

BALANCING ACT

**Gymnastics team
takes fresh faces
and new coaching
staff in stride, aims
for postseason
success**



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Competitive gymnastics is quite a balancing act.

The Mason gymnastics team has competed in five events this season and has brought home five championships. The girls were crowned champions at Flip Fest, Oak Hills, Northmont, Centerville, and the Indian Cup. The team has qualified for state the past four years and was the Cincinnati City Champions as well as district runner-ups last year.

Denise DeLotell is a first-year head coach for the Comets, and has been an assistant coach for the last six years. According to DeLotell, having past experience coaching the team has helped her transition into the head coach position.

“The head coach I was under, Kelly Wooten, was just awesome and she was a great coach and that’s why we got to state as many times as we did,” DeLotell said. “I paid attention.”

Lauren Brune, a 2011 Mason graduate, assists DeLotell. Brune was a captain of the gymnastics team and specialized in floor and vault. According to DeLotell, the age and experience of Brune strengthens the coaching staff while providing a young aspect to the team.

“She brings big advantages in that she is closer to the age of the gymnasts, so she can relate to them differently and I’m more like their mother, or their grandmother in some cases,” DeLotell said. “The fact that she was just a gymnast within the last five years is huge so she can explain how she did things and how it is supposed to feel. She has just been a huge asset.”

Many new faces have made their way into this year’s varsity rotation. Freshmen Donna Soltis, Lauren Brucher, Jessie Clark, and Jenn Kyselica have added depth crucial to their lineup. Although senior Mandie Shumate and sophomore Jasmine Bacchus are new to the team this year, they still contribute to the squad’s success. According to senior captain and 2014 City Champion, Gabby Sora, the young team will set higher standards in the future.

“I think with how young they are with the potential that they have now they can definitely grow as the years go on,” Sora said.

According to DeLotell, this young team has had its struggles throughout the season, but the leadership of upperclassman has guided them in the right direction.

“(The young team) has been a struggle, but I think because of the seniors they’ve been able to see what’s expected of them down the road,” DeLotell said. “I know they can handle it, it’s just if they have the desire. You can’t coach desire.”

According to DeLotell, the team needs to simply work on their confidence to find success at the district and state competition.

“The main thing they need to work on is confidence and showing off their routines,” DeLotell said. “They can work on the skills but you have to sell it. You have to sell what you are doing.”