

Gymnasts place fifth...

Conference finish wins team spot at regionals

By Michael Cohen

Gymnastics

Debbie Bessette and the rest of the Antioch Community High School girls' gymnastics team met fierce competition at the North Suburban Conference (NSC) Girls' Gymnastics Championships on Jan. 25.

The meet is held each year at the school that won the conference, and so this year Stevenson High School hosted the championship. Antioch went up against six other teams from the NSC, including powerhouses Stevenson, Warren, and Vernon Hills.

Antioch's performance at this meet will be used to place them in a regional competition.

"Our goal for the meet was for Antioch to start building a name for ourselves," said Bessette. "We wanted to get closer to the top 3 in the conference than we did last year."

Bessette wasn't let down by her squad's performance.

The Sequoits, under the leadership of captains senior Lizabeth Miedona and junior Beckie Geyer, completed strong routines.

"We aimed to look as good as we could in front of other teams and get us ready for regionals, sectionals, and state [competitions]," said Miedona.

"This meet was important for us because it is forcing us to get serious about our upcoming meets," said Geyer.

Although no girl from ACHS placed in either events or all-around competition, the

Sequoits shined in many areas.

One highlight of the meet was ACHS sophomore Amanda Wagener's uneven bars routine. She completed "giants" for the first time since last year and had not tried them even in practice. Wagener had just received her driving permit, and prior to the meet she bet her parents that if she did the "giants" in her routine, she would get to drive home.

"I surprised the coaches by throwing my giants, it was important to me also," said Wagener. "It was awesome to drive. I chickened out at first, but then drove after dropping off my boyfriend."

Wagener received an 8.5 for her performance on the bars.

Other Sequoits, like Miedona and freshman Katie Collins, gave strong performances on the bars receiving an 8.1 and 8.35 respectively.

On the vault, Wagener gave another strong performance and received an 9.1 for her effort.

"For the vault, I've been doing the same thing all year. I've done nothing different in practice. It just gets more intense out there during the meets," said Wagener.

The floor exercise and the beam held challenges for the team, with no one girl receiving a score higher than 8.4 on either events.

Angel Simonini, ACHS freshman, finished with the highest score for the

Sequoits on the floor exercise with an 8.4.

"My toughest move during the routine is the layout, one and a half twist. I don't practice it a lot because I try to take it easy during practice because of my hurt back, and hardly ever practice my floor routine. I try to save everything up for my meets," said Simonini.

Wagener received the highest score on the beam from the team with a 8.15.

"What makes the beam difficult is the fact that you have to stay tight and in line with the beam... the thing is hard too," Wagener jokingly added.

Stevenson won the meet, with Vernon Hills and Warren close behind. Kate Kuchel, from Stevenson, won the all-around competition.

Antioch finished in fifth place with a score in the 130s, a goal Bessette had set out for the team before the meet. They were happy to reach their goal.

Antioch's performance secured them a position at the regional competition, where they will go head to head against Vernon Hills and Wheeling who are both tough teams.

They hope to continue to improve in the regional meet.

The Sequoits were able to finish one place higher than rival Lake Forest, who they have



FLYING: Freshman Katie Collins does the vault last week at the North Suburban Conference meet held at Stevenson High School. Collins received a score of 8.35 on the bars. The Antioch Sequoits finished in fifth place, ahead of their rival Lake Forest High School. The finish qualified the team, coached by Debbie Bessette, for regionals to be held Feb. 5, also at Stevenson High School. Stevenson won the conference meet with Vernon Hills in second and Warren in third place. Kate Kuchel from Stevenson won the all-around competition.

Photo by Michael Cohen



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-Debbie Bessette
gymnastics coach



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