

All Around News



Paul Padron
RJOC

JO INFORMATION UPDATE

1 Cutchin Court
Charleston, SC 29414
Phone / Fax 843-766-3008
E-mail: phpadron@knology.net

This summer we made an attempt to do our first all expense paid international trip for our top Region 8 finishers from JO Level 10 and 9 Nationals. With help from **Toni Rand** and **Tim Keckler** we were able to put together a four day trip to the Cayman Islands to train with the Cayman Island team. Unfortunately we had to cancel the trip at the last minute due to not getting a firm commitment and/or approval from NCAA officials that the trip meets all NCAA compliance requirements. We are currently working with USAG national office (Steve Penny and Kathy Kelly) to get a concrete decision from NCAA regarding compliance. We want to make sure that anything we do for our athletes will never jeopardize their NCAA eligibility, and although this is taking longer than expected, we would rather be safe than sorry, when it comes to such an important matter such as collegiate gymnastics. As soon as we get a clearance from USAG and NCAA we will contact all of the eligible coaches and athletes.

I would like to take this time to recognize **Mike Hammer** and **Balcony Gymnastics** for hosting the Future Stars Training Camp. Mike and staff did an outstanding job to provide a great training site for our athletes. To all of the volunteers at Future Stars, thank you for stepping up to the plate and donating you time to work this camp. Future Stars camp seems to be the most difficult to staff however it is probably the most important one since it is from these ranks that we will be developing many of our future optional athletes. If you have not volunteered your time to work this camp please consider doing so in the future. To all upper level coaches, this is where you are needed the most. Developing a strong base of athletes will ensure the future success. Our region is full of successful and talented coaches, please consider sharing your knowledge and time with the "Future Stars of Region 8."

Another special thank you goes to **Kenny & Beth Morphis** and **Salem Gymnastics**. Congratulations for putting together such a wonderful experience for our athletes at the Level 8-9 Training Camp. Not only did you give us an incredible facility, but also added special touches such as cooking for all of the athletes and coaches. To the volunteers that worked this camp, I cannot tell you how many compliments we received from parents, coaches and athletes regarding the quality of training, many felt it was the best one they have ever been to. Thank you all for your time and willingness to work with our regional athletes.

In October we will be heading to **Ultimate Gymnastics** in Suwanee, Georgia for the Level 9-10-Elite Training Camp.

Although the camp is full for athletes, **there is still room for coaches, judges and volunteers**. Please take advantage of this wonderful learning experience. Registration forms are available on the regional web-site and in this newsletter. In addition we will be having samples of our national apparel at this training camp. Please stop by the apparel station and let us know which items look and fit the best.

In talking with coaches and judges from throughout the region, I often get some negative comments about the quality of gymnastics in certain parts of the region. Sometimes it is people that have no idea what is going on in another state making comments and sometimes it is people making comments about their own state. Fact of the matter is that our region is composed of 8 states that all contribute to the success of Region 8. If we are to look at the level of gymnastics within a state we need to look at more than just numbers of athletes. It is not fair to compare a large state with a large population base to a small state with a small population base. If you look at high school sports it has divisions that are based on population of the school. A more valid predictor would be the percentage of gymnasts that a state qualifies to nationals based on the number of athletes in that state at that particular level. Below I have listed those stats for the top 2 levels of the Junior Olympic program.

2006 Results for Level 10's Qualifying to Nationals:

- 1st - Georgia 26%
- 2nd - Florida 25%
- 3rd - South Carolina 20% .
- 4th - North Carolina and Louisiana tied with 16%

2006 Results for Level 9's Qualifying to East Nationals:

- 1st - Mississippi 66% .
- 2nd - Florida 33%
- 3rd - Tennessee 20%
- 4th - Louisiana 17%
- 5th - Alabama, Georgia & North Carolina 13-16%

As you can see every state big and small plays a vital role in the success of Region 8. There are outstanding coaches, judges and athletes throughout our region. It is by working together and as a team that Region 8 will become the number one region in the country.

I look forward to seeing everyone in the upcoming season. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you in any way.