

TWISTARS USA



BOYS ROCK FLORIDA LEVEL 6S WIN!

Doug Dean, Josh Moore and Dylan Weiss placed 1-2-3 in the AA, Rob Wilson, Mike Bigelow place 4th AA in their age groups and Jacob Proper 9th as the Twistars level 6 boys team earned the team title at recent Winter on the Beach meet in Panama City, Florida. Jake Moore and Kevin Johnson placed 1-3 respectively at level 7 and Ryan Dayton faired well at level 10. Luc Velasquez got to finally compete one event (vault) as he recovers from a shoulder injury. At level 5 Sam Parks, and Noah Adams earned medals. GREAT JOB BOYS TEAM!



Twistars Family plan an instrumental role in the success of the **LIFE FOR LIAM CAMPAIGN**

We were sitting at a late night gathering of coaches at the Twistars USA hospitality party. The atmosphere at one of the tables seemed to be non party like. I found myself being drawn into the conversation. This is when I first heard the story of 5 year old Liam Quirk as I listened to a father with welled up eyes and a crackling voice describe his little sons battle.

Most have heard the story or portion of it by now thanks to the REGION5FORLIAM.COM Campaign that was born on that night. You see Liam was diagnosed with one of the rarest immune system diseases ever found. There are something like 5 documented cases and Liam's particular version has it's very own twists. In a nut shell his body can not fight off viruses and this places his health in great jeopardy. So he needs a stem cell transplant, 6-8 months in a hospital, follow up treatments and more. A frantic search for donors around the world produced 17 potential matches (an amazing number considering). After narrowing the field 5 agreed to participate. Then comes the scary part. These 5 volunteers have to pass extensive testing to make sure they are a perfect 100% match. Phone call 1- no match. Phone call 2 and 3.... no match. I can't imagine the feeling of helplessness that these parents must have experienced.

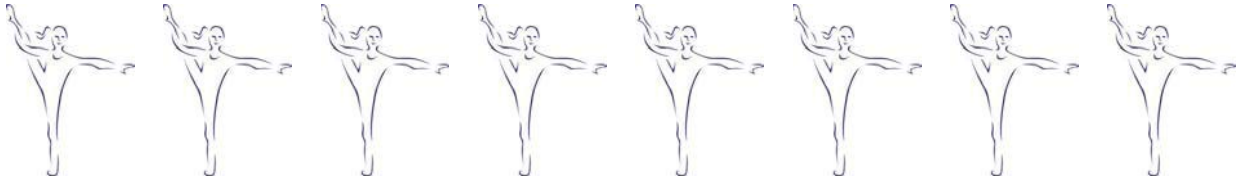
Phone calls 4-5 PERFECT MATCH.

I like to think of myself as a person who takes action but no project has ever been as satisfying as directing and encouraging community action for this

little guy. It only took a moment of placing myself in the shoes of parents Kevin and Amy Quirk as they struggled, not only with the battle ahead, but also the related financial repercussions. We couldn't do much about the medical implications, that would fall in the hands of the doctors and GOD. BUT we could very well do something about the paralyzing financial strain that something like this can place on a young family. We DID! In 3 amazing weeks of heart felt support this project has raised over \$30,000 with the final goal of \$35,000 in site.

Twistars USA families, and booster club have played a vital role in the success of this campaign and for that I am not only grateful but very proud. THANKS TO ALL who felt this family's desperation and recognized the need to assist. As always Twistars parents seems to blaze the trail for doing things the right way.

Speaking of doing things the right way, a super big thanks has to go out to Kristin Moore who jumped into this project with both feet. Within a moments notice she personally designed the gift tree web site. She also solicited corporate donations for a future raffle, updated the Region 5 fan page on a daily basis and more. As always Kristin's passion for doing things to the max and her off the charts organizational details has provided the opportunity for the REGION 5 FOR LIAM campaign to be as successful as it has been. Thanks Kristin.



HEADACHES AND ADVANCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

It has to be one of the toughest parts of administering a gymnastics program. More coaching frustrations revolve around the issues related to when and how to advance athletes to the next level. There are so many things to consider that from the outside looking in seem fairly cut and dried. This is never the case but rest assured there is plenty of thought that goes into the considerations all of which hinge on what is best for the program and the individual development of the athletes themselves.

