

WMGF News

www.wmgf.us

December 31, 2025

Season Preview

by Head Coaches Trevor Ruggeri and Andrew Layman

As the Washington Men’s Gymnastics Team prepares for the upcoming season, excitement is building around a group that blends proven leadership, competitive depth, and an influx of motivated young talent. With strong momentum from last year and clear goals ahead, the Huskies enter the season eager to make an impact on the national stage.

With a demanding schedule and a renewed focus on performance and consistency, this year promises to showcase not only the team’s athletic ability, but also the resilience and character that define the Washington Men’s Gymnastics Team.

Key Returning Athletes

Zachary Murray (Senior Captain)

A first-year captain, Zacky has stepped seamlessly into his leadership role, uplifting and guiding the team while continuing to contribute across all six events.

Riley Lineman (Senior Captain)

Entering his second year as a captain, Riley is a steady and trusted leader within the program, playing a major role in shaping the team’s culture and competitive mindset.

Key New Additions

Connor Linford

A powerful and talented all-arounder, Connor brings an impres-

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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.

Photo credit: CHRIS BURCH photography



Eli Deehr at Washington Open

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sive combination of strength and skill and is expected to make an immediate impact across all six events.

Austin Hopping

With strong fundamentals, clean technique, and a relentless work ethic, Austin joins the Huskies ready to contribute right away on up to five events, with the drive to continue expanding his role.

Key Competitions

Co-Ed Dual Meet (Seattle, WA)

Competing on home turf against the Bay Area Bandits, Washington will take the floor alongside the UW Women’s Gymnastics Team in a high-energy showcase at Alaska Airlines Arena, looking to ignite fans with an exciting performance.

Southwest Cup (Chandler, AZ)

A pivotal road meet against strong competition, the Southwest Cup will serve as an important early benchmark for the team’s progress and preparation.

GymACT National Championships (Oklahoma City, OK)

With national champion aspirations, the Huskies aim to reclaim their place on the podium and make a statement on the national stage.

Areas of Focus

This season, our focus is clear: execution, fundamentals, poise, and

(Continued on page 2)

Season Preview

team culture. These are the standards that will define how we train, how we compete, and how we represent Washington Men's Gymnastics.

We are demanding a higher level of execution and fundamentals in every routine. Clean shapes, strong basics, and attention to detail are non-negotiable. We believe that quality gymnastics—performed correctly and consistently—creates the greatest opportunity for success, and our training reflects that expectation every day.

Poise is another major emphasis. We want athletes who can step onto the floor with confidence, control the moment, and trust their preparation. Competing under pressure is a skill, and we are committed to developing athletes who can deliver when it matters most, regardless of the environment or stakes.

Finally, team culture is the backbone of this program. Leadership, accountability, and respect for the process are expectations, and every athlete is responsible for raising the standard—supporting teammates, competing selflessly, and taking pride in the work they put in. When we stay connected and committed to one another, the results follow.

Selfless Acts

Beyond competition, the team continues its tradition of service and support within the University of Washington and the broader gymnastics community. Throughout the season, athletes will contribute hundreds of hours of labor supporting local club competitions, collegiate meets, high school events, university athletic events, and community clean-ups.

Balancing these responsibilities alongside academics and training speaks volumes about the character, discipline, and commitment of this team.

Join the Excitement

Be sure to follow the Washington Men's Gymnastics Team throughout the season and cheer them on as they strive for new heights. Your continued support plays a vital role in the success of this program.

GO DAWGS!!

Your 2025-2026 Huskies



Getting ready to compete at this year's Washington Open

Photo credit: CHRIS BURCH photography

Meet the Freshmen

A big welcome to the newest additions to our Husky Gymnastics Family!



Kelly Bateman



Gymnastics is the best sport!

Hometown: Bellevue, WA
From: Emerald City Gymnastics Academy
Events: FX, PB, HB
School: Seattle Culinary Academy
Major: Specialty Breads and Desserts

Benjamin Gum



This team is a perfect fit for the school I'm attending and allows me to continue the sport I love with some fantastic individuals.

Hometown: Kansas City, MO
From: Mercury Gymnastics
Events: PH
School: University of Washington
Major: Biology

Ryan Heck



I chose WMG because of the team atmosphere, and the support that allows me to improve my gymnastics and help out the team.

Hometown: Clovis, CA
From: Clovis Academy of Gymnastics
Events: PH
School: Shoreline Community College
Major: Biochemistry

Austin Hopping



I chose WMG to continue gymnastics in college, and I know I'll have a great experience with the team by learning a lot and meeting new friends.

