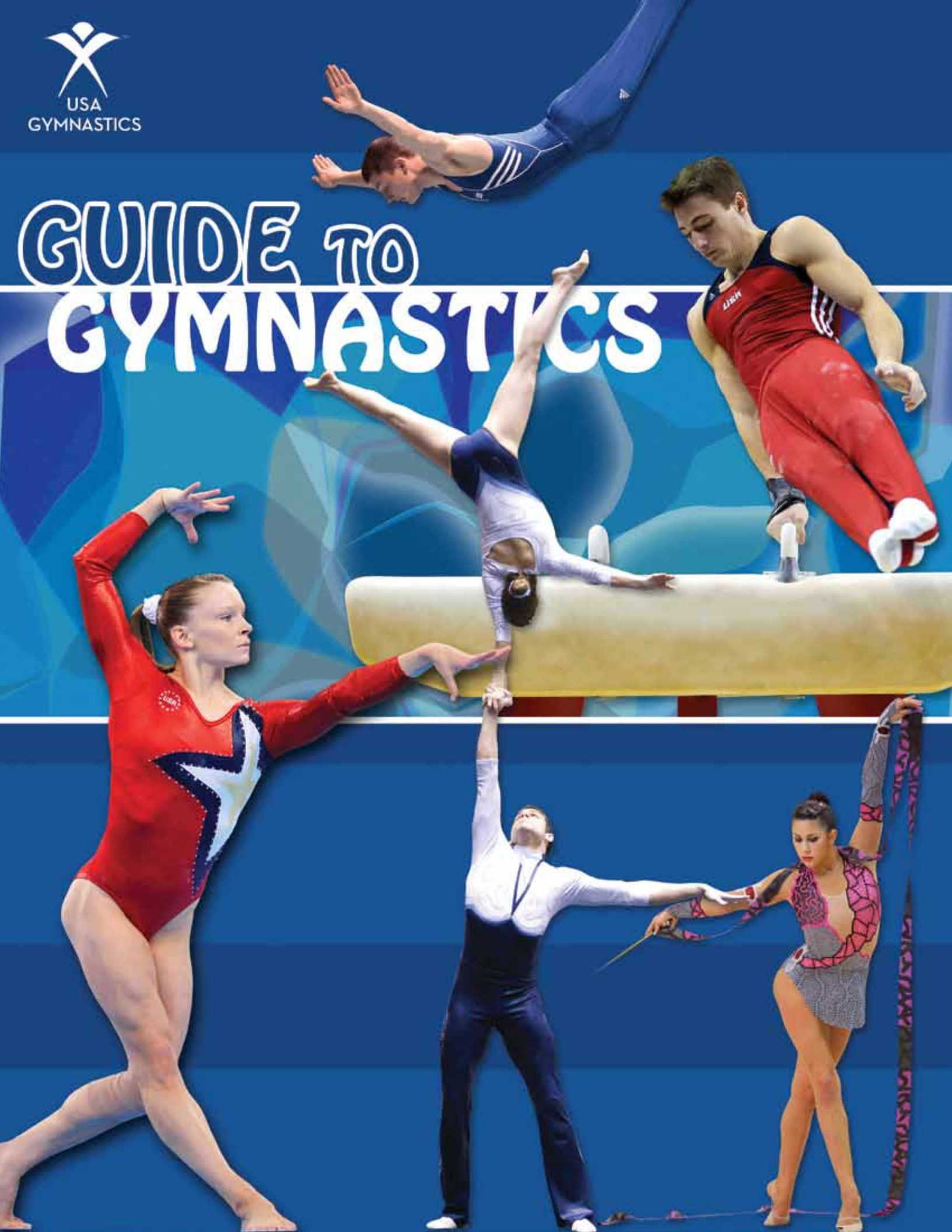


GUIDE TO GYMNASTICS



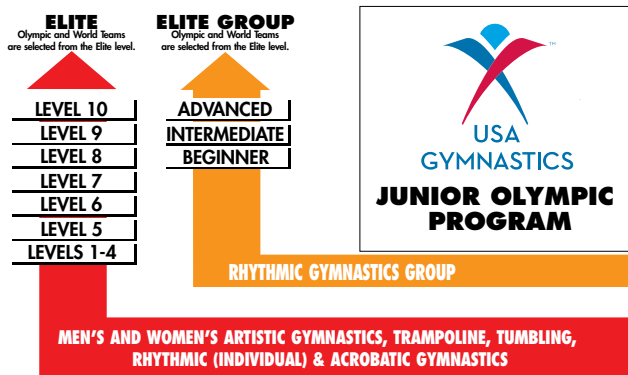
ABOUT USA GYMNASTICS

USA Gymnastics is the national governing body for the sport in the United States. It gets this designation from the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Gymnastics Federation. USA Gymnastics, headquartered in Indianapolis, Ind., sets the rules and policies that govern the sport of gymnastics. USA Gymnastics has many responsibilities, including selecting and training the U.S. Gymnastics Teams for the Olympics and World Championships; promoting and developing gymnastics on a grassroots and national level; and serving as a resource center for members, clubs, fans and gymnasts throughout the United States. USA Gymnastics also provides continuing education resources for new and experienced coaches and instructors in the sport.

USA Gymnastics encompasses six disciplines: Women's Gymnastics, Men's Gymnastics, Trampoline and Tumbling, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Acrobatic Gymnastics and Gymnastics for All (Group Gymnastics).

