

# Mountain Gymnastics Center hits the ground running in 2020-21

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Blairsville's Mountain Gymnastics Center's (MGC) 2020-21 season got off to a flying start thanks to a pair of meets in 20 days between Nov. 15 and Dec. 5.

The season opened on a high note with MGC claiming six first-place individual finishes and five runners-up in Woodstock at the Turkey Tumble on Nov. 15.

In USA Level 6 competition, Emma Schuette recorded a first-place all-around score of 35.295 thanks to a high-score of 9.2 on the bars. She was second on the floor at 9.1 and third on the beam (9.025) and vault (8.6).

Reese Chambers was first in USA Gold with an all-around total of 33.275. She took home first in three of four events with scores between 8.45 and 8.6. Chambers also took second place on the bars.

In AAU Bronze, Brooke Mowry and Madelyn Primeaux recorded first-place all-around scores of 34.5 and 36.1, respectively. Mowry placed first on the vault (8.85) and the beam (8.7); Primeaux took the top score on the vault (9.2), beam (9.1) and floor exercises (9.2).

Shaylyne Davis and Madelyn Earley each secured the top spot in AAU Silver. Davis recorded MGC's highest all-around score of the day with a 37.05 via a 9.4 on the beam and a 9.25 on the floor exercises - both good enough for first.

Earley took three of the



AAU Bronze - Back Row L to R: Selah Patterson, Madelyn Primeaux, Lucie Burgess. Front Row L to R: Baylor Sullivan, Kylee Coggins, Brooke Mowry. Photos/submitted by MGC.

four events, highlighted by a 9.6 on the bars, giving her an all-around total of 36.8. A 9.0 on the bars was her lone second-place score of the meet.

Abby Brown (36.05) and Addison Harkins (36.75) both finished second all-around in USA Silver. Harkins turned in an impressive 9.7 on the bars - MGC's highest single score of the day. Brown placed first on the vault with a 9.5 - MGC's best vault score of the meet.

Selah Patterson placed second all-around (34.25) in AAU Bronze after taking home first on the bars (9.1) and floor (8.4). Kylee Coggins also picked up a second-place overall finish in AAU Bronze competition with a 35.55.

Lola Patton was second all-around in USA Level 6 with a 35.775 all-around tally and a first-place score of 9.175 on the floor.

In other USA Level 6

results, Avery Frechette placed third all-around at 34.575, and Josie Poston was fourth overall and recorded the high score on the vault with an 8.8.

Baylor Sullivan and Lucy Burgess both placed third in AAU Bronze; Emma Madlock was third in AAU Silver after notching a first-place score of 9.15 on the vault.

Lindsey Hammond also came in third all-around in AAU Silver, while Grace Rice



AAU Silver/Gold - Back Row - L to R: Nevaeh Leopold, Abby Brown. Front Row - L to R: Emma Madlock, Shaylyne Davis. Photos submitted by MGC.

and Keely Shook each turned in a fourth-place performance. Addyson Lee placed fifth, and Nevaeh Leopold recorded a 34.7 all-around total in AAU Gold competition.

MGC's USA Gold and Level 6 gymnasts traveled to Emerson on Dec. 4-5 to participate in the Sugar Plum Classic.

In Level 6 action, Frechette finished fourth all-around with a 34.575 - taking

home first-place on the vault at 8.475.

Schuette was fifth overall, placing third on the bars and the beam. Patton was third on the beam (8.95) and sixth on the floor (9.125). Poston recorded a fourth-place showing on the vault with an 8.4.

In USA Gold competition, Chambers turned in a top-eight performance, highlighted by an 8.75 on the floor.



AAU Silver - Back Row - L to R: Lindsey Hammond, Addyson Lee, Madelyn Earley. Front Row L to R: Keely Shook, Addison Harkins, Grace Rice. Photos submitted by MGC.



USA Gold / Level 6 - L to R: Josie Poston, Lola Patton, Reese Chambers. Photo submitted by MGC.

## NASCAR 2020

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Christmas with The Arkansas Traveler

NOTE: Each year during Christmas we break from our traditional NASCAR racing news in order to bring a timeless Christmas story from Bobby Ward, an early sprint car racer from Arkansas. While he was not well known along the east coast, he was a household name among racing fans in the Midwest. When Ward showed up at the race track, he was always the "one to beat."

He is a member of the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame.

Bobby had a stroke five years ago, but is doing well. He and his wife sold their "homeplace," and moved to Conway, Arkansas, so he could be closer to a medical facility.

"I think that sometimes people overvalue the things of Christmas, and forget to really focus on their friends and the actual holiday season," said Ward. "I certainly have more material things now, which I thoroughly enjoy, but as far as true happiness goes, I'm not so sure that we weren't just as happy back in my early years."

Ward was born in 1935 in the community of Bee Branch, Arkansas, about 40 miles north of Little Rock, in a one-room log cabin. His racing career began in 1956. He raced hard, traveled long distances, won many, many championships, accumulated a large fan following, and became known as "The Arkansas Traveler."

"Christmas for us was very light," continued Ward. "Mom and dad, and sometimes all the family would go out on Christmas Eve and cut down a tree. It wasn't always a cedar tree. Sometimes it was a pine. After getting it set up in the house we would decorate it. The decorations consisted of some colorful ribbon that had been cut in strips, and strings of popcorn."

"That was all the decorations we used. There were no lights, or anything shiny."

"My three sisters and I each got one toy. That's the only time of the year we got any store bought toys. But I don't ever remember a Christmas when we didn't get that one toy."

