

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEGA Qualifies Five Gymnasts to USA Gymnastics TOPs National Testing



Rachel Dickson, Daisy Ference, Olivia Ference, Allison Kunz and Emma Loken, from Michigan Elite Gymnastics Academy (MEGA) in Farmington Hills, MI, qualified for the 2008 USA Gymnastics National TOPs Testing, which will take place October 3-5, in Houston, Texas at the Women's National Team Training Center located at the Bela Karolyi Gymnastics Camp.

TOPs is a Talent Opportunity Program for female gymnasts ages 7-11 and their coaches. During the summer, gymnasts are evaluated on physical abilities at the state or regional level. From the more than 2,500 participants, 300 gymnasts qualify to participate in the National TOPs testing. From here approximately 60 gymnasts will make up the TOPs National Team.

Olivia will compete in the 9 year old division, Emma in the 10 year old competition, and Rachel, Daisy and Allison will be competing in the 11 year old competition. MEGA's TOPs coach Kim Tanskanen said, "I'm so pleased to have five girls qualify to National Testing. Most of these girls train around 25 hours per week on top of their school work load and it just shows that hard work pays off. They are dedicated kids and very motivated to succeed."

Rachel and Allison were National TOPs Team members last year and they hope to qualify again this year. Daisy was a National TOP B Team member, and Olivia was a Diamond National TOP team member (the 7 and 8 year old division). Emma will be making her first appearance at the National TOPs Test.

Those who qualify to the TOPs National Team will be invited to attend a training camp this December in Houston, Texas, at Karolyi's Gymnastics, home of well-known gymnastics coaches Bela and Martha Karolyi. The Karolyi's coached Nadia Comaneci, Mary Lou Retton, Kim Zmeskal, Kerri Strug and many other World and Olympic champions.

Owner of Michigan Elite Gymnastics Academy, Kim Tanskanen, said, "We're thrilled to have qualified for this most prestigious event. I'm very proud of our hard working staff and gymnasts."

USA Gymnastics Elite Program Manager Gary Warren, said, "The TOPs program is definitely working. With more than 50% of the current National Team and 3 of the 2008 Olympic Team having been National TOP Team Members, marks the success of the program.

USA Gymnastics is the National Governing body for gymnastics in the United States. For more information on the USA Gymnastics TOPs program and to see a full list of the 2008 National Testing qualifiers, go to www.usa-gymnastics.org.

About Michigan Elite Gymnastics Academy

Michigan Elite Gymnastics Academy (MEGA) is a first-class gymnastics and physical education academy founded in 2005 to help build the self-confidence and self-discipline of its students through physical fitness, fun, and achievement. Located in Farmington Hills, MEGA offers classes in gymnastics and tae kwon do while focusing on healthy living habits that students can use for the rest of their lives. Since its inception MEGA has taught over 900 students in a variety of physical activities. Visit www.mega-gym.com or call **248-474-7778** for more information.