

Written by Dwight Normile
Thursday, 18 March 2010 13:28

Once again, IG editor Dwight Normile compiles a list of nuggets, editorially and photographically, from the current issue of *International Gymnast* magazine.



When IG contributor **John Crumlish** sat down with **Aljaz Pegan**, 35, and **Mitja Petkovsek**, 33, the veteran Slovenians really opened up. Here's what Pegan said about the 2009 world high bar champ:

"I was surprised when I saw the Chinese guy, Zou Kai, with his 7.5 (difficulty score). I didn't expect it. His routine was good, but not so clean, and then 7.5—wow. The routines over 7.0 are usually so unclean and so risky that I think you can [only] do it maybe once or twice, but not when you want—just when you have luck. He was lucky that day. I'm sure his routine is not so well prepared that he can do it whenever he wants."

And here is Petkovsek's response when Crumlish asked if he ever considers retirement: "I'd rather not think about it, because it's such a painful thought."

We reviewed **Kim Hamilton Anthony's** book, *Unfavorable Odds*, and also included an interview with her in "Chalk Talk." She placed fourth at the 1985 U.S. championships, then dropped to 13th at the world trials, so we asked her what happened. Here's her answer:

"As crazy as it may seem, I got my wisdom teeth taken out shortly before world trials, without alerting my coach. ...the surgery had some complications which caused me to miss quite a bit of training,... It still saddens me to think about it."

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Moral of the story: It is always unwise to have your wisdom teeth removed before an important meet. In hindsight, the 1985 U.S. world team, which placed sixth in Montreal, probably could have used Hamilton.

I really liked the feature "**Faith and Gymnastics**," written by 1992 U.S. Class II champion **Tim Dalrymple**

, whose gymnastics career ended because of a severe neck injury while he was at Stanford. He went on to get his Ph.D. at Harvard, where he teaches today. He also writes and edits for Patheos.com. His neck injury still causes chronic pain today, but his outlook is inspiring:

"As a Christian, however, I believe that a life is not wasted if it is lived in pain and suffering. A life is wasted if it is lived in such comfort and superficiality that the deeper needs of the soul are never exposed."

And I also appreciated what he had to say about gymnasts who finally retire: "Many, as a result, find the adjustment to the post-gymnastics life difficult. If they are no longer gymnasts, who are they? They feel empty and adrift, as though their identity and purpose have been taken from them, until they find another source of fulfillment...."

This, of course, is true for anyone who retires from something s/he loves.

Army's annual men's gymnastics team photo is always an original creation by head coach **Doug Van Everen**

, who refuses to position his squad in any sort of conventional pose. In the past, his team has been photographed on a golf course, the Empire State Building and even underwater. This year's version, which appears on page 10, is particularly clever. You've really got to see it. Oh, and the poster is also an ad for the 2010 Men's NCAA Championships, which will be in West Point, N.Y., April 15-17.

One of my favorite photos in this issue is of **Maxim Devyatovsky** on parallel bars. It's part of our "Nobody's Perfect" gallery, which reveals various quirky form breaks of top gymnasts.

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The March issue also has a profile on **Koichi Endo**, who has illustrated the men's Code of Points since 1989. Here's how he developed his skill as an artist when he was still a school boy: "I thought many gymnasts did the same [skills]. I drew new skills—for me—on textbooks or notebooks during boring classes. It was fun."

Considering how good he became at it, Koichi must have had a lot of boring classes. And yes, he is related to the late, great **Yukio Endo**, who was his father.

In his "Ziert Alert!," Publisher **Paul Ziert** brought up a great point in comparing women's and men's NCAA dual meets. The women still use the 10.0 and have created rules that encourage parity and down-to-the-last-routine excitement. The men use the FIG open-ended scoring system, even though most NCAA male gymnasts are not trying to make an Olympic team. Regular-season men's NCAA meets could be a great spectator event if the scoring format could be altered to create more parity, and thus, a few upsets.

I thought the sibling rivalry of **Maike** and **Katja Roll** was especially interesting. Maike, who turns 17 on March 22, says she is happy for the success Katja is enjoying as a junior. "Maybe this will change when we are both seniors, because then we really have to fight against each other since we both want to get a spot on the team," she says.

On the "**Warm-up**" page, we highlighted the March 1970 issue of *The Modern Gymnast*, which included men's routine requirements to become an elite back then. Here's one that should be added to the current Code of Points ASAP: "Each apparatus also required "1 non-stock part," which means an original skill. Now wouldn't

that

be wonderful?