

El Salvador

Region 5 All Star Team 2005 Trip!

Meet: Cupa International Forno de Izote
(The State Flower of El Salvador)

Levels: 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10

Site: Olympic Training Center/ San Salvador

Delegation members:

Twistars, USA, John Geddert Coach
Maureen Moody University of Michigan recruit
Kari Pearce
Nicole Curler Michigan State recruit
Elizabeth Mahlich
Taylor Zondervan
Alexis Byington
Nicole Dayton
Taylor Medrea

Anita Byington - Chaperone

Attending Parents:

Kevin and Nancy Moody
Deb Curler
Margy Dayton
Gene Medrea

Midwest Twisters, Mickey Orr Coach
Vaness Zamarripa
Amber Orr (Level 7)
Ida Orr Coach

US Airborne Rachel Rydbeck Coach
Kaitlyn Joseph

Arena Gymnastics/ Dan Miller Coach
Danielle Ikoma
Jamie Custer University of Arizona recruit
Gina Nuccio
Colleen Williams
Nicole Ellis

Aerial Gymnastics Jiani Wu Coach
Anna Li UCLA recruit

IGI Todd Gardner Coach
Kathryn Mahoney/ Attending Parent Magda Mahoney

Gym Kinetics Glen Whllming/Dana Edeus Coaches
Kylee Botterman

Olympic Dreams Dawn Toussaint Coach
Hannah Toussaint

Wrights Gymnastics Casey Wright/ Michelle Hart
Kelly Moffit Michigan State recruit
Stephanie McAllister Jennifer McAllister Chaperone

DeVeaus Gymnastics Thomas Strange
Elizabeth McNabb
Nicole Johnson
Julie McNabb Chaperone

Judy Dobransky Region 5 Judge

Special thanks to Joanie Zondervan and her Dad Gale Voss who generously drove the Lansing contingent in his wonderful motor home to Chicago the night before the 6 am flight through Atlanta to El Salvador!!!

The delegations connected in Atlanta and were joined by Marco Bravo who brought his athletes to compete and served as the interpreter for our 46 party delegation!! Jenna Bossle, Keagan Johnson, Kelly Rupkey, Emma Stevenson, Katy Zurales represented Midwest Academy.

Wednesday: We were met at the airport by Irving Nochez, the National Team coach and our host for the competition. San Salvador is the capitol of El Salvador and one of the largest populated cities in Central America!!! Our drive from the airport, coordinated by Irving, was mixed with the beauty of the mountains, the density and variation in population and the excitement of a true police escort!!! What a ride!!!

Checkin was very efficient, meal tickets were purchased and the group went to the training center to make plans for the rest of the week. The site had a warm up and workout gym for many aspiring rhythmic gymnasts, a group of boys and in the big arena, an all event workout for the San Salvador artistic athletes...all ages, sizes and levels!!!

Tom Koll and Connie Maloney had visited the arena the week before and began the education of Central America with the introduction of our own JO compulsories! The meet is hosting Level 3 - 10 and the optional rules from our American USAG will be enforced at the Copa this weekend!

We congregated, received instructions and returned for a very good dinner and preparation for our first workout at 6:30pm. Fortunately the spreaders we brought fit the bill and our girls were able to train full sets. Tomorrow the delegation will have a practice session in the early morning and the gym will be filled with Level 4 and 5 athletes for the rest of the afternoon.

The crew showed up for a good breakfast and workout began on time as more spectators entered the arena to watch the Americanos!!!

Thursday: Morning training went very well and following massive picture taking, our delegation traveled to a wonderful market and shopped for El Salvador crafts and souvenirs. A quick trip to the Plaza mall found some great high end stores and lots of packages returning to the hotel!!!

