



Leonard Isaacs

Head Coach and CEO, American Academy of Gymnastics
USA World Team Coach



HALL OF FAME

Inducted 2008

Leonard Isaacs *Class of 2008*

Years of coaching

1967 to present

Positions Held

- Chicago Park District-assistant to Erna Wachtel (1956 U.S. Olympic coach) 1967-1972.
- Northwest Suburban YMCA (Des Plaines, IL) assistant to Sandy Oldham (Elite Judge) 1969-1973.
- American Academy of Gymnastics-Head coach & CEO – 1973 to present. Oldest gymnastics club in Illinois.
- IL USAG Education Chair for over 12 years.
- Head coach for Porter summer gymnastics camps: 1972-2002.

Gymnasts developed during formative years

10 National Team boys including 3 who went on to World Championship teams (Robbie Brown, Brian Ginsburg, and Chris Waller (Olympian)).

Coached Kurt Thomas for 3 summers.

Over 20 male gymnasts went on to college teams on scholarships.

2 Women's World Team members (Christa Canary & Larissa Fontaine).

Several J.O. all-around and individual event champions and over 40 college team members on scholarships.

Illinois High School competitors: 4 state champions, 20 all-around champions, team scoring record, all-around record, two 1st and one 2nd at high school nationals in just the last 5 years.

Coaches and club owners developed, mentored, and influenced

Ron Bartusiak (Texas), Cary Griffin (Illinois), Robbie Brown (Illinois), Greg Teets (Illinois), Neil Palmer (Illinois). Chris Waller (CA), Any Morreale (Illinois), Carrie Minshall (CA), Patti Murphy Resnick (Boise State), Ben Fox (OK), Nina Dziem Dent (Ohio State), Nancy Roach (NV), Mary Charpentier Janssen (UIC), Larissa Fontaine (Stanford), Doug Davis (Tumbl Trak). Larissa and Chris were also Elite program Athlete Reps at the same time.

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Athletic background

- High school gymnast at New Trier High School under Joe Giallombardo
- Diving and track and field in college.

Honors and Awards

- Region 5 Rookie Coach of the year 1989-1990 season
- Illinois USAG Inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award 2008
- High School Coach of the Year 2008.

Publications

- Writings disseminated to membership over 40 years.

Contributions

- Over 50 clinic appearances split between coaching and lecturing.
- National Congress lecturer in Boston and Region 4 Congress in Milwaukee along with
- several Region 5 Congresses and several Illinois State Congresses. Also coached 2
- Region 5 camps (Head Coach for bars and floor).
- Was pioneer in the concept and development of teaching gymnastics with progressions. instead of spotting starting with beam in the 1960's. The promotion of this type of coaching was greatly helped by the clinics and writings of Dr.William Sands who was Leonard's assistant coach in the mid to late 70's. Bill and Leonard often discussed selection and development of young children which Bill later expanded upon when he authored the original TOPS Program Manual.
- At Kathy Kelly's request Leonard rewrote the National Team qualification procedures for Pan Am Games, World and Olympic Teams (1994-1995) which helped to avoid the problems encountered in the 1992 Olympic Trials.