

# WMGF News

www.wmgf.us

November 22, 2010

## Season Preview

by Mark Russo

Here we go into another season of Husky Men's Gymnastics and this season looks to be better for the Purple and Gold. The team has nearly doubled in size from last season, giving us the needed depth to withstand any injuries and to have a full complement of scores on each event. The backbone of our team remains with Jon Chapman, Sam Softich, and Bobby Miller, but they will have a much larger supporting cast. At this time, sophomore Taylor Anthony appears to be out for the season with a shoulder injury, which is really a tough break because he was probably the most improved gymnast on the team last year. Joining the team this year are Kyle Farmer, who grew up in Gig Harbor and trained with Bob Young at Black Hills gymnastics, Peter Moser and Greg Steward from Cascade Elite where we train, and Layton Oka from Funtastics in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The Northwest is well represented from this diverse group of talented young gymnasts.

Our strongest event is floor exercise, where junior Sam Softich leads the way with six difficult tumbling passes. He should be able to qualify to event finals at Collegiate Nationals on this event. Senior Jon Chapman also competes a nice routine on floor that will score well. Newcomers Greg Steward and Peter Moser will challenge the veterans for lead score on this event.

Pommel horse is to be our weakest event although much improved from last year. Junior Bobby Miller has upgraded his routine and is

## WMGF

The Washington Men's Gymnastics Foundation is a non-profit organization that exists to assist the Men's Gymnastics Team at the University of Washington.



Bobby Miller

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strong enough to hit on a consistent basis. He's added a lot of difficulty and has good extension in his swing, which should get a good score when he hits the set. Freshman Kyle Farmer swings good pommels as well, and will give the team another good score. Jeramie Hardi has a tough routine as well, and when he hits it the team does great on this event.

Rings is our second weakest event as the strength required to do well on rings these days is a rare commodity. Kyle Farmer has the potential to be the man on this event; he just needs a couple years to develop his own incredible strength. Sam Softich is getting the strength needed to do well, and is refining his swing to improve his dismount. He will lead us on rings.

The vaulting team is wide open with Sam's stretched full- or double-twisting Yurchenko, and Jon, Bobby, and Kyle all doing twisting Tsukahara vaults. Layton Oka shows tremendous power here and it's only a matter of time before he bursts into the lineup. He who lands best will lead the team. Vault will be our highest scoring event – even though it's not our best – mostly because of the rules governing the event.

Bobby Miller and Kyle Farmer swing the most difficult parallel bar routines for the team and are doing so cleanly. Jon Chapman has upgraded his routine significantly and will show his improvement immediately. Sam and Jeramie are giving us good solid routines, making p-bars our second strongest event.

(Continued on page 2)

## Season Review

*(Continued from page 1)*

High bar is an average event for the team, with Jon and Sam being the most consistent. Kyle and Bobby also have good routines and are working to upgrade their releases. Layton Oka has almost all the requirements here and will probably break into the lineup first on this event. If we catch all our releases, this can be a pretty good event for us. Practice, practice, practice.

Fortunately this season, we have four local opportunities to compete. We start off with an intrasquad competition with the UW Women's team on December 5th at 3pm. Then we host our traditional Washington Open on New Year's Day at 7pm. Black Hills gymnastics is

hosting a competition on January 30th at St. Martin's College in Olympia where we will compete in the evening. Finally, we host our big dual meet on March 4th vs. ASU in conjunction with the UW Women hosting Michigan State.

The depth and ability added to the team this year will make us extremely competitive with ASU to be the best self-funded team in the country. We are hoping with the many home competitions we have this season that you will come see us compete and be amazed at the skill and level of difficulty of the team. It isn't often that we get to compete at home so please take this season and make yourself present in the stands!!



**Your 2010-2011 Husky Gymnastics Team**

*Back row (left-right): Mo Angok, Jon Chapman, Joey Lawrence, Greg Steward, Eugene Burton-Breazeal, Andrew Inaba  
Front row: Coach Mark Russo, Peter Moser, Layton Oka, Kyle Farmer, Kevin Smith, Sam Softich, Bobby Miller, Taylor Anthony*

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*Wishing WMG all the best in the upcoming 2011 season,  
from a former Husky Gymnastics Team Captain!*

## *Where Are They Now?* An Update on Husky Alum **Mauno Nissinen**

by Dr. Eric Hughes

Several Husky gymnasts have won national titles, but only two have won a national all-around championship. Mauno Nissinen is one of them.

Mauno was born in Oulu, Finland, very close to the Arctic Circle. His first sport experiences were in cross-country skiing and ice hockey, but later he got involved with gymnastics.

Mauno was on the Finnish national team for ten years from 1965 to 1975 and competed in two Olympics – Mexico 1968 and Munich 1972. I attended both of these Olympics, one as a coach, and saw him compete. He was also on three Finnish world championship teams. His best personal result in international competition was a silver medal on parallel bars in the European Championships in 1973.

