

A Summary of Canadian Gymnastics Results at the Major FIG Competitions

by Hardy Fink - September 2003

The double team qualification for the Olympics Games and the double medal wins by Kyle Shewfelt have had a number of persons send me questions related to the comparison of these outstanding results with past performances. I have been involved in one way or another with all of our Olympic qualification efforts since 1968 and with the FIG since 1974, so perhaps I can provide some answers and information for all rather than for one at a time.

The men's and women's teams qualified together for the Olympic Games only in 1979; unfortunately, it was for the Games that were to be boycotted by Canada in its political acquiescence to the wishes of US President Carter. Olympic qualification was not necessary before 1976 but Canada (COA and/or CGF) chose never to send a full team before. Canada has never qualified and/or attended with two full teams though we lucked in in 1984 and in 1988 due to political boycotts. Neither team was able to qualify for the 1996 Games – the only time this has happened.

Of course, no other Canadian gymnast has ever won two medals at one FIG competition. Kyle Shewfelt now becomes the most successful Canadian world level medalist with four medals compared with Curtis Hibbert (2), Alexander Jeltkov (2) and Elfi Schlegel (1). Curtis Hibbert had five World Championship top-8 placings and a total of ten on four apparatus at world level competitions. Kyle has had three World Championships top-8 placings and a total of six at world level competitions. Stella Umeh also had three World Championship top-8 placings and Alexander Jeltkov had two at World Championships and a total of five at world level competitions. Have we had three apparatus finalists before at a World Championship? NO – but we have had six; four for men and two for women in 1992. Not listed but significant is that we have many times had the first reserve for apparatus finals, but such detail is too extensive for now.

Kylie Stone's 14th all-around is the best ever for a Canadian woman at a World Championship. Lori Strong placed 15th in 1987 and Stella Umeh placed 15th in 1993. Others who logged top 20 AA results at World Championships have been Karen Kelsall, Elfi Schlegel, Larissa Lowing, Yvonne Tousek and Kate Richardson. The best Olympic result was Bonnie Wittmeier's 13th in 1984 and the best World Cup result was Karen Kelsall's 10th in 1978.

David Kikuchi's 20th all-around is tied for 4th best ever for Canadian men at a World Championship. Philippe Delesalle placed 12th in 1979, Brad Peters 14th in 1985, Philippe Chartrand 19th in 1985 and Curtis Hibbert 20th in 1989. The best Olympic result was Philippe Chartrand's 18th in 1984 and the best World Cup result was Philippe Delesalle's 8th in 1977.

For the following chart, I have listed the significant results for all major world-level FIG Competitions (World Championships, Olympic Games and World Cup Finals) since Canada first participated in 1956. The evidence of some Canadian participation at the beginning of the 20th century is so confused that I haven't bothered to include it.

Many of the results cannot be understood without knowledge of the evolving rules and other changes in competition format. I have tried to add some of this information where I thought it might be enlightening or interesting. Lots more could be said about every rule change, every result and every person mentioned, but that will have to wait for another day. Noteworthy is Canada's influence in much of the sport's evolution.

