

Written by Dwight Normile
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IG Editor Dwight Normile reports from the 2009 Visa (U.S.) Gymnastics Championships, which began Wednesday in Dallas.

Stretching OUT

IG Editor
Dwight Normile



DALLAS — **John Orozco** won his third consecutive U.S. junior title (14-15) with room to spare. He posted the top all-around total of both age groups (86.850), with Sam Mikulak (SCATS HB) second with 83.500. Orlando Metro's Jake Martin placed third with 81.050. Orozco and Mikulak went 1-2 last year, as well.

Coached by **Jason Hebert** at World Cup Gymnastics, Orozco was in class of his own, even with a fall on vault (handspring front with double twist), the only event he did not win. He started his day on pommel horse, a weak event for many U.S. all-arounders, but posted a 14.700, his highest score of the meet. He will compete again Friday night with the seniors, and has a great chance to make the senior national team. Born Dec. 30, 1992, Orozco is from Bronx, N.Y., and has his sights set on the 2012 Olympics.

Cameron Rogers (Zenith), a 17 year old from Mint Hill, N.C., nailed his parallel bars routine in the final rotation to jump from a tie for fourth to first in the closely fought 16-18 division. Rogers, fifth in 2008 in the 14-15 division, eclipsed **Jesse Silverstein**, 82.150-82.100.
Christopher

Turner

(WCOGA) posted second-place finishes on his final two events, parallel bars and high bar, to place third.

Cool Skills...

- Dylan Akers (Cypress): easy tucked double-double off rings
- Zachary Chase (Cascade Elite): Kasamatsu-1-1/2 on vault
- Colton Wolf: high layout triple-double off high bar in warm-ups
- John Orozco (World Cup); tucked full-out off parallel bars (a bit low on the landing but well within his potential)

Fun Stuff... Universal coach **Yin Alvarez**, who may well be the most excitable man on the planet, is as animated as ever. In fact, it looked as if he picked up six inches on his vertical leap from last year.

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Scary moments...

- **Mario West** (Preston), who has a body builder's physique, tapped early on a Tkatchev and caught in a front support, almost like he meant to. Later, however, he peeled off on a double layout and did a 1-3/4 to his chest. He scratched from the remaining events.
- **Colton Wulf** (5280 Gymnastics) stiff-legged the landing on a Yurchenko 1-1/2 and was attended to by the trainer. He was OK, too.

Other Notes...

- The junior men's competition used senior FIG rules, which allow skills such as a Thomas salto on floor.

- 2008 Olympian **Raj Bhavsar** will not be competing this weekend, according to his coach, **Kevin Mazeika**

. Might we have seen the last of him in competition?

- 2008 Olympian **Sam Peszek** will compete in three events (vault, beam and floor), as she has a torn labrum (shoulder), which will require surgery after the 2009 World Championships in London.

- The venue, the American Airlines Center, is definitely top-notch. The interior looks futuristic with the multitude of luxury boxes that occupy the full perimeter of the arena.



John Orozco (center) won his third consecutive U.S. junior title in Dallas. Sam Mikulak (left) finished second ahead of bronze medalist Christopher Turner.