Inconsistencies

There are far too many aspects to consider for any established advancement procedures to remain bullet proof from those that would care to shoot at them. What seems like inconsistencies may very well be coaching strategies (something we are very good at). I guess this is where trust comes in. Trust that we will do what is best for the program and the athletes that participate in it. Sometimes the long term goals and benefits are not quite as visible to parents as they are for coaches who have been down these roads before.

Skill Readiness

Here is a catch 22. Often times we here "how can they get the skills if they never get a chance to work on them"? Well actually what may seem like repetition of the same ole routine IS actually working on advancing the skill level. I realize that this is an elusive concept to grasp but the basic premise is that if the CORE component of any skill is not refined or even mastered then the advanced version of that skill is destined for learning frustration, safety risks, inconsistent performance issues etc.

Therefore we spend more time doing basics (layouts instead of twisting for tumbling skills, uphill stacked mat timers rather than flipping the vaults, handstands, handstands and more handstands rather than transition releases, layout flyaways rather than double flyaways. If we were to take a different path I could promise only one thing and that would be an eventual collision with the wall of skill development.

Team Considerations

Yep this plays a role. Some years we are deep thus have the luxury of taking a little more time with advancements. Some years we are a little thinner in the depth department so have to step things up a bit. This is the nature of a team based program.

No Hurry

One of the biggest mistakes that I see with many programs is the attraction to rapid level advancement with young talent. They have a little hot shot and want to set the world on fire proving how great they coach because now they have a 9 year old level 7. Well ... great coaches don't fill their resumes with how great their 9 year olds are but rather their 18 year olds.

Mental Readiness

A bi product of advancing too fast often manifests itself and rears its head as competition anxiety or inconsistent performance. This can certainly be traced to rushing through basics, and not learning how to compete aggressively and confidently at a lower skill level prior to heaping on the difficulty. We really do try to avoid this and as we become better coaches it seems the approach is working.

ADVANCING LEVELS

HANDBOOK CRITERION

Often times parents are blind sided by our advancement philosophy and policies. Although it is impossible to outline the exact criterion for advancement, there is a pretty good template outlined in our team handbook.

It is important to note that these are guidelines:

1. **SCORES-** 2 separate 36.5 AA scores at the previous level. This displays a reasonable amount of proficiency and skill development at they previous level. Attaining this level of scores also gives indication that the athlete has learned to compete well.

2. USAG EVENT REQUIREMENTS-

Each event has certain requirements that serve as the minimum consideration for advancement

3. TWISTARS STANDARDS

Twistars has it's own requirements in addition to the USAG list. These requirements are what sets our program apart from most. (earning bonus on the events is one to note)

4. Coach Discretion -

We know when they are ready.



BOYS REPORT

BY TOM BUESE

January was a busy month for the Twistars Boy's Team! We had three straight weeks of strong competition to start the month - which really put the boys in the *competitive* mode. **INVITATIONAL:** This was the first real meet for most of the Level 5s, and they showed a lot of improvement from the Judges Cup - 2 months earlier. Luke Huisken made it through a Pommel Horse routine without falling and earned a 14.3 for 5th on Rings. Sam Parks placed 5th on FX and 3rd place HB. Luke Lathrop led the Level 5s by placing 5th on PH, HB, and AA, 4th on PB and 3rd on Vault! The Level 5 Team increased their previous team score by over 10 points!

Level 6s also had a great meet! Mike Bigelow finished 4th on Rings and 3rd on V and HB, while Jake Proper was 4th on Floor and 5th on PB, HB, and AA. Dylan Weiss placed 2nd on FX, PH, and PB and 4th AA. Josh Moore had a great day, placing 3rd on FX and PB, 1st on SR, and 2nd on V, HB, and AA! In the older age group, Rob Wilson finished 3rd on Rings and 4th on HB and the AA, while Doug Dean was 3rd on PH and V, 2nd on Rings, and 1st on FX, PB, HB, and AA! The Level 6 Team finished 2nd.

