

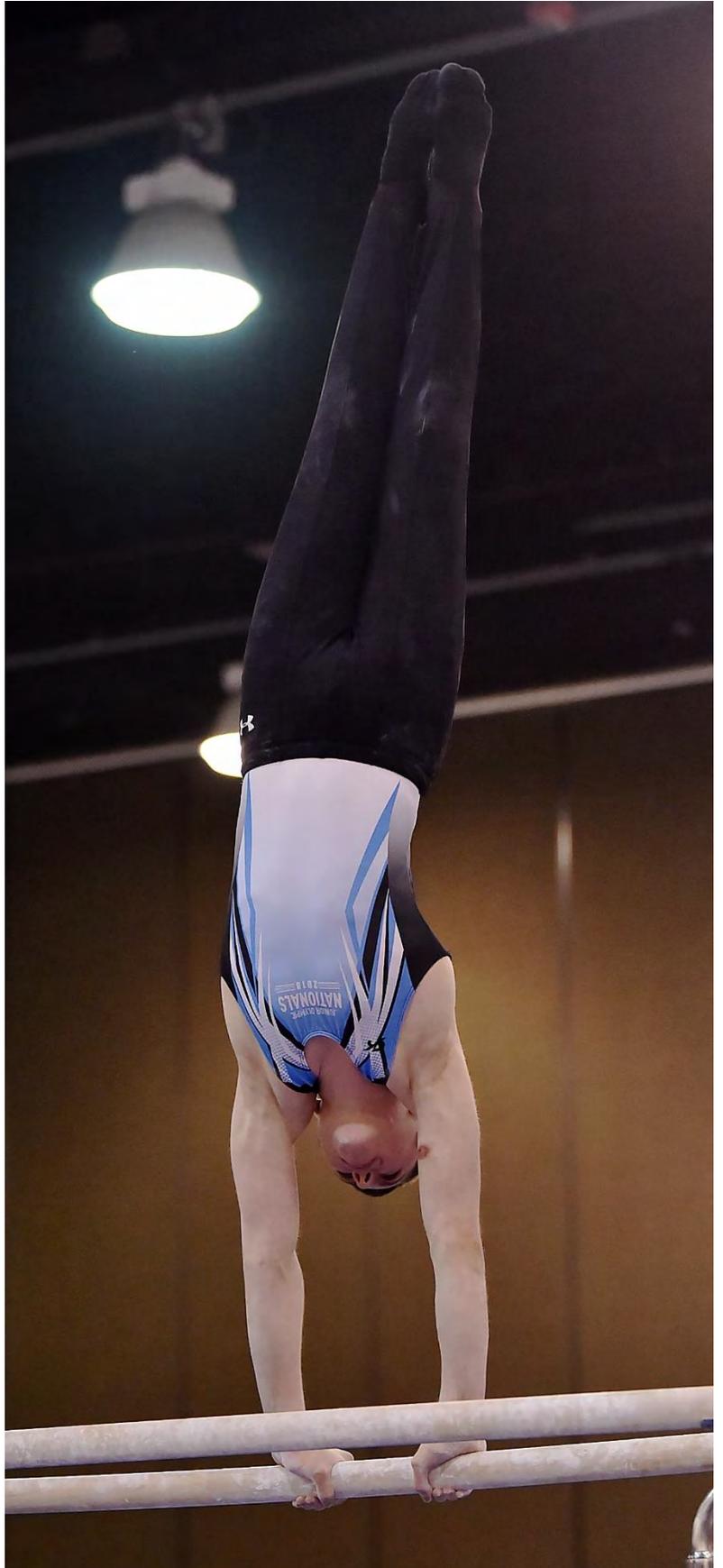
NATIONAL GYMNASTICS MAGAZINE



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Issue #1



OVERCOMING FEAR

Jeff watched intently as the announcer read off the names of the gymnasts who made nationals. As the final names were read Jeff realized that his name was not on the list. That was almost a year ago. Jeff knew that if he would have competed a Voronin he would have made nationals last season, but he freaked out at regionals and did not go for it. Now here he was close to one year later, and he still had not gotten it back.



