

MGC's season is kicking into high gear after two February meets

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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Lawrenceville - Blairsville's Mountain Gymnastics Center opened its 2015 Competitive Season last month at the Snowflake Invitational.

The local gymnasts competed in the AAU Level 1, 2, and 3, along with the AAU Silver and AAU Gold.

The USA Gold squad placed all six of its girls in fourth place or better in their respective age group.

Reagan Ledford placed second all around - picking up first place on the bars, the vault, and second on the beam. Mia McCombs was also second all around with a first place finish on the beams and second on the vault, the bars, and the floor.

Coming in third place was Evelyn McBride and Laura McGaha. McBride took first place on the floor and third on the bars and on the beam. McGaha placed second on the beam and the bars.

Erin Raper and Jaylen Hogsed each placed fourth. Raper finished in first place on the vault and second on the floor. Hogsed finished third on the vault.

The AAU Silver level saw Annalyse Kiernan place third after taking first on the floor and the vault while taking second on the beam.

Jacey Lee came in fourth - taking third on the bars, the beam, and the floor. Kiersten Queen also finished in fourth after taking third on the vault and fourth on the floor.

Kaitlyn Tant placed fifth all around, Hana Gregory was sixth, BreKailyn Arp and Brandy Barlow came in seventh.

The AAU Gold squad was led by Caymin Thompson's fourth place all around finish - taking the top spot on the beam and on the floor. Chloe Truex came in fifth all around with a third place finish on the bars and on the floor. Sofia Swartz took sixth place all around following a fourth place performance on the floor. Jordan Swanson was seventh after a second place finish on the floor.

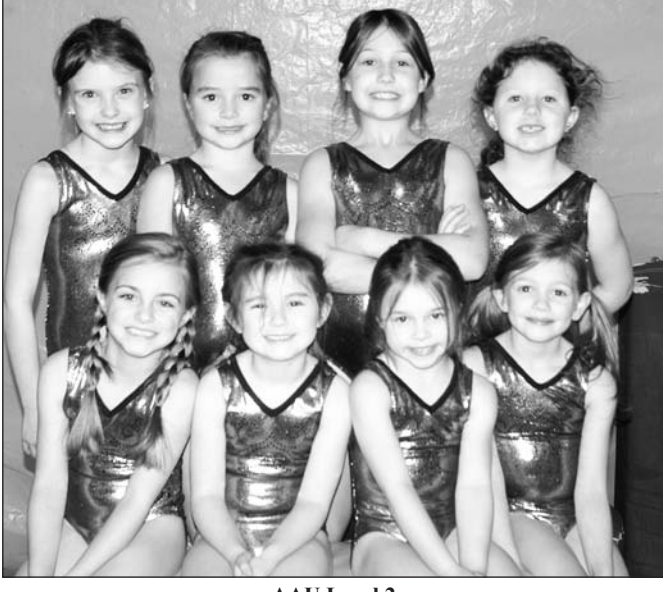
Avery Frechette took fifth all around in the AAU Level 2 competition after claiming second on the



AAU Level 3



AAU Xcel Silver



AAU Level 2

beam.

Others competing in AAU Level 2 were Molly Williams and Lola Patton, who each took seventh. Lola Patton took second on the floor.

Bailee Stiles was eighth all around after placing second

on the bars. Zady Ludlum came in second on the vault and ninth all around. Lola Hunter was 10th, while Rose Huff, and Kennedy Mason, each finished in 11th.

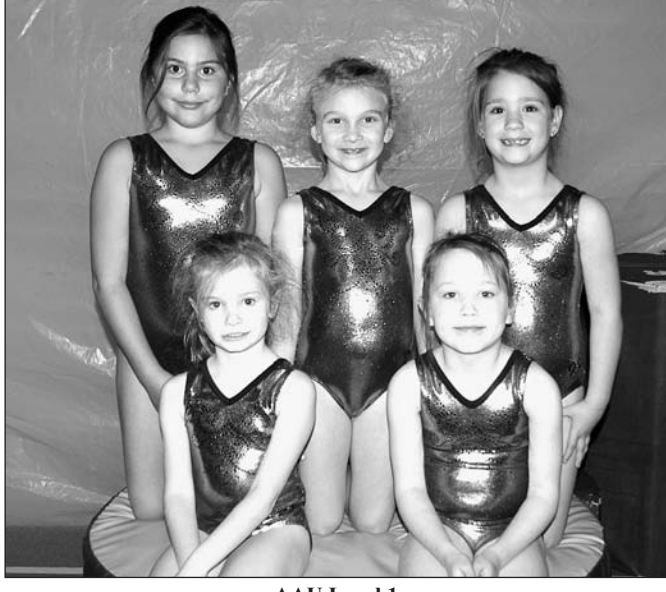
Ella Matheson took second on the bars and sixth



AAU Gold



USA Xcel Gold



AAU Level 1

all around in AAU Level 3. Madison Pelfrey was eighth all around while Ariel McCarter and Josie Poston each finished in ninth place.

