

Nine OGC athletes golden at trampoline/tumbling provincials

MICHAEL IVANIN / OAKVILLE...

1
2

His career started with a backflip into a pile of leaves at the encouragement of a group of friends.

When he pulled off the stunt, Michael Chaves thought maybe he had a talent for this sort of thing. He began competing in artistic gymnastics but didn't enjoy all of the various disciplines.

"I didn't really like bars and rings," he said. "I liked flipping. That was my favourite thing."

So Chaves made the switch to tumbling three years ago and has quickly climbed the ranks.

Sunday, Chaves claimed the Ontario youth national title at the Ontario Trampoline and Tumbling Championships and is already looking forward to the day he makes the final leap to the senior division to compete against the country's best.

He's well aware of what it will take to get there. He's already studying videos of three-time national champion Alex Seifert.

"I like practicing stuff that's harder than the level I'm at," he said. "It's getting exciting. I'm always on YouTube checking things out."

Chaves, who just turned 16 last month, had the opportunity to compete against Seifert at Elite Canada in April and got a boost of confidence with a fifth-place finish against senior national team members, many of them in their 20s.

No pressure for Meehan

Chaves was one of nine gold medalists for the host Oakville Gymnastics Club, including Jonathan Meehan, who has already reached the level Chaves is striving for. In fact, Meehan is the only tumbler at the national level in Ontario, which took off some of the pressure.

Without having to worry too much about scores and placings, Meehan used provincials as preparation for nationals. Though he took a hard fall on his final pass, he got up smiling.

"It's been a bit of a roller coaster," he said of his first year at the senior level. "I haven't been as consistent but moving up and doing the harder skills that's expected."

Although his passes didn't go as well as he liked, Meehan isn't ruling out adding more difficulty for nationals.

"There's a lot more motivation doing harder passes," he said. "There's always that next move. If you don't have that motivation to get there, it's difficult to move on."

Luke MacKinnon moved up at the provincials. After finishing second at each qualifier, he took the novice national title on the weekend.

MacKinnon said missing a week of training before provincials worried him a little but he came through to take the gold.

"It's really rewarding," he said.

Teammate Jack McGarr also moved up the podium to earn the silver medal.

"Some of the guys have harder passes," said coach Don Holmes. "But it's about landing on your feet at the end of the day."

MacKinnon was the division's only competitor to crack the 30-point mark, doing so on all four of his passes. Asked if his performance gave him confidence heading to the Canadian championships at the end of the month in Charlottetown, MacKinnon said, "Tons. I'm really looking forward to nationals."

McGarr topped 29 points on three of his four passes. Like Chaves, he switched from artistic gymnastics because "tumbling looked cooler."

Oakville earned another one-two finish in the women's national novice, with Savannah Wepf and Kezia Allen taking gold and silver respectively. Allen led after the preliminaries after the posting the divisions top score, 29.000, on her first pass but Wepf delivered two strong passes in the final to overtake her teammate.

Dakota Treleaven was a model of consistency, scoring 57.500 on her two passes in preliminaries and then matching that score in the final to take the gold in the novice national women's 15-and-over. She would also add a silver medal in double mini trampoline, placing second in the women's national novice 15-and-over division.

Four trampoline winners

Dezember Treleaven was fifth in tumbling but she would earn a gold medal on trampoline. She earned the division's highest score (29.500) on her final routine to win the women's provincial C 15-and-over title.

Connie Robinson won the women's provincial C 9-10 tumbling gold. Scoring a 29.100 on her final pass took her from third to first as she won the title by less than half a point. Elizabeth Karam was fourth.

Valeria Granda made a similar jump from third to first on her final pass to win the women's provincial B 13-14 division title.

Erik Polasek also claimed gold by taking first in the men's provincial B 15-and-over division.

Oakville also had four silver medalists in tumbling, including a pair who earned their first medals of the season. Kiana Ng had finished between fourth and 12th at the four Ontario Cups during the season and Abigail Youngberg placed between eighth and 12th. However, both were on the podium at provincials.

Ng took second place in the women's provincial B 15-and-over division. Youngberg was second in the women's provincial C 11-12 division while teammate Naomi Smith was fifth, just one-tenth of a point out of third.

"I think there was no pressure on them and they delivered," Holmes said. "Without the stress, they were able to show their best routines."

Connor Salmon finished second in the men's provincial C 12-and-under and Oakville's Steven Tucker and Jamie Patrick earned silver and bronze respectively in the men's provincial A 15-and-over division.

MacKenzie Dodd earned a bronze medal in the men's provincial B 14-and-under while in the men's provincial D 12-and-under Keegan Merner edged teammate Tyler Hutchings by a tenth of a point for the bronze.

Nicole MacDonald was fourth in the women's provincial D 9-10 division.