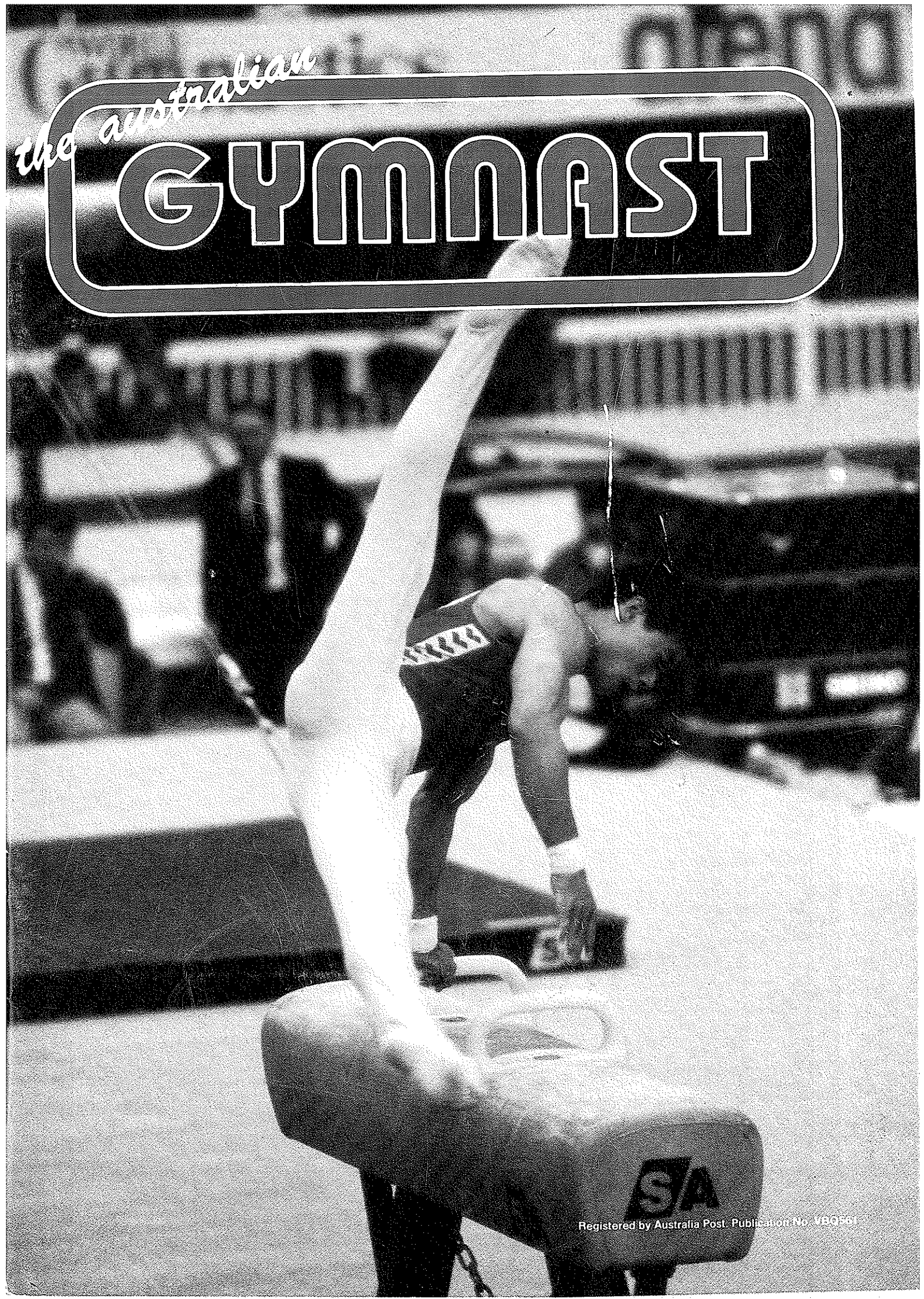


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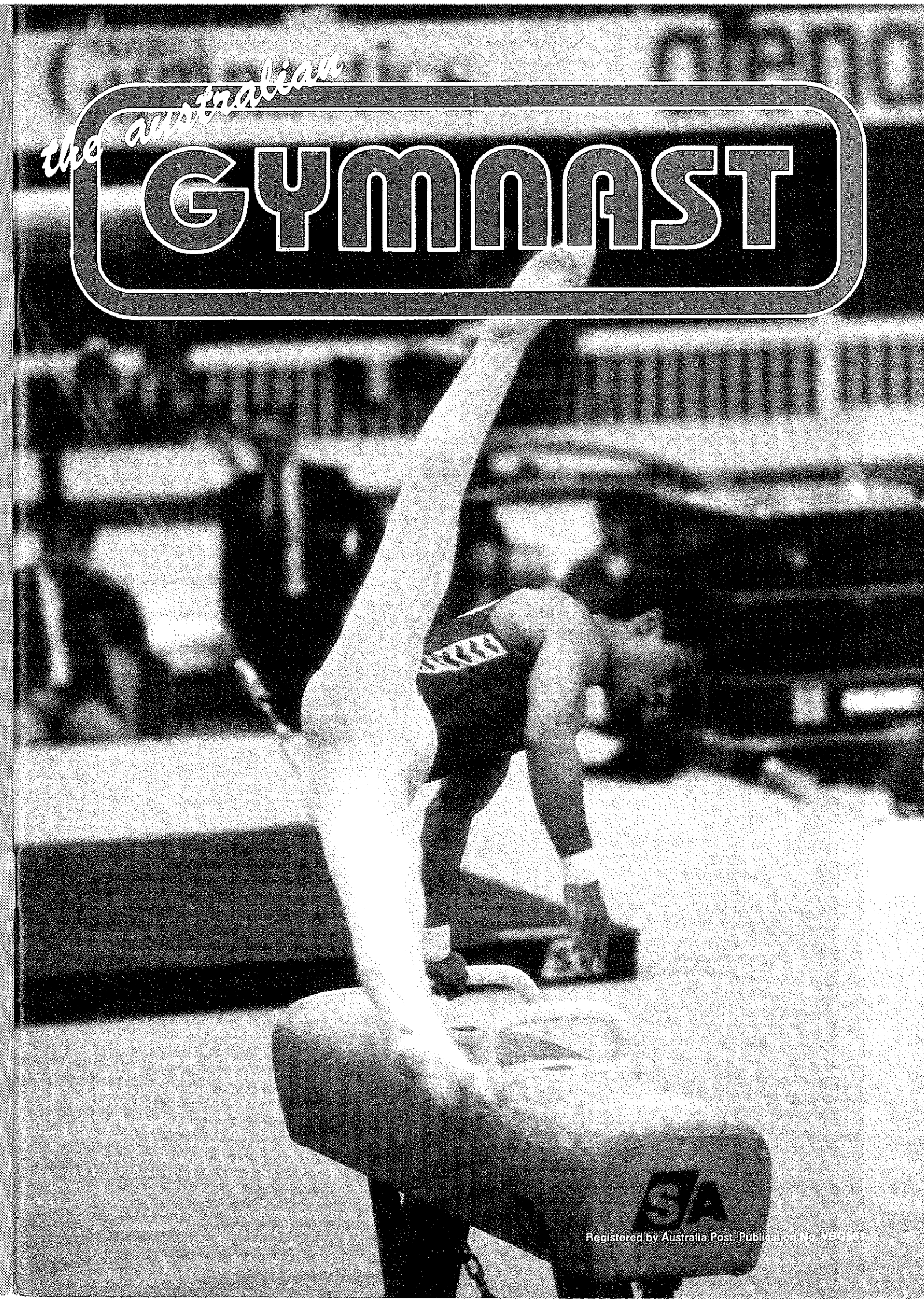
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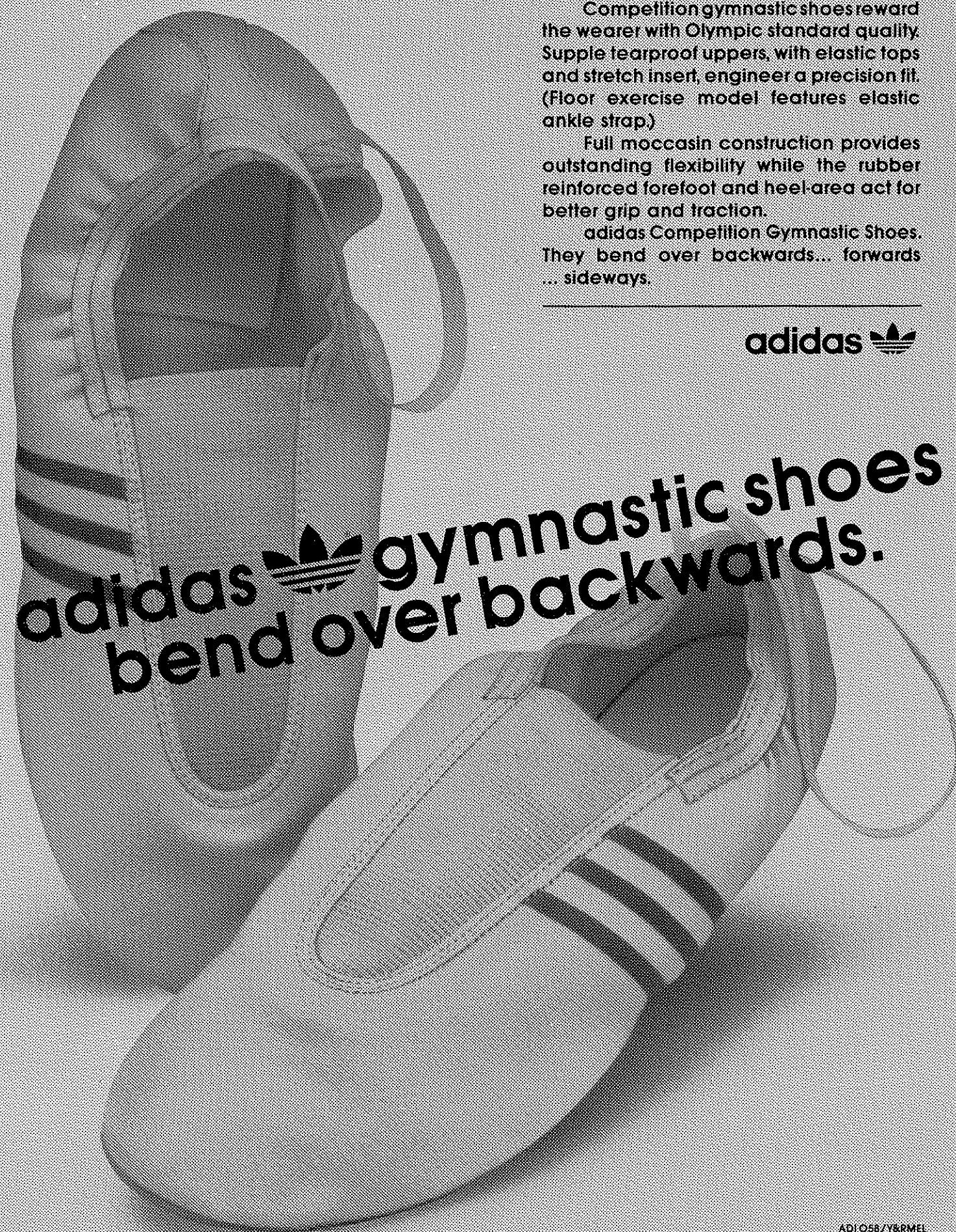
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GYMNAST

The official magazine of the Australian Gymnastic Federation

Summer 1987
Volume 12
Number 1

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DEADLINE DATES FOR 1987

1st June	1st October	16th November
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Limited back issues of The Australian Gymnast are still available. Write to A.G.F. Office.

Viewpoints and opinions expressed in articles appearing in The Australian Gymnast are those of the authors. The Publishers accept no responsibility for the information supplied or the changes subsequent to the date of publication.

The Australian Gymnast is published quarterly in Melbourne and printed by
ENNIS & JARRETT PTY. LTD.
35 Advantage Road, Highett, 3190.

