

Written by Dwight Normile
Friday, 17 September 2010 12:25



USA Gymnastics and the **Ukrainian Gymnastics Federation** were "warned for negligence" by the FIG Presidential Commission for their failure to announce the return to competition of formerly retired gymnasts.

As reported already, the athletes involved are artistic gymnast **Alicia Sacramone** (USA), shown here, and rhythmic gymnast

Natalia Godunko

(UKR), both of whom were required to announce their return to competition six months prior to entering a meet. By not doing so, they violated WADA and FIG Anti-doping rules.

Romania's **Marian Dragulescu** received the same slap on the wrist recently.

The FIG news release also stated: "All FIG Member Federations have been reminded of the respective rules and informed that no more exceptions will be made"

Wonder why exceptions are being made at all?

My suggestion to all gymnasts: *Never* announce your retirement, because most of you come back anyway.

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Regarding Sacramone, I think she has a real shot at winning the world title on vault at the Rotterdam world championships next month. She made the world vault finals in 2005 (bronze), 2006 (silver) and 2007 (bronze). I thought her two vaults at the Visa championships last month looked cleaner and more dynamic than the same vaults **Kayla Williams** used to win the 2009 world title.

Paul Hamm

Speaking of comebacks, I chatted with **Paul Hamm** recently about his return to the sport. And I hope he heeds the above news item, because the U.S. could really use him next year when the qualification to the 2012 Olympics tightens. Hamm says he's still in the beginning phase of his training, putting in about three hours each morning under the watchful eye of **Andrei Kan** at his former club, Swiss Turners.

"He's really good at putting me in my place," Hamm says of Kan.

And does Hamm ever feel like giving up during this latest comeback?

"Every day you have a little bit of that, but then you realize you're getting better," he said.

Hamm, who visited troops in Iraq in August with three other Olympians, understands the new math of the five-man team that will be sent to London 2012. He has always been extremely balanced across all six events, and pommel horse, a soft spot for the U.S. men, has always been more of a strength than a weakness.

"[The five-man team] is a situation that's probably good for me," he said.

Hamm said he planned to visit various gyms as the summer ends. He wanted to train with **Jona than Horton**

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at Cypress Academy in Houston; the gym at Ohio State, where he trained for the 2004 Olympics; and the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

Shawn Johnson

If you haven't visited Johnson's website recently, check out her new training video, called ["The Journey Begins."](#)

Looks like she's completely healed from the torn ACL, since she tumbled a double pike on the regular floor mat (landing on a 4-incher). For her to take the time to create this video tells me that she's proud of her progress so far. And to have an upbeat coach like

Liang Chow

helping her each day, how can she not give it a go?

For me, two questions remain: Can she get back to where she was in 2008? And if she can, will it still be competitive in 2012?