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Competition Information		Results for Canadian Men			Results for Canadian Women		
(Total # of participants are presented in brackets)		Team Rank	Best All Around Rank	Top 8 Apparatus Rank	Team Rank	Best All Around Rank	Top 8 Apparatus Rank
1956 Olympic Games	Melbourne AUS	na (7)	Ed Gagnier 49 (63)		na (9)	Ernestine Russel 56 (65)	
This was the last time a women's group floor exercise was held. It eventually became Rhythmic Gymnastics which held its first World Championship in 1963.							
1958 World Champs.	Moscow URS	na (15)	-		na (13)	Ernestine Russel 60 (88)	
1960 Olympic Games	Rome ITA	na (20)	Richard Montpetit 85 (130)		na (17)	Ernestine Russel 76 (124)	
1962 World Champs.	Prague TCH	18 (20)	Richard Montpetit 100 (132)		16 (17)	Gail Daley 91 (116)	
Canada sent teams for the first time. Gail Daley became the first Canadian to earn a FIG pin for earning a 9-point average.							
1964 Olympic Games	Tokyo JPN	na (18)	Richard Kihn 82 (130)		na (10)	Gail Daley 55 (86)	
1966 World Champs.	Dortmund FRG	18 (20)	Wilhelm Weiler 77 (143)		15 (22)	Sandra Hartley 71 (156)	
1968 Olympic Games	Mexico City MEX	16 (16)	Gilbert Larose 65 (117)		11 (14)	Jennifer Diachun 51 (101)	
Canada sent two teams but for internal political reasons that still irk me, chose to send only five men. In those days six competed and five scores counted (6-6-5 format).							
1970 World Champs.	Ljubljana YUG	19 (22)	Andre Simard 80 (154)		13 (21)	Jennifer Diachun 41 (137)	
1972 Olympic Games	Munich FRG	na (16)	Steve Mitruk 97 (113)		11 (19)	Jennifer Diachun 50 (118)	
An all-around final of the top 36 was held for the first time, but there was no restriction as to numbers per nation. All 6 Japanese men qualified – all placed in the top 11.							
1974 World Champs.	Varna BUL	17 (18)	Bruce Medd 87 (126)		11 (22)	Nancy McDonnell 54 (148)	
1975 World Cup	London GBR		na (12)			na (10)	
<p>The USGF hosted an event they called the World Cup in Miami in 1971. The FIG then decided to adopt this concept and held its first such competition in 1975. The best all-around gymnasts were invited by the FIG to the first eight such optional-only competitions (12 in 1975 and 18 plus, variously, one or two from the host country in the next seven). These World Cups were held in 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1986, and 1990 (note the evolution to the non-Olympic even years). A rudimentary qualification competition system was used for the 1990 World Cup. These competitions used six apparatus finalists in 1975 and eight in all subsequent years.</p> <p>The FIG Congress in 1990 decided on annual World Championships of different formats and the World Cup disappeared for eight years. In 1998 a World Cup series for single apparatus was introduced (taken from the example of the European Grand Prix System). The World Cup Final is now held every two years for the best eight gymnasts on the ranking list but after 2004, qualification will probably be through Continental Unions.</p>							