"On my sixth birthday I had asked my mom for some type of Tinker Toy. On Christmas Eve, I happened by the bedroom and saw a Tinker Toy sticking out from under the bed. Mom saw me, and said, 'Son, would you believe that Santa Claus came by earlier today and left this for you? And he might even come back again tonight.'"

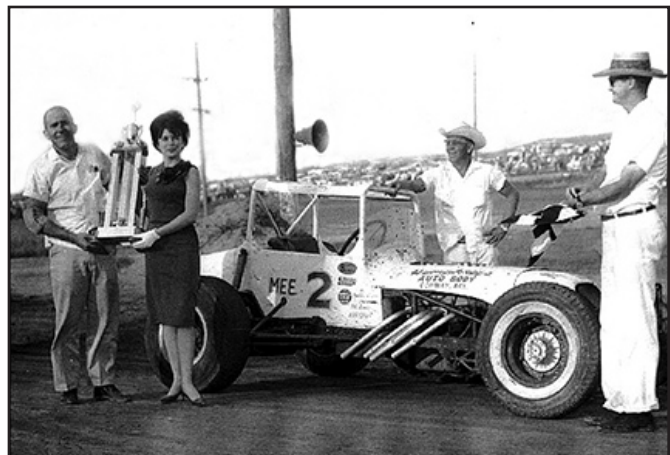
"Well, I believed her, and sure enough, the next morning Santa had paid us a second visit and left some oranges, apples, and cookies."

"Our Christmas dinner consisted of chicken and dumplings, and dressing, along with ham and some other vegetables, plus a cake and pie."

"We never had turkey or anything you had to buy."

"Around Christmastime, daddy would kill some hogs and cure the meat. He would take some type sugar cure and put it all around the ham, and inject it all around the bone. This not only flavored the meat, but preserved it. The meat would keep in a smoke house for at least a month."

"In my very early childhood, we had Christmas by our-



Bobby Ward wins the 1975 Southwest Championship at Albuquerque.

elves. We lived a pretty good way from our neighbors, and traveling in our wagon would have taken too long.

"As I got older, we moved and dad bought a car, and we visited my father's mother and dad on Christmas. I had a cousin that always got lots of toys and we were allowed to play with them while the rest of the family visited."

"I never said anything to mother and dad about the single toy I got, because I knew how things were with us."

"During the year, I was able to make homemade cars out of blocks of wood."

"We used our imagination and what we had, to entertain ourselves."

"We always ate well, even outside the holidays. We had pork, along with fried potatoes, pinto beans, and corn bread. Every Thursday night we had corn bread and buttermilk."

"There was no electricity in my early years. Our traditional lighting was a simple kerosene lamp. One day my dad brought home a new type of kerosene lamp, called a "Latin Lamp." It gave a much brighter light, and that was the first time my sister and I had been able to do our homework together at the kitchen table."

"Sometimes at night I would get a glass of milk, and only drink half of it. I would leave the rest of it setting in the kitchen. When it was really cold, the next morning I would have a half glass of ice cream."

"When we moved from Bee Branch to Shirley, Arkansas, there weren't any boys around to play with, just girls. Mother made me a doll on her old tread-mill sewing machine, and filled it with straw and rags, so I would have something to play with."

"It might seem funny now, but I had the time of my life playing with that doll, along with my three sisters and the other girls."

"Whenever my dad took corn to the grist mill, to get it ground into meal and grits, I always went along. The corn was yellow. We never raised any white corn like they have now."

"My childhood was good. I thoroughly enjoyed growing up with my sisters and we were a loving family. We were also a working family. We worked hard, and loved each other. We didn't go around hugging each other, saying, "I love you," but we all shared a bond of love."

"I don't ever remember a day growing up when I didn't feel loved."

"I tried to race everyone

just like I would want him to race me."

"I didn't always win, but I knew it was important for me to try and finish each race. I think in order to enjoy our success we've got to put forth effort. The races that I enjoyed winning the most were those I really had to work for."

"Greater labor leads to greater love."

"To maximize our present enjoyment in life we might need to give up some of the comforts of our easy life style brings us. Instead of buying a present ready-made this Christmas, why not see what kind of physical chore you could do for your neighbor. Instead of buying a pre-cooked pie or cake for Christmas dinner, why not bake it yourself?"

"Christmas happiness can still be found. You just need to know how and where to look."

Meanwhile, Kevin Harvick has been named the National Motorsport Press Association's Driver of the Year.

He won a career-best nine races in 2020, including victories in the Brickyard 400 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the Southern 500 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway and the Bristol Night Race. He also won the regular Cup Series championship.

Harvick finished fifth in the final series standings.

Also receiving multiple votes was 2020 Cup champion Chase Elliott, 2020 IndyCar Series champion Scott Dixon and Kyle Larson, who won 46 races on dirt this year.

**Racing Joke:** James had gone to the company doctor for a pre-season check-up and was told he had high blood pressure.

"It runs in the family," he said.

"On your mother or father's side?" asked the doctor.

"Neither," James replied.

"It's on my wife's side."

The doctor confused, asked, "How can your wife's family give you high blood pressure?"

James replied, "You try spending the weekend with them and you'll see."

**Racing Trivia Question:** What year was the NASCAR Truck Series started?

**Last Start Question:** What year was the first Daytona 500 run? Answer: It was 1959. The winner was Lee Petty.

Gerald Hodges is a syndicated NASCAR writer and author. His books may be viewed and ordered online at Amazon.com. You may contact him by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com.

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