

Holy gym team

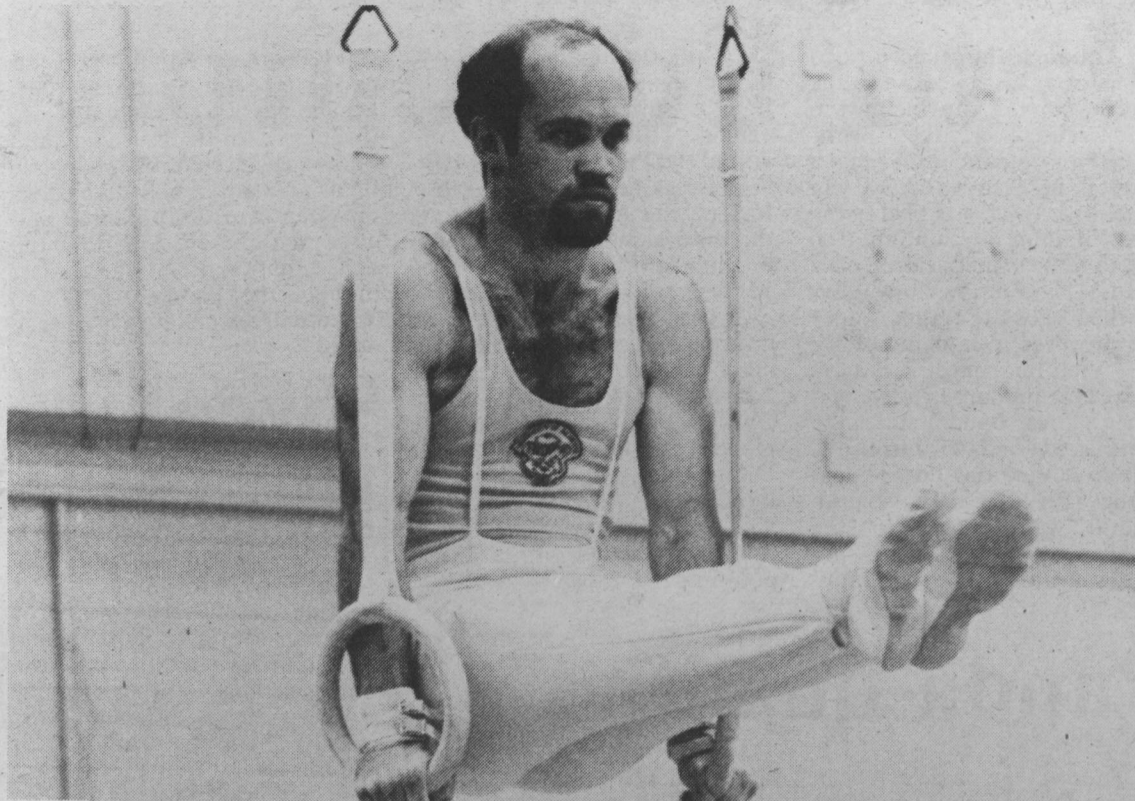


Photo Brad Keith

The season is underway and routines are being tested in competition.

The U of A men's gymnastic team know there is strength in numbers. Coach Francis Tally is impressed with participation in the gym, but wonders why spots on the team are unfilled. Consequently the team is not getting the most, in team standings, possible for the program.

Last weekend the gymnasts competed with a team composed of Alberta's best competitors. Although open competitors, like national team member Alan Reddon were there, the U of A squad's James Hamilton placed second and Eric Ruckenthaller took first in the vault.

Hamilton and

Ruckenthaller both qualified for the national finals, but may need still higher scores to ensure they will be among the 36 chosen from national qualifiers.

In spite of good individual performances, the team has weaker high and parallel bar routines. Tally believes it "is crucial to get guys in there" and is hoping some specialists will appear. Tally admits his team is weak in depth and hopes the "fantastic participation" in the gym will yield some specialists.

Needless to say Tally is surprised some of the recreational gymnasts, working

out regularly, would not line up to compete inter-collegiately. He emphasized the conference rules are structured to encourage the inexperienced to learn one or two events at first. Present rules allow the use of these specialists for team scoring.

The team's next meet is this weekend in Winnipeg. Tally is not "overly optimistic" for team results, but is "hopeful in individual qualifying." The team's problems may or may not disappear soon, but in any case the U of A squad should be represented at the national finals.

Rub a dub

Last weekend's home dual swim meet with the U of C and UBC was a conference final preview. Diving coach Don McGavern was "generally pretty pleased" with the meet's results, especially when his team's points were crucial to a 144-141 U of A victory over UBC.

In total, the meet was an upset and the diving events were no exception. Defending CIAU champion Don Lieberman was defeated on the 3m board. The U of A's Steve Stutt, according to McGavern, "surprised him (Lieberman) by one point." McGavern adds Lieberman may have been "insulted" and will be "much tougher" at the conference finals to be held at UBC February 15 and 16.

The small U of A team's two women placed well against the tough U of Calgary squad. Still,

the meet favorite, Calgary's Sherry Hall, won both 1 and 3m boards.

In spite of good individual scores the three-person team's size will make winning the team championship difficult. For the U of A to win the title McGavern believes a miracle would be involved, and adds no mistakes could be made. Still he is aiming to upset UBC again and in particular thinks Alberta's Steve Stutt could take Lieberman on the 3m board.

Regardless of the season's outcome, next year looks promising. McGavern will move three nationally ranked divers out of his club program. Consequently the team next year will build in depth. If UBC is not upset this year they will undoubtedly have tougher competition for the next few seasons.



Photo N. F. Goode

U of A divers scored points crucial to U. of A victory over UBC.



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