1976 Olympic Games	Montreal CAN	na (12)	Philippe Delesalle 22 (90)		9 (12)	Karen Kelsall 27 (86)	
<p>For the first time, only 12 teams were permitted into the Olympic Games. All countries had to go through a complex qualification system of dual meets and the results were accumulated and compared. The system became so corrupt, that at the behest of a Canadian contingent (Lou Lefaive (Sport Canada), Bryce Taylor, Carol Anne Letheren, and Hardy Fink), the FIG abandoned the system and agreed to count only 40% of the qualification system points towards Olympic Qualification. The other 60% would come from all country Olympic Qualification competitions in Hamburg GER for women and in Wiesbaden GER for men, both held in May 1976. The top six teams from Varna were automatically qualified. The Canadian women placed 3rd from among the rest and essentially qualified for the Olympic Games in 9th place. The Canadian men placed 6th but by the next morning, the result had been changed to 8th putting Poland and Italy marginally ahead and leaving Canada's men's team out of its own Olympics. Somehow they managed to find some more points to contribute to the 40% earned at earlier competitions.</p> <p>For the first time also, only the top three per country could enter the All-around Final and the top two per country, the Apparatus Finals. This was to prove a huge incentive for world-wide participation and success. As late as 1972 for example, 5five Japanese men competed in the high bar final. In 1974 all but two women's apparatus finalists were from the Soviet Union and East Germany.</p>							
1977 World Cup	Oviedo ESP		Philippe Delesalle 8 (18)	Philippe Delesalle PB-4 th and HB-4 th		na (17)	
1978 World Champs.	Strasbourg FRA	14 (22)	Warren Long 28 (147)		8 (22)	Karen Kelsall 17 (145)	
Following the example of the 1977 World Cup, eight finalists per apparatus was introduced as the standard. This change could not be included in the Olympic Games until 1984.							
1978 World Cup	Sao Paulo BRA		na (19)			Karen Kelsall 10 (16)	Karen Kelsall UB-8 th and FX-7 th
1979 World Cup	Tokyo JPN		na (19)			na (16)	
Because Philippe Delesalle did not compete in the 1978 World Championships due to illness, he was not eligible to be invited to the 1978 or 1979 World Cups.							
1979 World Champs.	Fort Worth USA	11 (23)	Philippe Delesalle 12 (151)		10 (26)	Elfi Schlegel 20 (164)	
<p>Up until 1978, World Championships were held every four years. This Championship began the new cycle of every odd year so as not to interfere with the Olympic Year. It was also the first World Championship to serve as Olympic Qualification. And in that year, Canada qualified both its men's and women's teams for the 1980 Olympic Games.</p> <p>Philippe Delesalle placed 4th in the All Around Final with an incredible 58.65 (9.775 average), but in those days the preliminary compulsory and optional scores were carried forward. The subsequent Olympic boycott ended his career at age 21. He competed at one Olympic Games, one World Cup and one World Championship, yet experts from around the world still ask me about him and how he trained.</p>							

