

Crossley wins all-around state gymnastics title



Broadmoor Elementary School student Kendall Crossley poses with all her medals following her all-around state gymnastics championship last March in Columbia, Mo.

Kendall Crossley was waiting with bated breath – hoping what happened a year ago wasn't going to repeat itself.

In March of 2018, Kendall was ahead in the standings during the Missouri State Gymnastics Championships with only one competitor remaining. She was forced to wait for the final scores to roll in.

The wait was hard, but the result was even more difficult for Kendall as she lost the all-around state championship by one-tenth of a point. It was a tough setback for Kendall, despite earning the state championship in the uneven bars and a runner-up finish in the all-around Level 3 competition.

Kendall, who is a student at Broadmoor Elementary, got back to work instead of sulking about her close loss. She used that as motivation.

Not only did Kendall have to get past a difficult loss, she also had to move to a level where she would be competing against older, more experienced competitors. She rose to the challenge and found herself in the exact same spot last month – waiting for the final competitor to finish her routine.

This time, Kendall was all smiles.

On March 22, she became the Missouri Level 4 10D state champion at Columbia

College in Columbia, Mo., with a score of 36.85, which turned out to be her

highest scoring meet of the season as she led from start to finish.

“When I finally realized I had won the state championship, it made me feel happy and proud of myself,” she said. “I also felt relieved

because I didn’t have to worry about being disappointed. I was very nervous

waiting for the scores because I didn’t want to lose out on first place again

by a tiny amount.”

Kendall performed well in all her events during the state competition as she was a state champion on vault and floor exercise. She was

also third on uneven bars and fourth on balance beam.

“I could not be prouder of her,” her father Shawn said. “It is well-deserved, and saying she worked for it doesn’t begin to do it justice.”

The journey to a state championship has been a long time coming for Kendall, who has given up a lot to focus on her gymnastics. She

currently competes at Eagles Gymnastics in Martin City, MO., and has been there

since she was 3-years-old.

“Since June she has spent 11-plus hours every week in the gym,” Shawn said. “Not only does she do Level 4 gymnastics at Eagles, she also takes Elite Ballet and Jazz/Lyrical dance. She misses out on playing other sports, she misses family outings, she misses birthday parties, she misses father/daughter dances, she misses being at home. It’s a life of go, go, go.

“It’s straight to the gym after school and she isn’t home until after 9 by the time we get food somewhere. She is dedicated to this sport, and it’s a level that is hard to explain unless you see it on a daily basis.”



Louisburg’s Kendall Crossley stands atop the podium following her all-around state championship last month.

It is a commitment that has always been

there from Kendall, but it was no more tested than last season when she was forced to make a difficult decision.

Kendall had high hopes for herself in her second season as a Level 3 gymnast, but her body was fighting back. She was diagnosed with a pars stress fracture in her back and a spine specialist recommended she end her season prematurely.

After some discussion, and with the blessing of the doctors, she was allowed to continue her season with limitations in practice. Even with the obstacles, Kendall was atop the leaderboard in the state championships in 2018 at Union Station in Kansas City.

She led from the start, but when the final scores came in, that one-tenth of point was the difference between a runner-up and a state championship.

“Last year was very difficult for many reasons,” Kendall said. “I had to lead my level 3 team with a hurt back. I felt like I needed to be a good example. I couldn’t do the best that I could do. I had to sit out some parts of practice. I felt like I was wasting time and wasn’t improving.”

Kendall took some time to recover from her injury after the season and then got right back to work. Not only did she have to move up a level, she also had to learn brand new routines for all four of her events.

“A great number of the girls she would compete against this year would have a leg up because they would have had a

full year of practicing and performing these routines,” Shawn said. “It was supposed to be a down year for Kendall, one with a bit of a learning curve.

That was the expectation at least. However, Kendall is very self-motivated and incredibly driven. She set out with the mindset that this would be her year.”

The 11-year-old Louisburg resident got her season off to a good start with a pair of all-around runner-up finishes and then took first in the all-around in three of her next four meets that led up to the Missouri State Championships and her state title.

All the success she achieved also saw a jump in competition. Kendall will now be competing in Level 6 gymnastics with the Eagles, which means more of a time commitment for a girl that has school and after-school activities.

“I am still hungry for more,” Kendall said. “The more I win, the more other people want to beat me. There may always be someone working harder than me and I don’t want that.”