Today, more than 110,000 athletes and professionals are members of USA Gymnastics. Approximately 3,000 competitions and events throughout the USA are sanctioned annually. USA Gymnastics has more than 92,000 athletes registered to participate in the Junior Olympic or elite programs.

The chart (below) shows each discipline and how it progresses from beginner to elite level.



The ultimate goal in the sport is to become a USA National Gymnastics Team member. To become a member, a gymnast must first work his or her way through a series of qualifying meets. The preliminary meets range from USA Gymnastics-sanctioned competitions organized by private clubs to state, regional and national qualification meets. Each meet gives the athlete the opportunity to meet minimum qualification scores and/or placement requirements established by USA Gymnastics. Gymnasts meeting the requirements are then eligible to compete in the Visa Championships, the most prestigious and significant competition of the year.

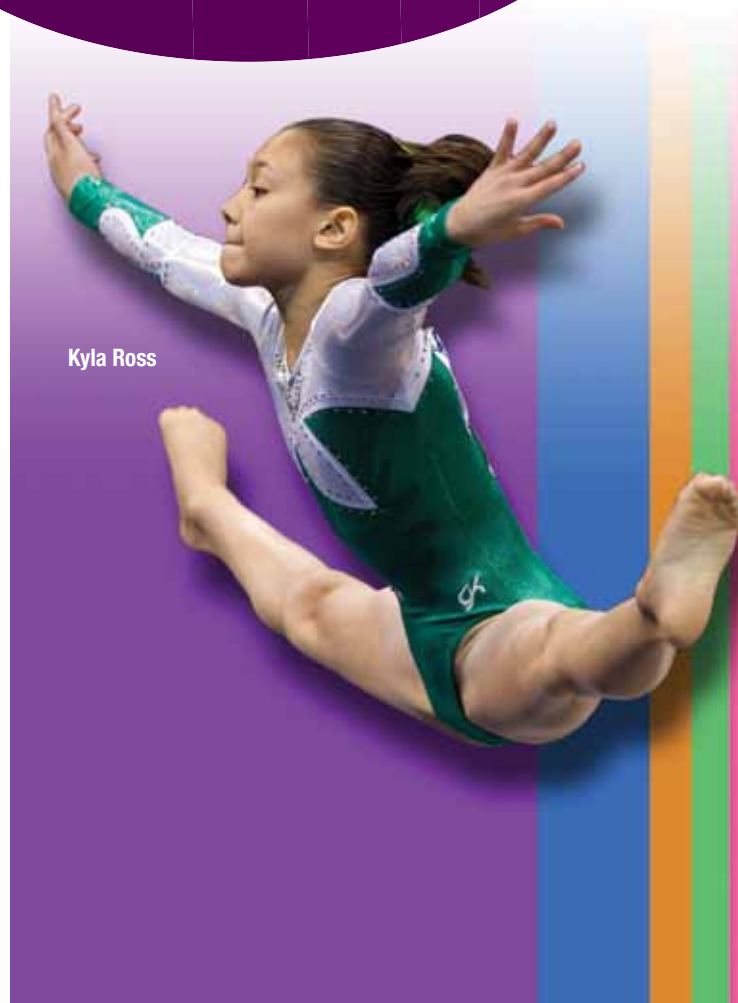
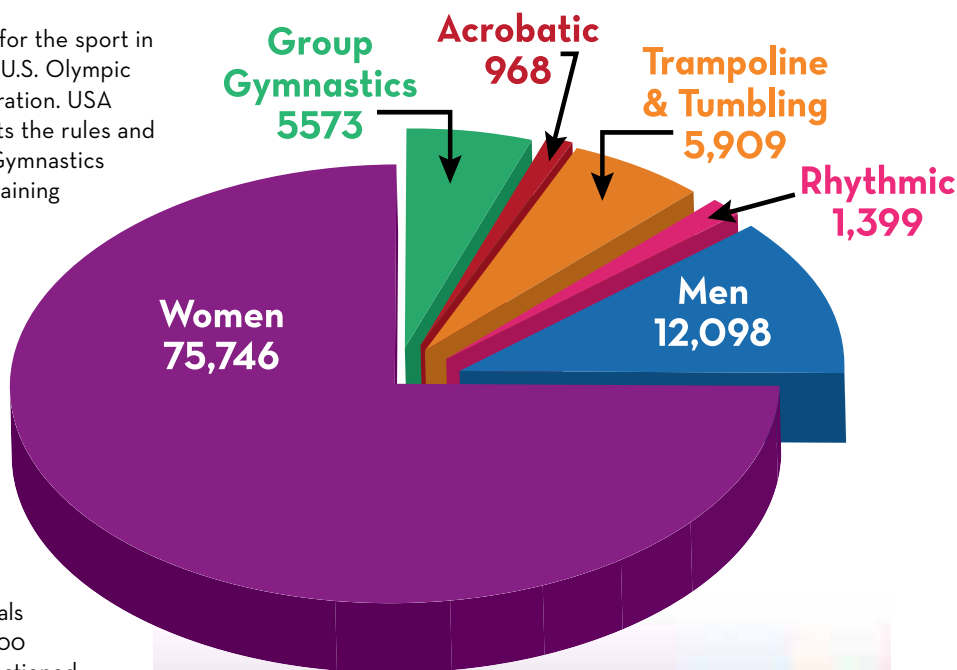


Photo © John Cheng

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT GYMNASTICS?

