

WMGF News

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December 15, 2006

Season Preview

by Mark Russo

The new season begins shortly and our team is not the same as it was last year. Gone are four promising freshmen, and graduating are two of the team's most dependable performers Jeff Crockett and Graham Gordon. We are at a new beginning and the construction of the team will take several years as our Region (Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Alaska) has only a few high school gymnasts graduating this year. It has again reminded me how precarious the situation is for men's gymnastics. The second you think that your team has arrived... poof! it is gone and reconstruction begins. Thankfully though, a solid foundation for our program has been laid by the many efforts of the WMGF, which enables us to be stronger and ready for the next able group to come through. We will be better than we were; it just may take a while this time.

Our team this year is composed of Senior Sean Liner who will lead the team in the all-around. Sean has upgraded his routines to a very respectable level and his performances are always enjoyable to watch. He will anchor the team, and I honestly believe he has a good chance to be the best all-arounder of all collegiate clubs in the country. That says a lot about Sean, but did you know that he is going to graduate on time as well with a degree in Civil Engineering? Amazing when you consider all that is involved with being a student athlete and member of our team where we work 22 weekends of the year for

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.



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fundraising. Sean also finds time to be a high flying member of the Sonics Dunking Ushers. He will be our team leader this year once competition begins in January.

Third-year member Kevin Perkins looks to add to his impressive summer where he finished fifth on rings and eighth on vault at USA Nationals. This was extremely impressive considering it was his first time at the big dance! Kevin has world-class potential on these two events and also competes on floor exercise, parallel bars, and high bar for the Huskies. He is an essential member of the team and looks to improve this year.

Mohamed Ghanem and Joe Zhou round out the competitive team. Both are specialists and are "learning the ropes," so to speak. Mohamed – "Mo" – did gymnastics previously in his native Egypt and for a short time here at Metropolitan Gymnastics. He is reacquainting himself with all the events. I would say that floor and high bar will be his best events and eventually rings will be good as well. Joe Zhou competes on the floor and will upgrade his skill level this year. His clean lines are enjoyable to watch.

This season we travel to three new locations. First we compete at Oklahoma, the defending NCAA champions. They have the deepest team in the country and it will be a joy to see them do the best gymnastics that the NCAA has to offer. Then we meet the University of Texas and their collegiate club team that is similar to ours. This should be an interesting competition and

Season Preview

(Continued from page 1)

one to take note of. They aspire to be as good as our team, and I am eager to see how they look. Finally, this season's Collegiate Club Nationals will be hosted by the College of William and Mary in Virginia this March. The area is rich with history; we will get out to see some of it and hopefully to make some history of our own. Because we do not have enough gymnasts to post a full team score, we look to show our ability individually. With the talent we have, this should be an assignment we can ace.



A Primer on the New Code

By Graham Gordon

There have been some significant changes to the Code of Points since the last Olympics, so we wanted to take some time to explain some of the changes. The first thing you may have noticed is that it is now possible to score more than a 10.0. This is because a gymnast's score is obtained by adding an execution score, which starts from a 10.0, and an open-ended difficulty score. In international competitions scores typically are above 14 points, with top finishers scoring in the mid 16's.

Because there are so many points dedicated to execution, the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) has also increased the deductions. The new deductions are now .1, .3 and .5 for small, medium, and large errors, and .8 for falls from the apparatus. Small errors include slight bending of the arms or legs or 1 to 15 degrees deviation from a hold position. Medium errors include strong bending, hitting the apparatus, or 16 to 30 degrees deviation from a hold position. Large errors include extreme bending, holding a strength position for less than one second, or more than 30 degrees deviation from a hold position. Large errors can also often result in the skill not being recognized, causing a drop in the gymnast's difficulty score.

The difficulty score is much more complex. Each skill, with the exception of vaults, is assigned a difficulty, from A to F, and one of five groups. For example a giant on high bar is an A in group I Long hang swings and turns, whereas a Ri Jong Song (a stretched double salto backward with three twists) on floor is an F in group III Acrobatic elements backwards. The

gymnast's difficulty score is calculated by taking the ten most difficult skills (the rules for choosing these skills can be quite complicated) and giving him .1 for each A, .2 for each B, .3 for each C, .4 for each D, .5 for each E and .6 for each F. The gymnast also gets .5 for each of the five element groups included in the ten counting skills (for the dismount group he must perform a D or higher skill, for all other groups an A or higher is sufficient). It is also possible to obtain bonus points for connecting certain skills on floor, rings and high bar. To determine the difficulty score on vault, the judge simply looks up the vault in a table. The difficulty scores range from 4.5 for a stoop to 7.0 for a Yeo 2 (a handspring front layout with 2 1/2 twists) or Melissanidis piked (a round off, back handspring, double salto backward piked). This allows the scores on vault to be approximately the same as those on the other events.

One big exception to these rules is that the NCAA has maintained a maximum score of 10.0 by limiting the difficulty score to 3.5 and starting the execution score at 6.5. They also add 3.0 to the value of each vault. So try not to boo too loud when a Kevin Perkins scores a 9.7 on rings.

If after all that you still have more questions or want more specifics you can download your very own copy of the Code of Points for free from <http://tinyurl.com/ymwywg> (just scroll down to the Code of Points 2005—2008 and click on the icon to right of the Men's Artistic Code of Points).

Meet the Team

An Interview With Sophomore **Mohamed Ghanem**

by *Graham Gordon*

Name: Mohamed Ghanem

Major: Civil Engineering

Place of birth: Alexandria, Egypt

Age: 19

Shoe size: 10

Year in school: Sophomore

Favorite event: Rings and vault

Parents: Mother Azza Lel-Sabaney

Father Abdalla

Graham Gordon: Who is your hero?

