

inside USA gymnastics



“Begin Here, Go Anywhere.” Recent conversations with members, athletes and parents have underscored for me how appropriate this slogan is for our sport. There are many amazing examples of how this works, from gymnasts whose names are well-known to an athlete who participated in recreational programs! The experience, lessons and skills that are learned in gymnastics provide a platform that leads to so many places!

While there are many stories to choose from, below are just a few examples of what I mean. The men and women who have represented the United States in the Olympic Games demonstrate the heights that can be reached by kids who began the sport as toddlers and advanced through the programs to the pinnacle of sports competition and beyond.

Here’s a look at the 2008 men’s and women’s Olympic Teams and what they are doing now.

- Once learning cartwheels, now **Nastia Liukin** has appeared on runways since becoming the Olympic champion and has a new clothing line. She is currently attending SMU and has returned to training in the gym.
- As most are aware, it was recently announced that **Shawn Johnson** will appear on this season’s *Dancing with the Stars*.
- **Alicia Sacramone** was on the red carpet at the Golden Globes and filed Web reports on the recent NBA All-Star Game and its ancillary activities.
- **Chellsie Memmel** has been making appearances and enjoying the post-Olympic glow, and says she is not yet finished competing.
- **Samantha Peszek** and **Bridget Sloan** are finishing up high school and looking forward to continuing their elite careers and competing in collegiate gymnastics in a couple of years.
- For the men, all six Olympians are maintaining their position on the U.S. National Team.
- **Jonathan Horton** is finishing up his college degree at the University of Oklahoma.
- **Justin Spring**, **Kevin Tan** and alternate **David Durante** are coaching men’s collegiate gymnastics at the University of Illinois, Penn State University and Stanford University, respectively.
- **Joey Hagerty** recently won the Winter Cup Challenge and finished third at the Tyson American Cup.
- **Raj Bhavsar** is doing public speaking and appearances.
- **Alexander Artemev** is getting back to the gym after all of his post-Olympic activities.

Many great gymnasts have gone on to make their mark in the world. Some fantastic examples include:

- **Peter Vidmar**, 1984 Olympic gold medalist, is now USA Gymnastics chairman of the board, a motivational speaker and serves on other boards as well.
- **Mary Lou Retton**, 1984 Olympic all-around gold medalist, is

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a wife and mother of four daughters and serves as a corporate spokesperson and participates in philanthropic endeavors.

- Olympic Gold Medalists **Bart Conner** and **Nadia Comaneci** are married with a son, own a variety of gymnastics related businesses and have become global ambassadors for the Olympic movement.
- **Shannon Miller**, who won a total of 16 Olympic and world medals, has a law degree, is a spokesperson for numerous great causes (including childhood obesity) and just returned from visiting the troops in Iraq.
- **Carly Patterson**, the 2004 Olympic all-around champion, is pursuing a singing career and has already launched her first album.
- **Kerri Strug**, a 1996 Olympic gold medalist, works in Washington, D.C., in the Department of Justice.
- **Mary Sanders**, 2004 rhythmic gymnastics Olympian, spent some time as a *Cirque du Soleil* performer.
- **Arthur Davis** and **Shenea Booth**, two-time world champions, transformed their passion for acrobatic gymnastics into a successful entertainment career as “*Realis*,” performing on a number of shows, including *America’s Got Talent*, *Cirque du Soleil*, and *Dancing with the Stars*.
- **Karl Heger**, a two-time world trampoline gold medalist, works for the FBI.
- **Chainey Umphrey**, a 1996 Olympian, is a sports medicine physician in Northern California.

I could go on and on. USA Gymnastics is fortunate that our gymnasts are not only great athletes, but also wonderful role models for future generations. Gymnastics builds character as well as strong and healthy minds and bodies. The sport of gymnastics is a great place for children to begin, preparing them to go down many different paths.

If you’d like to read more inspiring stories about individuals who have started with gymnastics and gone to so many places, check out the Web site:

www.beginheregoanywhere.com

or if you have a great story to share, please send it to: publications@usa-gymnastics.org

See you in the gym.

Steve Penny
President