

Banner year for Skyline

Abby Kaufman was just one of many gymnasts who made 2012 a year to remember for the 26-year-old club.

By RYAN DIXON
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Abby Kaufman has the dream that so many young gymnasts do and that is to become an Olympic champion.

Kaufman and the rest of the Skyline Gymnastics members were glued into the coverage of this summer's London Olympics. The United States women's gymnastics team — consisting of Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross and Jordyn Wieber — won the gold medal, capturing the hearts of gymnasts everywhere.

"It makes me want to strive to go to the Olympics and become an elite gymnast," Kaufman said.

Kaufman, 13, who overcame two different injuries to have quite the successful season as a Level 9 gymnast, is on her way to competing at Level 10 next season.

It will be the first time in the gym's 26-year history that they will have a Level 10 team.

"It makes me feel really good," Kaufman said. "I think we can be a strong team this year and make it a great first Skyline Level 10 team."

Added Skyline owner TC Goodwin via email of the Level 10 team for next season, "I feel they are going to do a great job and make Skyline proud. All of our teams have been working hard all summer and I expect that we will repeat our success with all of the 2012 Skyline teams."

What a year it was for Skyline in 2012, who, led by head coach Gabby Ganesco, competed in the Eastern National's in Prince George, Md., in May.

Kaufman won the beam and took home second place in the All-Around.

"It was definitely a lot of adversity last year. But, it was the most rewarding (season) of all of them," said Kaufman, who has been in gymnastics since she was 2 years old and had to overcome a fractured left foot and sprained right ankle during the season.

Also in Level 9 Nationals, Nicole Hatchard had top 10 finishes in all events and in the All-Around and Trinity Thomas took second place on the beam and finished fourth in the All-Around.

Those three girls' also excelled at the regional competition where Hatchard won on the bar event, Thomas was crowned the beam champion and Kaufman took first place on the bars and beam.

The gym enjoyed tremendous success in February's Blue Ridge Gymnastics Association's League Championships where Skyline swept the event by winning all four championship titles.

This event was for Levels 3-6, where Kaylee Gorseger, Alyssa Maiste, Audrey Dawes, Cora Brandt, Madelyn Paterson, Tesia Thomas, Reise Rankin, Isabella Barbacci and Jordan Dubbs took honors for their levels and age groups.

In March, the Prep-Optional team continued its streak by clinching the state title for the third year in a row. Payton Pew, Cierra Crane, Emma Brown, Mary Sigley and Nisa Still claimed individual event gold medals, with Crane, Brown and Still also winning state All-Around titles.

This year was also the first time that Skyline was represented at Level 9 team states, where they finished second and won two gold medals in individual events.

As some younger gymnasts may have been just starting out in 2012, girls' like Alexandra Zimmerman, a Level 10 gymnast, who was sidelined for months by an injury, finished up their Skyline careers. Zimmerman will continue her career at the University of Maryland.

All-in-all, it was quite the successful year for Skyline, who saw its numbers increase by nearly 25 percent from the previous year in which they had three Level 9 gymnasts and one Level 10. In 2012, Skyline had six gymnasts at Level 9 and two at Level 10.

"Both 2011 and 2012 were amazing years, our gymnasts did well in both years," Goodwin said. "Skyline is growing quickly. All of the levels did a great job this year. With many state champions at all the levels, we can only look forward to an even better season in 2012-2013."