

Cobra gymnasts claim 33 Vermont State titles



The 2018 Vermont State Gymnastics Championships provided an opportunity for the Rutland-based Cobra Gymnastics team to shine. The meet was held at Bellows Falls High school March 17 and 18. Ten Vermont gymnastics clubs competed, with 371 total gymnasts in the meet. Cobra qualified 52 girls for the meet and competed in six awards in: vault, bars, beam, floor and all-around as well as a team title.

“The girls were fantastic this weekend,” said Shelby Collett, owner and head coach at Cobra. “They’ve grown incredibly this season as athletes and children, proving their abilities to discipline themselves athletically and enjoy the sport all the same.”

The weekend began with the Xcel Teams, a program designed for beginner-advanced gymnasts who want to compete in multiple sports beyond gymnastics. The Cobra Bronze girls stood out with their swing dance choreography. The 14 member team, ages 7-12, took the second place with a team total of 114.775. First-year members won state titles: Chloe Mol of Brandon won the state title on beam (9.50) and floor (9.35) in the 9-year-old age group while Sadie White of Manchester claimed the state title on beam (9.70) in the 10-year-old age group, and Samantha Schramm of Poultney won the state title in the 8-year-old age group in bars (9.675) and balance beam (9.625). Third-year members Maisha Hendrickson of Rutland and MaKenna McKnight of Hampton, N.Y., also claimed state titles. Hendrickson won the 5-to-7-year-old age group on beam (9.25), while McKnight won the 9-year-old age group on vault (9.60). Third year member Ally Cerrata of Rutland Town tied for the state title on floor (9.6) in the 9-year-old age group.

The six-member Xcel Silver team, while they placed second as a team on beam, finished third in the overall team competition with a 110.350. Elianna Carman of Proctor, a third-year member, won the state

title in the 8-to-10-year-old age group on floor (9.55). Her teammate and first-year member, Alison Usher of West Rutland, won floor (9.65) in the 11-to-12-year-old age group.

The eleven member Xcel Gold team impressed the judges on bars and captured a team win on the event and took second place in the overall competition with a 111.70. In the 8-to-10-year-old age group, three Cobra girls rose above the rest. Sydne Sterling of Manchester, a third-year member, won the state title on vault (8.775) while Izabella Adams of East Dorset, a third-year member, won the state title on floor (9.55). Jada Hughes of Wallingford, a third-year member, won the state title on bars (9.625), beam (9.425) and all-around (36.925). Teammate Abigail McChesney of Pawlet, a fifth-year member, won the state title in the 11-to-12-year-old age group on beam (9.525) and qualified as one of the eight athletes to represent Vermont in the Xcel Gold Regional Championships in Boston in May. This is McChesney's second year qualifying for the Regional team.

Saturday evening concluded with the highly anticipated USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic Level 7-10 meet.

McKenna Greene, Lili Zens and Maleah Jones won the second place state title in the Level 7 competition; all of their routines made up the team score of 108.550. Greene of Rutland, a six-year member, tied for the state title on floor (9.50) in the 13-14 year old age group. Zens of Sunderland, a third-year member, qualified for an All-Star spot in the Level 7 Regional Championships.

Ella Tashjian of Manchester, a fifth-year member and only Cobra Level 8 competitor, showed her athleticism by winning all five state titles in the 8-to-11 year old age group. She scored an 8.45 on vault, 8.65 on bars, 8.45 on beam and a 9.45 on floor. Tashjian's 35.00 AA score earned her a spot on the Level 8 Vermont Regional team, to be held in Springfield, Mass., in April.

Sunday's competitions were dedicated to the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic program. By 8 a.m., 92 Level 3 competitors packed the floor with high energy.

The seven-member Cobra team finished third on bars, but fell short of their team goal by just .15 and settled for a fifth place team finish with a 112.15 team total. Jayla Eugair of Brandon, a second-year member, won the 12+ age group state titles on bars (9.525), floor (9.45) and all-around (37.85).

The Cobra team wrapped up the weekend with an impressive performance during the Level 6 meet. This 11-member team placed second in bars, beam and floor but settled for a third place finish with a 111.15 team total. Robin Tashjian of Manchester, a fourth-year member, won the state title on vault (9.375) in the 8-10 year old age group. MacKenzie Carlson of Rutland, a six-year member, won the state title on bars (8.85) and all-around (36.45) in the 15+ age group. Karena Kuehl of Rutland, a five-year member, won all five state titles in the 11-to-12-year-old group with a 9.4 on vault, 8.825 on bars, 9.625 on beam, 9.475 and a 37.325 in the all-around.

Photo courtesy Performance Photography

Chloe Mol, beam state champion on the Bronze team, strikes a pose on the mat.