Nevaeh Leopold placed second on the floor and eighth all around in AAU Level 1.

Reece Jones also came in eighth and Ragan McCarter was 10th. Millie Banks and Anna Barrett each took 11th.

Tucker - Last weekend, the MGC's youngsters hit the floor at the Valentine Invitational and picked up four first

place finishes.

Thompson took first on the bars, second on the beam, and third on the bars for a first place all around finish at the AAU Gold level.

Kiernan was first all around at the AAU Silver level after taking first on the vault and the floor and second on the beam.

Others from MGC at the AAU Silver level were: Kiersten Queen, who took second all around after a first place performance on the bars. Tant took third all around - taking second on the vault and the bars. Lee was fourth all around and second on the floor. Arp and Gregory each came in fifth while Barlow placed sixth.

At the AAU Gold level, Swartz came in fifth all around, Swanson was sixth, and Truex was seventh.

The USA Gold level saw McBride and McGaha take first place all around. McBride took first on the beam and the floor while McGaha completed the clean sweep - taking first in all four events.

Hogsed came in second after taking second in all four events. Ledford was also second - taking first on the vault and the bars. Raper was third all around with a first place finish on the vault. McCombs finished fourth all around.

At Level 2, Williams finished second all around with a first place showing on the bars. Frechette was third all around - taking first on the vault and the floor. Patton was fourth all around, Ludlum came in fifth, Hunter was sixth, Huff and Mason took seventh and Bailee Stiles captured 13th.

The Level 3's saw Matheson coming in third all around after a second place showing on the bars. Ariel McCarter was sixth all around, Poston was seventh all around, and Pelfrey was eighth all around.

The Level 1 team was led by Leopold's eighth place all around finish after taking second on the floor. Jones placed third on the beam for a ninth place all around finish. Ragan McCarter came in 11th, Barrett was 12th, and Banks placed 13th.

Up next is the Champion Cup on Feb. 28 and March 1 in Roswell, followed by the Spring Breakout in Woodstock on March 14-15.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Great American Race goes to Logano

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.—Joey Logano won the 2015 Daytona 500 in an overtime finish, followed by Kevin Harvick and Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Based on the preliminary races and many wrecks that occurred in each race leading up to this year's "500", most racers predicted Sunday's 200-mile affair would be a crashfest.

But it didn't happen. Instead, it was one of the milder Daytona events, with only six cautions. The "Big One" never happened.

"I really don't know what to say," said Logano. "It's all about hard work. That's what got us here. We had a great car today. We knew we had a really fast car, but once the race started, the team was quiet. They didn't know what to expect. Well we did it and here we are."

Kevin Harvick, the runner-up did not lead any laps.

"We had a pretty good plan and was where we wanted to be, but there was no one to help push me past Joey," said Harvick. "We wound it pretty good coming out of that last turn, but it's like we were racing each other. Neither one of us had any drafting help. He was in the lead and he won."

Dale Earnhardt Jr. finished third and seemed to have a fast car, but all he said was, "I got shuffled back on that last restart. I got down on the inside and couldn't do anything."

Denny Hamlin was fourth, followed by Jimmie Johnson, Casey Mears, Clint Bowyer, Martin Truex Jr., Kasey Kahne, and Greg Biffle.

Jeff Gordon started on the pole and led the early part of the race. He was shuffled back, and did manage to get back up front twice, but he seemed to lose some of his zip and wrecked near the end. He led six times for 87 laps, and was credited with a 33rd-place finish.

Tony Stewart lost control of his car on lap 41, and smacked the outside wall. He returned to the track for a few laps, but pulled it behind the wall and parked it. He finished

42nd.

Brad Keselowski ran up front for most of the race until losing an engine in his No. 2 Ford on lap 159. He finished 41st.

Logano took over the lead for the last time during lap 171. He was still the leader on lap 197, when Justin Allgaier's engine blew in his No. 51, causing him to brush the outside wall. NASCAR put out the red flag, which meant the race would have a green-white-checked ending.

For the g-w-c restart, Logano was on the outside front, while Denny Hamlin was on his inside. In the second row, it was Jimmie Johnson and Clint Bowyer. Then it was Martin Truex and Kevin Harvick.

Logano got a good jump on the restart and pulled back into the lead, with Clint Bowyer right behind him. Kevin Harvick managed to work his way into the second spot. As the field took the white flag, signifying the last and final lap, it was Logano and Harvick.

Midway down the back straightaway Austin Dillon got into the rear of Jeff Gordon, sending him into the wall. There were a few other cars that were damaged, but it was not a major Daytona accident.

