

# 2023 Canadian National Gymnastics Championships – An Inside Look from an OGC family



The 2023 Canadian National Gymnastics Championships were held over the Memorial Day long weekend in Richmond, British Columbia and OGC had three ladies qualify to compete and represent their club and Ontario at these Championships:

- \*Gabrielle (Gabby) Black: Junior
- \*Jada Yip - Janniére: CCP-10 (age 16+ years)
- \*Riley Bowen: CCP-9 (age 11-14 years)

I am Riley's dad and was asked to provide some insights into our experience at Nationals. While Gabby, Jada and their families have National and International competition experience under their 'belts,' it was Riley's first National Championships and a huge, invaluable, learning experience.

First, the period leading into Nationals was very hectic! When Riley qualified, it kicked off a whirlwind month that her mom and I weren't entirely prepared for. From having to make travel arrangements on a dime, acquiring new gear, taking her to camps and studying competition protocols and schedules, it was a lot to take in (and none of this is free). It was helpful to be able to lean on the advice of more experienced families during this time!

Secondly, National Championships are of a much greater scale and scope than the provincial qualifiers we are used to. The venue is huge, the crowds are large, the event is choreographed like the Grammy's and the talent is the best in the country! It was certainly overwhelming for me and I could only imagine what it felt like for Riley and the other competitors. This is why gaining this experience was so invaluable and will serve her well in the future.



Jada with Coach Lena and Coach Sandra



Riley

Lastly, keeping Riley rested and healthy became an obsession (more so than normal) in the lead up to Nationals. The excitement and anxiousness that comes with an important event can certainly be detrimental as the body's fight or flight system kicks in. Keeping Riley's mind away from the competition and shielding her from the stressors noted above were very important to ensuring she, at the very least, was going to be able to show up to the competition!

Riley did show up and performed very well! At 10 years old, she was the youngest competitor at Nationals but that didn't deter her. On Day 1, she finished 4th on floor and 8th on vault, which helped Team Ontario win the silver medal in the team event! In addition, she qualified for the individual finals on Day 2. While she didn't have her 'best stuff' on Day 2, we left the competition very proud of her accomplishments and this experience has only fueled her drive to continue to work hard and make it back next year.

As far as Gabby and Jada..wow!!

I don't get to see these two ladies compete very much over the season but had the privilege of watching both of them compete twice over the long weekend. I was amazed by their level of readiness and skill, as demonstrated by their results:

Jada:

- \*Gold Medal Team Event
- \*Bronze Medal on Bars
- \*5th All Around

Gabby:

- \*Silver Medal on Vault
- \*Bronze Medal on Beam
- \*7th All Around

We are lucky to have athletes of this caliber training at OGC, being role models and instilling good habits and work ethic in our younger athletes.



Gabby -

Lastly, a special mention needs to go out to Coach Lena and Coach Sandra. These two ladies were on the competition floor everyday coaching and supporting Riley, Gabby and Jada and when they weren't, they would be meeting them at the hotel gym for a workout or another facility to train or reminding parents where we need to be and what time. Both Lena and Sandra put 100% of their effort into the three athletes and I think they did them proud