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Bill Doucet, Times Staff | Feb 24, 2011 - 11:46 AM | Report a Typo or Correction

Gerber most decorated at Games

Mikaela Gerber wasn't sure she would even be able to compete in the Canada Winter Games.

Holding a development card in artistic gymnastics, the 15-year-old Cambridge native was worried that would hold her off the Ontario team for the Games, currently running in Halifax, N.S.

Not being fully carded yet, Gerber was given the go-ahead and showed why she is considered one of the top up-and-coming senior gymnasts in the country. The Galt Collegiate Institute student won five medals last week, taking silver in vault, bronze on beam, silver on floor and bronze all-around – though she was just 0.25 points out of the tie for first place – as well as gold for the team event.



Gerber most decorated at Games. Fittingly, Mikaela Gerber stands on the Stairway of Excellence at Galt Collegiate Institute after winning five medals in women's artistic gymnastics at the Canada Winter Games.

BILL DOUCET, TIMES STAFF

Gerber said she was told she tied the record at the Games for the most medals won by a women's artistic gymnast.

"It was a perfect experience," Gerber said after classes at GCI before heading out to train at the Oakville Gymnastics Club.

"It gave me a chance to compete three times in one competition, once for the team, then all-around, then event finals. It's what the Olympics are like. It was a great experience and I got a chance to feel what a team is like."

Despite being one of the favourites to medal at the event, along with Oakville clubmate Sabrina Gill, Gerber said she took nothing for granted going into the Games. In fact, she was somewhat shocked to do so well.

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"I was a little surprised. I never really go in with too high of expectations, I just go out there for my team and try my best. To get five medals is icing on the cake," she said.

This was the first time Gerber had been to a Games and she said it had an international feel, which was something she won't soon forget. The opening ceremonies, when you first walked out, you felt like you were in the Olympics. It was so fun."

Aside from the medal count, the event also gave Gerber a chance to hit her routines prior to some big events. Next month, there's Gymnix International in Montreal and the Wild Rose International competition in Edmonton, and then the Canadian Gymnastics Championships are in May in Prince Edward Island. She is hoping to qualify for the world championships in October in Tokyo.

"Every routine is a confidence builder. After each routine, it's like I hit another one, so I can do it one more time. This meet was a great confidence builder because I hit some of the routines I was less confident on.

"It really is big to know I can hit a routine so I can be calm and just go there and do my stuff and not worry about anything else."

Gerber also received some exceptional experience as the team ambassador – where she was called upon to speak to media and hold squad pep rallies – and was unofficially named the women's artistic team captain.

"This was the first experience of anything like this for me," she said.

"It was just amazing. It gave me something that I've never gotten before."

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