

WMGF News

www.wmgf.us

June 13, 2025

Season Review

by Head Coach Eli Richardson

As the 2025 season comes to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on an incredible year for the Washington Men's Gymnastics Team. This season was marked by grit, growth, and an unwavering commitment to a vision far bigger than ourselves. I write to you filled with pride for what they've accomplished – and immense gratitude for the support that made it all possible.

This year looked very different from the last. Our goals were bigger, and the workload heavier. Gymnastics is widely regarded as one of the most physically and mentally demanding sports, and pursuing it at the collegiate level is no small feat. But our athletes go even further. In addition to their work in the gym, they dedicate themselves to supporting this program in ways that few other teams can.

This season, our athletes contributed over 200 hours of service to the team, to the University's varsity sports programs, and to the greater gymnastics community. Yes, I counted the hours. And they did this on top of rigorous practices, full academic schedules, and for many, personal jobs and internships. Why? Because they love this sport. They believe in each other. And they want to build something lasting for the athletes who come after them.

In the gym, they started the year with training that demanded more than ever before. New and stricter rule sets required us to raise our diffi-

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.



Bradley Stroud at UW vs ASU

WMGF Board of Directors

Officers

Paul Roggenkamp.....	President
Jennifer Umemoto	Vice President
Mark Russo.....	Executive Director
Peter Sawyer	Secretary
Daniel Luna.....	Treasurer
Graham Smith-Gordon....	Press Secretary
Riley Lineman.....	Team Liaison

Active Members

Jeff Tretheway	Sarah Layman
Sandy Flores	Lynn Boman
Beth Henriquez	Perry Lightfoot
Eugene Burton-Breazeal	Mace Brady

E-mail: team@wmgf.us
Web: www.wmgf.us

culty and skill levels significantly. Rather than be intimidated, the team rose to the challenge with hunger and determination while preparing for our first competition: the Washington Open. They came in with new skills, new teammates, and a renewed focus. Their performances reflected the months of preparation, and more importantly, they offered a glimpse of what's to come. And yes – our athletes also handled the full setup and breakdown of the event they competed in.

Just a week later, several of our gymnasts competed at the Windy City Invitational in Chicago, creating back-to-back weekends of meets, and on top of that, another competition equipment setup for a Seattle-area women's meet. And they didn't stop there.... The very next weekend they set up and supported one of the largest and most complex meets they've ever taken on. Oh, and they also set up and supported another competition in Kitsap, Washington that same weekend. Oh, and I almost forgot: The athletes also competed for the third weekend in a row (back-to-back-to-back). That weekend tested us like never before. It was physically brutal, mentally draining, and emotionally challenging. But it also revealed something profound: When pushed to the edge, our strength doesn't break – it forges stronger.

Finally, they had a brief break from competition, but never from the grind of training. Training sessions and late-night fundraising (setting up other competitions) con-

Season Review

tinued. This hands-on labor became our routine. That became the theme of our season: More challenge, more growth, more resilience.

By the time they reached championship season, they were exhausted and drained—but they were far from done. They found the will to keep pushing. While getting ready for our championship meets, they continued to lift up the Seattle gymnastics community, they continued to support the University's funded sports, and they continued to fight for the future of the program.

At the Western Conference Championships and National Championships the team posted some of the highest individual scores and there were numerous accomplishments to celebrate. Some remarkable highlights include having six All-Star athletes, achieving 3rd place team at Western Conference Championships, and 4th place team at Nationals. They finished Nationals ranked 1st on floor exercise and 1st as a team on parallel bars. They also finished the regular season in 1st place as a team on pommel horse.