Subscription: \$14.00 per year
Individual Copy: \$4.00

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and CREDITS

President

• Jim Barry

Managing Editor

• Peggy Browne

Editor & Design

• Georges McKail

AGF Board Elected Delegates

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• Mandi Shields

Photographers

• Warwick Forbes

• Ross Gould

• Peter Meyers

Acknowledgements

• Acromat Pty Ltd

• adidas

• Australian Institute of Sport

• Ansett

• ANZ-National Training Centre Programme

• Australian Sports Commission

• Australian Olympic Federation

• Ennis & Jarrett Pty Ltd

• Rothman Foundation—

National Sports Division

• Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation

Advertising Manager

• Georges McKail

Printers

• Ennis & Jarrett Pty Ltd

Cover: Li Ning—CHN

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Peggy,

I just wanted to drop you a short note to thank you and your editors for the extensive coverage you have been giving USGF events in your magazine, "The Australian Gymnast".

I have just completed reviewing your coverage of the McDonald's American Cup and the Soviet dual meet. You are most generous with your coverage of these fine events. They are indeed international competitions that have a definite impact on our worldwide community. Your coverage lends additional integrity and importance to our efforts.

I hope all goes well and that you continue to grow. We look forward to seeing you in a few months at the 1987 McDonald's American Cup, which will again be held in Fairfax, West Virginia.

Again, on behalf of our marketing and events staff, Peggy, we appreciate your support and your coverage very much.

For the U.S. Gymnastics Federation,
Sincerely,

John Arends,
Director, Marketing & Communications
United States Gymnastics Federation.

Dear gymnastic friends,

It is two years ago, when I wrote you a small letter in which I asked you for some material about the occasion 1st Australia Games 1985.

You sent me very, very beautiful FDC envelopes issued by Australia Post. I was happy. It pleased me very, very much.

I would like to ask you, if you couldn't send me some material for stamps collector (stamp, envelope, mark etc.) about the 2nd Australia Games in 1987 please?

I have the second question now. Don't you know any person, which would like to exchange the post stamps with me, please?

I am very looking forward to your answer.

Yiri Galajda
V Bažantnici 2653
272 01 KLADNO
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	PLACE	EVENT
April 3—5 April April 10—12 April 16—21 April April	Hungary Romania East Germany AIS West Germany PRC	International International International WAG Level III Course/IOC RSG Weisbaden Competition Shanghai Invitational
May 1—3 May 4—11 May May May May 15—17 May 23—31 May	Australia Israel Austria Hungary Bulgaria Switzerland France Japan Australia	General Gym Workshop, AGF Biennial Conference Hapoel Games (MAG/WAG/RSG) RSG Medico Cup RSG Invitational RSG Invitational RSG Invitational RSG Corbeil-Essonnes RSG Brother Cup MAG IOC Jnr Coaching Course
June June June 13—20	USA Bulgaria Hobart	RSG Development Tour Golden Sands WAG National Stream Championships 8/9/10
July July 2—6 July 7—11 July 11—14	Brazil Denmark Denmark Yugoslavia	RSG Cup FIG Congress Gymnaestrada Universiade (MAG/WAG/RSG)
Aug Aug Aug	Australia Japan Brazil	WAG National Clubs Junior Invitational Artistic Cup
Sept Sept 17—20 Sept 21—27	Bulgaria Varna Perth	RSG International RSG World Championships Senior Nationals
Oct Oct Oct 18—25	Sydney Spain Rotterdam	MAG/RSG Junior Nationals Artistic Criterium Artistic World Championships
Nov Nov Nov Nov Nov Nov	Germany Canberra Taipei Germany Japan Australia	DTB Pokal Cup AIS Invitational TPE Invitational Junior Competition Leverkusen Cup (WAG) Chunichi Cup Tour by USSR

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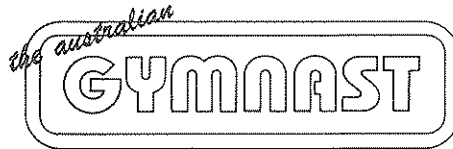
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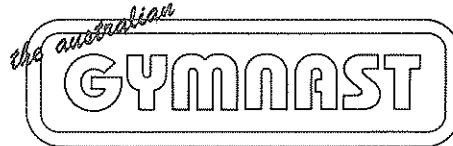
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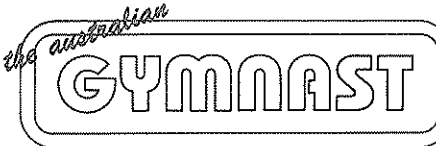
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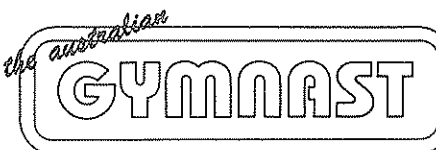
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The writer in his capacity as a FIG Executive Member, has the international responsibility for the Oceania region. With the exception of Australia and New Zealand, this is an onerous region to develop and especially so in gymnastics.

The Australasian partners, in turn, have gained International Olympic Committee Solidarity funds for courses to develop gymnastics and have dutifully invited nations within the region to attend. In turn we have received appropriate negative or no responses as the high level courses were unsuited to their development.

Two Australian developments have changed all this!

The first was our inaugural Administration Course held in Melbourne in January, 1985 when we had the Executive Director of the USGF, Mike Jacki as our keynote speaker. Administration Courses are difficult to construct and can be quite obscure to the recipient. That this Course was a success is now history. Its success came in two areas. First, delegates came from the following FIG Federations: Hong Kong, Taipei, New Zealand and Malaysia. The reader will note that some of these Federations are a little outside of the geographic Oceania region, but this overlap with the Asia region has been agreed to by the FIG. Secondly, most State Associations sent two representatives to the course, thereby broadening our administrative knowledge in Australia.

The second development was the introduction of the Gymfun program. The Federation has been slowly embracing the concepts of general gymnastics and kinder gymnastics. With the appointment of Peter Murden as General Gymnastics Development Director in August last year, we have lifted the momentum again.

A natural outcome of both of these developments was for Australia to successfully bid for a General Gymnastics Course from the IOC Solidarity program.

We are fortunate that the IOC Oceania Secretary General is our good friend Julius (Judy) Patching who has been most supportive and this Course is to be held in Melbourne, 1-3 May, 1987.

The exciting point of this report is the strong level of support from the Oceania region. At the time of writing, the following nations have accepted, Solomon Islands, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia.

So, what we thought was mission impossible two to three years ago, is now happening.

The Gymnastrada in Denmark in July of this year with an indicative participation of over 20,000 will further heighten this interest in General Gymnastics. We will have our FIG Congress officials attending and as well, we are hoping to have a group of Australians participating in the Gymnastrada for the first time.

Our fourth discipline is coming of age!

James Barry

EDITORIAL



a challenge before us to ensure that our own gymnastic community understands the different requirements between the rhythmic individuals and the 'rhythmic group' gymnasts. I have singled out the rhythmic group, as we are more than comfortable and understand a "team" in mens and womens artistic gymnastics. In effect, a team can still compete to the cut-off point (ie. four with three to count or six with five to count) under the present technical regulations.

The only team event in gymnastics as traditionally defined, (ie. basketball, netball or soccer) is the 'rhythmic group' routine. Each gymnast, as each player, must be fine-tuned to perform in their area of skill and each must contribute at the same time to ensure success. If one person in the team does not present themselves for the event, the team does not compete. No strategies re: who goes first etc. can be considered.

At the beginning of the year's program for both clubs and officials, it is interesting to reflect on the educational responsibilities which the Federation must undertake. I would like to speak specifically of the rhythmic discipline. In particular, we have

This team, (rhythmic group) also has an impact on our thinking re: financial implications, and other necessary administrative requirements. We have also had difficulty asking the government to categorise 'rhythmic group' in the team category for the STEP grants.

Because of the magnitude in all areas of the team event in gymnastics (ie. rhythmic group) it becomes a major, and often daunting task, for Clubs, States and even the Federation to address. It is often placed in the too-hard basket and, when considered, the necessary differences are addressed within the framework of thinking of individuals. To that end, I am delighted that the Rhythmic Technical Committee has pursued the concept of selecting one group at the national level to train for major international events. I trust that the procedure for identifying the group for the following Olympiad is being considered within the development plan of rhythmic gymnastics.

In women's artistic gymnastics, the National Clubs Competition evolved and has become most successful. I trust that a similar evolution for a National 'Group' Competition will also encourage clubs to place emphasis and enjoyment, on this particular aspect of rhythmic gymnastics. For those who wish to participate in gymnastics but are truly 'team' people, this provides a wonderful opportunity in a sport which has traditionally looked at individuals only.

Peggy Browne



OKSANA AND GYMNASTICS

Whenever we introduce highly successful athletes to our readers we usually talk about what obstacles he or she had to overcome on the way to the top, who helped make it possible, etc.

by Valentina Pozhilova—reprinted courtesy 'Sport in the USSR' 7/86

That's more or less what I was planning to discuss with the world all-round gymnastics champ Oksana Omelianchik. But my plan came to nought as soon as the apartment door opened and I beheld a disarmingly elegant blue-eyed creature wearing velvet slacks, a dainty sweater and slippers. From that moment on those eyes held me under their spell, forcing me to forget all the questions I'd prepared beforehand.

What did I know about Oksana before the interview? That in the last world championships held in Canada last November the young girl from Kiev (height: 140 cm; weight: 31 kg) shared first place in the all-round competition with her teammate Yelena Shushunova and won a gold medal in the floor exercises. That she is 15 years old and a ninth-former at a sports boarding school. And that she enjoys poetry, writes her own poems and draws.

Tatiana Perskaya, her coach, had this to say:

"Oksana has her hands full now. After Montreal she competed in South America. After that she began preparing for a sports extravaganza held on the occasion of the

27th CPSU Congress for the Ukrainian delegates. Now that she's back at school she's got some catching up to do in gymnastics. Oksana's week is planned down to the last minute. The only day you might be able to meet with her is Sunday...."

When I spoke with Oksana's mother, Lyubov Omelianchik, she at once understood my position and invited me to visit them:

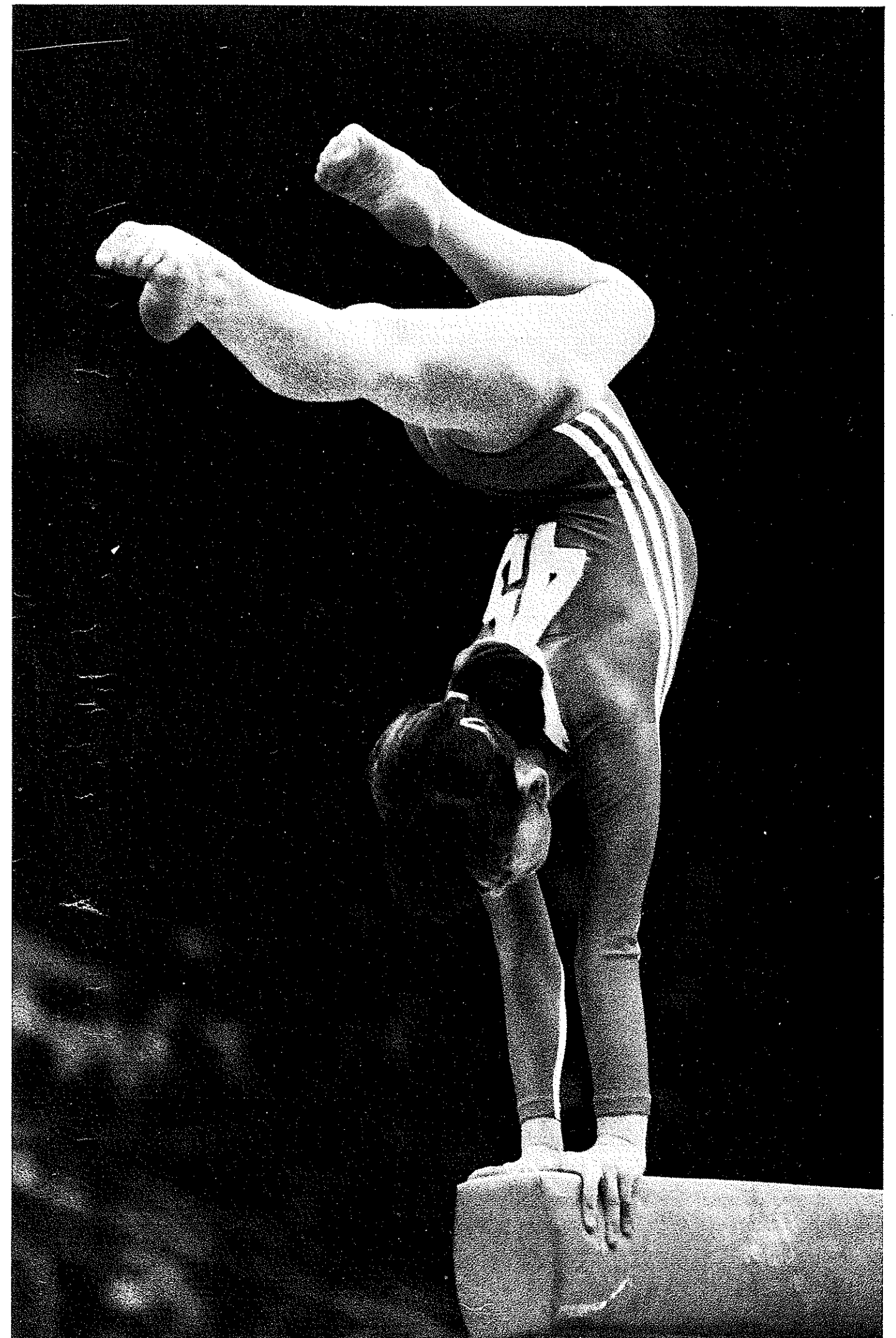
"Come on over! Sunday is our day for receiving visitors. There are a lot of people we like to have over.... Oh no, you won't be in the way". On noting the obvious sincerity of her invitation, all feeling of discomfort left me and I no longer felt that I was guilty of depriving the poor girl of her only free day.

