

USA EARNs 3 MEDALS AT WORLD GAMES

KRISTIN ALLEN AND MICHAEL RODRIGUES WIN GOLD



This July, approximately 4,500 athletes from 100 countries competed at the World Games, a multi-sport event held every four years during an Olympic year for those sports that are not included in the Olympic program. The USA sent a delegation from the disciplines of acro and trampoline and tumbling.

2008 world silver-medalists Kristin Allen and Michael Rodrigues of Livermore, Calif., won gold for the United States in acrobatic gymnastics mixed pairs, the first World Games gold medal earned in acro gymnastics by the USA.

In second place following qualifications with a total dynamic and balance score of 57.306, the pair began event finals with new life. Taking full advantage, Rodrigues and Allen earned a combined routine score of 28.806 and a first place finish. 2008 world bronze medalist Sergei Bykhavtsov and Anastasia Zharnasek of Belgium won silver with 28.653, and Katie Axten and Nicholas Illingworth from Great Britain took home bronze with a combined routine score of 28.551.

In double-mini trampoline competition, Sarah Prosen of Apple Valley, Minn./ Gleason's Gymnastics, and Aubree Balkan of Carlsbad, Calif./Bounce California, finished second and third. Russia's Victoria Voronina won the gold medal with a finals score of 69.800. Prosen posted a 65.700 for the silver, edging out Balkan who scored a 65.500.

In other USA performances, Logan Dooley of Lake Forest, Calif./World Elite Gymnastics and Steven Gluckstein of Atlantic Highlands, N.J./Head Over Heels finished sixth in synchronized trampoline with a finals score of 48.700. In women's tumbling, Natalya Beneschott of Reno, Nev./Legacy Trampoline & Tumbling, finished eighth with a score of 55.900. Austin White of Newport Coast, Calif./World Elite Gymnastics, competed in the men's double-mini-trampoline and Leanne Seitzinger of Stafford, Vir./Novak's Gymnastics, also competed in women's tumbling.

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Q&A WITH MICHAEL RODRIGUES AND KRISTIN ALLEN

MICHAEL RODRIGUES

How did it feel to win the first U.S. gold medal in acro gymnastics at the World Games?

It was one of my greatest moments in my Acro career. It was such an overwhelming rush of emotions when the final score of the meet came up and we were ranked first. I felt a wave of excitement, relief, pride, joy, and happiness. It felt like all my years of training and competing rushed through me to remind me of what it took to get there, and in that moment I was lucky enough to experience the realization of my dreams.

Tell me your typical daily schedule.

My typical daily schedule is: 6:30 a.m. - wake up; 7:10-8:00 a.m.-commute to work; 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.-work; 4:30-5:20 p.m.-commute to the gym; 5:20-8:30 p.m.- train.

Who choreographed your combined routine?

Our combined routine was choreographed by the famous Alex da Silva whose routines can often be seen on the TV show, *So You Think You Can Dance*.

KRISTIN ALLEN

What makes you and Michael so successful as partners in acro?

Michael and I work extremely well together (training together since August 2007). We



value and appreciate what makes each of us unique, and use those things to our advantage. We each have very different strengths, but we have the same drive, the same goal, and the same passion. We love what we do.

Can you tell us about home school and how you fit in training?

I do independent study. I go to school once a week to meet with my teacher and get my work for the next week. I absolutely love it, and it makes it easier to travel and train. However, I also take two classes in the morning at my local high school so that I get up and get my day started, and so that I m not completely void of a social life.

What s the best part of acro and what is the most challenging part of acro?

For me, the best part of acro is competition. I love love love to compete! The adrenaline, the focus, and the hope that we can reach past the edge of the floor and touch the audience with the emotion in our performance. My hope is that the judges and audience won t feel like they ve watched just another routine; they ll feel like they ve had an unforgettable experience. ☺