The end of the season also brings the incredible loss, but huge celebration, of amazing gymnastics careers for seven Seniors and one honorable-mention Sophomore:

- Trevor Ruggeri (Sr)
- Bradley Stroud (Sr)
- Carter Hawthorne (Sr)
- Xander Agate (Sr)

- Galen Henriquez (Sr)
- Oscar Coromina Pujol (Sr)
- Andrew Layman (Sr)
- Jack Miller (So)

The impact that these athletes have left on the team's legacy is immeasurable. They will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

This was a long and grueling season. It wasn't always easy. It wasn't always what they pictured. But I believe they ended up exactly where they needed to be – with lessons learned, bonds forged, and a vision sharpened for what's next. None of this would have been possible without you – our families, board members, donors, and loyal supporters. Your belief in our mission fuels everything we do. Thank you for investing in our journey and for standing with us as we continue to build.

As they look ahead, they do so with passion, optimism, and drive. The work continues—and they're ready for it.

GO DAWGS!



*Back: Judah Hirschman, Trevor Ruggeri, Joshua Lutz, Drake Miesel, Everett O'Donnell, Riley Lineman, Eli Deehr, Carter Hawthorne, Jack Miller, Charles Cady
Front: Galen Henriquez, Jonah Hahn, Xander Agate, Drew Allen, Andrew Lineman, Jaxon Eastwood, Bradley Stroud, Oscar Coromina Pujol, Zachary Murray, Adrián Facundo*

UW Men's Gymnastics Class of 2025

Seven Final Dismounts, Lifelong Impact

By Beth Henriquez, Board Member

As the mother of one of the gymnasts, I've known these guys for the last four years — but sitting down to interview each of them one-on-one was something else entirely. I was moved by what they shared: their personal growth, their stories of being together, and how much they truly love each other, and how they shared it — they are thoughtful, kind, and genuine. As a board member, it's been a real honor to support them from behind the scenes.

As the UW men's gymnastics season wrapped up, so did an extraordinary chapter for seven senior athletes who've balanced flips and finals, leadership and laughter, grit and growth. These graduating gymnasts leave behind not only years of hard work and athletic accomplishment, but a legacy of community, resilience, and unforgettable memories. From comeback stories to career breakthroughs, they've inspired teammates and coaches alike — and now they're ready to leap into what's next.

Andrew Layman

Andrew isn't quite finished with his academic journey; he'll officially graduate after winter quarter, but his time with UW Men's Gymnastics has come to a close. This summer, he will be interning in luxury multifamily real estate, rotating through all aspects of the business. After years of balancing school and sport, he's excited to finally have time to build industry connections and explore his career path in earnest. He enjoys spending time with friends, all kinds of sports, playing games, and being outside by the water.

He describes the team as family, dedicated, and persevering. His most memorable funny moment? Watching a teammate spin their coach around the airport in a wheelchair-style seat after a grueling travel day — a perfect example of the team's ability to stay light even when things were hard.



The hardest part of his gymnastics journey came this year, recovering from shoulder surgery and realizing he might never return to peak form. But he stayed — for his teammates, and for himself. "I've been doing this for almost 20 years," he said. "It didn't feel right to walk out early. I had to cross the finish line."

Andrew is most proud of the quiet leadership he brought

to the gym: showing up every day, ready to work, and modeling the standards set for him when he joined. He learned that leadership doesn't require being the loudest voice — and that deep friendships can form across lines he might never have crossed outside the team. "No obstacle is too big," he says. "When you've got people around you, you can always find a way through."

He's not done with gymnastics forever — he'll always be a fan, and maybe someday, a coach.

Bradley Stroud – Team Captain

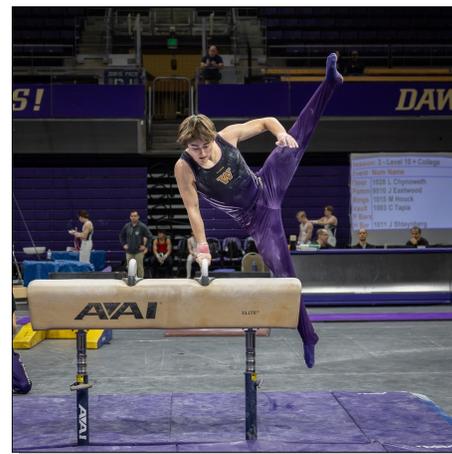
Bradley Stroud describes his team as dedicated, hardworking, and deeply connected through relationships. As team captain, one of the roles he took the most pride in was leading off events. "I loved being the guy who could set the tone. The one they could count on to hit the routine and start the meet strong," he says. "I'd always think, 'I'll hit this routine.'" And he did — again and again.