And now there she was in front of me with her little brother and sister. Her mother tried to drag them away from Oksana explaining that the guests had not come to see them. But the last thing they wanted to do was relinquish their sister to them—"them" meaning the guests. Later Oksana told me that little Tatiana was constantly badgering her mother with the request:

"Take me to a coach, like you do Oksana".

Oksana Omelianchik's involvement with sport began at the age of five when she took up figure skating. Before even learning the basics of skating she was already trying her hand at ice dancing. The music forced her to spin, leap and Oksana was only too glad to surrender to the melody and rhythm of the music. But one day a coach and choreographer recommended switching Oksana over to gymnastics. Apparently she had seen something in the young girl that others had failed to notice. Was it her exceptional plasticity or movement? Her flexibility? Her musicality? But these are all important in figure skating as well. When I asked Oksana this she merely shrugged her shoulders. Beats me.... At any rate her mother followed the advice and brought the girl to Valentina Panchenko who later handed her over to Tatiana Perskaya.

Why does Oksana attend a boarding school? It makes for easier allotment of her time. Her daily schedule is the same as everyone else's: morning exercises, classes, gymnastics training, homework. What does she do for fun? She gave me a



surprised look. Isn't it obvious? Gymnastics, of course! And then an even more absurd question issued from my lips: what will you do once you finish with gymnastics? Her eyes showed no surprise; instead they took on a serious, adult expression. I'm not ever going to finish with gymnastics. True, athletes today stop competing at a young age, sometimes as soon as they've finished secondary school. But Oksana plans to enter an institute. One that will enable her to make a career out of the love of her life—an institute of physical education.

"Do you want to become a coach?"

"No, a choreographer".

Does that mean, I was tempted to ask, your main interest in gymnastics is floor exercise? But I managed to hold my tongue, the answer was all too obvious.

Meanwhile Oksana offered me coffee, candy and pastries.

"Aren't you wary of all these sweets? Aren't you afraid of putting on weight?"

"The competitions are a long way off", Oksana replied light-heartedly. "And during training there's no special diet required", she added as she reached for a piece of candy.

The warm cup of coffee felt good in my hands. I glanced over at Oksana's hands. It was hard to believe that such tiny hands could propel her so powerfully during the floor exercises, and that they could support her weight with such ease as she executed difficult turns on the parallel bars. But it's true.

"Oksana, what do you find most appealing about gymnastics? Training? Working on a new composition? Competing?"

"Everything", she exclaimed.

Gymnastics experts have said of Omelianchik that she is unusually serious about everything, that she is self-possessed and shows remarkable concentration. I have even heard say that during training she won't even smile if there's not a good reason. That is why she performs so consistently well. As I spoke with her she was not in the least sparing with her smiles.

Everything about gymnastics interests her. Training, putting together a new

routine. Does she choose her musical accompaniment herself? No, she has her choreographer decide for her.

"What if you don't like it?"

"That just doesn't happen. My choreographer knows me too well".

Does competing make her nervous? She does get butterflies just before going out on the floor but as soon as she begins her routine she's fine. She tries her best to perform like a true artist whose aim is to share his or her gifts with the audience. She enjoys demonstrating all the skills she has mastered and infusing the spectators with the vicarious thrill of being completely in command of the apparatuses, feeling the lightness of her body and the joy of being alive.

"But what if you fail, what if you flounder?"

"That's a part of gymnastics just like it's part of life. There are high points and low points, struggles and victories. It would be nice if everyone would realise this when watching me perform".

When I first started speaking with Oksana and noticed how often the expression in her eyes changed, how she smiled so artlessly, almost like a child would, I found myself unknowingly assuming the kind of tone an adult would use when speaking to a youngster. And suddenly I was thrown for a loop with this very unchildlike reply comparing gymnastics with life.

But life isn't just gymnastics for Oksana Omelianchik. She also loves to draw with pencils, pens and felt markers. Whenever she's lost in thought she finds herself drawing a tree under a rainy, autumn sky; a spring flower along a roadside; a red-breasted bullfinch in the snow. Her poems, too, often have as their subjects the changing seasons of the year.

What amazed Oksana most during her trip in South America were the flowering cacti. It was spring and the delicate flowers on the spiny, forbidding plants along the roadside left a strong impression on her. And she wanted nothing more but to preserve the memory of the cacti—in poetry, on paper, and simply in her mind's eye.

The Soviet gymnasts visited more than ten different cities in Argentina. Later they calculated that they had spent 60 hours in sports halls and 100 in buses. Most of the country was seen from the window of a bus, since their time was strictly regulated: public appearances and press conferences with the usual questions: How does it feel to be a champion? Is this your first time in Argentina? What kind of family do you come from? What do your parents do?

How did Oksana respond? That being a champion hasn't changed the way she relates to those around her or to gymnastics. That yes, this is her first time in Argentina. That she comes from a simple workers' family: her mother is a shop assistant and her father is a mechanic. And that she has a younger brother and sister.

The hours flew by. We spoke of her favourite poets: Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov and Shevchenko. She told me that fellow team-mates Natalia Yurchenko and Olga Mostepanova had helped her find "her own" poets.

As we spoke I tried not to let my admiration for the girl show. She was so sincere and frank, so gentle and sweet. This is what Oksana Omelianchik is like when she is not performing. And anyone who says that she is standoffish, too serious and close-mouthed most likely has seen her only in performance when she's got one thing alone on her mind: If I'm going to do it, I'm going to give it my all. And that's exactly what she does. But that's only one side of her.

Oksana saw me to the door. Beside her was a fluffy white lap-dog given to her as a birthday present by friends. And in those few seconds I saw a completely different Oksana, a typical fun-loving girl whose natural spontaneity so characteristic of that age group couldn't help but win you over.

It seemed to me that the lap-dog also felt something similar. That probably explained why it gazed at her with such genuinely canine devotion.

Valentina Pozhilova

PUBLICATIONS in PERSPECTIVE

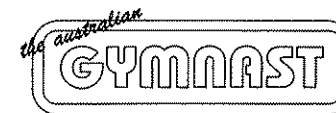


Changes in the direction of the AGF magazines reflect the evolution of gymnastics in Australia.

In commencing 1987, it is appropriate to evaluate where our regular gymnastic publications are, where they should be, and where they could be.

In the light of the New Year, and the many significant changes in the gymnastic 'market place' to date, it would be sound to ensure that our publications are developed with a clear profile of the prospective readership.

Defining who our readers are, allows us to provide the most appropriate product—which, in turn, should increase the number of readers.

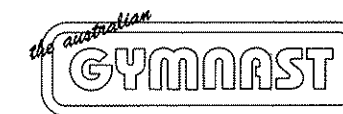


The Australian Gymnastic Federation's two publications are:

- "The Australian Gymnast" (AG), issued quarterly, and
- "Gymnastic Coach" (GC), issued bi-monthly.

A long-term and elusive resolution has been to ensure that publication timelines are met, and that issues are received regularly throughout the year; fulfilling these timelines is a primary objective.

"Defining who our readers are allows us to provide the most appropriate product—which in turn should increase the number of readers".



A parallel objective is to re-align the content of each magazine to its appropriate readership (as per namesakes).

Some changes will be already noticed with this first (AG) issue for 1987; further developments foreshadowed include the following:

"The Australian Gymnast" magazine is:

- to be 'softstyle';
- to include articles of interest to participants, clubs and the public;
- to include a fold-out poster in each issue (colour wherever possible);
- to include personal profiles of National and AIS gymnasts;
- to foster popular features of State information and/or Club reports;
- to foster 'pen-pals' nationally and overseas;
- to feature regular informative/fun cartoons;
- to feature various competitions for readers;
- to include snippets of information from readers, irrespective of age;
- to attract sponsors and advertisements;

Increasing the suitability of 'AG' should enable an increase in readership and subscriptions.



While participant numbers (registered) nationally total about 55,000, the current number of subscribers to 'AG' is 2,000—most of whom are the 1800 coaches registered with the AGCA.

It is in gymnastics' best interest that 'AG' is both utilised and marketed. To assist this endeavour:

- magazine style and content are being modified;
- subscription cards have been developed and made available in every issue, and in bulk upon request from the National Office;
- contributions from one and all, are not only welcome, but vital;
- feedback is, as always, most appreciated.

Ultimately, anyone should be able to walk into their local newsagent and find 'AG' on the racks.

Our magazine will get there with our combined efforts.

by Georges McKail

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Children in Gymnastics Seminar

The Australian Gymnastic Federation has been granted funds under the auspices of the IOC Solidarity Commission to conduct a "Children in Gymnastics" Seminar in Melbourne from May 1-3, 1987.

The Seminar will bring together key personnel from within Australia, Oceania and South East Asia to examine issues related to gymnastics for children.

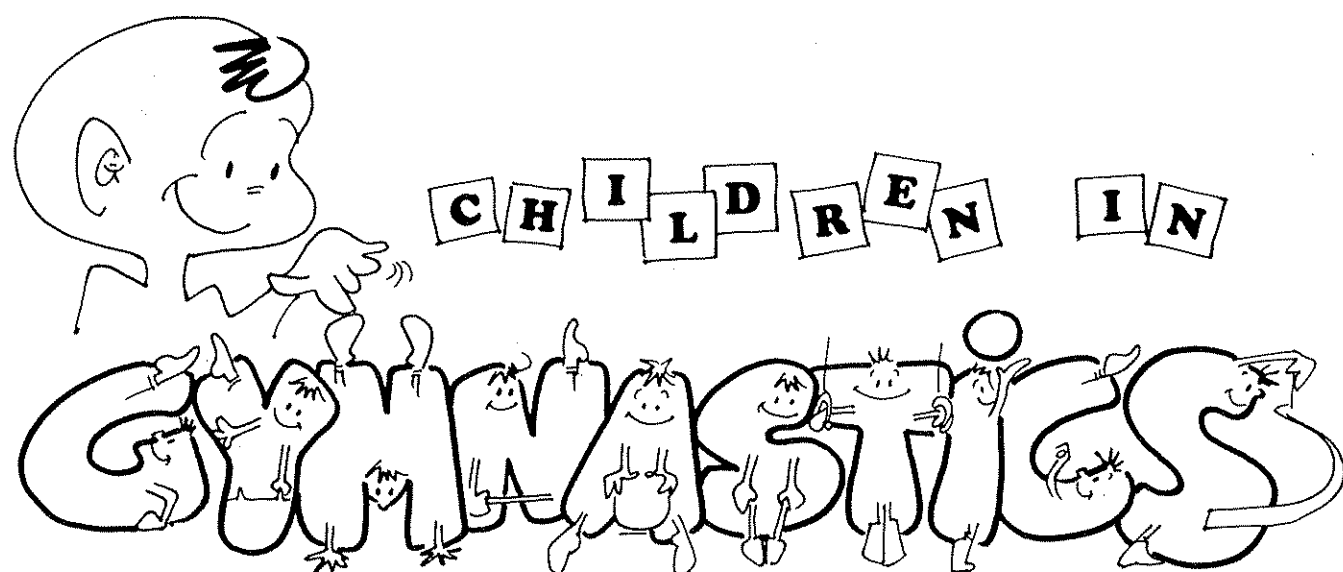
The two major aims of the Seminar are to promote an awareness of the role of junior development in gymnastics, and to assist in understanding the importance of a broad based junior development program for the long term success of gymnastics. Emphasis will be placed on the recreational and non-competitive aspects of junior gymnastics.