Jake Moore and Kevin Johnson represented the level 7s. Kevin finished 4th on FX and PB, 2nd on PH and V, 1st on SR, and 3rd AA. Jake was 4th on SR, 2nd on HB, and 1st on FX, PH, PB, and scored a huge 89.3 for 1st AA!

Level 10 Ryan Dayton had a great start, hitting his Horse routine for 1st on the event, then placing 2nd on SR, V, PB, HB, and AA!

WINDY CITY: The veteran Level 5, Sam Parks took home 10th on Floor and Vault and 8th on HB and scored an 80.4 AA to lead the 5s. Ryan Dayton started with a solid FX set, but the 7:30 AM start might have been a little early for the other events. The finishing sequence of Ryan's HB routine did make it to www.gymnastike.com under the Windy City coverage; be sure to check it out.

Jake and Kevin continued to represent the 7s well. Kevin placed 9th on Rings and 8th on PB. Jake just had one mistake on PB, but finished 3rd on SR, 2nd on FX, and 1st on PH, V, HB, and the All Around to make Twistars history!

The 6s finished off the weekend with more good performances. Dylan finished 16th in the youngest age group, Josh and Mike finished 9th and 14th on HB, respectively, Rob Wilson placed 6th on V and 8th on PH and the AA, and Doug had another great showing with 2nd on SR, 3rd on FX and HB, and 4th AA!

CIRCLE OF STARS: The Level 5s continued to show improvement, bringing their team score up to a 248.4 which is starting to get competitive. Individually, the 5s had some impressive performances too. Luke Lathrop placed 2nd on SR and 4th on PH on his way to 6th AA! Noah was right behind him placing 6th on PB and 7th AA. Ryan M. took 10th on PB, while Ethan was 9th on FX in the 8 year old division. Luke Huisken put

together his best meet of the year, finishing 6th on PH, 5th on SR and PB, 4th on FX, and 5th AA! In the older age group, Sam placed 9th on V and 6th on his best event HB.

The Level 6s held their own as well. The early morning had them starting a little slow, but they pulled it together, finishing 1st as a team on SR and 4th overall! Jake Proper took 7th on ; Dylan Weiss placed 3rd on PH and HB and 2nd on FX, SR, V, PB, and AA! Mike Bigelow was 4th on FX and V, while Josh was 2nd on SR and PB. Our *big*s, Rob and Doug were also at the top of the rankings. Rob placed 2nd on SR and 3rd on V and AA, while Doug was 3rd on PB, 1st on SR, and 2nd on FX, V, HB, and the AA! The Level 7s, Jake and Kevin were both the champions in their age groups! Kevin was 2nd on PH and 1st on SR and PB, while Jake was 2nd on SR and 1st on the rest! Ryan Dayton started his meet really well, earning 1st on FX, V, and HB and 2nd on PB. Horse and Rings were a little rough, but he still came away with 2nd AA!

The next meet is the team trip to Florida, then Cereal City. These meets are a little more spread out, so the boys get a chance to rest a little more and work on the details of their routines. If they continue their current progress, Championships will be a very exciting time for the team!

KEY:

FX – Floor Exercise
 SR – Still Rings
 PB – Parallel Bars
 PH – Pommel Horse
 V – Vault
 HB – Horizontal (Hi) Bar
 AA – All Around
 LOL – Laugh Out Loud
 KIT – Keep In Touch
 IDK – I Don't Know

ALUMNI REPORT

TWISTARS ALUMNI ROCKING IT OUT IN COLLEGE

One of the greatest gymnastics related photos I have ever seen was one presented to me last year after the NCAA National Gymnastics Championships held in Florida. It was a group photo of 6 former Twistars USA athletes as they gathered at the event banquet. Having 6 athletes competing at the collegiate level would be an admirable accomplishment for most clubs but to have 6 representing their respective schools at the NCAA Championships was something special. (Nicole Curler, Taylor Zondervan, Maureen Moody, Kari Pearce, Elizabeth Mahlich and Nicole Dayton)

I have always stated that one of the main goals and objectives of our program is to assist our athletes with obtaining a post club career at the collegiate level. Nearly 5 million dollars in earned scholarships says that we must be doing something right. It is quite gratifying when we hear former Twistars standouts doing well for their new teams.