Mohamed Ghanem: My hero... I don't know. I don't have a hero... Do you mean for gymnastics or for everything?

GG: Anything.

MG: That would be the Prophet.

GG: What is the best part of being on the team?

MG: Having a lot of great guys as friends. Because when you have gymnastics friends, they can understand what you are going through, school work and workload.

GG: The worst?

MG: Uh... the fundraisers. Really tiring. I understand how they are helpful, but they are really tiring.

GG: What is the one thing every non-Muslim should know about Muslims?

MG: We are not terrorists.

GG: How many languages do you speak?

MG: Arabic, English, and a little French. Not very good at French, but I can converse a little bit.

GG: Where did you learn French?

MG: Well, I went to a French Catholic school called St. Mark's.

GG: What was it like going to a Catholic school?

MG: Well it's a Catholic school, but they don't enforce anything, and there was a mosque in it. There was a church *and* a mosque.

GG: What's your favorite radio station?

MG: 104.9 FM the Funky Monkey

GG: Format?

MG: Metal and Rock

GG: When did you start gymnastics? And why?

MG: When I was five years old. I was a very hyper kid, jumping all around, so my mom put me in gym and swimming, and I sucked at swimming. We would jump into the deep pool and all the kids were able to move and I couldn't. I would just move to the ropes.



Mohamed Ghanem

GG: What are the differences between gymnastics here and in Egypt?

MG: In Egypt, basically we were very disciplined. Our coach used to hold an inner tube and if you didn't point your toes he'd smack you with it.

If the coach told us to do something we wouldn't say we were scared, we'd just do it. If we said we were afraid then he wouldn't spot us!

Where Are They Now?

An Update on Husky Alum John Maseng

by John Maseng

Growing up in Illinois, I began gymnastics as a freshman in high school. None of the incoming freshmen except one was very good on the pommel horse, so I felt I might have a chance of making the team. Back in the 70's, gymnastics competition was fierce in Illinois, particularly on the pommel horse. Our senior year, my school John Hersey High won the State Tournament by just a few tenths of a point, and I placed fourth. When Coach Hughes recruited me to the UW, I thought I finally would get away from all the guys I competed against throughout high school. Little did I know most of them went to the Pac-8 (as it was known back then). After four years of trying, I finally made it to Nationals in 1978 where, after falling on my last routine, I slipped from second or third to seventh. As I hit the floor I saw the ABC camera logo, and all that I could think of was their old opening commercial of the poor ski jumper crashing on his takeoff, "The Agony of Defeat!" Then, during finals night at the NCAA Championships, everyone on the pommel horse was originally from Illinois – guys I competed against my entire career!

Anyway, the lessons learned and hard work and determination I developed during my gymnastics years helped and influenced my chosen profession. After finishing at Washington, I went to a civilian flight school in Florida and got a second degree, this time in

Flying. I had started flying at age 15, receiving my private license at 16, but this is where I got most of my civilian ratings. Aviation jobs were scarce during the recession of the late 70's, so I joined the United States Air Force Reserves. I put in 20 years flying C-141B Transports out of McChord AFB in Tacoma, WA. Five years into that, I also began working for United Airlines and have flown the B-727 as a Flight Engineer and Line Check Pilot, and as a pilot on the B-757, B-767, the Airbus 320/319 series, and currently serve as a Captain on the B-747/400. During the first Gulf War, I was activated for almost a year, flying troops and equipment all over the Middle East. War is never good, except for the arms dealers, but it was one of the more interesting periods of my life. For 15 years I worked at both jobs, until finally retiring from the military in the fall of 2000, as a Major.

My wife Nancy, who works in real estate, and I live in Las Vegas, NV (exactly the opposite climate of Seattle!). Outside of work, we spend most of our time raising two children, Elizabeth (13) a straight "A" student, and Sean (5) who has systematically hidden all of my tools somewhere around the house.... We enjoy traveling when we can, and spend as much time as possible in Southern Utah, where we have a small cabin just outside of Zion National Park.



John at the helm of a Boeing 747-400

THANK YOU!

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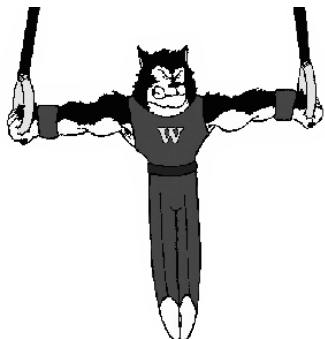
Happy Holidays from your 2006-2007
Husky Gymnastics Team



Your 2006-2007 Husky Gymnastics Team

Left - right: Coach Mark Russo, John Chapman, Jeff Crockett, Eugene Burton
Breazeal, Sean Liner, Mohamed Ghanem, Kevin Perkins, Jennifer Umemoto

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In This Issue...

Season Preview, Alumni Update, and more...

December 15, 2006

Washington Men's Gymnastics

2006 Meet Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>January 6</i>	<i>Washington Open, University of Washington</i>	<i>Hec -Ed Pavilion Addition, Seattle, WA</i>
<i>January 27</i>	<i>Stanford Open</i>	<i>Palo Alto, CA</i>
<i>February 8-10</i>	<i>Winter Cup</i>	<i>Las Vegas, NV</i>
<i>February 17</i>	<i>at Oklahoma</i>	<i>Norman, OK</i>
<i>February 24</i>	<i>Great West Gym Fest</i>	<i>Coeur d'Alene, ID</i>
<i>May 3</i>	<i>at Texas</i>	<i>Austin, TX</i>
<i>May 22-23</i>	<i>Collegiate Nationals</i>	<i>William & Mary, VA</i>

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