1980 Olympic Games	Moscow URS	na (9)	na (65)		na (8)	na (62)	
These Olympic Games were boycotted by many western countries at the instigation of the USA.							
1980 World Cup	Toronto CAN		Warren Long 14 (20)	Warren Long FX-6 th and V-5 th		Monica Goermann 17 (20)	Elfi Schlegel V-3rd
Elfi Schlegel became the first Canadian to win a World level gymnastics medal.							
1981 World Champs.	Moscow URS	14 (27)	Warren Long 22 (171)		10 (19)	Elfi Schlegel 30 (135)	
1982 World Cup	Zagreb YUG		na (20)			na (17)	
1983 World Champs	Budapest HUN	15 (26)	Danny Gaudet 69 (175)		10 (28)	Bonnie Wittmeier 25 (176)	
1984 Olympic Games	Los Angeles USA	7 (9)	Philippe Chartrand 18 (71)	Warren Long V-7 th	5 (9)	Bonnie Wittmeier 13 (65)	Kelly Brown V-6 th
These Games were boycotted by many Soviet Bloc countries, but not Romania. Eight finalists per apparatus was introduced at the Olympic Games for the first time. Rhythmic Gymnastics- all-around only - became part of the Olympics for the first time (notwithstanding the fact that a group FX routine was part of women's gymnastics in 1956). Lori Fung of Canada won the gold medal.							
1985 World Champs.	Montreal CAN	11 (21)	Brad Peters 14 (147) Philippe Chartrand 19 (147)		9 (23)	Christina McDonald 26 (158)	
1986 World Cup	Beijing CHN		Brad Peters 12 (17)	Brad Peters PB-6 th and HB-7 th		na (14)	
1987 World Champs	Rotterdam NED	14 (27)	Curtis Hibbert 30 (176)	Curtis Hibbert HB-2nd	8 (31)	Lori Strong 15 (201)	
1988 Olympic Games	Seoul KOR	9 (12)	Curtis Hibbert 22 (89)	Curtis Hibbert FX-8 th , PB-6 th and HB-7 th	11 (12)	Monica Covacci 22 (91)	
The Canadian men qualified because North Korea and Cuba chose not to attend. Canada beat the '84 Olympic Champions, USA which placed 11th.							
1989 World Champs.	Stuttgart FRG	16 (29)	Curtis Hibbert 20 (190)	Curtis Hibbert HB-5 th	6 (28)	Larissa Lowing 18 (187)	Larissa Lowing V-8 th
Canada's proposal to the 1988 FIG Congress resulted in "new-life-finals" which were used for the first time in 1989. Canada also successfully proposed that individuals be grouped as Mixed Groups and drawn randomly with the teams rather than always start the competition. This was also the year (right at the time of the Championships) when East Germany dissolved and influenced much of the changes to occur in the Eastern Bloc (URS, YUG, TCH, ROM) in the subsequent two years. The women's 6 th place team finish in a "wide-open" un-boycotted world competition remains one of the high points of Canadian gymnastics history.							
1990 World Cup	Brussels BEL		Curtis Hibbert 10 (20)	Curtis Hibbert PB-8 th and HB-7 th		Leah Homma 16 (19)	
1991 World Champs.	Indianapolis USA	16 (30)	Curtis Hibbert 30 (212)	Mike Inglis V-5 th	12 (28)	Stella Umeh 17 (189)	
The 1990 FIG Congress introduced a new competition system with different format World Championships every year. Also introduced for the first time in Indianapolis was 6-judges on the panel. This was the last World Championships that the Soviet Union competed as a team – it was soon to split into 15 distinct countries. This also led to a world wide distribution of Soviet coaches and gymnasts that brought up the level of numerous countries. In the 1992 World Championships and the 1992 Olympic Games the Soviet Union competed as the Soviet Unified Team and afterwards as separate countries. A formal judges' control system largely proposed by Canada was used for the first time. The FIG-WTC computerized and expanded it into the controversial JOE (Judge's Objectivity Evaluation) System.							
1992 World Champs.	Paris FRA			Curtis Hibbert V-3rd , PB-7 th and HB-6 th Rob Doyle HB-7 th			Stella Umeh V-8 th and BB-5 th
This was the first World Championships for individual apparatus – an unbelievable step for a tradition bound sport, but one that would advance gymnastics opportunities everywhere. Prize money was awarded for the first time.							
1992 Olympic Games	Barcelona ESP	na (12)	Curtis Hibbert 36 (93)		10 (12)	Stella Umeh 16 (92)	
1993 World Champs.	Birmingham GBR		Curtis Hibbert 42 (123)			Stella Umeh 15 (97)	Stella Umeh FX-8 th
This competition was for all-around gymnasts and for individual apparatus specialists. Only 24 gymnasts (2 per country) were allowed in the all around final. The Codes of Points contentiously introduced a large amount of bonus for difficulty; something that would drive the sport in unanticipated and controversial ways for the next decade.							
1994 World Champs.	Brisbane AUS		Alan Nolet 30 (86)			Marilou Cousineau 24 (66)	
A format similar to Brisbane was used, but there was no All-around Final competition.							
1994 World Champs.	Dortmund GER	15 (21)			10 (16)		
This was the one and only World Team Championships. Twenty-four men's and women's teams were eligible but had to qualify through their Continental Unions. Each Continental Union was allocated a number of teams that could be eligible from its region based on past results. No all-around or apparatus results were announced. A 7-6-5 team format was used here and continued until Atlanta. This permitted teams to include specialists (or non-all-arounders) for the first time. For example at the 1995 World Championships Nadia Hatagan ROM competed only on optional uneven bars and scored 9.825.							
1995 World Champs.	Sabae JPN	14 (24)	Peter Schmid 55 (209)		15 (26)	Yvonne Tousek 45 (197)	
This is the first and only year in which neither of Canada's teams qualified for the Olympic Games.							