Kari Pearce

Kari is a 2007 Graduate and attend the University of Michigan where she is competing in her senior year. "Pearce" as always known as a great All Around performer but as most collegiate athletes find out, gymnastics in college is a different ball game. With 12 scholarship athletes on your team it has the make up of an ALL STAR TEAM and therefore competing in all 4 events is a rarity. Kari competes regularly in the Vault and Bar line up this season.

Taylor Zondervan

Tay transferred from the University of Michigan to Western Michigan for a variety of reasons but mostly so that she could have a better chance of making the line up and to be closer to home. The NCAA being the red tape, rule confused governing organization that they are, determined that Taylor would have to sit out this year due to some regulations about transferring schools. She is continuing to train and will have one year of eligibility left next season.

Mallory Brewer

Mallory is in her senior year at University of Pittsburgh. Mal's collegiate career got off to a slow start. Often times the

transition to the collegiate life has distractions and commitments that make it difficult for some. Well the good news is Mal is BACK! She is the top performer for the Panthers in their floor line up and has posted her career high scores on that event this season (9.8).

Caitlyn Ciokajlo

"Cujo" is a sophomore at U of Kentucky and is the cornerstone of their bar line up (posting her first career victory on that event this year against powerhouse Arkansas). Caitlyn also see duties in the beam and vault line up from time to time.

Elizabeth Mahlich

"BB" is a junior at U of Florida (the top ranked team in the country). She competes in the Bars (ranked top 20) and Beam line up.

Nicole Dayton

"Nicko" is a sophomore at Stanford (the number 2 ranked team in the USA). Nicole has competed in the vault and bar line up for the Cardinals which is not an easy task considering the depth of talent on that team.

Kristen Seidowski

"Syd" is a freshman for the rejuvenated Western Michigan University gymnastics program. She had an early season hand fracture but has been making the vault line up regularly and hopes to crack the bar line up soon.

Shelby MacDonald

Shelby (our little Canadian) is at the University of Alaska. A knee injured has slowed her progress but rumors have it that she is battling for her spots in the bar and beam line up.

Maya Ketner

"Mayo" is a freshman at U of Pittsburgh and cracking the vault and bar line ups. On line result show scores in the 9.7 range.

WE ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR ALUMNI

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

11-13- Chicago Style at Navy Pier- Girls Levels 8-9-10
11-13- Love or Money Indianapolis- Girls Levels 4-5-6-7

17-21- WOGA- Dallas Texas- Girls Levels 8-9-10
19-20- Cereal City- Kalamazoo- Girls Levels 4-5-6

19-20- Cereal City- Kalamazoo- Boys

This meet includes Level 4 Silver Stars

26-27- Wolverine Classic- Levels 7-8
28-2- American Cup/Italy Verification- Houston- Elite

March

10-12 Arena Classic- Joliet Illinois- Girls Levels 8-9-10
11-12- SMQ- Grand Blanc Girls Levels 4-5-6

11-13- Jason Whitfield- Ann Arbor- Boys

This meet includes Level 4 Silver Stars

13-21- Italy Grand Prix- Joslo, Italy- Elite

25-27- State Championships- Holland- Girls Level 8-9-10
26-27- State Championships- TBA- Boys

April

9-10 SMQ- Shelby Township- Girls Levels 4-5-6
This meet includes the Level 4 Silver Stars

8-10 Regional Championships- TBA- Boys

15-17 Regional Championships- Cleveland- Girls L 9-10

18-23 National Team Camp- Houston- Girls Elite

30-1 Regional Championships- Lansing- Girls Level 8
30-1 State Championships- Traverse City- Girls L 4-6

May

4-9 National Championships- TBA- Boys

5-9 Eastern Nationals- Boston- Girls Level 9
7-8 State Championships- Freeland- Girls Level 5

11-16 Nationals- Long Beach, Ca- Girls Level 10
13-14 State Championships- Kzoo- Girls Level 7

20-24 National Team Camp- Houston- Girls Elite

June

17- Team Banquet

18-20 State Champions Camp- Boys

20-23 Week 1 Twistars Camp
Groups B-E-F-H-J-L and All Boys

26-30 National Team Camp- Houston- Girls Elite

27-1 Week 2 Twistars Camp
Groups A-C-D-G-I-K-M

27-2- Region 5 Camp- TBA- Boys

July

5- Summer Session Begins

SUMMER CAMP

Full boosters club team members have one full week of Twistars camp paid for (One per family).