Mr Keith Russell, the well respected practitioner in the fields of recreational

and competitive gymnastics, has been invited to be the main speaker at the seminar.

Mr Ian Robertson, who has written extensively on issues pertaining to children in sport, will also be a speaker at the seminar.

Two delegates from each State Gymnastic Association will be invited to participate in the Seminar. Copies of the Seminar proceedings will be made available to the gymnastic community by June 1987.



Women's National Levels Competition

TASMANIA TO HOST THE FIRST WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEVELS COMPETITION

Launceston is the city and the Velodrome is the venue for the first Women's National Levels Competition.

Approximately 140 competitors spanning three levels (8, 9 & 10) will be vying for team plus individual placings in this Optional only event.



Also included in this program will be competitors from New Zealand.

The dates of the competition are the 17-20 June, 1987.

We are delighted to see this initiative which permits more gymnasts to experience the thrill of National Competition and which fosters the enjoyment of meeting fellow gymnasts.



AIS Rhythmic Coach, Ileana Vogelaar, brings new European trends to NTCP and RNSF National Squad Clinic.

RSG National Training Squad Clinic

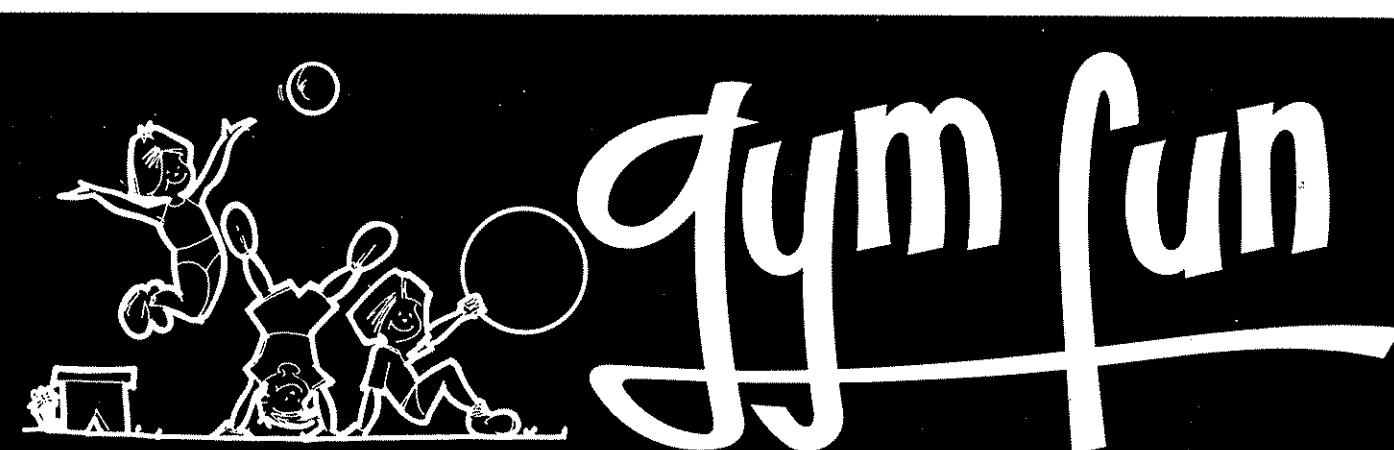
The opportunity to start a new year with information on the latest trends in Europe started the 1987 program for the Rhythmic National Squad gymnasts on a high note. Coaches and gymnasts were pleased with the result of the January Clinic which emphasised choreography of routines, physical development and new moves.

Observed and assisted by their personal coaches, gymnasts were ensured that the benefits gained would be continued throughout 1987. Having the Clinic at the AIS allowed the use of the "sports science" expertise, particularly in relation

to physical development and nutrition. Videos from the most recent European competitions were used to stimulate creativity and demonstrate excellent technique.

In the evening, the coaches discussed the trends and issues in rhythmic gymnastics in relationship to the rhythmic component of our national development plan.

As a result of this year's success, it was strongly recommended that a National Squad training camp be held every January at the AIS.



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NATIONAL SQUAD MEMBER PROFILE

MARK BIRD

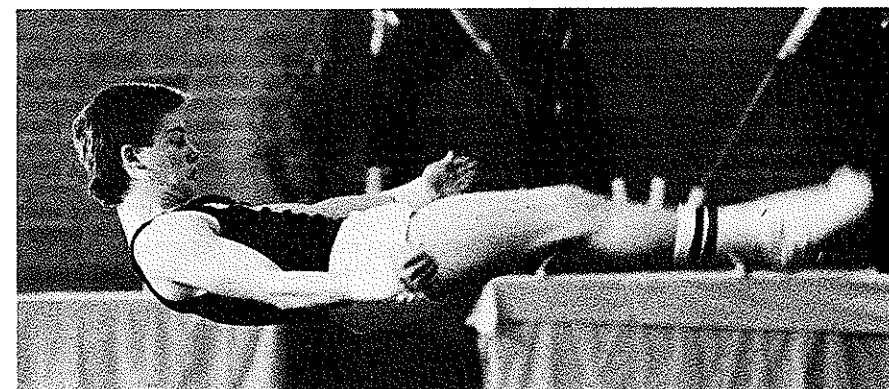


During his relatively short time at the Institute, Mark has been fortunate to travel extensively including the 1985 Tour of Great Britain, and participation in the Junior European Clinic prior to the Junior European Championships in 1986.

More recently, Mark was successful in the U/16 Australia vs Great Britain Invitational held at the AIS. Following that he completed a tour of the United States of America as a member of the Men's Development Team which included a training camp at the United States Olympic Training Centre at Colorado Springs. In fact during that tour Mark achieved a 9.6 on Parallel Bars in the USA Gold Cup, their major junior men's event. John Curtin, Manager/Coach of that team said that "Mark considers PB's his weakest apparatus; however, his performance on that occasion was beautiful to watch". "Mark is one of our best prospects for the future".

With his commitment and past international experience, Mark should soon attain his position in the National Team.

Photo: Ross Gould



Mark Bird commenced his gymnastic career at the geographically isolated Mt. Isa Club in the north of Queensland. At the age of 14 he was awarded a scholarship at the Australian Institute of Sport.

After two years of training at the AIS under coach Paul Szyjko, Mark is now preparing to move up to the National Team under the guidance of Warwick Forbes.

In 1985, Mark was the Men's Level 9 National Champion and in 1986, in his first year competing at

Level 10 at the National Championships he finished 6th in the individual all-around.

Mark is currently completing Year 11 at Ginninderra College and has ambitions to move into the world of photography following his education and in conjunction with his gymnastic career.

Mark lives in the Halls of Residence at the Institute and is known to enjoy the lifestyle and the opportunity for interaction with other sports people resident there.

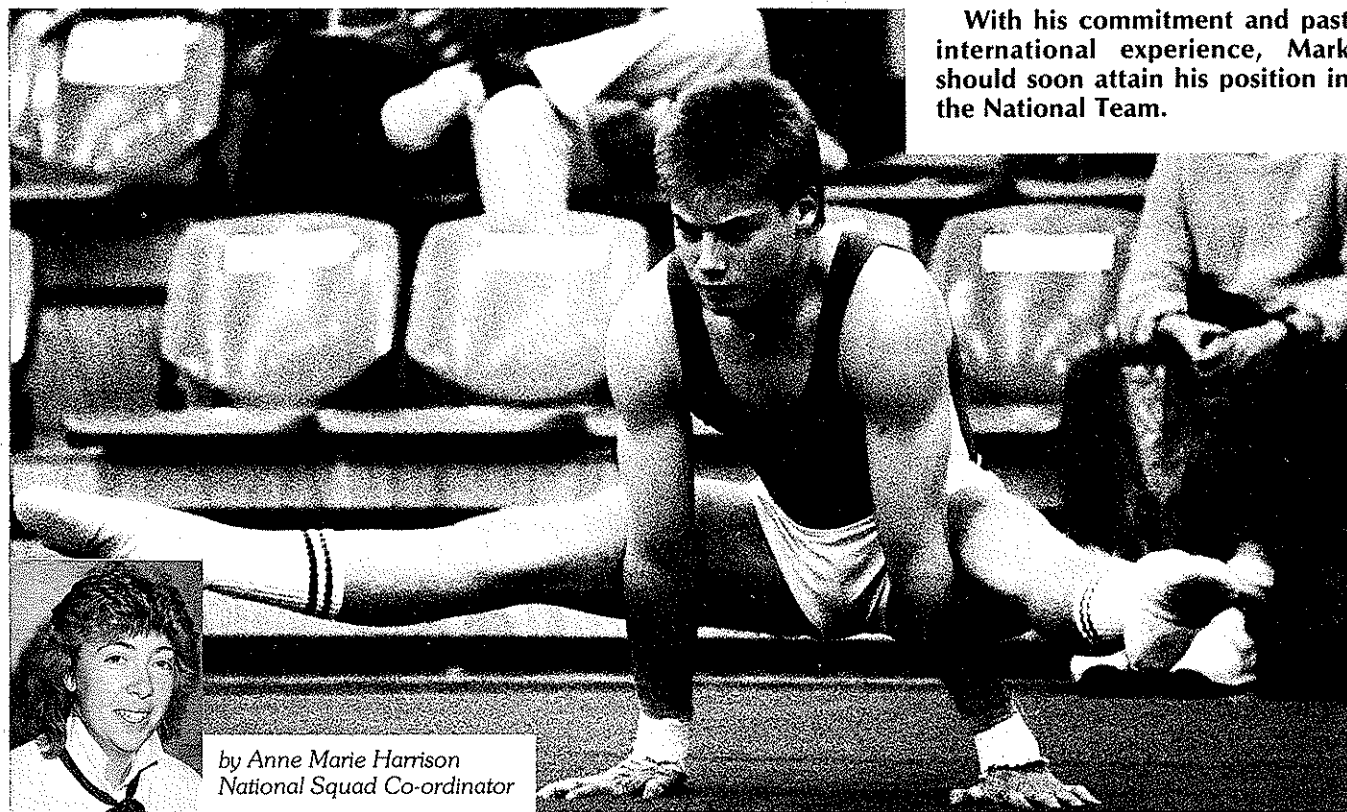


Photo: Ross Gould

by Anne Marie Harrison
National Squad Co-ordinator

NATIONAL SQUAD GYMNASTS WIN ANZ SCHOLARSHIP

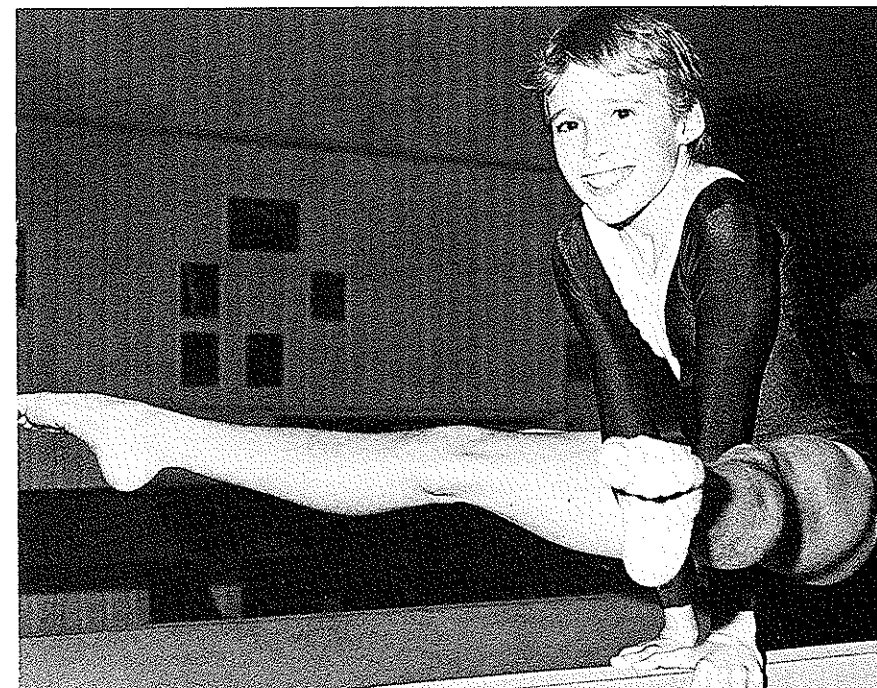
Following the successful ANZ Gymnastic Clinic held in Melbourne in December, 1986, three members of the WAG Junior National Squad, Sasha Hartnett (WA), Sallyanne Hargrave (WA) and Lisa Read (NSW) were awarded scholarships of \$2000 each.