Off the mat, Bradley enjoys cooking, running, and hiking; and he speaks Japanese — which was a real asset when the team traveled to Japan.

His biggest technical triumph? Finally mastering the elusive Diamidov on parallel bars. "It's such an easy skill... while also being completely impossible," he joked. It took years to make it look effortless — but for Bradley, that journey was part of the fun.

Behind the scenes, the laughs ran just as deep as the training. One of his favorite memories? The chaotic, exhausted car rides home after setting up meets. "We'd be so tired we were basically delirious. We'd try to play this word game called Contact, but it would totally fall apart. Everyone would start shouting nonsense, and it had nothing to do with the game. It was so dumb, but so funny." The drives home — from Tacoma, Everett, Shelton — were always full of those moments.



Bradley credits his teammates and his love for sport for

Class of 2025

helping him push through the tough times. And he's not done yet: he's headed to San Francisco to work in biotech but plans to stay connected to the gymnastics world. "I definitely want to stay connected to the gymnastics community. I'm hoping to get certified to judge this fall, and I could see myself coaching in the future — maybe even after I retire."

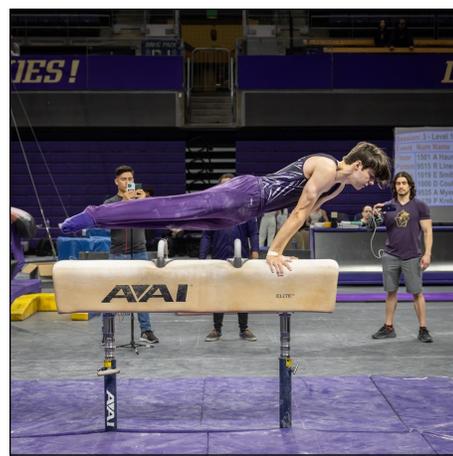
One of the biggest life lessons he's taking with him? The power of consistency. "You can have a rough day or a rough month, but what matters is sticking with it. If you want to get better, it's not about having one great day. It's about showing up and putting in the effort every day — even when it's hard."

Gymnastics also helped him discover something unexpected: his ability to lead. "I never thought of myself as a leader before. I was the quiet guy who let others take that role. But becoming captain changed that. I realized I could step up and be the one to support my teammates. That's something I'll carry with me long after college."

Carter Hawthorne

Carter is finishing his degree in computer science at Oregon State University — fully funded through a program called Guild Education, which he accessed while working at Target. When he's not working, studying, or grinding at the gym, he enjoys reading, playing guitar and has recently gotten into climbing. Originally from Alaska, Carter is now calling Seattle home. And while he's proud of finishing his degree, the milestone he's most excited about? "I'm getting married in a few weeks!"

When Carter reflects on his gymnastics journey, the three words he uses to describe the team are resilience, welcoming,



and family. "I couldn't think of a better group of people — especially the seniors — to spend such an important time in my life with," he says. "I couldn't imagine the person I'd be right now without going through this with them." Some of his favorite memories are the simplest ones — like playing word games with teammates while traveling — but he also still laughs about the time Galen got lost in downtown Chicago (See Galen's profile for more details.)

A key moment of growth for Carter came when he finally



mastered a swing handstand dismount on pommel horse. It was a long road — "50 attempts a day sometimes" — but thanks to mentorship from former teammate Julian and relentless practice, he got there. "It was such an amazing feeling... I felt like a real horse specialist." That persistence and sense of accomplishment became a defining theme.