1996 World Champs.	San Juan PUR			Richard Ikeda HB-8 th			
	The second World Championships for individual apparatus.						
1996 Olympic Games	Atlanta USA	na (12)	Alan Nolet 56 (112)		na (12)	Yvonne Tousek 26 (105)	
1997 World Champs.	Lausanne SUI	17 (35)	Peter Schmid 47 (236)		8 (19)	Yvonne Tousek 20 (149)	
	For the first time, there were no compulsory exercises in accordance with the hard fought 1994 FIG Congress decision (This was proposed by Canada already in 1976.). Also a Team Final (for 6 teams) was introduced. This made the first day(s) of competition a true Qualification Competition for all subsequent medal rounds (Finals). The concept of an A-jury to determine the Start Value and the B-jury to register only execution deductions which would be subtracted from the Start Value was also introduced in Lausanne. Start Values were displayed for the first time. In addition a new team format of 6-5-4 was introduced to make eventual room for the addition of other Olympic disciplines without exceeding the IOC quota for the gymnastics sports. (Trampoline was eventually given the extra spots.)						
1998 World Cup Final	Sabae JPN						
	This was the first World Cup Final to follow a qualification series and for individual apparatus only. The six best gymnasts were invited to the Final and the host country was permitted to have one gymnast on each apparatus if none had qualified.						
1999 World Champs.	Tianjin CHN	18 (43)	Alexander Jeltkov 28 (293)	Alexander Jeltkov HB-2nd	10 (39)	Kate Richardson 19 (260)	Yvonne Tousek FX-8 th
2000 Olympic Games	Sydney AUS	na (12)	Neither Jeltkov nor Kyle Shewfelt competed all-around			Kate Richardson 15 (97)	
	At the urging of the IOC, the FIG introduced a tie-breaking system (but only for Olympic Games). Each of men's and women's gymnastics gave up 10 spots and Rhythmic Gymnastics gave up 4 so that Trampoline could be in the Olympics for the first time with 24 athletes (12 men and 12 women). Incidentally both Canadians (Karen Cockburn and Mathieu Turgeon) won bronze medals. Five "Wild Cards" for men and for women were made available for developing countries but based on one per Continental Union.						
2000 World Cup Final	Glasgow GBR			Kyle Shewfelt FX-2nd Alexander Jeltkov HB-3rd and FX-8 th			
2001 World Champs.	Ghent BEL	12 (40)	Grant Golding 22 (268)		10 (27)	Kate Richardson 16 (172)	
	For the first time, one-touch warm-ups were not permitted for Team Finals and Apparatus Finals. The Team Final format was changed to 6-3-3 and included the top eight qualified teams. The new Vault Table was introduced and only 32 gymnasts were allowed into the All Around Final and these competed in seeded groups of 16.						
2002 World Champs.	Debrecen HUN			Kyle Shewfelt V-4 th			
	This was the third and the last of the World Championships exclusively for individual apparatus.						
2002 World Cup Final	Stuttgart GER			Kyle Shewfelt FX-2nd and V-5 th Alexander Jeltkov HB-5 th			
2003 World Champs.	Anaheim USA	9 (52)	David Kikuchi 20 (322)	Kyle Shewfelt FX-3rd and V-3 rd Alexander Jeltkov HB-6 th	11 (35)	Kylie Stone 14 (223)	
	Only 24 gymnasts (2 per country) were allowed into the All Around Final. Vault finalists qualified by demonstrating two vaults (under Finals rules) during Qualification – a long anticipated first which was proposed by Canada as long ago as 1976 .						
2004 Olympic Games	Athens GRE						
2004 World Cup Final	TBA	Will be based on the current system of qualification points; but I hear only the top six will be invited. A harbinger of things to come?					
2005 World Champs.	Melbourne AUS	An all-around and individual apparatus World Championships similar to Birmingham '93 and Brisbane '94.					
2006 World Champs.	Ahrus DEN	An open full format World Championships. The top 24 teams (and an unrestricted number of individuals) will qualify to the 2007 World Championships.					
2006 World Cup Final	TBA	Will follow the new but as yet unspecified system of Continental Qualification. It may include an all-around competition.					
2007 World Champs.	Stuttgart GER	A full World Championships but with only the best 24 teams from 2006 as well as an unrestricted number of individuals.					
2008 Olympic Games	Beijing CHN						