



Acro in ACTION

When

most people watch Acrobatic Gymnastics for the first time they can't help but say—WOW. The synchronization, timing, balance, and physical demands make the sport so much fun to watch. The U.S. women's group of Nicole Summers, Karilynn Rockhill and Melissa Summer, definitely make spectators say WOW when they perform.

This group earned the silver medal at the 2006 Acrobatic Gymnastics International Age Group Competition in Portugal. The trio also competed in the senior elite division for the first time at the 2006 Acro National Championships and finished second in all-around, second in balance exercise finals, and first in dynamic exercise finals.

This group has crossed three lines in the sport of gymnastics – winning State and Regional titles in artistic gymnastics, winning international titles in acrobatic gymnastics and also participating in group gymnastics.

In 2005 the gymnasts decided to give up artistic gymnastics and concentrate on acro so they could compete at the elite level. They continue to be involved in Group Gymnastics and have even participated in the World Gymnaestrada.

These three gymnasts have represented the USA in international acro meets in France, Belgium, Portugal and the Washington D.C. area where they have medaled in the last three and placed fourth in France.

Karilynn's dad, Regan said, "The girls utilized, built upon and combined what they have learned from one form of gymnastics into other forms of gymnastics. Their choreography and movement to music ▶

Nicole Summers

Hometown • Dickerson, Md.

Birthday • July 6, 1992 – age 14

Position • Top

Club • Skyview Gymnastics in Mount Airy, Md.

Coaches • Diane Floyd and LeeAnn Lenhart. Training 20+ hours per week

School • Freshman in high school, Fall 2006

What's Next: • I'm planning to go back to artistic gymnastics and compete Level 9. My dream is to get a college scholarship for artistic gymnastics.

What is it like being the top? • It's a lot of fun. I like going high. Most people are scared of going high, but I like it.

What's it like working with your sister? • It's hard not to bring outside things into

the gym. But I like it because it brings us closer. Sometimes it's hard because we'll fight at home and then we're mad at each other in the gym but I trust my sister and Karilynn, and I know they'd never drop me.

What's the best thing about acro? • You get to have fun with other people – it's not just you out there competing.

What's the best thing about artistic? • It's a lot of fun because I get to be on the floor by myself. I don't have to count on other people. I like knowing that I can control how I do. My favorite event in artistic is beam.

What is one thing most people don't know about you? • I'm a straight A student. I've been out of artistic gymnastics for a year but now I'm training again as a Level 9.

Karilynn Rockhill

Hometown • Clarksburg, Md.

Birthday • March 31, 1988 – age 18

Position • Middle

Club • Skyview Gymnastics in Mount Airy, Md.

Coaches • Diane Floyd and LeeAnn Lenhart. Training 20+ hours per week

What's Next • I'm starting my freshman year at Ithaca College. I'm still deciding if I'll go back to artistic gymnastics at Ithaca. They have a Division III program.

What was it like to win the silver medal at the World Age Group Games? • It was amazing. We went to France two years ago as 11-16 year olds and for two years I've wanted to go back to Worlds and win a medal.

How did you get involved with acro? When did you start? • Our gym watched Sports Acro for the first time in Cleveland at the 2002 Visa Championships and we decided that it looked so cool that we wanted to give it a try. We saw Arthur Davis and Shenea Booth and they were awesome. Our club owner Diane Floyd said, "Okay let's give it a try." We just started training and working hard. Diane developed a program and we went from there.

What's the best part of acro? • The best part of acro is having three of us together on the floor. It's a lot of fun. In artistic you are by yourself out there. I like acro better.

What is one thing most people don't know about you? • All three of us live on farms – we're all farm girls. I have cattle and they have horses.

Melissa Summers

Hometown • Dickerson, Md.

Birthday • January 24, 1989 – age 17

Position • Base

Club • Skyview Gymnastics in Mount Airy, Md.

Coaches • Diane Floyd and LeeAnn Lenhart. Training 20+ hours per week

High School • Senior – Looks forward to going to college. Would love to one day be involved with Cirque du Soleil.

What's Next • Doing print modeling and will coach acro at her gym.

What was it like to win the silver medal at the World Age Group Games? • It was amazing. When you finally win something that you've been working so long for it's really cool. The eight years of gymnastics that I did made it all worth it.

What is it like being the base? • I like the floor and being the base. It makes me feel more in control. I wouldn't want to be in the air.

What is it like working with your sister? • That's a hard question. I just think of her as being a teammate in the gym instead of my sister. Sometimes we get in fights when things are not working and things can get out of hand but we always bring it back and are able to control it.

What is one thing most people don't know about you? • I love to dance!

comes from their group performance and ballet training, their tumbling comes from artistic, and their building of shapes and dynamic moves comes from acro and when it all gets combined - it is stunningly beautiful, however performed.”

2006 International Age Group Competition

The International Age Group Competition is a FIG-sponsored event which is comparable to a Junior World Championships. It provides the younger acrobatic gymnasts an opportunity to gain experience in world-level competition. This year's event took place June 22-24 in Coimbra, Portugal, on the heels of the Acrobatic Gymnastics World Championships.

All of the USA pair/groups finished preliminary competition in 10th place or higher. The top eight per event qualified to finals, with the restriction of one pair/group per federation. The USA had four pair/groups, one in each of the events entered, advance to finals. They included Men's Pair Jake Kanavel and Lukas Martincik, (12-19); Women's Pair, Cassidy Dolstra and Jordan Rozsa, (11-16); and Women's Group Marina Mihov, Kristen Sanchez, and Samantha Olivencia (11-16). They all performed with confidence and grace and hit their routines in finals. All three pair/groups ended the competition in fourth place.

The other U.S. pair/groups to qualify to finals were Women's Group, Nicole Summers, Karilynn Rockhill and Melissa Summer (12-19). This trio stood out among the competition and earned a silver medal for their performance. For complete results from the Acrobatic Gymnastics International Age Group Competition, visit www.usa-gymnastics.org/acro/2006/worlds.



The USA Team included: (Front) Jake Kanavel, Makaela Bogowitz, Karilynn Rockhill, Paula Kidwell, Lukas Martincik, Melissa Summers. (Middle) Cassidy Dolstra, Marina Mihov, Ariel Walsh, Caitlin Cusano, Nicole Summers. (Back) Kristen Sanchez, Jordan Rozsa, Jordan Seto, Samantha Olivencia, Courtney Olivencia, Kayla Huesgen, Amber Kottwitz