Mikhail Voronin on High Bar

Jeff lay in bed, as he tried to fall asleep, his thoughts drifted to that day's practice.

It was three weeks until regionals and he had finally decided to go for a release. The whole team was cheering for him. As he climbed up to the bar Jeff could feel his heart pounding harder than it ever had before. He tapped as hard as he could. As soon as Jeff's hands left the bar he knew he was going to hit it. As Jeff hit the bar, time seemed to slow to a crawl. He could see the chalk float off the bar and his teammates cringe. Then pain shot through his shins and everything sped back up.

Tomorrow Jeff knew that they would have high bar again. He needed a way to get out of going to practice. Just before Jeff fell asleep, he got an idea.

Jeff groaned as his alarm went off. It took a second for his half-awake brain to process why his alarm was going off so early in the morning. When Jeff realized what was happening he scrambled to grab his phone and turn his alarm off. Once Jeff got his phone to stop buzzing, he crept over to his door and put his ear to it. Jeff did not hear anyone, so he peeked his head out into the hallway. He did not see any lights on in any rooms and there were none on down stairs. Jeff figured he was the only one up, so he tiptoed through the darkened corridor to the bathroom. Jeff had set his alarm for an hour before his parents got up, so he could go through with his plan. Jeff was not normally a fan of getting up early, but if it meant he did not have to go to Saturday morning practice and do Voronin's he was all for it. Jeff opened the door to the bathroom, careful not to rattle the door knob. Once in the bathroom, Jeff took a hand towel from a drawer. He soaked it under a thin stream of warm water and proceeded to rub himself down with it. Just as Jeff hoped it gave him the appearance that he had broken out in a cold sweat. "If my parents think I am sick they cannot make me go to practice" thought Jeff. Now that he was done, Jeff silently closed the bathroom door and stole back to his room.

Jeff wake up! Jeff! Jeff opened his eyes, mumbled “I don’t feel so good” and rolled over. “You cannot just ignore your alarm! You could have been late! Let me feel your forehead.” Jeff rolled back over and sat up, so his Mom could feel his forehead. “You do not seem to have fever, but you are really clammy. How do you feel?” asked Jeff’s Mom. “Like I am about to throw up” replied Jeff. “You should stay home today” said Jeff’s Mom. “I will go get you a trash can in case you do throw up.” As his Mom left the room Jeff allowed himself a small smile. His plan had worked!

A few hours later Jeff was still in bed. He was scrolling through gymnastics videos on Instagram when he saw a post by Mark, a kid from the gym Jeff went to before his family moved to California. It was a video of him doing a Voronin. “What? How is this possible?” thought Jeff, “I have always been better than him, but now this! Why am I so scared of this? If Mark can do it, so can I! I need to make myself get this! I cannot be sneaking around to get out of high bar! I will do this skill!”

During the weeks between Jeff watching Mark’s video and regionals, he worked on Voronin’s every chance he got. Now it was time to see if his work paid off.

It was time for high bar, Jeff’s last event. He had hit five for five so far, but he knew he needed to make this routine if he was going to make nationals.

“Come on guys, hustle! We need to get our warm up turns so this is a good last event!” Jeff clapped the excess chalk off his Richelsport grips and was the first to the bar. As his coach lifted him up to the bar, Jeff thought here is the hardest skill in my routine right off the bat. Jeff brought his toes to the bar, kicked backwards, tapped forwards and felt his shins smash into the bar. When Jeff hit the ground, the wind was knocked out of him. After a few seconds Jeff climbed slowly to his feet. “Lift me back so I can finish” said Jeff. “Are you sure you do not need a minute to recover?” asked his coach. “I am sure, it is fine.” Jeff did not try any more Voronin’s in warm up. When he was chalking up, his coach pulled him aside. “Jeff, you do not have to go for a Voronin. You can just do a free hip.” Jeff replied, “I am going to do it coach.” His coach responded, “That’s fine, now come on you are up!” Jeff walked up to the bar and saluted the judge. His coach lifted him up to the bar. Jeff started his routine and did the best bar vault of his life. Jeff finished one of the cleanest high bar sets with a stuck double back. When he landed his dismount, his teammates erupted in cheers. For many years to come Jeff would reflect on that day he conquered his fear and the day he made nationals for the first time.



