

NATIONAL AAU JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

Boys' Gymnastics

Comments by Tom Maloney, AAU Gymnastics Administrator

The National Junior Olympic Gymnastic Championships for boys was held at San Diego State College, San Diego, California on August 21, 1969. The site and facilities for this competition were excellent and meet director Ed Frantz, assisted by Bill Schaeffer, did an excellent job.

Twelve of the fourteen regions in the United States were represented in the 13-14 age group, and all fourteen regions participated in the 15-18 age group. This year's championships featured both compulsory and optional exercises, all completed on one day, requiring the boys to be in excellent condition, and not a single entry withdrew while going through this grueling program on a hot day.

In 1968 the first Jr. Olympic gymnastic championships were held and there were only one or two outstanding boys in each age division, whereas in the championships this year there were a number of boys in each age group that were outstanding. Many of our gymnastic experts were doubtful that our boys could work the all around program, but now the interest shown and the progress made in just one year proves that our youngsters can work the decathlon of gymnastics.

The gymnastic exercises demonstrated by the boys in this competition surprised everyone including the four former Olympians who were judging. The work of Tiger Taylor, David Eby and Scott Evans in the 13-14 age group astonished the judges. All of these boys were strong in every event in the program. The competition in the 15-18 age group was even more outstanding with only three and one half points separating the winner and sixth place. Bill Hudgins followed closely by Stan Gladstone, John Pellikan, Richard Gaylor, Robert Quintanales, and Blane Nasueschick, were so close that the lead changed six times during the competition. All of these boys showed that they definitely have the potential to become Olympic gymnasts and by 1972 they can help the United States improve our position in international gymnastics.