A late lunch was followed by a brief rest and then Opening Ceremonies. The girls were inundated with pictures and praise. The additional countries were represented with younger competitive athletes, both male and female. Dancers and rhythmic athletes and cheerleaders entertained a full house! The real treat of the evening after welcome speeches and introductions was the distribution of over 500 leotards generously donated by our athletes and clubs. The Children of El Salvador, and Guatemala were thrilled and went home with their gifts and Region 5 paraphernalia. Marco Bravo conducted the gift giving as our interpreter.

The girls finished another good meal and the "adult" delegation enjoyed an evening off campus!!!

Friday: Training is optional in the am and the group plans to support Amber Orr as she competes Level 7 that afternoon. Following a relaxing morning at the pool, the girls went to the 7/8 meet and cheered Amber to a 9.2 floor!!! The Federation had set up a trip for us to the Boqueron Volcano! and we climbed the precipice escorted by a group of El Salvadorian youngsters and got to see a landmark of the country. Traveling with our police escort we navigated "curve peilgranos" down the mountain to another sight seeing marvel..and incredible view!! picking coffee beans and buying souvenirs and home grown coffee!

A group of the coaches and parents enjoyed a round of golf while the girls and chaperones counted off and saw the sights!!!

Saturday, November 12 is competition day. The city market was exciting, enticing and the visit was all too short!! But...we did some great power shopping. Check the web site for lots of pictures!!

A 1:30 lunch sets the pace for a 3:00 stretch and event warm ups with a 4:30 start time. Our girls are divided into 3 groups while the 4th team is made up of Midwest athletes and two gymnasts from El Salvador.

Highlights of the meet included some stellar performances and great scores. 3 judges were used on each event and all the scores were averaged. A 9.61 took first on senior bars/ Maureen Moody. 9.65 was the top score on senior beam Anna Li and junior floor, Hannah Toussaint.. Medals were awarded for all athletes on each event and a beautiful All Around trophy went to top places in both age divisions. Junior winner, Elizabeth McNabb/ DeVeaus and Senior winner, Anna Li/ Aerials. A full set of results will be given to each athlete as a keepsake from the meet.

The crowd was truly appreciative!! and cheered all the athletes!

An evening of entertainment and Mexican food followed the competition. The girls looked great!!! and this was actually our first meal away from the hotel dining room!! The Federation has made every effort to transport our whole delegation to so many neat places...and with each trip, there is a police escort!!

Sunday: Glorious is an understatement!! The delegation was invited to the beach house of Monica . We traveled through the city and out to the pacific coast along the beach and surrounding forest areas. The destination was one of the most beautiful sites any of us have seen. The "get away" site was nestled in a protected cove between mountain-like peaks while the black sand beach absorbed the every changing tides from the active surf of the ocean. The "parents group" prepared a wonderful meal for all of us and the day was spent between ocean play, pool dipping and lots of sunshine!!! (plenty of sun screen!!) The delegation adults who did not get to visit the volcano were treated to a special outing and climbed the Volcano before visiting the Coffee plantation and joining us at the beach

house. "A Day in Paradise"...

Monday: Our final day of adventure began with a "late" wakeup, and a bus trip to The Devil's Door, the city market and another coastal beach!! The climb to the top of the Devil's door was an adventure in itself. The market allowed the power shoppers to finish their gift lists and thanks to Marco and his marvelous bargaining power,, there was more for the money!!! A full lunch at Pizza hut and a hysterical water purchase story got us on the road a little later than we anticipated. The beach ride was long but beautiful and Costa Del Sol beaches were clean and probably well attended during the sunny days of tourism. We had the beach to ourselves and enjoyed a beautiful sunset before heading home to eat dinner and pack for the departure on Tuesday.

Tuesday: With many goodbyes (Adios amigos) on Tuesday morning, the delegation packed the buses and headed to the Airport. FYI...there is an exit and entry fee in El Salvador that must be handled in cash or credit card!!! Be prepared on your next visit!!!

This journal is merely an overview of our marvelous trip! There will be more to follow!!!
Pictures and poetry!!

Gymnastically,

Judy Dobransky/Brevet Judge
Region 5 All Star El Salvador Official