Sasha, who is coached by Liz Chetkovich, is in her fifth year of gymnastics and has competed at the 1985 National Clubs competition, finishing 7th, and the 1986 Junior National Championships, placing 8th. Sasha was also selected to represent Australia at the Canadian Classic in 1986 winning a Bronze medal on floor.

Sallyanne Hargrave, also a member of the Chetkovich Academy of Gymnastics, commenced her career in 1981. Sallyanne was placed 2nd in the 1984 National Clubs competition and was reserve for the Canadian Classic.

Lisa Read, 1986 Junior National Champion and "Junior Gymnast of the Year", is a member of the North Western YMCA and has been coached by Anne Scott for 6 years. At the age of 10, Lisa was the youngest gymnast to compete at the National Clubs competition; the talent identified at that young age has taken her onto representing Australia at the Taipei Invitational in 1985 and Canadian Classic 1986 where she finished 10th overall.

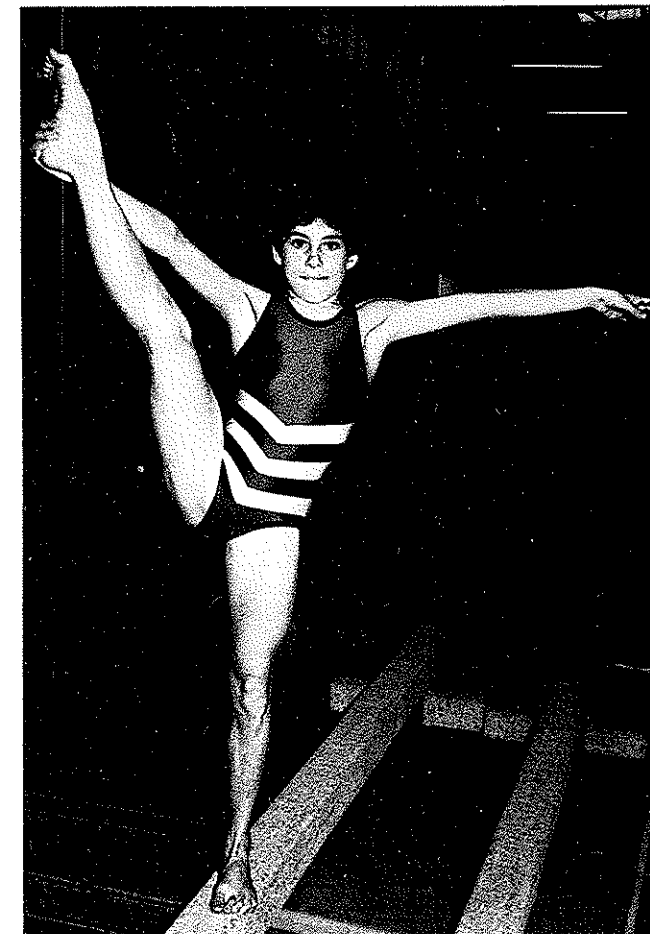
With the assistance of the ANZ Scholarships, these gymnasts will be able to continue their development in 1987 through to the international level. We look forward with anticipation to monitoring Sasha, Sallyanne and Lisa's progress.



Sallyanne Hargrave



Lisa Read



Sasha Hartnett



Dual Purpose Clinic Combines Successfully

Peter Sharpe
Men's National Coaching Co-ordinator

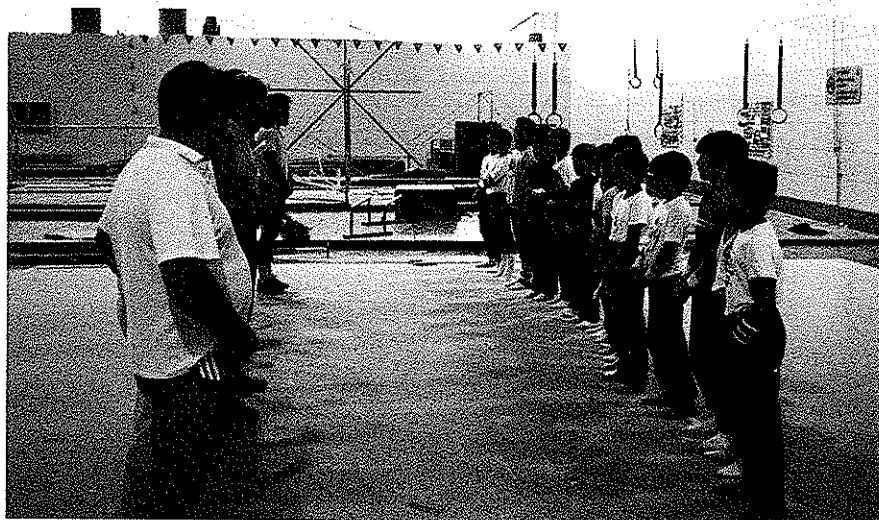
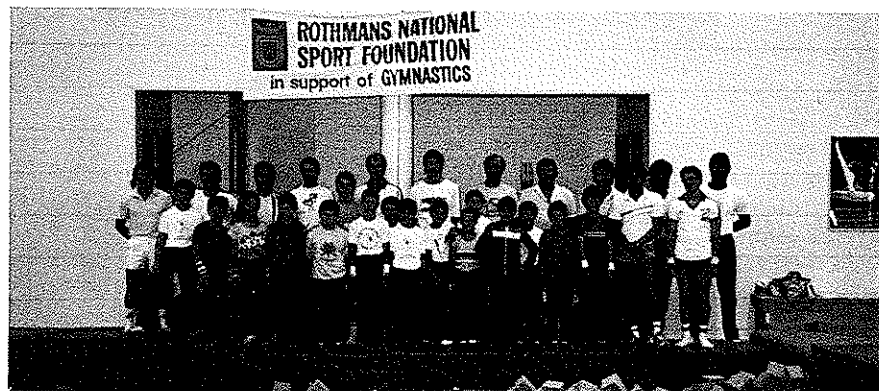
The men's junior national clinic combined the group of boys preparing for the USA tour and an U/12 year group working on a specific program. The USA tour group were maintaining fitness for competition whilst the U/12 group concentrated on a systematic progression of gymnastic basics. The principle objective was to acquire an understanding of the requirements placed on a young gymnast in the pursuit of excellence.

The coaches of the USA group worked with their gymnasts and 14 coaches worked with the U/12 squad; a ratio approaching 1:1. The activities included:

- 2 competitions for the USA tour boys
- testing on profile shapes; flexibility and strength
- gymnastic dance sessions with Stephanie Burridge—AIS dance teacher
- lectures/workshops on nutrition, psychology and injury prevention
- tour of Canberra and the War Memorial
- Christmas banquet and visit by Father Christmas!

Many people contributed to make this clinic a success, including:

- Although the 1986/87 clinic received no funding under the N.T.C.P., the AIS non-coaching staff continued to be extremely obliging and helpful. I would especially like to thank the staff of the resource centre, who are always friendly and helpful.
- AIS coaches John Curtin, Paul Szyjko and, for his preparation as well as personal assistance, Warwick Forbes.
- Stephanie Burridge, AIS gymnastic dance teacher, who continues to be an inspiration.
- Ken Williamson, Men's Technical Director, for his administrative and personal assistance at all times.
- National Regional coaches Ken Mooney, Fred Burke and John Dorrington, this time ably assisted by Ken Armanasco and Lindsay running the clinic, input to its preparation, and ideas for improvement, are invaluable.
- Rothmans National Sport Foundation's continued assistance makes it possible for gymnasts to receive exposure to the best coaches possible.
- Finally, as always, I must thank all the gymnasts and coaches who attended the clinic and whose enthusiasm and support make it all worthwhile. I look forward to next year's program.



Photos: John Dorrington

"What a great way to eat breakfast...."