Hometown: Seattle, WA
From: Cascade Elite Gymnastics
Events: FX, PH, PB, HB
School: University of Washington
Major: Finance and Supply Chain Management

Connor Linford



I chose WMG because it was close to home, and because the school and the team environment were so good.

Hometown: Clovis, CA
From: Clovis Academy of Gymnastics
Events: All-Around
School: Shoreline Community College
Major: Biology

Mitchell Payumo



I chose WMG because the people seemed friendly when I met them, so I figured I'd join.

Hometown: San Diego, CA
From: Seawind Gymnastics
Events: PH, SR, VT, HB
School: University of Washington
Major: Molecular Biology

75 Years of Husky Men's Gymnastics

by Paul Roggenkamp

On August 24th, 2025 the Washington Men's Gymnastics Foundation celebrated an historic era of men's gymnastics which began when Dr. Eric Hughes coached the first Husky Men's team. Had it not been for Dr. Hughes' drive, determination, and gymnastics acumen on a national scale in the 1950s, one could not imagine a program such as this flourishing at the University today. Because of their intense love of the sport, Jim Holt, Mark Russo, and others willed that the sport was not going to fade away given many universities' actions supporting Title IX, a law requiring the same number of women's sporting opportunities as men's. In 1980, many universities defunded the "smaller" sports such as wrestling, swimming, and gymnastics to make room for more women's sports. The then-current UW men's team continued to work out as a team and competed wherever they could; paying their own way to competitions and for maintenance of equipment and such. To keep the men's program viable and competitive, the WMGF was created to raise funds, pay coaches, and provide support so that young gymnasts would continue to have the opportunity to train, be coached, and compete at the highest level.

The Husky Men's Gymnastics program fought for survival through the early years and gradually built a name and a solid reputation of excellence, which drew new recruits from California and other states, as well as

some foreign students to the program. The Huskies are now part of GymACT (Gymnastics Association of Collegiate Teams), competing in conference- and national-level competitions, earning national recognition and even All-American status. Two of the program's finest, Jeff Crockett (from Idaho) and Ben Bloom (from California) have skills named after them, signifying that they were the first in the world to perform those skills. The program has hired coaches such as Giancarlo Mora, Jeff Crockett, Eli Richardson, and Bob Young to continue the level of team excellence and opportunity for Husky gymnasts.

At the 75th Anniversary event at the UW Waterfront Activities Center, a large gathering of current and past gymnasts and supporters shared their love of gymnastics and their stories of what the sport had done for them over the years. There were funny stories of the early years and amazing stories of life-changing accomplishments of many athletes who became better gymnasts at UW. Great food, drinks, and unforgettable experiences shared by older and younger athletes demonstrated the bonds which athletes in such gymnastics programs develop and nurture through lifetimes. Tears were shed remembering our founder, Dr. Eric Hughes, who worked with the current program until he passed away at age 92. Joy and laughter also were shared as everyone acknowledged how the as-



Celebrating our 75th year at the UW Waterfront Activities Center

THANK YOU!

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(if different from the label on the back of this page)

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You can also donate on our website: www.wmgf.us/donate



Comments: _____



75 Years of Husky Men's Gymnastics

sociation and hard work as gymnasts, coaches, and supporters changed lives forever and will continue indefinitely.

The WMGF is committed to continuing to provide opportunities and coaching for young athletes whose dreams are to compete in the sport of gymnasts at the highest levels and be a part of a team that always gives its best. We salute those who began this journey and those who have kept the dream alive, and we are dedicated to keeping this amazing effort thriving!

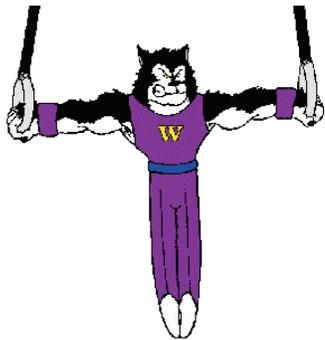
GO HUSKIES!!



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In This Issue...

Season Preview, Meet the Freshmen, and more...

December 31, 2025

2 0 2 6

SCHEDULE SEASON

1.10 WASHINGTON
OPEN

2.21 SOUTHWEST
CUP

4.10 GYMACT
ALL STARS

1.31 NEXT
ERA

3.14 SILICON VALLEY
INVITE

4.25 WESTERN
CHAMPIONSHIP

2.07 CO ED DUAL
MEET

5.9 NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIP

HOME MEETS ARE IN GOLD

AWAY MEETS ARE IN WHITE