Let USA Gymnastics assist you:

132 E. Washington St., Suite 700

Indianapolis, IN 46204

317.237.5050 • www.usa-gymnastics.org



NATIONAL GYMNASTICS DAY

Each year, USA Gymnastics celebrates National Gymnastics Day to raise exposure of our sport. Gymnastics clubs across the country have raised more than \$1.2 million for Children's Miracle Network since USA Gymnastics first partnered with Children's Miracle Network in 2001. Gym clubs and their members raised \$166,000 in 2009 as part of their celebrations for National Gymnastics Day through the Tyson Fitness Challenge.



GROUP GYMNASTICS FOR ALL

This is the Gymnastics For All Group from Biron Gymnastics in Houston, Texas, at the 2009 International Sports and Cultural Festival in Ft. Worth, Texas. Biron Gymnastics, representing USA Gymnastics, has been selected as a special performing group in the FIG Gala at the 2011 World Gymnastrada in Lausanne, Switzerland.

TYSON FITNESS CHALLENGE

The Tyson Fitness Challenge, a joint initiative of USA Gymnastics and Tyson Foods, has two goals: helping today's kids get more physically fit through fun activities; and raising money to help kids who are fighting illness through the Children's Miracle Network. The program is not about teaching gymnastics skills, but using gymnastics to help kids become more physically fit, as well as learn about a well-balanced diet.



The Tyson Fitness Challenge is a fitness program designed to encourage kids to live healthier, more active lifestyles through positive physical activity and nutritional changes. Gymnastics is the perfect vehicle for getting kids off the couch and into the gym.

The program incorporates four fundamentals of fitness – cardiovascular exercise, strength training, flexibility and nutrition. Geared toward kids ages 6 to 16, the eight-session fitness initiative is designed to encourage physical fitness through fun activity.

Gymnastics clubs are a fun and safe environment for kids to get increased physical activity and begin to learn the lifestyle habits that will hopefully last for a lifetime. In many ways, a gymnastics club is like a fitness center for kids, a place where they are involved in fun and entertaining activities that keep them active. To learn more about the program, go to www.usa-gymnastics.org.

Photo © Marvin Sharp

WHY GYMNASTICS IS GREAT FOR KIDS

BY LUAN PESZEK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LARRY GIBSON

Today's kids are considered the most inactive generation in history due to the popularity in social media and the advancements of computers and video game technology. Instead of kids riding bikes, playing kickball and going to the park, they are sitting in front of the TV or computer screen.

Gymnastics provides a fun and safe activity that gets kids physically active. Not only does the sport provide a good, solid fitness foundation, gymnastics also provides many other benefits, from socialization skills to life skills to basics that can enhance performance in other sports.

If you turn on the local news or read the paper, you'll see that childhood obesity is on the rise. According to the Center for Disease Control, obesity is a serious health concern for children and adolescents. With the trend of a sedentary lifestyle on the rise, obesity is also on the rise.

According to the CDC participating in physical activity is important for children and teens as it may have beneficial



effects not only on body weight, but also on blood pressure and bone strength. Physically active children are also more likely to remain physically active throughout adolescence and possibly into adulthood.

So, enrolling your preschooler in gymnastics is a great foundation for a healthy and active start to life! Let's look at more reasons why.

IT'S FUN

The number one reason gymnastics is great for kids – it's FUN. Where else can kids run, jump, flip, swing, tumble and use all of their energy in a single class. If your toddler is active, climbing on everything and jumping on the bed or other furniture, this is a good sign you should find a local gymnastics club near you. Going to the gym allows kids the freedom to have fun in a safe environment.

YOU CAN START YOUNG

Gymnastics is one of the only activities a child can begin when he or she learns to walk. Most sports requires kids to be a certain age. You can't put your child in soccer, basketball, baseball, football or cheerleading as a toddler. But, gymnastics, allows parents and toddlers to come to class, learn and play. It's the first form of organized activity in which your child can participate. Then, when your child has mastered the parent-tot class, he or she will advance to the big-kid gymnastics class.

DEVELOPS PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Gymnastics teaches both physical and non-physical benefits and these attributes help with any sport that your child decides to pursue. Gymnastics teaches strength, flexibility, agility, confidence, balance, and allows your child to interact with other children in a social environment where he or she will learn how to take turns and interact with his/her peers. When children learn to swing on the bar, kick to a handstand, jump on a trampoline, climb a rope, or run into a foam pit and climb out – these are all challenging and fun activities that develop a multitude of physical benefits that provide a solid foundation for practically every sport. Ask some of the top athletes how they got their start and many will tell you they took gymnastics lessons at a young age.

DEVELOPS NON-PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Gymnastics also offers cognitive benefits. When children are engaging in gymnastics, they are exercising their brains as well as their bodies. According to Dr. Robyn Silverman, PhD., "Research suggests that there is a strong correlation between physically fit children and academic achievement. This means that every time you send your child to gymnastics class, they're getting an opportunity to engage in physical exercise that encourages healthy brain function. Nerve cells multiply and connections in the brain are strengthened.



Photo © John Cheng



It is not surprising that children who are engaging in consistent physical activity like gymnastics are more likely to get better grades than their inactive peers."

Putting your child in gymnastics makes sense for a number of reasons. It's fun, you can start lessons at an early age, it helps your child's physical and cognitive development, it's healthy and encourages an active lifestyle.

Go to www.usa-gymnastics.org and scroll down to find a gymnastics club near you.

