

Gymnastics Nationals at Stoke-on -Trent

On April 30th and May 1st Stoke-on-Trent hosted the annual Schools Gymnastics Nationals. Over the course of the weekend gymnasts from eleven of the thirteen regions of the United Kingdom competed to take away the coveted titles of British Schools' Champions in Floor and Vault, Tumbling and Sports Acrobatics.

At Regionals in January, our Under 11 boys, Under 11 mixed team and our Under 14 boys had won their respective Floor and Vault titles and were representing the East of England at this competition. The mixed team finished a creditable 6th. Meanwhile the boys performed exceptionally well with the Year 7 and 8 team finishing 2nd and the Year 6 team winning their competition.

Our tumblers, Max and Jake performed with strength and precision in tough fields. Max finished 4th and Jake finished 6th in his first Tumbling national event.

In Sports Acrobatics, we qualified 4 pairs to National Finals. Max and Hannah made it to this top competition for the fourth time and on each previous occasion have narrowly missed out on medals. In a bid to secure a podium place the two, plus Max's boys' pairs partner, Reuben, travelled to Heathrow Gym Club to undertake a masterclass with Nic Osborne, the choreographer for 'Britain's Got Talent' winners and Olympic closing ceremony performers, 'Spellbound'. The work was intense and the sequences were taken to a new level as a result of Nic's stunning efforts. Hopes were high and Max and Reuben did come home with silver medals. That podium place still alluded Max and Hannah who finished 4th but the journey, and the experience was incredible and no one has regrets about the effort sustained.

In the Under 11 section, Ollie and Chloe finished 5th and Jake and Kit took silver. During the presentation, despite 2nd place being advertised throughout the morning, Kit and Jake were announced as 3rd place. When the mistake was discovered the boys were asked to return to the podium to exchange medals with the rightful bronze medallists and to accept the correct silver medals. There was a tough moment when the mistake was explained as the crowd responded by 'ahhhh' in a sympathetic response to seeing the silver medals being taken from the opposition. Jake and Kit, however, reached across and shook hands with their opponents and the 500 plus crowd exploded into rapturous applause. The correct result with an encouraging response was all we could have hoped for.

Mr North and Miss Butler were delighted with the behaviour and team spirit from all teams. The children were a pleasure to coach and their results are indicative of continued hard work and a real pride in performance.

Mrs North

Head of Latham House and Teacher of Sport