What Carter is most proud of is pushing through to the end, largely injury-free, and growing both physically and mentally. "Winning Nationals last year was incredible," he says. "But even more important was the maturity I gained — learning how to deal with tough situations better, how to stay grounded and improve not just as a gymnast, but as a person."

Perhaps the most touching realization for Carter was how deeply connected he became to his teammates. "People were always happy to see me. They were so welcoming. They mean more to me than they can ever know. That kind of companionship — that was one of the most important parts of this whole experience."

Galen Henriquez

Galen graduated last winter with a degree in Psychology from the University of Washington. As for his time on the team, he didn't just spend four years flipping through the air — he walks away with a whole new perspective on life.

"Being on this team has really just gotten me to appreciate life more," he says. "Even though it was really hard a lot of the time, I feel like that's overshadowed by all the good memories and moments we had." For him, the biggest lesson wasn't a skill or a stat. It was something deeper: the importance of living in the moment. "Those four years flew by faster than any part of my life."

Galen's story is one of grit, creativity, and a very impressive comeback. After breaking his back, he came back with vengeance, teaching himself a Kovacs (a beast of a high bar move, if you know, you know). In the lead up to competition season his junior year, he tore his labrum, broke his finger and still went on to catch it in competition? That's what he's proudest of.

Outside the gym, Galen loves hanging out with his friends, playing piano (and he offers lessons!), exercise of any kind, and practicing photography. He describes the team as "family, passion-



Class of 2025

ate, and full of energy.” His funniest memory? Getting epically lost late at night in downtown Chicago (where the team was competing) after exiting through the wrong 7-Eleven door, not realizing there were three Hiltons nearby, and with zero battery left on his phone, he wandered lost for hours until a kind bus driver bought him an Uber back to the right one. Legendary.

What’s next? He’ll keep coaching gymnastics, teaching piano, and plans to head to grad school in Psychology in the near future — but is most looking forward to finally living with his girlfriend (a gymnast at UC Davis) after three years of long distance.

When asked what he’s taking with him from these years, Galen reflects on something he hadn’t really put into words before:

“Before college, I was all about personal goals. But being part of this team showed me how much joy there is in working toward something with other people — something bigger than yourself. That’s something I want to carry with me into whatever comes next.”

Oscar Coromina Pujol

Oscar is graduating with a degree in economics and hopes to land a full-time role at the investment management firm where he interned. As an international student, the opportunity to live, study, and now work in the U.S. has been deeply meaningful: “It was a dream to come to the United States for university and to now gain professional experience here feels surreal.”



Though his journey on the team was far from easy, Oscar says he’s proud of sticking it out all four years — through injury, culture clashes, and limited competition time. His proudest athletic moment came during Spanish Nationals after his freshman year, where he earned a bronze medal on vault in his first time competing as a senior elite. And when the UW team needed him most — with just two weeks’ notice before Nationals his junior year — he stepped up to compete on floor and vault, even though he wasn’t fully recovered from injury.

He plans to continue training on his own schedule, with the goal of retiring at Spanish Nationals next year. “I want to do it for myself again,” he shared. He also hopes to move into a house with teammates Trevor, Andrew, and Xander in the com-



ing year.

In addition to gymnastics, Oscar enjoys reading, watching movies, and playing golf. One thing he has learned about himself is that he’s not always the most coachable, but he’s working on it. “It’s a life skill. Knowing when to listen more; I’m still learning that.”

As for funny memories? Oscar recalls the team’s trip to Guatemala: and one moment in particular when a Mayan ruins tour guide jokingly blamed all of Spain for historical destruction, leaving Oscar, the lone Spaniard, to endure the group’s amused stares. “Everyone kept looking at me the whole time,” he said, laughing.

Oscar says his time on the team taught him valuable life lessons about persistence, adapting to unfamiliar systems, and learning how to advocate for himself. Most of all, he’s grateful for the friendships he built, especially within his class. “I’ve learned so much and made friends I’ll always carry with me.”