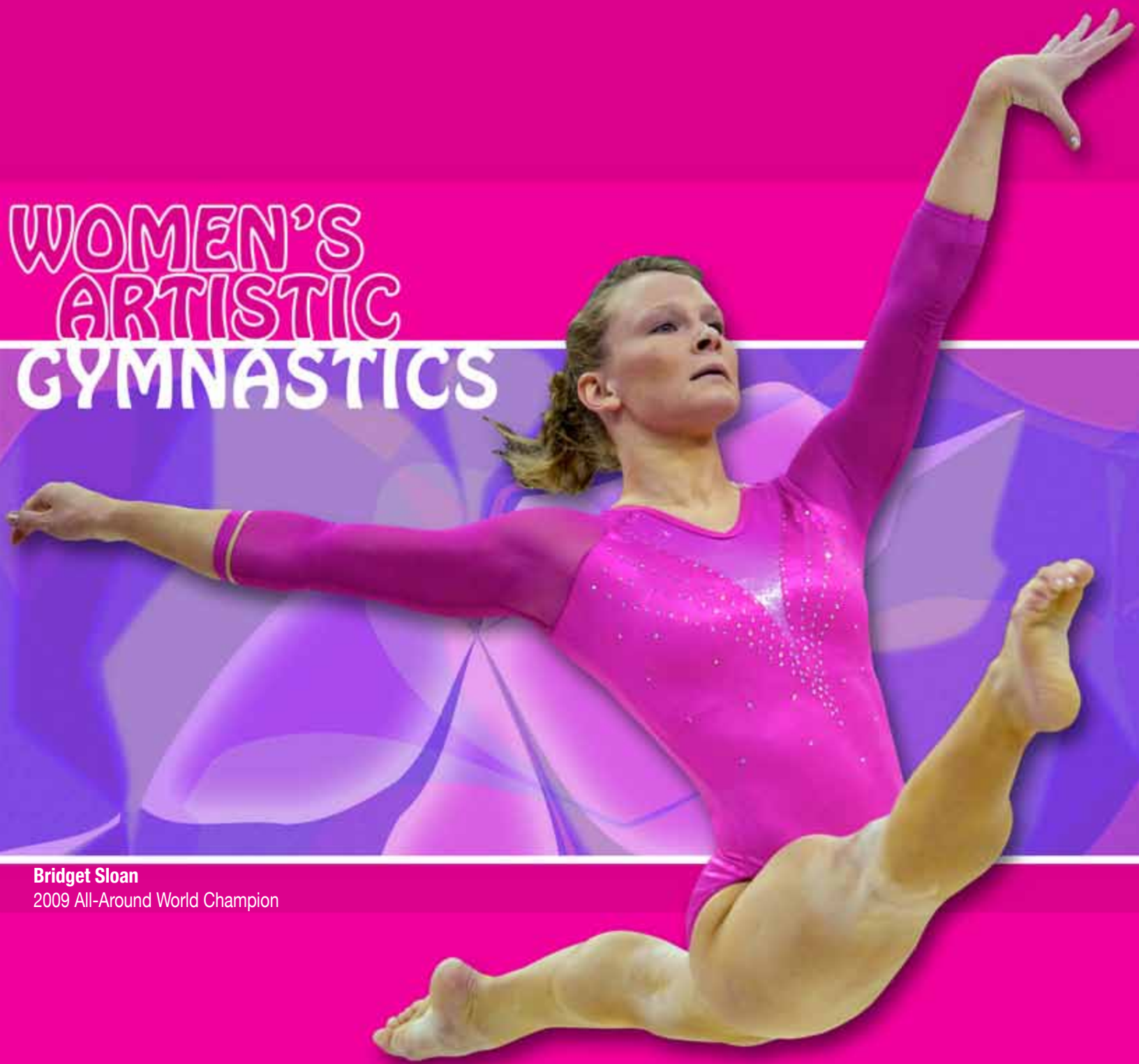
Happy flipping!

10 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD ENROLL YOUR CHILD IN GYMNASTICS

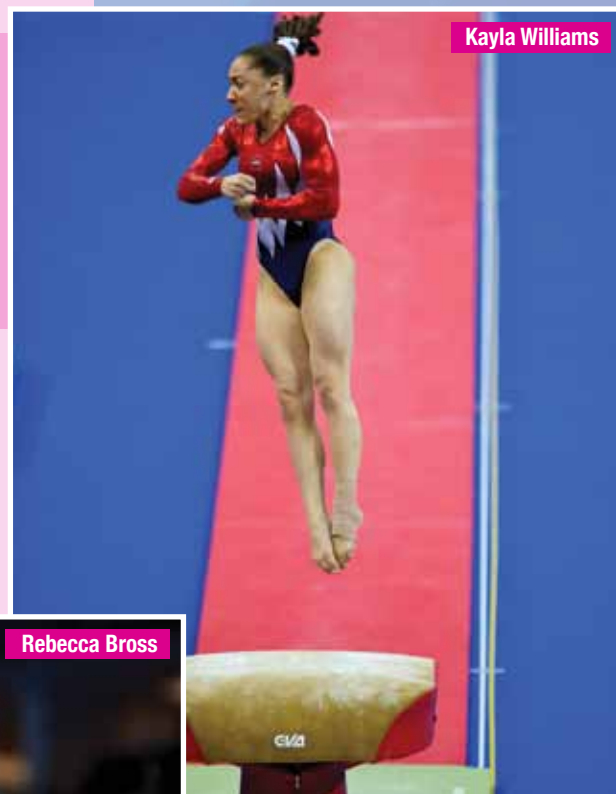
1. It's fun
2. Develops strength
3. Develops flexibility
4. Develops coordination
5. Teaches listening skills
6. Gains self-esteem and confidence
7. Provides social interaction with peers
8. Teaches goal setting
9. Develops cognitive abilities to help in the classroom
10. Develops skills to enhance other sports

WOMEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

Bridget Sloan
2009 All-Around World Champion



There are four events in women's gymnastics – Vault, Uneven Bars, Balance Beam and Floor Exercise. Women's gymnastics is one of the most beloved sports in the Olympic Games. Every four years a new star is born as the Olympic All-Around Champion is crowned. Mary Lou Retton, Carly Patterson and Nastia Liukin all obtained this prestigious title! This discipline requires incredible strength and flexibility. Although most sports have seasons, gymnastics is a year-round commitment for athletes at the upper levels.



Kayla Williams

VAULT

A successful vault begins with a strong, accelerated run. The best vaulters explode off the board with tremendous quickness during the preflight phase of the vault. When the gymnast pushes off the vault table, the judges are looking for proper body position and an instantaneous repulsion. Watch for the height and distance traveled, as well as the number of flips and twists. Gymnasts strive to “stick” their landings by taking no extra steps.

UNEVEN BARS

The most spectacular of the women's events, the uneven bars demand strength, as well as concentration, courage, coordination and split-second timing. Watch for the big swings that begin in handstands on the high bar, incorporating multiple hand changes, pirouettes and release elements. The entire routine should flow from one skill to the next without pauses, extra swings or additional supports. Watch for the high flying dismount where the gymnast will attempt to stick her landing.



Rebecca Bross

BALANCE BEAM

The beam is only four inches wide and considered the most difficult event by many gymnasts. The gymnast must use acrobatic, tumbling and dance movements in her routine. Watch for acrobatic series consisting of two or more elements performed in a row. The overall execution should give the impression that the gymnast is performing on the floor, not on a beam. Watch for variations in rhythm, changes in level, and the harmonious blend of dance and acrobatic elements.

FLOOR EXERCISE

Usually a favorite event for the fans, the floor routine must be choreographed to music and cover the entire floor area. The gymnast must use a variety of dance and tumbling elements which reflects her personality. Most gymnasts at the international level will do four tumbling passes, changing both the direction and level of movement throughout the routine. Watch for powerful, yet graceful, routines that are fun and exciting.