Nissinen came to the UW as an undergraduate in 1967 directly from the World University Games in Tokyo. A UW pole vaulter by the name of John Cramer who was competing in Finland made the initial contact and helped recruit him.

Mauno was ineligible to compete intercollegiately in 1968, but he did compete as a Husky in both the national Amateur Athletic Union (this AAU meet is now called the USA Championships) and the U.S. Gymnastics Federation (USGF) nationals. He medaled in several events in both meets and helped the Huskies win the national team championship at the AAU meet.

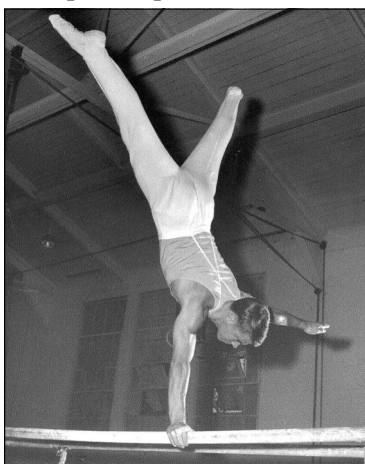
In 1969, his best year as a Husky gymnast, he won the Conference parallel bar, high bar, and all-around titles; the NCAA all-around title; and the Amateur Athletic Union all-around title. He was selected a first-team All-American. In other words, he dominated U.S. gymnastics in 1969. (It is interesting to note that 1969 was the year that Yoshi Hayasaki was out for the year with a ruptured Achilles. Yoshi dominated in 1968, and again in 1970 and '71. If he had been healthy in 1969 the Huskies would have had the two best gymnasts in the U.S. that year.)

After returning to Finland and completing his competitive career on their national team, he returned to the UW as a graduate student in 1976 to study Sport Biomechanics. His friend, world high bar champion Eberhard Gienger, came with him to study Russian at the UW. We were fortunate to have Mauno and Eberhard,

both outstanding international gymnasts, in our gym with the team for that entire year. Eberhard actually perfected the “Gienger” that year in our gym.

In 1978, Nissinen started working as a Biomechanics of Sport Specialist in the Olympic Training Center at the University of Frankfurt. While vacationing in Germany, I was able to visit him in his lab in 1992. In a recent email, Mauno had this to say about his research work:

*In 1978, East Germany was very strong in international sport and that is why West Germany started building Olympic training centers. Finally we were able to work with the top athletes on a daily basis. Our center provided the scientific support for several sports. My main field, of course, was gymnastics. After my retirement I am still working with the national team. With one of my gymnasts, Fabian Hambuchen, world champion on high bar in 2007, I have been working already 16 years. I have videos, strength measurements, biomechanical analysis and training documentation since he was six years old.*



Mauno Nissinen

Mauno married Diane who was a teaching assistant in Sport Physiology at the UW and they have a daughter, now 25, working in Munich. He now has a second family – wife Petra and two “sporty” boys who keep him fit. He told me he played soccer with them the other day for six hours.

Mauno Nissinen and Eberhard Gienger performed a professional horizontal bar act for over 25 years, even once in Madison Square Garden. Eberhard was primarily the “straight” man and Mauno primarily the clown. I had the pleasure of seeing one of their excellent performances while on my trip to Germany and am still laughing.

Mauno ran his latest marathon on his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and is planning to run another next year. He has challenged me with the question, “What about you?” I’m too old to accept, but it could be a good challenge for all of you younger ex-gymnasts who are reading this.



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In This Issue...

Season Preview, Where Are They Now, and more...

November 22, 2010

# Washington Men's Gymnastics

## 2010-2011 Meet Schedule

(local meets in bold)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>December 5</i>	<i>3:00pm</i>	<i>Intrasquad with UW Women's Team</i>	<i>Hec Ed Pavilion Seattle, WA</i>
<i>January 1</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>Washington Open</i>	<i>Hec Ed Pavilion Addition Seattle, WA</i>
<i>January 30</i>		<i>Flipout Challenge</i>	<i>St. Martin's College, Olympia, WA</i>
<i>February 19</i>		<i>at ASU</i>	<i>University of Phoenix Stadium Phoenix, AZ</i>
<i>March 4</i>	<i>7:00pm</i>	<i>vs. ASU, with UW Women vs. Michigan State</i>	<i>Hec Ed Pavilion Seattle, WA</i>
<i>March 20</i>	<i>1:00pm</i>	<i>at Air Force with ASU</i>	<i>US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO</i>
<i>March 25, 26</i>		<i>Collegiate Nationals</i>	<i>Springfield College, Springfield, MA</i>

Please contact Mark Russo for updates: 206-524-9480 or team@wmgf.us