Trevor Ruggeri - Team Captain

Trevor is wrapping up his degree in applied math and computational finance and plans to take certification exams this summer to launch his career as an actuary. He’ll stay in Seattle, drawn to its vibrant energy and proximity to the water. He’s also eager to finally explore the beauty of the Pacific Northwest now that he has more time. Maybe he’ll have more time for basketball, running, swimming and doing math!?



Trevor describes his team as competitive, disciplined, and most importantly, a community. “The friendships I’ve developed through this team are unmatched,” he reflects. “These are relationships I’ll carry for the rest of my life.”

That strong sense of community helped Trevor grow into a role he never expected: leadership. Chosen as a team captain at the end of his freshman year, he initially doubted whether he was the “right kind” of leader. “I never saw myself as someone with power or influence,” he admits. “But I learned that leadership isn’t one-size-fits-all. You don’t have to be the loudest person in the room to have a big impact.” Over time, he discovered that showing up consistently, modeling discipline, and treating teammates with care could inspire others and those lessons have shaped how he communicates, supports others,



Class of 2025

and takes responsibility. “Those are skills I’ll take into any team I join, in the workplace or beyond.”

One of Trevor’s proudest moments came at Nationals, where he delivered a strong high bar routine just when the team needed it most. He’d had a rollercoaster relationship with one of the skills in that routine, but in that moment, under pressure, he hit it. “It was tremendously rewarding, not just because I finally nailed it, but because of the impact it had on the team,” he says.

He’s also proud of how close-knit the senior class became. “We stuck it out through all four years,” he says. “When one of us wasn’t feeling great about gymnastics, the others were there to lift them up. That sense of pride and gratitude; I’ll never forget it.”

Among his favorite memories are the laughs shared by the high bar chalk bucket, especially when Adrian and Cole would riff hilariously during practice, lightening the mood when it mattered most. His go-to pre-meet fuel? A rice cake or slice of bread with peanut butter and honey, paired with Freebird by Lynyrd Skynyrd to get in the zone.

While Trevor’s future may lie in actuarial science, gymnastics will always be part of who he is. He hopes to give back to Region 2 through coaching or judging on the side. “Discipline, leadership, and care for others — I learned all that here,” he says. “And I want to pass it on.”

Xander Agate

Xander graduated last year with a degree in biochemistry. His path forward is focused and ambitious: he’s coaching gymnastics, preparing to work as a phlebotomist, and shadowing a sports medicine physician, all part of a plan to apply to medical school in 2026. He’s aiming



for orthopedic surgery, inspired by his own injury history and the relatable care he received from athletic doctors. “I want to stay in the world of sports,” he said, “and I like being hands-on. A surgical specialty like orthopedics just makes sense.”

Though his gymnastics journey wasn’t without struggle,



Xander credits his fellow seniors for getting him through the tougher moments when motivation flagged. “I never really wanted to quit,” he reflected, “but there were definitely times I wasn’t as invested as I wanted to be. The team helped me find my way back.”

One of his proudest moments came at Nationals his senior year. After stepping away from the all-around, he made an unexpected return and hit all six events cleanly, even while nursing a fresh injury. “Last year’s Nationals didn’t go well for me. So being able to come back, hit six-for-six, and end on that note; that meant a lot.”

When asked what he’s learned about himself, Xander doesn’t hesitate: “Dedication. You don’t always feel like showing up or conditioning for an hour and a half, but you do it anyway. That discipline — it’s something I’ll take with me forever.”

Outside the gym, Xander is a passionate baker. “I like to cook, but baking is where I really have fun — lava cakes, donuts, cookies, cinnamon pretzels.” He’s also a J. Cole fan and keeps things relaxed before competing, sometimes singing or dancing to whatever’s in his head as he approaches an event. His go-to snack before a meet? Either applesauce or a Rice Krispie treat.