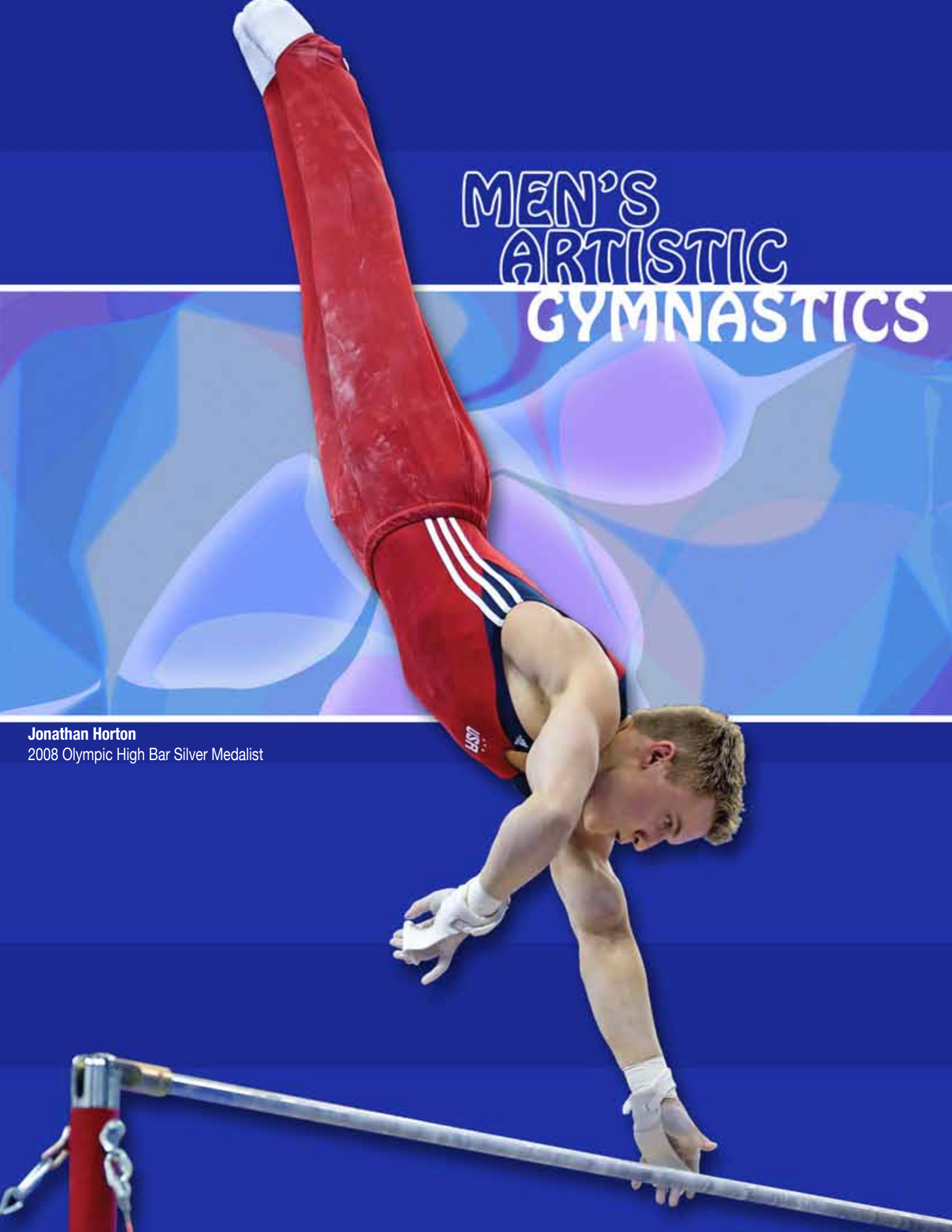
Ivana Hong

Pictured are medalists from the 2009 World Championships team.

Photos © John Cheng

MEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

Jonathan Horton
2008 Olympic High Bar Silver Medalist



There are six events in men's gymnastics – Floor Exercise, Pommel Horse, Still Rings, Vault, Parallel Bars and Horizontal Bar. This discipline requires an incredible amount of strength and power. Below is information on each of the six events.

FLOOR EXERCISE

Floor routines consist of dynamic tumbling skills. The best gymnasts will incorporate tumbling passes with multiple twisting and flipping, both forward and backward, throughout their routine. A gymnast must show power and control on this event.

POMMEL HORSE

Considered by many to be the most difficult of all men's events, the pommel horse is also the most subtle. Each move is defined by complex hand placements. The gymnast must perform continuous circular movements interrupted only by the required scissors elements. The entire exercise should flow with controlled rhythm. A gymnast must show precise timing and balance throughout the routine.

STILL RINGS

Of all the men's events, rings are the least stable, therefore requiring the greatest amount of strength. Just as its name suggests, the rings must be kept still while the gymnast is performing. There are two types of moves on the rings – strength positions and swinging movements. Those with the best command of the event will display extraordinary skill in arriving at all holds with absolute precision.

VAULT

Each vault is categorized in the *Code of Points*, the official text giving the relevant value of each skill performed. A good vault is sometimes described as a “big” vault. The height, the distance of travel, the overall acceleration into the vault and the sudden impact of a no-step, “stuck” landing all create a good impression for the judges.

PARALLEL BARS

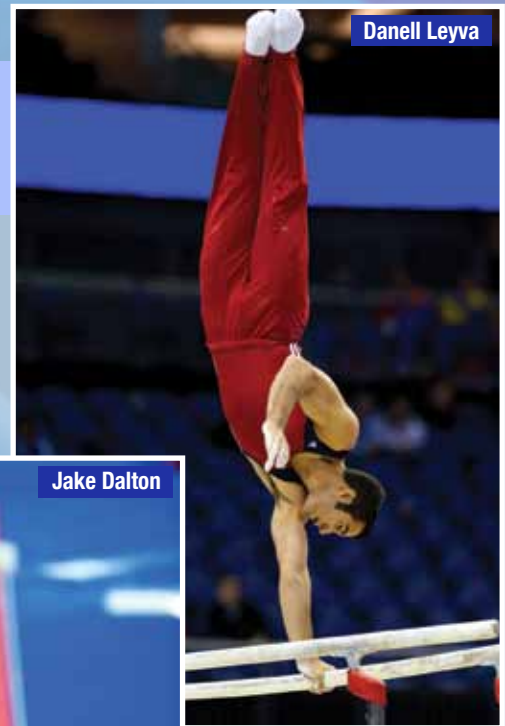
A parallel bar routine consists of predominantly swing and flight elements. Watch for the gymnast to execute swing elements and skills in which both hands release and regrasp the bars. Some gymnasts move outside the two rails, performing handstands and kips on only one bar.

HORIZONTAL BAR

This event is also known as the high bar, and routines consist exclusively of swinging parts without stops. The parts are generally called giant swings, with more specific terms applying to changes in grip, direction and body position. Watch for the gymnast to execute release moves. Look for high-flying dismounts with multiple flips and twists and, of course, the gymnast aims to land the dismount with no extra steps.

**Pictured are members of the
2009 World Championships team.**

Photos © John Cheng



Danell Leyva



Jake Dalton



Steven Legendre

Wes Haagenen



TRAMPOLINE & TUMBLING

Kalon Ludvigson



Trampoline and tumbling includes four events within its program – Power Tumbling, Trampoline, Synchronized Trampoline and Double Mini-Trampoline. Both men and women participate in all four events. Some gymnasts choose to focus on just one area, while others participate in all four events.

The first trampoline World Championships event was held in 1964, and trampoline was first recognized as a sport in its own right in the U.S. in 1967. Trampoline made its debut as an Olympic sport at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

POWER TUMBLING

Power tumbling is performed on elevated runways, generally designed with fiberglass rods underneath, that help tumblers propel themselves higher than a basketball goal as they demonstrate speed, strength and skill while executing a series of acrobatic maneuvers. Explosive somersaults with multiple flips and twists are performed by the top-level contenders.

TRAMPOLINE

As a sport, trampoline varies greatly from recreational bouncing. International competition trampolines are larger and more powerful than traditional “backyard” models, propelling trained athletes as high as 30 feet in the air during performances. During two competitive routines of 10 skills each, upper-level athletes can easily demonstrate a graceful array of double, triple and twisting somersaults.