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COMPETITON CORNER

Last night's Winter Cup prelims ended with Sam Mikulak being first in All Around, first tie on Floor, first on P-Bars and first on High Bar. Marvin Kimble is in second, but he is almost three points behind Mikulak. Akash Modi rounds out the top three. S.G.A.'s very own Morgan Seyler, who will be leaving for OU next summer, placed twenty sixth out of the seniors but missed finals.

On the junior side, Bennet Haung is in first in all around and Cypress' Asher Hong is in second by a mere two tenths. Anything could happen, but it seems that Mikulak will win the senior division.

On February 10th you can watch the finals of one of the biggest gymnastics meets of the year on USAG's YouTube channel. That's all for now. Check in the next issue for the final results!



Sam Mikulak two-time Olympian

Nutritional tidbits

The week before a meet you probably have experienced having your favorite snack or breakfast taken away from you by a parent under the premise that it is too sugary and guess what they are probably right! Fortunately for you, I have a solution. It may not seem as good as your Pop Tarts and Frosted Flakes at first, but it's a great pre-meet option. I would go so far as to say that you should switch to this as your breakfast cereal.

The ingredients you will need to make the cereal are:

1. Four cups of oats
2. Two cups of Baker's sweetened coconut
3. Two cups of sliced almonds
4. One third cup of vegetable oil
5. One third cup of honey



You will also need a pan, something to stir the cereal, and a small glass bowl.

Start by pouring the oats, coconut and almond onto the pan. Next you want to microwave the vegetable oil in a small glass bowl for twenty seconds. Once you are finished microwaving the oil pour it over the dry mixture. Repeat this process with the honey. Now toast the mixture at three hundred degrees Fahrenheit for twenty minutes. Take it out and stir. Once you are done stirring, place the mix back in the oven for five minutes. Then take out and stir again. Repeat until golden brown. It normally takes about fifteen minutes of this until the cereal is ready, but some have had it take quite a bit longer. Now let the cereal cool. Once cool store in Zip Lock bag. I find that it is best served with milk, but it is great dry also.

I hope you like this healthy alternative. Thank you for taking the time to read this article.

Dear George,

I have noticed that not many people do Jager type skills. They are so cool why don't more people do them? Are they undervalued or is it something else?

Yours truly,

Bill Huchens

Dear Bill

Yes, that is precisely why. Some might argue that Jager's are not any harder than Tkachev's and they may be right but Balbanov's (laid out Jager's) are much harder than layout Tkachev or Tkachev half. Fear is also a large reason that they are not done more often. If you think about it, if you have a Jager and you miss it there is a much greater chance that you would kick the bar on the Jager rather than the Takchev.

You also have more options if you do Tkachev's. There are twelve Tkachev skills (including Piaty's) and only four Jager skills.

I hope this answers your question.

Yours truly,

George Simmons



Bernd Jager on High Bar

GYMNAST SPOTLIGHT

The 13-year-old McLain Seyler prepared for his final dismount of the 2017 JO National Championships. He took a deep breath and began his last pass. Round off, back hand spring, back-layout. Stick! He turned to the head floor judge, saluted and ran over to his coaches, Michael Reid and Ernesto Rossito of Southlake Gymnastics Academy. As he was being congratulated by his coaches McLain looked up at the scoreboard but not at the floor scores. McLain's searching eyes watched the pommel scores instead. McLain waited as the competition finished up, still watching the pommel scores as the last few flashed across the board. There it was the last pommel score, it read...

Southlake gymnastics academy one week earlier.