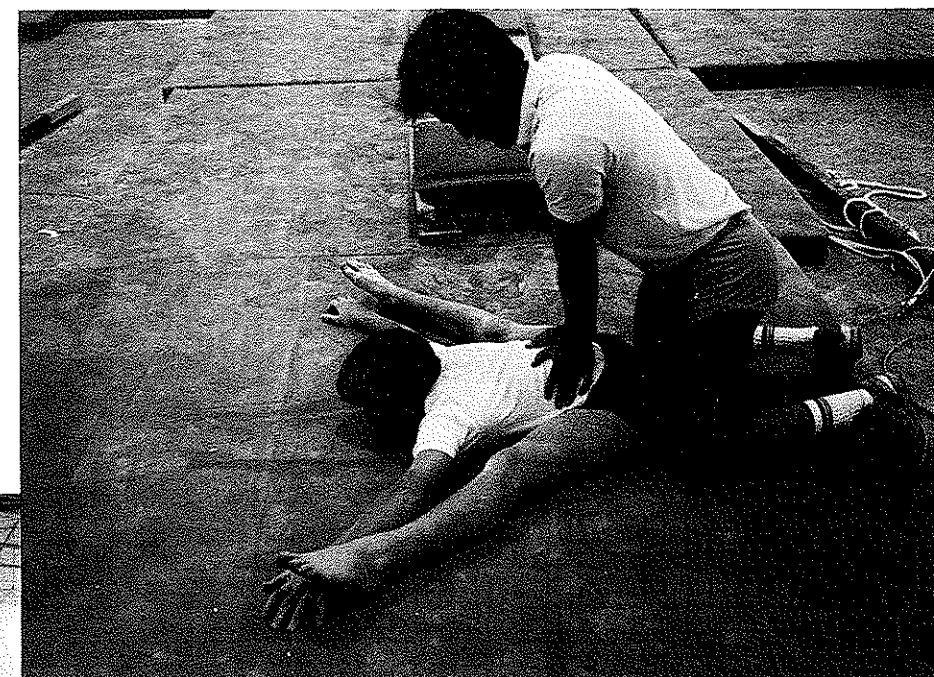
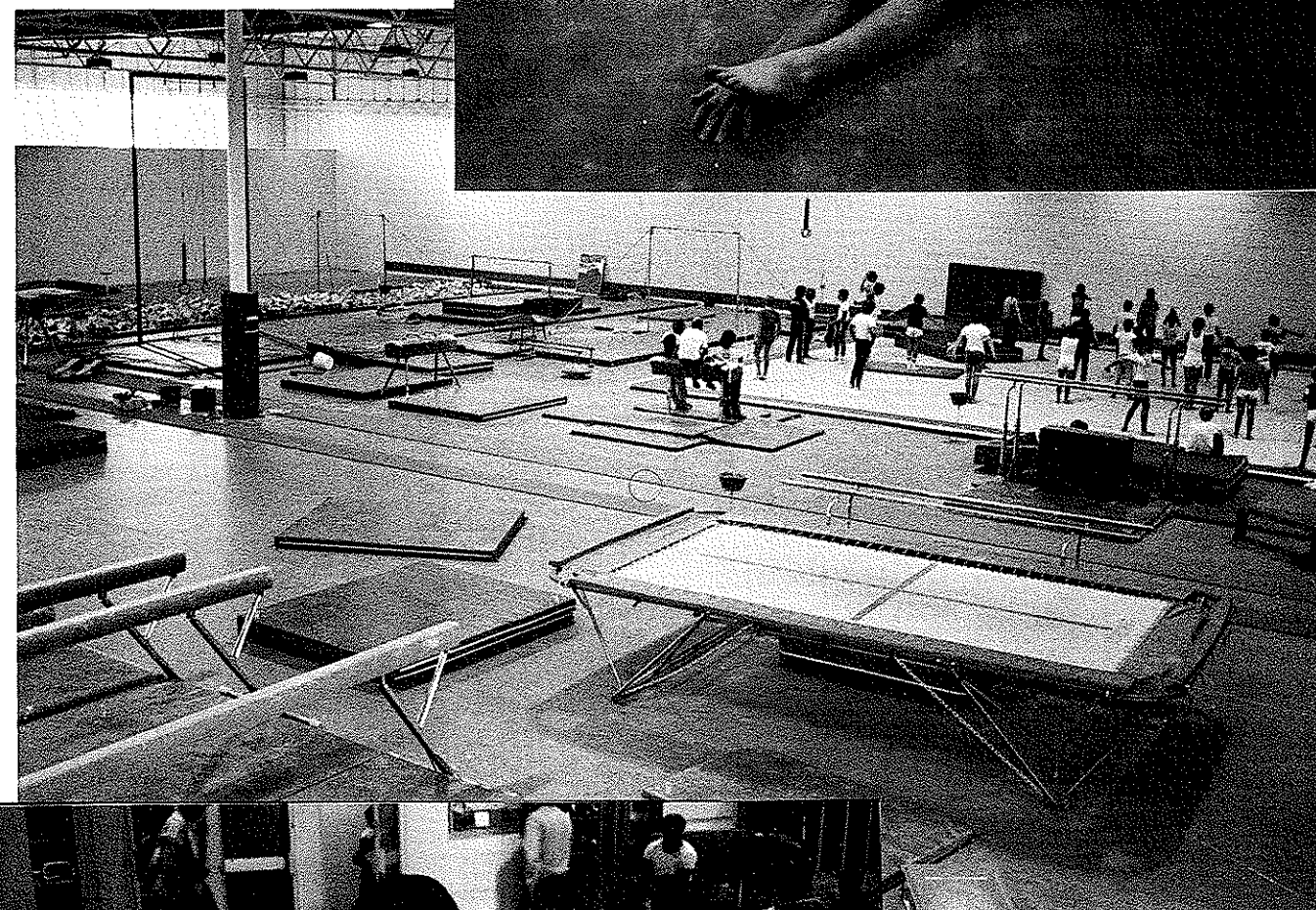


Photo: John Dorrington



AIS Training Hall

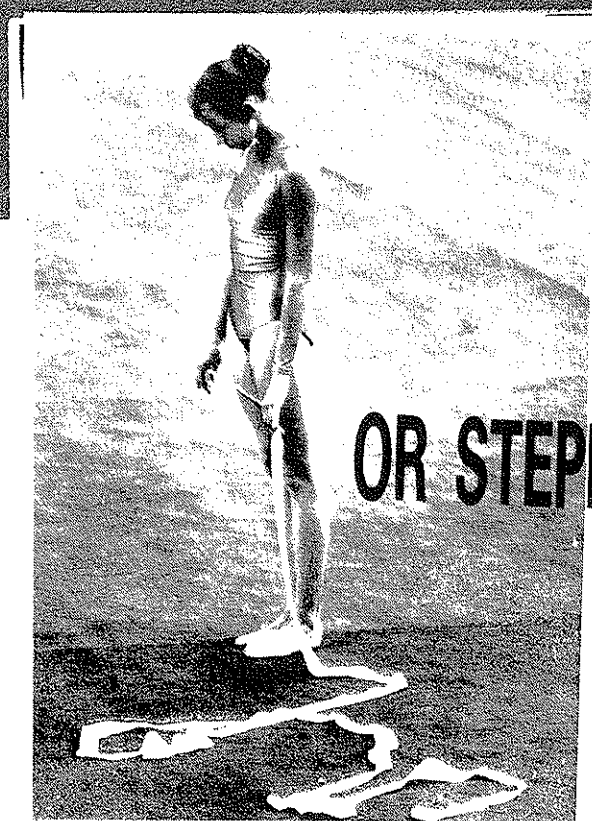


Photo: John Dorrington

"....look ma, no hands"



YURI TITOV
President of the International
Gymnastics Federation (FIG)
talks here with Sergei Kruzhkov,
correspondent for *Sport in the USSR*



DAUGHTER OR STEPDAUGHTER?

Q: Your federation is one of the world's oldest international sports associations. It has been in existence for over 100 years now. But rhythmic gymnastics is something new. World championships in this event have been held since 1963 and it became part of the Olympics' programme in 1984. How is this event looked upon by the gymnastics world? Is it a daughter or a stepdaughter of the FIG?

A: The simplest answer to your question would be to say that the FIG considers rhythmic gymnastics to be the younger of its daughters but loves both of them equally. But that is not quite the case. Rhythmic gymnastics causes a lot more worries than traditional gymnastics. Owing to the event's recent appearance and the subjective nature of judging its performers, we are experiencing difficulties training qualified referees. Unnecessary and often

unwholesome disputes arise due to the absence of clear-cut aesthetic criteria. I should also add that because rhythmic gymnastics is not as well known, or rather popular, as traditional gymnastics it is given less attention by the press and television.

Q: It should probably also be mentioned here that representatives of traditional gymnastics vie for 14 sets of medals at the Olympics whereas rhythmic gymnasts compete for one.

A: Yes, in this respect rhythmic gymnastics has been shortchanged. However, we are doing our best to see that Olympic medals in this event be awarded not only in overall scoring but also for winning in the individual events as is the case at the world championships. Especially since our efforts are very much in keeping with the

policy of the International Olympic Committee which seeks to enlarge the women's programme. But it's not going to happen overnight. We still need some time. After all, rhythmic gymnastics is still in its infancy.

Q: What direction do you see it taking?

A: There has been disagreement for some time now as to the course of its development. Dance and acrobatics have undoubtedly influenced rhythmic gymnastics, it has chosen its own distinctive path and for that reason has become an original sport in its own right.

It seems to me that rhythmic gymnastics is now becoming more like its older sister from which it has borrowed quite a few elements. If you watch the top gymnasts perform you can see semi-acrobatic elements ("pure" acrobatics is prohibited in

rhythmic gymnastics), movements taken from floor exercises. As far as technique goes, they handle the various objects almost (and here I want to stress the "almost") as if they were performing circus stunts. And all this in harmony with music. Such a performance creates a strikingly original and artistic impression.

Q: How do you explain the fact that in recent years Soviet women gymnasts, the innovators, so to speak, of this new sport, have yielded their leading positions to their Bulgarian rivals. At the recent World Cup competitions in Tokyo all the top prizes—in overall scoring as well as in the individual exercises—were won by Bulgarians Lili Ignatova and Bianka Panova while Soviet gymnasts, Tatiana Druchinina, Galina Beloglazova and Marina Lobach had to content themselves with being runners-up.

A: I think it's because Bulgarian coaches were quicker to pick up on the latest trends in rhythmic gymnastics. Its roots here in the Soviet Union are largely classical, choreographically speaking. Soviet coaches believed this to be the only viable approach. The Bulgarians opted instead to modernise the movements, broaden the scope of their choreography and enhance the rhythmical elements involved. Most importantly, they paid special attention to physical and technical training. It was their superb physical shape that enabled them to produce such technically impressive feats with the objects and heighten the intensity of the exercises. They also added more variety in the way of style. We always thought, for example, that style had to be lyrical, even a little sentimental. But there's no reason it can't be, say, demonic, mischievous or foxy. The Bulgarians practically succeeded in combining artistry with gymnastics. However, now the Soviet gymnasts are also making use of this approach and are rapidly gaining on their rivals. I think we'll soon be seeing some Soviet victories.

Q: Don't you feel that the average age of rhythmic gymnasts has become too young? A few years back we saw mostly mature women performing. What impressed us

was their femininity, their graceful movements. Now, however, the age of the performer often cancels out such an impression. How feminine an impression can a 14 or 15 year-old-girl create? Perhaps it would be a good idea to hold separate competitions—one for gymnasts under 18 and another for adults?

A: I don't agree with you and I'll tell you why. A girl begins to develop as a gymnast when she is 11 or 12. At this age she can easily assimilate and master very complicated movements. A little later she reaches the age of physical strength and by 15 or 16 her formation as an athlete is pretty much over. After that she adds very little to her technical arsenal. Also, the pace of development in sport in general—and I include here rhythmic gymnasts—is such that within two years many things become dated. If you look at this in terms of age gradation then young gymnasts will always be overtaking experienced ones. Their programmes will be much more interesting, complicated and versatile. And then who'll go to watch the so-called adult gymnasts? Since the latter will be nothing more than dance movements.

Q: Might it be a good idea to judge gymnasts on two counts: one, for technique and the other for artistry, as is the case in figure skating?

A: Yes, this would make sense. But the system has to be tried out and proved workable. We conducted an experiment at the World Cup: marks were given by two judging panels and then added up. We will continue working in this direction.

Q: You mentioned that rhythmic gymnastics was less popular than traditional gymnastics. This seems strange to me since traditional gymnastics is far more complicated and girls have a much easier time mastering elements of rhythmic gymnastics.

A: That's not quite right. Rhythmic gymnastics, as I have said, is developing along more athletic lines and becoming more technically demanding with time. Moreover, it has its own specific requirements: a rhythmic gymnast must not only be agile, bold and strong but also graceful and physically appealing.

Nevertheless I'm convinced that its popularity will grow and that this type of gymnastics will catch on in new countries and regions. The fact that an increasingly large showing of gymnasts from different countries is being seen at major international competitions already attests to this. At the first world championships only 10 countries were represented while at the last one in 1985 the number was up to 35. I feel certain that rhythmic gymnastics has a very bright future.

did you know....

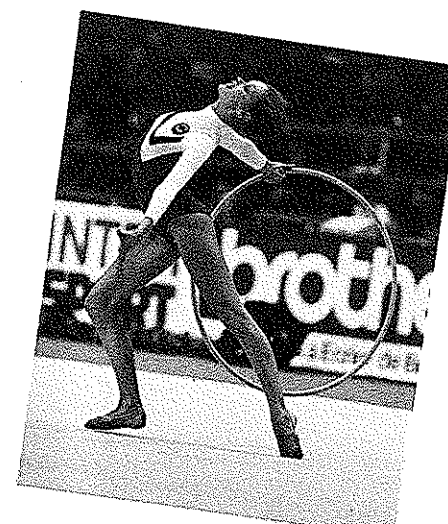


Congratulations to Rhythmic National Squad Member, Gail Duquemin on her recent engagement to Neil Price. We wish both Gail and Neil a happy and long future together.

The beautiful Galina Beloglazova, a true champion in the sport of rhythmic gymnastics was wed in July of 1986 to Heino Enden, a former world basketball champion from the Central Army Club.

Only two months following her marriage, Galina placed third at the Rhythmic European Championships—Florence, September, 1986; scoring 39.875, only 0.10 behind equal gold medalists.

Galina is pictured alongside during the 1983 World Championships.



