



JULIE ZETLIN



AVA GEHRINGER

2009 RHYTHMIC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

BY LUAN PESZEK PHOTOS BY TOM THEOBALD

Olympic and European champion Evgenia Kanaeva of Russia swept the all-around, all four event titles (rope, hoop, ribbon and ball) and was a member of the winning Russian team at the 2009 Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships in Mie, Japan. She became the most decorated rhythmic gymnast in history as the only gymnast to win six gold medals at a Rhythmic World Championships. She won the all-around title with a score of 113.85. Her Russian teammate Daria Kondakova finished second with a 113.250 and the Ukraine's Anna Bessonova was third with a 110.375.

The top USA finisher Julie Zetlin of Bethesda, Md., and Rhythmflex Gymnastics, placed 27th in the all-around with a total score of 72.550 and was one of four reserves for the

all-around competition. This was Zetlin's second World Championships. She said, "I was very pleased with my routines at Worlds. I was glad I could hit my routines at the most important



competition in the world, other than the Olympics.

The USA's Ava Gehringer of Naperville, Ill., and Northshore Rhythmic Gymnastics Center, was 34th in the all-around rankings (taking into consideration only two per

country can qualify into the all-around finals) with a 70.975. Gehringer was the alternate at the 2007 World team. She said, "Overall I was really pleased with how I performed. I was able to show how hard I've worked for this opportunity and although I made a few minor mistakes I couldn't have asked for much more.

During the group all-around finals, Italy earned the all-around title with Belarus coming in second and Russia in third. Competing for the USA was North Shore Rhythmic Gymnastics Center's Stephanie Flaksman of Northbrook, Ill.; Megan Frohlich of Marysville, Wash.; Kristin Kaye of Northbrook; Sydney Sachs of Deerfield, Ill.; Sofya Roytburg of Buffalo Grove, Ill.; and Marlee Shape of Buffalo Grove. The USA finished in 16th all-around, significantly improving their final ranking of 23rd at the 2007 Rhythmic Worlds. ✧