

## North of England Gymnastics Association

### GfA Team Gym Competition 2015

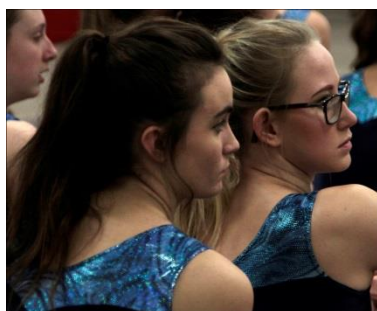


The event was held on November 15<sup>th</sup> at Hartlepool Gymnastics Club.

This was the second GfA competition held in the Region during the year managed by the General Gymnastics TC. In addition two other competitions, including GfA and advanced level work were hosted by City of Newcastle GC.

The purpose of this event was to create additional and new opportunities for Clubs and gymnasts who regularly take part in GGTC managed competitions. The competition was advertised across the region and open to all Clubs.

We anticipated that some teams would have previous experience of TeamGym, while others would be competing for the first time. We planned that Teams would be grouped appropriately so that new teams had support and encouragement from more experienced teams, but at the same time scores would be separated at the results stage to ensure fair competition.



Our hope was that the competition would generate interest in and enthusiasm for Team Gym and that more clubs may become involved both as a result of taking part, attending as spectators and through hearing about the event from others. The event would add a further dimension to clubs offer to members giving young people additional opportunities to compete and to experience working as a team and hopefully provide a fun and engaging competitive opportunity, encouraging participants to stay in the sport.

- Entries were received from nine Clubs, though one subsequently withdrew. Only one of the eight taking part had an significant experience of TG, two teams had competed on one occasion earlier in the year and five were completely new to the discipline.
- The Clubs taking part were experienced in a range of other disciplines – WA, Tumbling, Acrobatics and General Floor, Vault and Apparatus competitions. Gymnasts experience ranged from regional level champions to 'first time at a competition'!
- The Clubs came from all parts of the region – Northumberland, the Yorkshire borders, Tyne and Wear and Teesside.
- The competition ran from 9.00am to 5.00pm to accommodate 26 Micro Teams and 11 Full TG Teams competing at Levels 5 and Level 6 across all age groups from Mini to Senior. A Disability Team competed at Level 7.
- Over 180 gymnasts took part.
- The event was judged by six judges. The youngest judge was 16 and the oldest 78. Their experience was in TG (2); MA (1); WA (2); Acrobatics and Tumbling (1)
- The scoring and music was managed by three young leaders with support from an experienced announcer.



- The youngest gymnast was aged 8 and the oldest competitor was 42.
- Entry fees were kept at a reasonable level to encourage teams to take part. The Micro Team fee was £20 and Full Team £40.
- Spectators were charged £4 for adults and £2 for children. Approximately 250 people attended to spectate and the gym was full throughout the day.
- For most of the spectators, TG was a new experience.



The event did not run without some challenges, the main one being the general inexperience in terms of judges, coaches and officials. While generally at a competition in any discipline the majority of people know what is going to happen and how things work, for this competition it really was necessary to brief everyone, from the people collecting 'tariff sheets' at the door, to the coaches, the announcer, the judges and the music stewards so that the event ran as smoothly as possible. The withdrawal of the ninth Club was also a blow as this meant losing an experienced team and a qualified TG judge.

From our perspective, the event fulfilled its purpose.

- We engaged with new clubs, new gymnasts and new spectators as well as providing a further opportunity for regular General Gym participants.
- We encouraged coaches and gymnasts to try something new and, in some cases move out of their well-established comfort zone in other disciplines and enjoy a different gymnastics opportunity.
- A simplified judging system ensured that all the judges could work quickly and confidently and this made the day fun for them too.
- We awarded 264 medals and ribbons so most teams and all Clubs went home with a symbol of their success.
- Refreshments were available throughout the day, entry charges were reasonable and all spectators had a view of all the action.
- It was an opportunity to pilot elements of the proposed TG Disability programme, using simplified judging systems and adapted tariff sheets for everyone and seamlessly integrating modified apparatus within a mainstream competition.
- Two teams have already decided to enter the City of Newcastle Open TG in January.
- Modified tariff sheets and common skill values made the coaches administrative tasks easier. In theory at least!





The General Gymnastics TC has agreed to continue to offer two TG competitions during the year as part of the annual competition programme. These development level competitions will run in addition to and compliment a programme of Club Open events held in the region and in neighbouring regions and alongside an already extensive GGTC Competition programme. Financially the event was affordable for clubs and sustainable for the TC. These decisions will ensure sustainability at this level over the foreseeable future.

Feedback received by email after the event:

R – A General Gym club. ‘Thanks for a lovely competition, J and J learned a lot and the kids had a great time.

G – Disability Team ‘Well done on a great competition. Never done Micro before! Our gymnasts loved it’

B – Acro and Tumbling ‘Thank you for a wonderful competition. Everyone was buzzing and very excited over the prospect of another competition in January!’

A – Acro/Tumbling and General – ‘Brilliant day. Thanks and well done’.

RA – Acro and Tumbling – ‘So glad we did the competition – most enjoyable and good natured competition for a long time. The kids loved it and we will definitely repeat.’

H – Tumbling, General, WA – ‘Really enjoyed the competition. Our Purple Team want to compete in Newcastle – can you advise us?’