SYNCHRONIZED TRAMPOLINE

Synchronized trampoline demands the same athletic skill as individual trampoline, while adding the element of precision timing. Using two trampolines, side-by-side, two athletes perform identical 10-skill routines at the same time. In this most artistic event in the sport, each performs as a mirror image of the other, doubling the visual beauty of trampoline competition.

DOUBLE MINI-TRAMPOLINE

Double mini-trampoline combines the horizontal run of tumbling with the vertical rebound of trampoline. After a short run, the athlete jumps onto a small two-level trampoline to perform a rebounding trick immediately followed by a dismount element onto a landing mat. Double mini-trampoline is similar in concept to springboard diving, using a mat instead of water.

Steven Gluckstein



Photo © John Cheng

Steven Gluckstein (front)
& Logan Dooley (back)



Photo © FIG

Kaitlin Tortorich



Photos © FIG

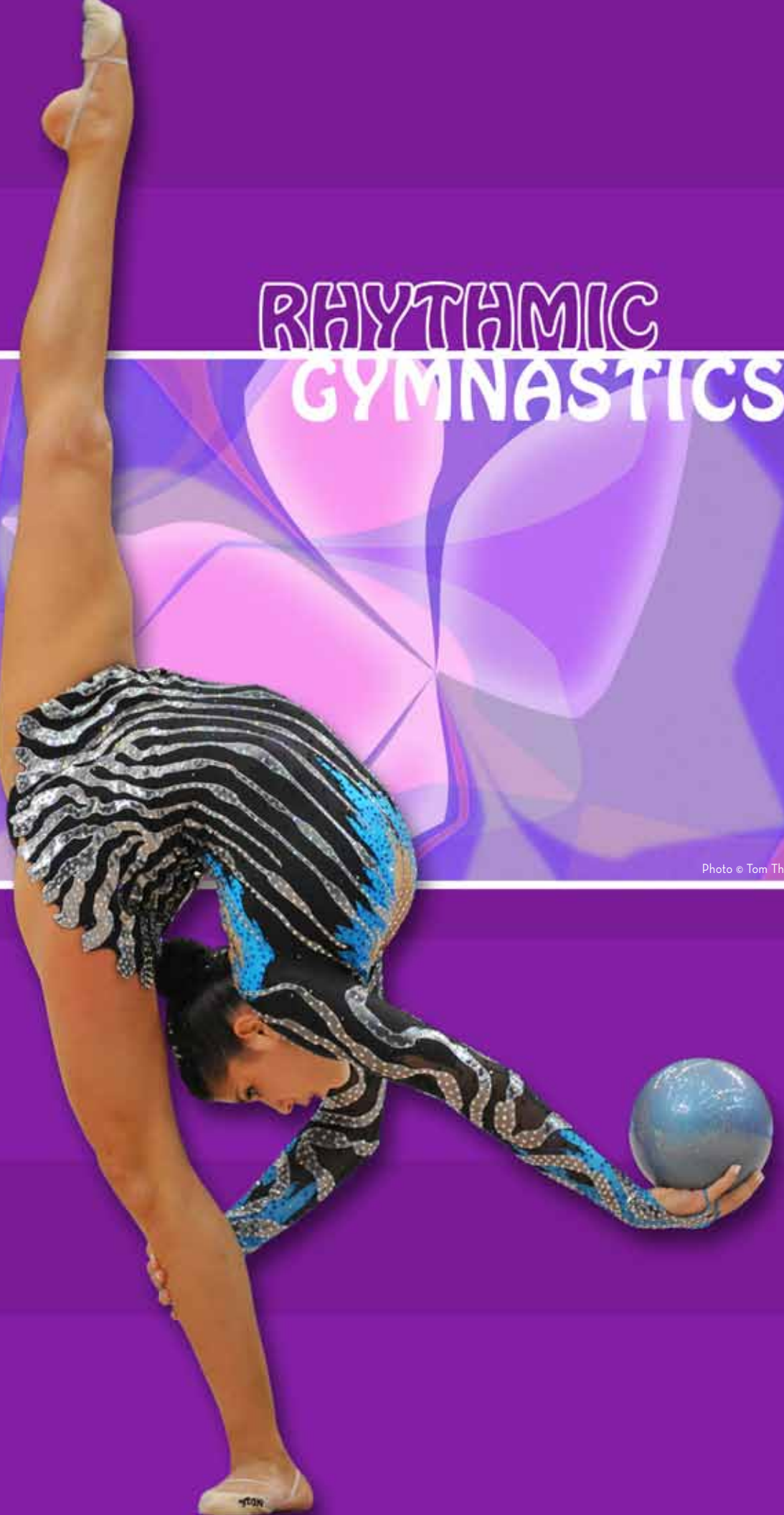
Aubree Balkan



RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

Photo © Tom Theobald

Julie Zetlin



Rhythmic gymnastics routines are choreographed to music, involving body elements and dance combined with the handling of small equipment including a Rope, Hoop, Ball, Clubs and Ribbon. The choreography must cover the entire floor and contain a balanced choice of the groups of elements, including jumps, leaps, pivots, balances and flexibility movements.

Each movement involves a high degree of athletic skill. Physical abilities needed by a rhythmic gymnast include strength, power, flexibility, agility, dexterity, endurance and hand-eye coordination. In the group event, athletes need to develop teamwork, sensitivity, quick adaptation and anticipation, in addition to the aforementioned skills.