When asked if gymnastics will stay part of his life, the answer is clear: “Absolutely. I plan to keep coaching for as long as I can and one day, I’d love to support the team however I can.”

To the Class of 2025 - Thank you for your leadership, your loyalty, and your deep love for this sport. You’ve left a legacy and you’ll always have a home with the Huskies.

Big shout out to the entire UW gymnastics community for the memories, the mentorship, and the magic.

GO DAWGS!!



Photo credits: CHRIS BURCH Photography

Where Are They Now: An Update on Husky Alum Matt Lyum

by Mark Russo and Matt Lyum

I recently caught up with teammate Matt Lyum and it was good to hear that he is doing well. I asked if he could write an article for our newsletter speaking of his experience being on the team and how it has affected his life. Matt and I were teammates on the first team that formed after the UW athletic department stopped funding the team. Matt was a very positive, easy-going teammate who had connections all across the western US at that time, and we used nearly every one of them. My favorite was when our coach asked Matt if he had any connections at Arizona State; Matt found, through his extensive Hawaii network, a friend's cousin's friend living there with two roommates, who then volunteered their house. So, all eight of us moved our sleeping bags over to their house which even had a pool!! We loved it and had a great time as they even had a barbecue for us. Good times! Great memories! Thank you, Matt, for all you have done for the team!!



I arrived at UW as a freshman in 1980. I had only started gymnastics a couple years earlier in high school, but I was hooked. I hoped to walk on to the team and learn high-level gymnastics. I was devastated to discover that Title IX guidelines had defunded and disbanded the men's gymnastics program.

But moving from Hawaii to Seattle brought so many new experiences – like seeing snow for the first time – that I quickly embraced collegiate life. The new women's team coach, Bob Ito, was also from Hawaii. He recognized me when I stopped by the gym to see if there was still equipment I could work out on. Since he didn't yet have an assistant coach, he offered to let me train if I helped spot the women. Are you kidding me? Of course I would!

It felt like this great opportunity only lasted a couple

of weeks before Mac Smith, a former member of the UW men's team, saw me working out and invited me to join the newly-formed club team. I was reluctant at first, but I said yes. That decision changed the course of my life.

The team faced many challenges – lack of coaching, raising funds, and convincing the athletic department to let us use the gym, locker room, and other facilities. It was like running a business startup while carrying a full load of college courses and training six days a week. But Mac, Mark Russo, John Daley, Tony Yonemitsu, and the rest of the team figured it out together. Led by coaches Jim Holt and later Tim Slottow, we became a band of brothers fighting to keep our beloved sport alive at a time when both the school and the national equal rights movement seemed to be working against us. That experience bonded us into lifelong friends – we still correspond every week and plan reunions 45 years later.

As anyone in the sport knows, gymnastics involves a grueling training regimen and painfully slow progressions to master even the basic moves. The discipline, hard work, and experience of failing over and over again trained me for life after U-Dub.

After a meandering career path through the emerging fields of aquaculture and renewable energy, I eventually started my own landscape contracting business. I grew it to over 100 employees before selling it to the largest landscape company in the country—for enough to retire.

The lessons I learned from the Husky Gymnastics team were as valuable as any class I took. The lifelong friendships are priceless.



Matt and family

Photo credits: Performance Landscapes, Punahou Magazine

WMGF
5529 27th Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98105



In This Issue...

Season Review, Departing Seniors, and more...

June 13, 2025

THANK YOU

for Your Support this Season!

Follow us online for updates:



Find us on
Facebook

www.facebook.com/washingtonmensgymnastics

www.wmgf.us

Find us on
Instagram



[uwmensgymnastics](https://www.instagram.com/uwmensgymnastics)

Watch
us on **You Tube**

[uwmensgymnastics](https://www.youtube.com/uwmensgymnastics)

Donate directly on our website:



www.wmgf.us/donate



[@uwmensgym](https://twitter.com/uwmensgym)

TikTok
[washingtonmensgym](https://www.tiktok.com/washingtonmensgym)