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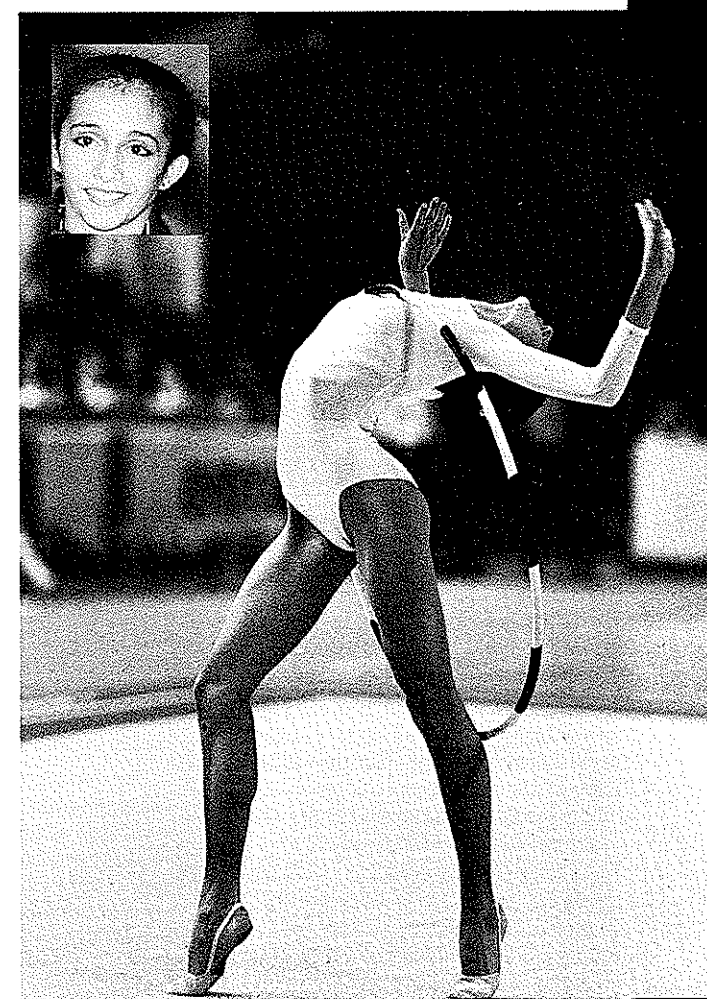
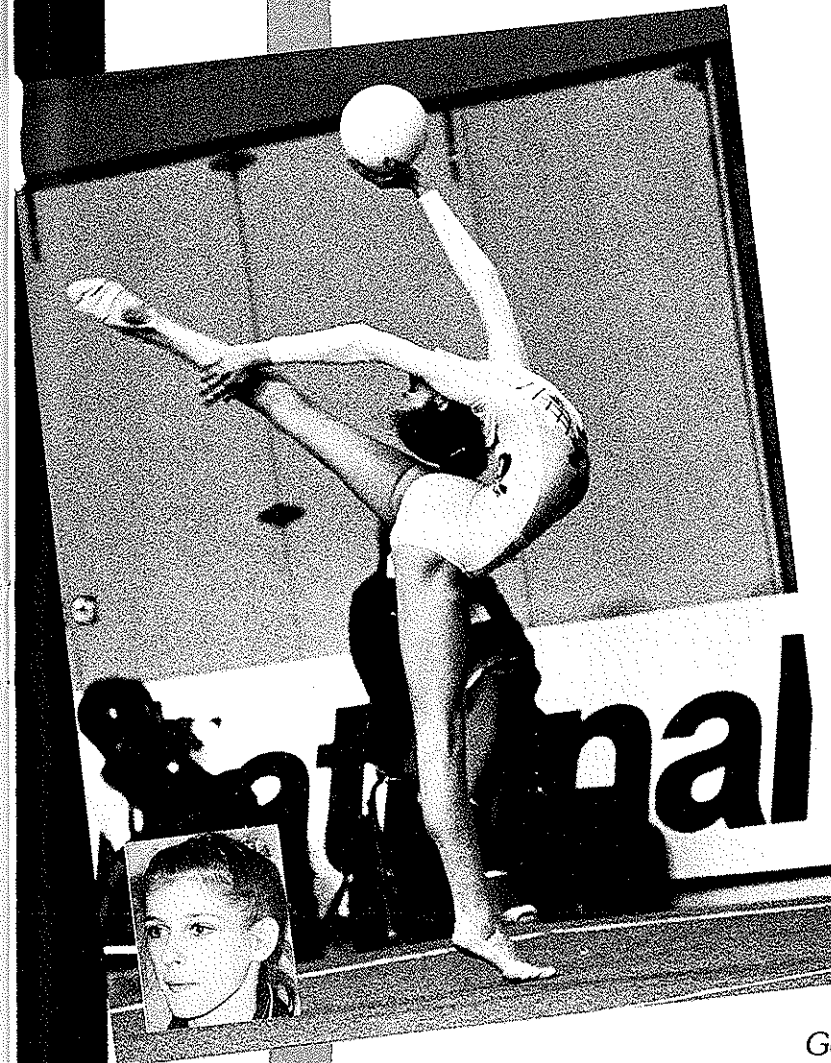
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Gold Medal shared by two Bulgarians at the Rhythmic European Championships in Florence, September, 1986.

Bianca Panova and Lilia Ignatova shared first place with scores of 39.975.

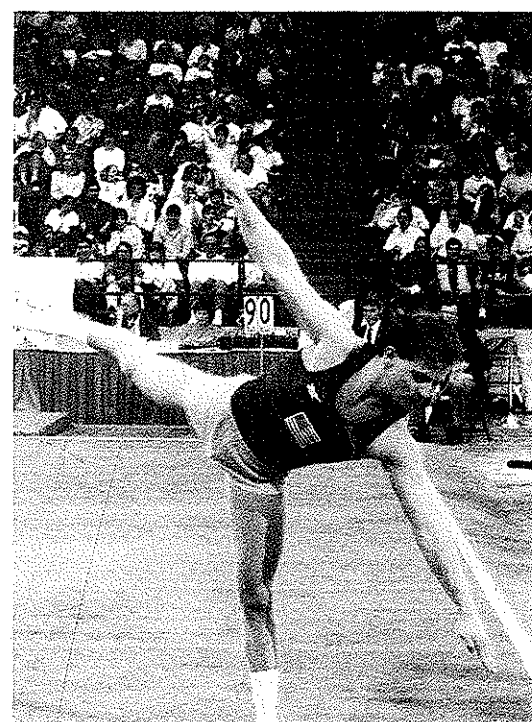


1987 McDonald's American Cup

March 7-8, 1987
Fairfax, Virginia, USA

Copyright 1987 by Mandi Shields

L: Kristie Phillips, USA, 1st AA
R: Brian Ginsberg, USA, 1st AA



Photos: Suzanne Shields

With the Olympic Games only eighteen months away, this year's McDonald's American Cup was used by many nations as a testing ground for their younger athletes, who will hopefully make up the teams of 1988. From a few of the countries we saw familiar names, but for the most part they were newcomers. Tim Daggett (USA) sustained a neck and shoulder injury only a few weeks prior to the event and Brian Babcock hurt his knee in training two days before the competition, but Brian Ginsburg and Scott Johnson were prepared to get the Cup for the United States and Kristie Phillips was back to defend her title against team-mate and best friend Phoebe Mills and the Soviet Olga Strazheva, who was second overall at the Junior European Championships last year. The Soviets had sent a strong representative for the men also, with Vladimir Gogoladze, as had East Germany with Sylvio Kroll. It should prove a very interesting battle for the top spots.

The first day's objective was to place in the top eight overall, so as to qualify for the All-Around finals on Sunday and also to obtain the highest score on each event, as there would be one award per apparatus given following the competition.

Immediately the women set a standard for themselves much higher than that of the men's when their top four scores in vault topped the highest of the men's for the entire day! Strazheva was fantastic here, reaching a near perfect 9.975 for her round off twisting layout. Both were as solid as possible and she gained tremendous height. The Retton look-a-like Hope Spivey had mastered the same vault but could not better Olga's score, thus allowing the 14 year old Ukrainian to win the event.

The men's event got underway and two of the top names proved right away that a name doesn't always bring the high scores. For Scott Johnson, though, his floor 9.45 would prove inconsistent, but for the 21 year old East German Kroll, it was only the beginning of a competition which he would surely just as soon like to forget about. He opened with a mediocre floor exercise, which earned only 9.30, and could do no better than 9.25 on pommels.

Ginsberg, on the other hand, began strongly by coming first in the first two events. He ended with a cowboied double on floor, just edging Gogoladze 9.65 to 9.60.

On pommel horse no one was more surprised at the outcome than the winners themselves. On the event which they call the most nerve-racking and definitely not their best, Brian Ginsberg and Scott Johnson had said before the meet that all they wanted to do was "get through without falling", and when they won they were "pretty excited".

The American girls were not faring as well against the competition though. Strazheva took another first place on the bars with a superb exercise containing a Voronin hop to immediate straddle somi on high bar. She took a 9.85 to Phillips' 9.70, but Karolyi would not compliment the competition until his girls had beaten her.

On rings it was Johnson once again, but the surprise here was that Alfonso of Spain tied for second with Ginsberg and Gogoladze.

The Soviet finally had his chance for first place when he scored a 9.60 on vault, but had to share with Huang Wofu (CHN), the 23 year old physical education

major, who was the national champion on this event in 1986.

Strazheva was fantastic on the balance beam, as she took her third event. She mounts with a round off onto the beam and immediately goes into a back hand-spring and two back layouts without the slightest wobble. Next she does a one armed handstand directly into a most original Healy twist to lay on the beam. Ending with a double tuck, it was quite evident that she deserved a 9.90. Jennifer Sey, current U.S. Senior National Champion, was strong here also for 9.725 following a straddle planch mount and solid tumbling. Mills and the Romanian pixi, Augustine Badea, tied in third, but Phoebe was not happy after a few bobbles. Augustine, on the other hand, was forever smiling and worked well from her head-spring mount to her three consecutive back handsprings to double tuck.

The parallel bars saw a surprise win by Tony Pineda of Mexico, who scored a fantastic 9.80, to edge Gogoladze by .05. Johnson and Ginsberg were third and sixth here with Canadian Phillipe Chart-rand in fourth.

Going into the last rotation, there were a few gymnasts who really had to go all out and get good scores in order to make it to the finals. Sylvio Kroll was in tenth place but got the 9.70 he needed to pull up two spots and qualify in eighth position. On the high bar he was tied with Rodrigues; Gogoladze was first with 9.80 for his two reverse hefts and Gienger to a triple tuck dismount.

The girls on floor were worried about scores also, particularly the four American participants, as only two of them would be allowed to compete the following day and

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Phillips was second at 29.25, Sey fourth with 28.975, Mills fifth with 28.825 and Spivey sixth at 28.775. Which two would make it would be close. Jennifer and Hope, although they performed relatively well for 9.55 and 9.20 could not make the finals: Hope would have been out of the competition anyway, after injuring her ankle on her last tumbling pass. Even so, Phoebe needed a score of 9.70 to overtake Jennifer. And, her high energy exercise with an opening full-in pike, a double tuck and a double pike to end, did more than qualify her—the 9.875 earned her first place on floor above her best friend. Two of the crowds favourites were third at 9.775—Badea and Henrietta Onodi (HUN). Both gave adorable performances; Augustina's enhanced greatly by its playfulness and smiling and Henrietta's because of the fantastic height she gets tumbling, when one considers that the 13 year old is only 4' tall!!!

The U.S. men were determined to regain the Cup, which they had surrendered to the Soviet Union last year

The first day over, the little girls (none past their first year of high school except Wilhelm (FRG) and Morio (JPN) and the men, were prepared for the battle for the American Cup.

The U.S. men were determined to regain the Cup, which they had surrendered to the Soviet Union last year, and Ginsberg and Johnson began immediately to accomplish this task. Brian began the "meet of his life" with a 9.80 on floor following a **stuck** double layout and a generally fantastic exercise. Gogoladze trailed by .20 here, tied with Johnson.

