

NPGA makes history at provincials

KELLY LAPOINTE
Sports Editor

The North Peace Gymnastics Association made history at the 2011 B.C. Gymnastics Championships in Langley Apr. 8-10.

The NPGA's Jaston Stockall won the silver medal in the Level 3 Tyro division – the club's first ever overall provincial medalist.

Local Jeryn Mackey is the only Level 4 gymnast in the province competing – and landing – a Yurchenko vault.

"It's a huge accomplishment for the club. It's our first time ever having an overall medalist for provincials. Looking at the progress from year to year, we've only improved," said a proud Leanne Couch, NPGA coach.

This year, 11 girls competed, bringing back 17 overall placings and three medals, no small feat as many of the categories featured over 40 competitors.

Stockall believes her first place beam routine, where she placed more than a full point above the second place gymnast, really solidified her overall silver medal.

"Other people did lots of similar skills, but I had different skills," she said, demonstrating her low turn on the beam.

She also did a round-off back tuck dismount, a skill she hadn't done in a competition before.

"It's given me more confidence," she said.

She was fifth on floor and seventh on bars.

After this performance, she will be moving up to a Level 4 or 5 and is working towards the 2015 Canada Winter Games, to be held in Prince George.

Mackey is the only Level 4 in the province to compete with a Yurchenko vault – where the gymnast does a round-off onto the springboard and a

back handspring onto the vault with a back tuck off the vault.

During her first attempt at the competition, Mackey landed on her knees, but then she landed on her feet, though low, the second time.

There was a lot of pressure on Mackey since this was the first year performing a Yurchenko was approved for Level 4s and there was speculation they could pull it if it wasn't performed safely.

"It was the first Yurchenko I had ever taught. It was the first Yurchenko she had ever done in a big competition like that and the only one in the province doing it. It was heaven. It was just awesome," said Couch of when Mackey landed it on her second attempt.

Mackey was proud of herself.

"It was really cool...it was just really scary because everyone was sort of looking at me to see whether it could be done in Level 4 or not. I was just in

shock when I landed it because I didn't really expect to," she said.

Mackey was 17th overall in Level 4 and was fifth on floor.

Brianna Owen completed a Tsukahara pike on vault in Level 4, which she had just perfected the week before. She was seventh overall in Level 4, placing top 10 in vault, beam and floor.

"I was just there to have fun, I set my goals and I was looking to get those rather than placing," explained Owen, adding that her goals were landing her vault, sticking her beam routine and doing all her tumbling on floor.

This was the first year the NPGA has had gymnasts compete in Level 4.

Looking back, Couch said preparing for provincials four years ago she told the girls to not expect anything and they were just going for the experience and something to build on.

"And now if we didn't win some-

thing, I'd be like 'something is wrong.' Now we're a force to be reckoned with," she said.

Heather Smith finished 12th overall in the Pre-Novice Aspire division and won a silver medal on vault.

In Level 3 Open, Daisy Petrucci was 14th overall, garnering a fourth place on bars and ninth on beam. Janelle Sonmor was 17th overall with a ninth place finish on floor.

Carlie Dunn tied for eighth overall in Level 2 Open finishing ninth on beam and floor.

Mariah Kantz was 40th overall in Level 2 Novice, getting 11th on bars.

In Level 2 Tyro, Taylor Gray was 23rd overall, finishing eighth on beam. Rachelle Mackey was 37th overall and Delany Bozarth 45th overall.

"Everybody walked away with something to be proud of," concluded Couch.

The NPGA will host their own meet May 14 and 15.

MONKEYING AROUND



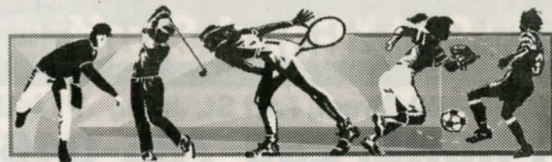
KATIE MAXIMICK PHOTO

A young gymnast makes it to the very top of the climbing rope at the North Peace Gymnastics gymnasium in mid June. The girl was the first of her class to make it to the very top, and seemed confident, cool and collected during her ascent. For registration information and scheduling, check out North Peace Gymnastics' website, www.npga.ca.

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SPORTS



Gymnastics team wraps up great season

KATIE MAXIMICK
Sports Writer

North Peace Gymnastics' competitive team is about to complete a very successful season while another waits on the horizon.

After attending four impressive competitions, including provincial championships, coach Leanne Couch couldn't help but boast about her team a little from North Peace Gymnastics on Tuesday.

"The quality of the gymnastics they've performed this year has been exceptional," she said. "I have nothing but pride with the athletes and what they've achieved this year."

"This year has been kind of different. We've been working a lot on just making corrections and doing our skills a lot stronger and cleaner, so this year for competitions, we weren't aiming for the top," she said.

"We didn't have as many girls attend provincials this year, but they still did very well," Couch added. "Delaney Bozarth was one of our best showings for provincials. She got tenth overall."

In March, the girls competed in two back-to-back competitions in Kamloops and Abbotsford, where many of the young gymnasts returned to Fort St. John with piles of medals around their necks and trophies in their hands.

Again 12-year-old Bozarth shone, picking up first overall in Kamloops.

But it was the Zone 8 Regional Championships in Prince George May 5

and 6 that Couch couldn't help get excited about. Ann-Marie Barrette finished first overall in Level 1 and Bozarth second in her level. At the 2012 B.C. Winter Games in Vernon, 13-year-old Jaston Stockall finished fifth on the beam, which was the highest any Fort St. John gymnast has accomplished at the Games, Couch said.

"That was the best we've done at a Zone 8," she recalled. "We've never been able to walk away with anything until this year."

Stockall has been working on skills that will have her competing in Level 5 or even the national level next season, which means North Peace Gymnastics might be able to send an athlete to some big-time events in the future.

"It's huge," Couch said about Stockall's progression to Level 5. "One of the big focuses is to try and have an athlete go to the Canadian Winter Games in Prince George in 2015. That's a huge benchmark, a huge goal that we're striving for."

"Even having a girl be at the level to qualify is a goal that I have for this club."

The team's last training day of the season in June 28 before they take the month of July off, their only break of the year before beginning training for more competitions in December.

Following the Canada Day long weekend North Peace Gymnastics is holding summer camps for kids to try a variety of gymnastics for full or half days. If you are interested in registering, call (250) 787-5327.



KATIE MAXIMICK PHOTO

The North Peace Gymnastics competitive team poses with a season's worth of medals and ribbons at their gym on Tuesday afternoon.