McLain Seyler

"Come on Mac get this! Let's go Mac! Finish it up you got it!" Mac hears the cheers of his teammates as he is about to finish his high bar routine. He lets go of the bar flips once, twice and lands his dismount. It has been a month since Mac qualified to the Men's Junior Olympic National Championships in Kissimmee Florida, a town just outside of Orlando. Regionals was held in Kansas City, Kansas and Mac had done quite well, placing second in all around and first on pommel horse and parallel bars, still he did not know how he would do. He knew he could go six for six, but would that enough? Mac was the only level nine gymnast to make nationals from Southlake, but four level tens qualified Charlie Jordan, Austin Torres, Allan Camillus and Mac's older brother Morgan.

Before Mac knew it, it was time to leave for nationals. When he got there though some of his anxiety lessened. It seemed just like any other meet with a warm up and a competition gym except there was a practice gym where you could work out on the days that you did not compete, for gymnasts who made it to the second day.

A few days later it was time for the first day of competition. Mac's first event was high bar. He watched the first few kids go. and then he was up saluting the judge. Michael lifted him up to the bar and he started his routine.

After solid high bar and floor sets it was time for pommel, Mac's best event. He noticed that one of the judges was a judge at most Texas meets. Mac saw the green flag, raised his right arm to signal the judges and

began. His routine was a blur, everything came back into focus only once he dismounted. He looked up at the scoreboard and there it was his score a 12.2! "Wow!" Mac thought "I didn't make it to nationals last year and now I might even place!

A few days later Mac competed again. He had done so well in prelims that he qualified for the second day. His first event was pommel and he was first up, he saluted and did one of the best routines of his life. He got a 12.25. After a few events he checked the scores and he was still in first. Mac was still in first after his last event and as he watched the scores he saw it, the final pommel score. Jesse-Lee Pakele 12.4. Pakele had beaten Mac the first day so when he saw the score Mac knew he had lost.

Mac did not know what to feel as he walked to awards but when his name was called, and he received his silver medal he felt pretty good.

ANSWERS FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I recently subscribed to your magazine to learn more about gymnastics. I just have one problem, I know so little about gymnastics that I cannot understand most of what is in the magazine. It was fine when I was a compulsory, but I am a level ten now. Last practice we were working on Tkachev's and I had to ask what that was. It was so embarrassing! Can you help me?

Sincerely,

Jonathan J

Mr. J,

Your plight is an unfortunate one but not as rare as one might think. In my time as editor of this magazine, my team and I have received many letters from readers with similar problems. I cannot teach you personally, but I would say your best bet would be to go to the F.I.G. website and print out a copy of the code of points. I hope this helps.

Best wishes,

Bob Clifton



Straddled Tkachev on High Bar



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Conquering Hardships

After Will Johnson finished his parallel bars routine, he looked behind him and saw his father shaking his head. He had seen it all. Will now knew that no matter how good the rest of his practice was, he would be in for it when he got home.

When Will got in the car later that night his Dad was on a work call, so he was off the hook for now, but to Will it only served to heighten the tension.

“How was gym?” asked Will’s Mom as he walked in the door.

“Pretty good.” replied Will.

“Come on Will, you know I was watching.” said his Dad. He turned to his wife, “Will’s p-bars were terrible.”

“But I got a new skill on high bar, an endo half!” stammered Will.

“Are going to put it in your routine?” asked Will’s Mom.

“Well no, not yet.” said Will

“Then why were you playing around on high bar instead of working on what you are bad at?” demanded Will’s father.

“My p-bars are not that bad, and I finished my high bar stuff early so coach told me to work that!” said Will defensively.

“I think your Dad is right, you should spend more time on p-bars.” said his Mom.

“Whoa! quit bashing my p-bars, ok? I’m second best of the level nines on them.”

“But not the best!” said Will’s Mom.

“Can you shut up!” yelled Will.

“Go to your room now!” bellowed his father.

“Fine!” will yelled back as he stormed off.

Later, Will lie in bed think about how he could never seem to please his family. Will’s dreams that night all were about one question, what am I doing wrong?