ROPE

Look for swings, circles, rotations, wraps, unwraps, figure-eight-type circling movements, throws and catches of the rope. Gymnasts also leap and jump through the open or folded rope, held by both hands.

HOOP

Common movements include swings, rolls, tosses and catches, spins, passes through and over the hoop, rotations of the hoop on the floor and rotations of the hoop around the hand and other parts of the body. Watch for the high throws and complex techniques for catching the hoop.

BALL

Waves, circles, throws and catches, movement with the ball balanced on the hand, bouncing and rolling the ball on the floor and along parts of the body are all key movements.

CLUBS

Swings, large circles, small circles, mills, throws and catches and rhythmical tapping are common tricks.

RIBBON

Ribbon routines are comprised of snakes, spirals, swings, circles, throws and catches and figure-eight movements. The ribbon must remain constantly in motion.

GROUP

Five athletes work together as one cohesive unit. Group is judged on the ability of the athletes to demonstrate mastery of body and apparatus skills in a synchronized manner. The more interaction between the gymnasts, the better the exercise.

Ava Gehringer



Photo © Tom Theobald

Megan Frohlich (front)
& Kristin Kaye (back)



Photo © Tom Theobald

Rebecca Sereda

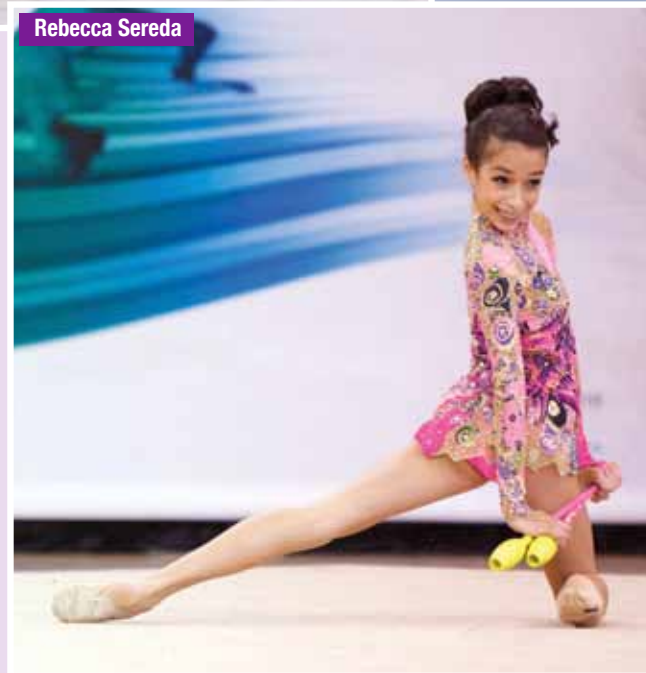


Photo © James Glader

ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS

Kristin Allen & Michael Rodrigues
2009 World Games Mixed Pair Gold Medalists



Acrobatic Gymnastics combines dance, gymnastics skills, and synchronization. Engaging choreography and brilliant attire are also a part of the sport. The competitors tell a story with their performances, while capturing the audience's attention with thrilling dynamic and graceful balance skills. The magnificent performances could hardly be accomplished without cooperative effort and mentoring among partners.

There are five events incorporated within the acrobatic gymnastics discipline. The events are women's pair, men's pair, mixed pair, women's group (3), and men's group (4). Each pair/group performs routines featuring gymnastics tumbling skills, partner balances, and dynamic skills. Balance skills highlight the athletes' strength and flexibility through pyramids and static positions of the top. Dynamic skills involve somersaulting and twisting with landings on the floor or catches by a bottom partner. Routines are performed on the same 40' x 40' spring floor that the artistic gymnasts use to perform floor routines.

Athletes of varying heights, weights, and body types are needed for acrobatic gymnastics. Smaller, more flexible athletes are needed as tops, while taller and stronger athletes are ideal for base positions.

Jesse Kelly,
Alyssa Liardon &
Brooke Rhoades



Valerie Bryant &
Hayley Lemmons



ROUTINES

Each elite pair/group performs three routines, balance, dynamic, and combined. All exercises are choreographed and performed to music.

BALANCE EXERCISE

A balance routine consists of static balance elements, intricate pyramids, transitions between balance holds, and individual elements of flexibility, balance, and agility. In a balance routine, a pair/group is required to perform a variety of balance elements and individual elements. Pair/group tops are typically in handstand, arched handstand, planche, or straddle hold positions being supported by one or two hands of a partner. Some balance elements require the top to balance on a partner's head, torso or foot.

DYNAMIC EXERCISE

Dynamic routines include skills with partner throws and pitches to catches by the base partner(s) or landings on the floor. Also included in dynamic routines are individual tumbling skills. Pairs/groups perform a variety of dynamic elements and individual skills. An example of an advanced dynamic skill is a salto with full twist performed from the hands of a partner back to the hands of a partner. Tops may be thrown into the air and perform double and triple saltos, some with twists, and land on the floor.

COMBINED EXERCISE

A combined routine is just that, a combination of balance and dynamic skills in one routine. Balance elements and dynamic elements are required in the combined exercise. Again, pairs/groups also are required to perform individual skills.

Sienna Martinez
& Ryan Ward



Axl Osborne &
Dylan Inserra

Photos © James Glader

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Nastia Liukin
2008 Olympic
All-Around Champion