Group M- First Year Silver Stars are assigned a week but are responsible for camp tuition.

All Team members are asked to attend camp.

Pre Team members are also invited and encouraged to attend.

POLICY CHANGE

This will not impact very many but after doing to math on a couple of scenarios it was highly suggested by our business advisors that we discontinue the cross program 10% family discount. (For instance an upper level athlete with a rising star sibling ... \$385 team monthly tuition, \$105 class tuition for 8 weeks, then a second \$385 would meant a discount of \$87.50 thus the recreational student would actually be paying \$17.5 for an 8 week class or \$2.18 per hour.... Can't do that)

SO new policy is TEAM to TEAM or REC to REC discount applies to the tuition total. Team to Rec will receive 10% off the Team Tuition only and only once per 8 week term.

ALEXIS MOORE

FUTURE BALL STATE CARDINAL

Another 2011 Twistars USA graduate has decided on her future collegiate home. After much thought and consideration, campus visits, tours, and discussions with the various choices, senior Alexis Moore has decided to join the gymnasts squad at Ball State University in the fall of 2011. Alexis has attained an official invitation from head coach Nadalie Walsh to join the Ball State Cardinals as a walk on with the expressed opportunity to fight for and earn scholarship funds in the future. Walk on status is not an easy accomplishment and comes with all the perks, bells and whistles associated with being a D1 collegiate athlete. (Preferred class scheduling, Tutors, preferred housing assignments and assistance, mandatory study sessions, medical assistance and wonderful apparel.) Congrats Alexis!

Lex is a 2 time Level 9 National qualifier and the 2009 Level 9 Eastern National Uneven Bar and Floor Exercise Champion. Alexis can swing and dance with the best of them! She has advanced to the pinnacle level of Junior Olympic gymnastics where she continues her quest to improve her consistency and skill. Nobody works harder, cares more, show greater determination than Alexis and it is these quality characteristics that are sure to help foster great results as she enters her post club career in Muncie, Indiana. We are thrilled for Alexis and her family!



PICKY EATERS

Here is some great advise from Beth Gervitz- Dietician for the Elite Coaches Association

Getting athletes to follow any healthy eating regimen is tough enough. Add to the equation the picky eating habits of some children and the problem magnifies. Frankly however gymnasts do not have time, nor can they afford picky eating habits. They need every ounce of nutritional benefit that a sound diet can provide in order to assist the development process. Here are some good suggestions.

1- Keep Fruits and vegetables readily available. With the time constraints placed on an athlete often time bad choice are simply a matter of convenience. If they have good choices available they are more likely to make a good choice.

2- Make healthy dips to increase consumption of vegetables. Try making ranch dip using greek yogurt rather than sour cream. Healthy dips are best of course but the benefit of eating vegetables in the first place outweighs the small amount of "bad dip" they may consume in the process.

3- Add Spinach or other vegetables into your meals- Try adding spinach to spaghetti sauce or mixing cauliflower into mash potatoes. Chances are they wont even notice.

4- Add flavors to milk. Yes plain low fat milk is best but again drinking flavored milk certainly is better than not drinking milk at all. If that is what it takes to get them to consume milk... go for it.

5- Add a little cheese to it (low fat, skim milk cheese). Sometimes this will make healthy foods more attractive.

6- Protein can be found in other sources other than meat. Remember nuts, seeds, lentils, milk, cheeses, peanut butter are good sources of protein. Don't skimp on the protein. Athletes have increased needs for a constant protein consumption for the repairing and strengthening of muscles.

7- Embrace the Pickiness! For one, gymnasts should be somewhat picky thus adopting the "eat to live" rather than the "live to eat" mentality. Research also shows that it may take up to 10 times of introducing a food choice to your children before they are actually willing to try it. Continue to put the healthy, creative choices on their plates and eventually they will become adventurous enough to try it.