

Written by John Crumlish

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British gymnast **Taeja James** told IG she was gratified by her World Championships debut last month in Stuttgart, where she helped her team qualify for next summer's Olympic Games in Tokyo and finish sixth in the team final.

"I was definitely proud of myself," said James, who competed on two apparatuses in qualifications and the team final. "My job for the team was floor and vault, and I felt like I delivered and didn't let the team down."

As the only British female gymnast in Stuttgart without prior Worlds participation, James said she relied on her previous Commonwealth Games and European Championships experience to manage the unique stress in Stuttgart.

"I felt a lot of pressure as this was my first World Championships and an Olympic team qualification event," said James, who turned 17 on October 15, two days after Worlds concluded. "I felt qualifications could have gone better. However, I made the corrections for the team final."

Both of James' scores counted in qualifications, where teams dropped the lowest score on each apparatus. In the team final, where all scores counted, she earned the highest British score on floor exercise.

James is confident that cooperation and focus can help her and her team perform to potential at the Tokyo Games.

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"I feel as a team we need to continue to work together and support each other to get the best result in Tokyo," said James, who trains under coach **Jody Kime** at the City of Birmingham club. "Personally I want to work on consistency when dealing with pressure on the world stage so I can deliver in both qualifications and finals."

James said stronger vaults and all-around effort will help her in her quest to earn a spot on the British team in Tokyo.

"My biggest goal is to make sure I have my double twisting Yurchenko (vault) for the team, and I'm working on a second vault," she told IG. "I'm also pushing to work all four pieces again after a number of injuries have set me back a little bit."

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