The leaders were half a lap from the finish when the incident occurred and NASCAR allowed the race to finish under green.

BUSCH BROTHERS OUT INDEFINITELY

Neither Kyle nor Kurt Busch was able to make this year's Daytona 500. Kyle, who had qualified fourth, broke his right leg and left foot in a crash with 8-laps to go in Saturday's Xfinity race.

Kurt's problems were not racing related. NASCAR suspended him indefinitely on Friday after a judge declared him guilty of domestic violence.

While it might be only two or three months before Kyle is back in a race car, it could be considerably longer than that for Kurt.

NASCAR suspended Kurt Busch after a judge said the former champion almost



Joey Logano celebrates his first Daytona 500 victory. Furnished by NASCAR.

surely strangled and beat an ex-girlfriend, Patricia Driscoll last fall and there was a "substantial likelihood" of more domestic violence from him in the future.

Busch will not be allowed to race or participate in any NASCAR activities until further notice given the "serious nature of the findings and conclusions" made by the Delaware judge.

Kurt appealed NASCAR's decision, but a three-judge panel and the Appellate Administrator met on Saturday and upheld the ruling.

Busch's attorneys have filed a motion asking the judge to re-open the hearing so that they can present testimony from three acquaintances of Driscoll, who they say were previously reluctant to get involved, but have now come forward to contradict statements Driscoll made about her relationship with Busch.

Kurt Busch becomes the first driver suspended by NASCAR for domestic violence.

Regan Smith replaced Busch in the No. 41 car for the Daytona 500.

Kyle Busch underwent successful surgery to repair the fracture on his right leg and broken left foot, and was resting comfortably in the hospital over the weekend.

He will be out of competition indefinitely.

Matt Crafton filled in for him during the Daytona 500, but Joe Gibbs Racing has not named a substitute driver for any other races.

RYAN REED CLAIMS DAYTONA XFINITY WIN

Ryan Reed caught Brad Keselowski in the final turn of Saturday's Xfinity Series race at Daytona International Speedway, and took the checkered flag in a nail-biting

finish to earn his first career NASCAR victory in his 40th start.

Reed got a push from Chris Buescher about halfway to the finish line on the final lap, and breezed by Keselowski for the win.

There were several wrecks that eliminated 23 cars. At the end there were only nine cars on the lead lap. Buescher finished second, followed by Ty Dillon, Austin Dillon, Brad Keselowski, David Starr, Aric Almirola, Kyle Larson, Ross Chastain, and Dale Earnhardt Jr.

TYLER REDDICK GETS FIRST TRUCK VICTORY

Tyler Reddick led 48-laps on the way to victory in Friday night's Daytona Truck race. The win was the first of his career.

Top-10 finishers: 1. Reddick, 2. Erik Jones, 3. Scott Lagasse, 4. Austin Theriault, 5. Ray Black, 6. David Gilliland, 7. Bryan Silas, 8. Matt Crafton, 9. Daniel Suarez, 10. Johnny Sauter.

Weekend Racing: The Sprint Cup cars and Camping World Trucks will be at Atlanta Motor Speedway. The 1.5-mile high-banked track is one of the fastest in the nation. While the present day track only dates back to 1960, its predecessor, Lakewood Speedway opened right after World War I.

The track held races between 1919 and 1979, including events sanctioned by AAA/USAC, IMCA, and NASCAR. It was a one-mile dirt track which was located adjacent to Lakewood Fairgrounds. Lakewood Speedway was considered the "Indianapolis of the South" as it was located in the largest city in the Southern United States and it held an annual race for Indy cars.

Racing Trivia Question: Many drivers from Owensboro, Kentucky have raced in NASCAR. Can you name at least three?

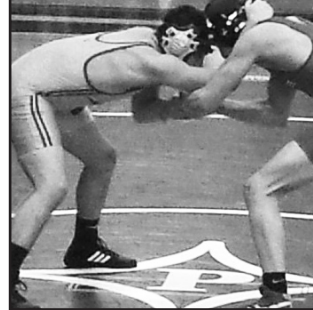
Last Week's Question: Who won the first Daytona 500, which was held in 1959? **Answer:** It was Lee Petty.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: www.hodges@race500.com

Two Union wrestlers reach Sectionals

Freshman Grizzly Breedlove (pictured above) and sophomore Zach Payton reached the State Sectionals. Unfortunately, both came up just short of becoming Union County's first wrestlers to reach the State Tournament.

There are high hopes for the future with the wrestling squad losing only one senior.



Union County Recreation

LAST WEEK To Sign-up

Sign-ups end February 27th

Please come by the office at 310 Wellborn or go online at unioncountyga.gov to sign-up. Ages 3 to 14.

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REPORT TO THE ELEMENTARY GYM