

Written by John Crumlish

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Although a torn left Achilles tendon has sidelined Olympian **Courtney McGregor** of New Zealand at the outset of her senior season at Boise State University in the U.S., her focus and enthusiasm remain intact as she prepares for surgery and her future.

McGregor, who suffered the injury on vault at a January 12 meet at UCLA, has been a competitive standard bearer for her native country as well as at Boise State. Her coaches include **Mary Wright** (all events internationally), **Tina Bird** and **Patty Resnick** (balance beam and floor exercise at Boise State), and **Ivan Alexov** (vault and uneven bars at Boise State).

Born November 17, 1998, in Christchurch, McGregor finished 41st all-around and 13th on vault in qualifications at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. She competed at the 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2019 World Championships, earning her best individual ranking, 17th place, on vault in both 2015 and 2017. Her other top international finishes include eighth on vault at the 2015 World Challenge Cup of Doha and eighth on balance beam at the 2015 World Challenge Cup of Anadia.

McGregor's accolades at Boise State include honors in the gym and classroom, including the Mountain Rim Gymnastics Conference (MRGC) all-around title in 2019, and designation as a Women's Collegiate Gymnastics Association (WCGA) Scholastic All-American in 2017, 2018 and 2019. In her freshman through junior years she helped Boise State earn three consecutive MRGC team victories.

In this IG Online interview, the resolute McGregor shares her insights on her lengthy career, the challenges of competing simultaneously at the international and collegiate levels, her recent injury and her post-gymnastics plans.

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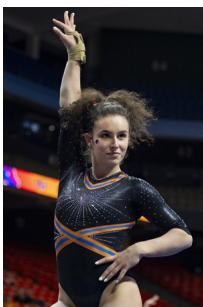
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IG: You have had a long and prolific career competing for New Zealand and Boise State, so what do you feel has kept you motivated to continue training and competing at such a high level?

CMcG: I like to set big goals for myself and give everything I have to achieve them. I hold myself to a high standard and have always been someone who doesn't struggle to push myself to the absolute maximum of my abilities. I enjoy the feeling of satisfaction that comes from knowing you have done everything in your power to make something happen!

IG: How have you been able to manage the physical demands of the sport, especially since you compete more or less on a weekly basis during the NCAA season and have also had your international season to prepare for while at Boise State?

CMcG: It has been a huge challenge! I have competed in the all-around at almost every single meet over the past three years here at BSU. Combining that with the elite season is definitely a challenge physically. After my freshman season I had knee surgery, after my sophomore season I had ankle surgery and now I am about to have my Achilles repaired. The physical demands of gymnastics definitely add up. I spend a lot of time in the training room!



Photos courtesy of Boise State University.

IG: As a captain of the Boise State team and a marquee performer for the New Zealand team, how do you view the extra responsibility your roles bring, and how do you manage the extra pressure that comes with them?

CMcG: As a team captain my role is to make sure the team environment is everything it needs to be for us to perform to the best of our abilities. It has been a particularly challenging

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pre-season for us with coaching changes. Issy — Isabella Amado, my co-captain — and I have done our best to help the team stay in a good head space and prepare for this season. Back home I was always part of a smaller team so my role was more to set a good example for the younger kids. It's amazing knowing the little ones look up to me and it is a responsibility I have always taken seriously. I don't feel any extra pressure being a team captain or performing for New Zealand. Like most athletes, all the pressure I feel comes from my own desire to succeed!

IG: How have you processed and reconciled your performance at last fall's World Championships in Stuttgart as it relates to qualifying for Tokyo 2020?

CMcG: It was disappointing not to qualify to Tokyo in Stuttgart, but I was hoping to qualify at the continental championships which are being held at home in New Zealand (in April). Unfortunately, after tearing my Achilles that will no longer be an option for me.

IG: In addition to providing experience and high scores to the Boise State team, what do you feel have been your biggest, but perhaps less obvious, contributions to the team?

CMcG: I have a calm personality and always try to enjoy what I am doing. I think this rubs off on my teammates and helps them to stay calm under pressure, too.

IG: What inspired you to continue your international career after Rio?

CMcG: After Rio I felt a responsibility to keep competing for New Zealand and guide the next generation of girls that were coming through. I know that would have been invaluable for me growing up — to have someone who had been there and done it before help me through those big experiences.

IG: We understand you intend to go to medical school. What specialty or specialties are you considering, and do you plan to study somewhere in the U.S. or home in New Zealand?

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CMcG: I'd like to go to medical school in New Zealand or Australia, because I plan on living in New Zealand. I have done some job-shadowing with orthopedic surgeons in the clinic and operating room, and I enjoyed that. But there are so many things that interest me, so I am not 100% sure which specialty I would like to go into yet.

IG: Over the years you have acquired a global fan following. What about your gymnastics and personality do you feel appeals to people around the world?

CMcG: I'm not sure what I have done to deserve all the support that I receive, but I am grateful for everyone who continues to encourage me. I'm someone who loves gymnastics and interacting with gym fans on social media. I think that has helped me build relationships with people in the gymnastics community.

IG: What plans do you have for continuing your international career beyond 2020?

CMcG: Right now, I do not have any plans to continue my international gymnastics career.

IG: What legacy do you hope to leave for both New Zealand gymnastics and Boise State gymnastics?

CMcG: I hope I have inspired some Kiwi kids to try gymnastics! My time at BSU has been life-changing. I'm happy to be part of a program that has such high academic standards, gymnastics abilities and cares about creating good people.

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