All through the next few months Will worked as hard as he could to make his parents proud. He took every chance he got to work harder, and it showed. Will was a much better gymnast now than he was two months ago, but his parents never seemed to notice. Will came home from practice each night drenched in sweat and with stories about new skills he had gotten, but his parents never seemed to care.

Before Will knew it, the first meet of the season was upon him. Will knew that he was ready.

Their first competition was one of the biggest of the season, so although he was prepared, Will was still nervous.

Will got to the competition early, so he could check out the setup. The meet was held in the host gym which was large and not overly crowded, even with the bleachers. Will thought that it looked much the same as it had in previous years. After looking around, Will saw his coach on the floor in the middle of the gym. Will walked over to his coach. Will’s

coach had done collegiate gymnastics. He was tall for a gymnast at six feet one with fairly pale skin and dark hair. Will walked up to his coach.

“Hi Coach James!” said Will.

“Hey Will, you can set your bag down and relax for a second while we wait for your teammates.”

After the team arrived coach James gathered the team, so they could talk before the meet began.

“Alright guys this is a big day for us, first meet of season!” Coach started. “I know some of you are still a little nervous for a few routines, but I feel that everyone is ready. Try to stay tight and the rest will come. Now it is about time to start warming up, let’s go!”

Will had a good first meet by most people’s standards. He got mostly twelves and a thirteen on floor. His only big mistake was he put his hand down on his double back off p-bars, but even with that he still got an okay score. It was not enough for his parents. It continued like this for the next few meets with Will slowly sinking into depression. After a while it started to affect his grades. One day the school therapist called for Will to come down to her office.

“Will Johnson, right?” asked the therapist.

“Yeah that’s me.” said Will.

“Have a seat Will.”

“Um okay.” said Will as he sat.

“My name is Mrs. Sanderson.” said the therapist. “I called you here today to talk to you about your grades. As you probably know, they are dropping which is surprising because you were doing so well in all your classes. Is everything okay at home?” At this point Will started to sob.



Sam Mikulak on P-Bars

It soon came time for another competition. It was the biggest one yet, the Florida Men’s Gymnastics State Championships. A strange calm had settled over Will, the likes of which his parents and teammates had never seen before. His best friends, Cam and Hunter, were worried.

“He been acting so weird lately. Do you know what is going on with him?” asked Cam worriedly.

“No, I cannot figure him out. Have you ever seen him like this?” replied Hunter.

“Never like this, but it has not seemed to affect his gymnastics though. Coach is going to let him try a double lay off high bar this weekend.” informed Cam.

The day of state came, and Will was having an amazing meet. He started on pommel. Will hit his routine with less than eight tenths off and got 12.9. Will continued to have a great meet scoring a 12.5 on rings, a 12.8 on vault and a 13.1 on p-bars. On high bar Will felt extremely confident. He made all his skills to handstand but on his dismount, he peeled to his face. Will did not let it phase him and he finished state with a 13.4 on floor.

After the meet his parents came up and talked to him before awards.

“Hey guys!” said Will

“What was that on high bar?” demanded Will’s dad.

"I don't know, just tapped wrong I guess." said Will absentmindedly.

"Well you'd better tap right at regionals." said his father.

"Will, why do you not seem to care about what we think of your performance?" asked his mom.

And to that Will said, "Because I shouldn't."

Joe the Gymnast

His name was Joe, a gymnast.

He thought he would never be beat.

He won every competition he went to,
and landed every dismount on his feet.

So, Joe, oh he stopped working hard.

And this was noticed by his friend Lance.

Joe's friend pushed himself harder than ever before,
For he knew that this was his best chance.

During summer Joe, oh how he quickly regressed.

Yes, his skills they grew worse by the day.

Oh, his mother wanted to know what was the matter,
for what bothered him Joe would not say.

At the first competition it did so happen
that, Lance outscored Joe by a point.

Oh yes good old Lance had taken a chance,
And now a new gym king we all must anoint

And after the meet Joe walked up to Lance
and right in face he did spit.

And before he stormed off he shouted two words.
Oh, he shouted the words "I quit!"



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