The American men came away with two more surprising pommel horse routines. Brian has an interesting move in which, from a front support, he straddles his legs and snaps them through his arms to regasp the pommels. Gogoladze earned 9.60 on an exercise which has been slightly better the previous day, but



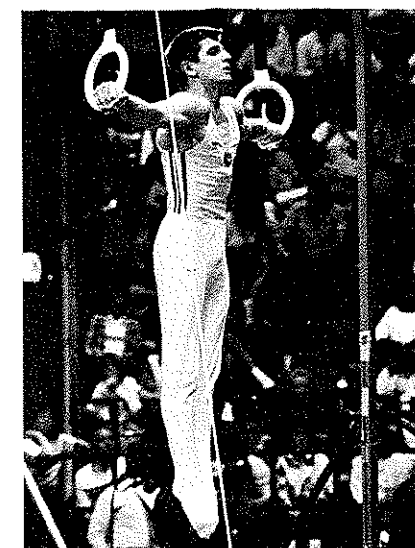
Olga Strazheva, URS, 2nd AA

his double twisting handstand dismount was very nice.

The finishing order after the third rotation had not changed among the top three men, with the Americans first and Vladimir third. On vault, Johnson and Gogoladze tied with Sylvio Kroll at 9.55, as the East German showed that he is still capable of decent performances.

Into the fifth rotation, the top three standings failed to change, but the Americans gave unconvincing exercises on parallel bars to come below 9.70. Gogoladze thus inched closer to second place with a 9.75 after a clean exercise with a nice Healy twirl with legs apart. The Mexican Pineda achieved the same high score and Kroll was at 9.70, in the event on which he is reigning World Champion.

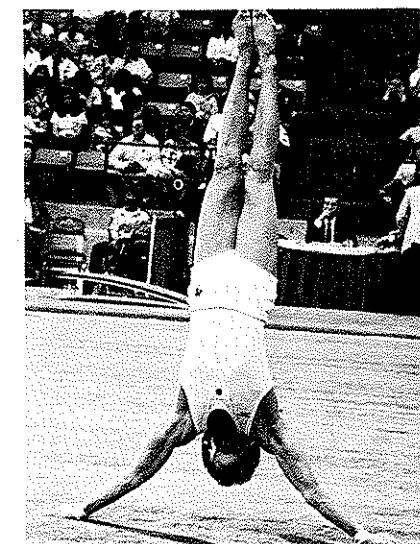
Leading to the last event, the standings of first to third had remained unchanged since the start of the day. Scott was first



Vladimir Gogoladze, URS, 2nd AA

Meanwhile, the women too were vying for the Title, and their's also was a fight to the finish between the two Americans and the Soviet

up on high bar and had a fantastic exercise until his triple back dismount. He hadn't competed the move since he crashed on it in the Olympics, and admits that is usually doesn't go so well. So, when he was flying so high, he said he forgot about the landing, over-rotating and having to do a roll on the mat. Unfortunately with this he had only 9.30 and he found himself in third place. Gogoladze was fantastic, as he had been the previous day, and took the same 9.80 score with the very dismount Johnson had missed. The exercise was so good, in fact, that it warranted a kiss on the lips from his coach. Brian Ginsberg was the last performer on high bar and needed a 9.60 to win the championship, when in the preliminaries he had had only 9.10. He mounted, performed—one



Photos: Suzanne Shields

Kazuki Tsuda, JPN, 5th AA

armed full twisting giant, a one armed Gienger (a little too close to the bar), another Gienger and finished with a triple back. With that he earned 9.75 and the title of American Cup Champion.

Meanwhile, the women too were vying for the Title, and their's also was a fight to the finish between the two Americans and the Soviet. Only this time Strazheva took the lead. She and Mills received 9.90's for the same vault, with Kristie, touching her hands to the mat on the second of her vaults, placing third. Another fantastic bar routine was shown by Olga, this time doing better than yesterday, for 9.90. Phoebe also improved over the previous day by staying on the equipment this time and earning, with her high reverse hecht and double pike dismount, a 9.825. The tiny Hungarian, Onodi, tied with Phillips and moved to 4th. She is one of the few girls able to do a straight giant swing on the low bar!

Kristie finally made her move towards reaching the top by scoring 9.90 on beam to Olga's 9.75. Kristine showed solid work all around, while the Soviet girl watered

down her routine from the previous day and committed several small errors.

Into the their final exercise there was little question as to who would take home the medals, but as to who should take the Cup was another matter. The reigning champion drew first, and was very upset with her score. She danced for the crowd, as she had the previous day, and they cheered her on through her full-in pike (which she landed a little too low), her tucked double back and pike double back—a much more difficult exercise than last year. Badea followed her with a 9.80 for the same little girl exercise of the first day. Olga was up next and needed a 9.725 to tie with Kristie. Today she made her first pass of handspring, front hand-

INTERNATIONAL MIXED PAIRS — INDIVIDUAL SCORES

Name	Cty	Vault Floor	U.Bars P.Horse	Beam Rings	Floor Vault	P.Bars	H.Bar	Total	Place
Phoebe Mills	USA	9.900	9.900	0.000	9.900	0.000	0.000	29.700	
Scott Johnson	USA	0.000	0.000	0.800	0.000	0.800	9.700	29.300	
Total		9.900	9.900	0.800	9.900	0.800	9.700	59.000	1
Olga Strazheva	URS	9.900	9.900	0.000	9.600	0.000	0.000	29.400	
Vladimir Gogoladze	URS	0.000	0.000	0.700	0.000	0.350	0.800	28.850	
Total		9.900	9.900	0.700	9.600	0.350	0.800	58.250	2
Augustina Badea	ROM	0.000	9.700	0.800	9.700	0.000	0.000	29.200	
Marian Rizan	ROM	0.000	9.600	0.300	0.000	0.200	0.000	28.100	
Total		0.000	19.300	1.100	9.700	0.200	0.000	57.300	3
Kristie Phillips	USA	9.850	0.000	0.000	9.700	0.000	0.000	19.550	
Brian Ginsberg	USA	9.700	0.000	0.650	0.000	0.000	0.000	19.350	
Total		19.550	0.000	0.650	9.700	0.000	0.000	38.900	4
Jiang Wei	CHN	9.700	9.150	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	18.850	
Huang Wofu	CHN	9.550	0.000	0.000	9.200	0.000	0.000	18.750	
Total		19.250	9.150	0.000	9.200	0.000	0.000	37.600	5
Jennifer Sey	USA	9.500	0.000	0.950	0.000	0.000	0.000	18.450	
Paul Torres-Menendez	CUB	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	9.250	9.600	18.850	
Total		9.500	0.000	0.950	0.000	9.250	9.600	37.300	6
Snejana Baeva	BUL	9.550	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	9.550	
Kalofer Hristozov	BUL	9.550	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	9.550	
Total		19.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	19.100	7
Anja Wilhelm	FRG	0.000	0.000	0.600	0.000	0.000	0.000	9.600	
Bernhard Simmelbauer	FRG	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	9.450	0.000	9.450	
Total		0.000	0.000	0.600	0.000	9.450	0.000	19.050	8

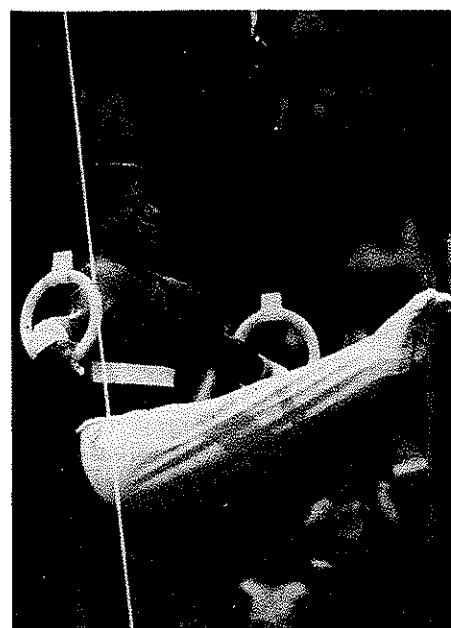
MEN'S FINALS — INDIVIDUAL SCORES

Name	Cty	Floor	P.Horse	Rings	Vault	P.Bars	H.Bar	Total	Place
Ginsberg	USA	9.80	9.75	9.80	9.40	9.65	9.75	58.15	1
Gogoladze	URS	9.60	9.60	9.70	9.55	9.75	9.80	58.00	2
Johnson	USA	9.60	9.75	9.80	9.55	9.60	9.30	57.60	3
Fajkus	HUN	9.50	9.55	9.55	9.50	9.20	9.70	57.00	4
Tsuda	JPN	9.15	9.55	9.60	9.50	9.60	9.50	56.90	5
Pineda	MEX	9.40	9.50	9.45	9.40	9.75	9.05	56.55	6
Zellweger	SUI	9.05	9.45	9.65	9.30	9.50	9.50	56.45	7
Kroll	GDR	9.35	8.50	9.50	9.55	9.70	9.20	55.80	8

WOMEN'S FINALS — INDIVIDUAL SCORES

Name	Cty	Vault	Bars	Beam	Floor	Total	Place
Kristie Phillips	USA	9.800	9.800	9.900	9.775	39.275	1
Olga Strazheva	URS	9.900	9.900	9.750	9.700	39.250	2
Phoebe Mills	USA	9.900	9.825	9.675	9.825	39.225	3
Maiko Morio	JPN	9.625	9.650	9.675	9.675	38.625	4
Augustina Badea	ROM	9.750	9.700	9.225	9.800	38.475	5
Anja Wilhelm	FRG	9.550	9.600	9.675	9.600	38.425	6
Henrietta Onodi	HUN	9.675	9.800	9.125	9.250	37.850	7
Snejana Baeva	BUL	9.600	9.575	8.750	9.675	37.600	8

spring, double front somi and forward roll followed by three back handsprings and an Arabian double front, but was short on her full twisting double back, therefore receiving only 9.70, which wasn't enough. Phoebe was next and was cheered on by Kristie from the far corner of the mat with "Go, Phoebe!" and "Stick it, Phoebe!" throughout the exercise. It worked and she received the highest score on floor with 9.825; that left her in third, Olga second and Kristie Phillips winning yet another American Cup title for her coach Karolyi. The interesting thing is that had Phoebe scored 9.90 on her floor exercise, she would have been the new champion, and Kristie would have been thrilled for her friend.



Tony Pineda, MEX; 6th AA

Photos: Suzanne Shields

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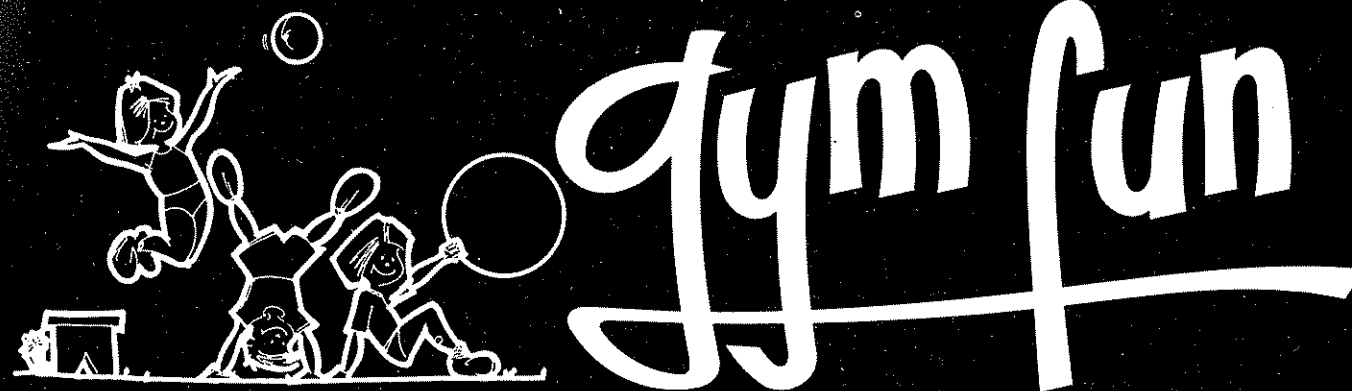
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Bela Karolyi with Kristie Phillips, USA



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