Navy at Sand Point and spent the next fifteen years supporting Navy shipbuilding projects; first in provisioning and later as a contract administrator. I worked on several big local projects including a new class of submarine tenders, fast frigates, and amphibious landers. I also participated in systems review teams at shipyards in other parts of the country, including Electric Boat in Connecticut where the Trident submarines were being built.

Navy shipbuilding in the northwest stopped after our senators changed and the Reagan administration ended. After helping to close out the contracts at Lockheed Shipbuilding (now a container terminal), I transferred to the Public Health Service and became a contracting officer for an office that handled the construction and remodeling of health facilities for Alaska Natives and Indians in Alaska and the northern half of the lower 48. It was a nice change to go from building warships to constructing hospitals. When Vice President Gore reinvented government in the mid-nineties and eliminated a lot of mid management layers, my office became part of the Indian Health Service. We replaced a lot of nasty old 1930's square brick institutional clinics with nice state-of-the-art facilities that incorporated tribal design elements and that typically became major community centers. It was an opportunity to see places it would never have occurred to me to visit otherwise, such as Barrow, St Paul Island, and the remote reservations in the plains states and Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Eventually I was promoted to be the Director of Acquisition Policy for all of the Indian Health Service and that gave

(Continued on page 7)



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Where Are They Now: Dale Burson

(Continued from page 6)

me a chance to get involved with the medical and social programs that deliver free health care to Native Americans nationwide, either directly in Federal facilities or through funding arrangements with tribes that opt to run their own programs. My position was located at the headquarters offices in Rockville, Maryland, but fortunately I was able to telecommute most of the time from Seattle and only had to travel east every six weeks or so. The time I was in this position included some special challenges: the Recovery Act stimulus spending in 2009, the start of Obamacare, and the 2013 Government shutdown. I was very impressed with the level of expertise and dedication of the tribal and government officials I worked with, and I'm proud to have had a small part in improving the well-being of the Native American population.

When we came back to Seattle from DC, Melody and I took up sailing as a hobby we could share together. We kept our sailboat on Lake Union and spent a lot of time sailing the lakes and taking cruises around Puget Sound and the Gulf Islands. We have also sailed on chartered boats in Thailand, Turkey, Greece, the Bahamas, and the Virgin Islands.

I retired in 2013 after a 38 year career in Federal government. Melody retired earlier from an impressive career as a major gift fund raiser for UW Medicine and several social service agencies. In 2012 she was diagnosed with breast cancer and we had a couple of rough years with treatments and side effects, but she is doing well and, so far, is now cancer-

free. Last December, after 23 years on Capitol Hill in Seattle, Melody and I sold our sailboat and our old house and moved to a little place on the water in Gig Harbor. We are settling in nicely as an old retired couple. Maybe we'll take up kayaking.



Dale horsing around with teammate Jim Young

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In This Issue...


Season Preview, Where Are They Now, and more...

December 4, 2015

Washington Men's Gymnastics

2015-2016 Meet Schedule

(local meets in bold)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Location</i>
January 2	7:00pm	Washington Open 	Marv Harshman Court Seattle, WA
January 16	6:00pm	Rocky Mountain Open	US Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, CO
January 30	7:00pm	Stanford Open	Burnham Pavilion, Stanford Univ. Stanford, CA
February 13,14	7:00pm	MAC Open vs. ASU	Multnomah Athletic Club Portland, OR
February 26	TBD	vs. ASU and So Cal United	Rawhide at Wild Horse Pass Chandler, AZ
March 13	12:00pm	vs. Cal and Army	UC Berkeley Berkeley, CA
March 25,26	TBD	Collegiate Nationals	Springfield College Springfield, MA

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