

Whitlock kids take gym titles

The modern rhythmic gymnastics team of the Steve Whitlock School of Gymnastics of Bloomfield Hills dominated competition at the 1980 Explorer Olympics July 1-3 in Fort Collins, Colo.

Karen Sadowski, 17, of Milford finished first in the all-around and first in the hoop competition. Danielle Williams, 14, of Bloomfield Hills was second in the all-around and first in the jump rope. Dana Watson, 13, of Troy was third in the all-around and second in the clubs.

Michelle Berube, 14, of Rochester finished sixth in the all-around in a special competition consisting of the top 20 modern rhythmic gymnasts in the country. Berube was also fourth in the jump rope.

Karen Lyon, 14, of Bloomfield Hills was fifth in the clubs in the same competition.

The Bloomfield Aconaut artistic gymnasts also did well. Linda Giordano, 16, of Royal Oak was first in the all-around with a composite of 33.8. Giordano won the balance beam competition (8.3), and was second on the uneven parallel bars, the vault and the floor exercise.

KRIS STANO, 16, of Sterling Heights was second in the all-around with a composite score of 33.45. Stano won the floor exercise (9.0) and the bars (8.5), was second on the beam and third in the vault.

Sharon McNie, 15, of Royal Oak was third in the all-around. She won the vault (8.55), tied for second with Giordano in the floor exercise, and was third on the bars and the beam.

Beth Claus, 16, of Birmingham was third in the floor exercise.

The Aconauts also participated in the Ludington Beach Meet on July 27 in Ludington. Barrie Muzbeck of Novi took first in the all-around of the elite division with a composite score of 37.3.

Lana Horowitz, 13, of Southfield was seventh in the floor exercise of the 12- to 14-year-old age group. Colleen Otterson, 12, of Madison Heights was 10th in the floor exercise. Diana Cook, 14, of Ulica was sixth in the vault.

Dana Dubransky, 8, was sixth in the vault and sixth in the floor exercise of the 9-11 age group.

Brad and Jason Horowitz of Southfield both placed in the top 10 of the all-around in the men's competition.

Kevin Watson, an instructor at the Whitlock school, placed second in the floor exercise and third in the vault in the collegiate division. Watson competes for Schoolcraft Community College during the winter.

The next event for the Aconauts will be the AAU Junior Olympics Aug. 15-16 in Santa Clara, Calif. Senior qualifiers for the Aconauts are Celeste Harrington, 17, of Brighton and Mary Olson, 15, of Clawson. Beth Claus of Birmingham is the senior alternate.

Sisi Porretta of Bloomfield Hills was the only Aconaut junior qualifier.

The Steve Whitlock school still has openings for anyone interested in its summer program. Call 335-6770 for more information.



from courtside
David Stewart

Confidence in your game could be the winning edge

When you walk on to the court to play a match, do you believe you can win?

Neither your physical condition nor the execution of your strokes matters as much as your state of mind when it comes to winning.

Believing you can win is one of the important secrets to improving your game.

When you make a shot during a crucial point, don't depend on luck — think confidence. When you have match point against you, and your opponent serves to your strength, you must have the confidence to return it. You should maintain the same attitude as if it were the first point of the game, or as if you're practicing with a friend.

When Jimmy Connors returns a serve, he attacks the ball. The faster the serve and the court surface, the better he returns. We all would like to return serve like Connors, and we can within our own levels of ability — if we have the confidence.

When you position yourself to return serve, you can't think about what you're going to do if your opponent gets the first serve into your backhand. With that kind of thinking you are going to lose.

ONE WAY to achieve confidence is to practice hitting a shot until there isn't a doubt in your mind that you can do it. Set a goal for yourself — such as hitting 100 consecutive backhand cross-courts. Now that probably sounds like a tall order, but it isn't if you set your first goal at 25, then 50 and finally 100.

The next time you hit a backhand cross court, you will bring over with such confidence that you'll execute the shot like you own it. Confidence —

that's what you need, and you must have it to win.

I have a friend who sits quietly before a big match visualizing how he is going to win. He shuts everything else out of his mind except the court on which he is going to play.

He sees himself hitting winners and serving aces until he hits the final winner and jumps over the net victoriously.

This mental exercise might help you, too. It isn't childish or neurotic, and it just may be the important aspect to winning a match. Start spending five minutes each day locked in combat with an imaginary opponent.

EVERY TIME he or she rushes the net, you pass him down the line. When a ball is hit to your weak side, respond with a defensive lob or a careful chip shot. When you have an important point, get the first serve in and fire an ace at least once a game.

Concentrate extra hard on the points you are afraid of and see yourself winning them. This simple mental exercise lays a foundation for increasing your self-confidence.

Many players attempt to emulate a particular stroke of one of the world's top players, particularly if they find the shot awkward to hit.

Stand in front of a mirror and spend a few minutes each day watching yourself execute the stroke. You will find that you begin to groove a graceful stroke and, at the same time, create a mental image of the stroke.

When you go out on the court, keep that image in your mind and you will stroke like that image.

• We all need confidence. The player who beats you has more confidence than you.

Winners believe they can win — losers do not.

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