

The Grace McCallum file

Full name: Grace Ann McCallum
 Age/birthday: 18/Oct. 30, 2002
 Hometown: Isanti
 Parents: Edward & Sandra
 Siblings: Rachael (19), Madelyn (15), Joseph (13), John (10), Xavier (7).
 High school: Connections Academy
 Future college/major: University of Utah/Kinesiology

How many hours do you train? "I train 4-5 hours per day, 25 hours per week. I think I train a little less than most elites. I feel we're pretty efficient, so we do our work and then get out."

Favorite gymnasts growing up: "Nastia Liukin or Shawn Johnson. Nastia showed so much elegance and grace in her gymnastics, and Shawn showed the powerful side of gymnastics."

Favorite gymnastics event to perform: "Uneven parallel bars. I love the feeling of swinging, and of flipping over the bar. My favorite is doing a 'ricna' over the bar."

Favorite food: "Any type of fruit. Probably raspberries."

Favorite singer or band: "I don't have a favorite. I listen to everything."

Favorite Movie or TV show: "Any comedy. I watch a lot of those with my family."

Favorite hobby: "In the summer we hang out at the lake and do a lot of swimming."

What is something nobody knows about you: "I probably have about 200 leotards, starting from when I began gymnastics. And I really love knitting and crocheting. I have crocheted a couple of blankets. It's not something you would think an athlete would do, but it's really calming. I get into a rhythm and keep going, and I find it relaxing."

— Compiled by John Wagner



The outside of Twin City Twisters off of Highway 169 on 123rd Avenue in Champlin. (Photo by Sam Johnson)

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be traveling with the U.S. team as an assistant coach. "There is a lot of pride and honor that we were selected to represent our country," Jantzi said. "I'm just going to do my job to make sure all the kids on the team get what they need."

Jantzi will be a part of a large Minnesota contingency representing the United States in gymnastics. Along with McCallum, 18-year-old Suni Lee from Saint Paul will compete for the women's team, and 22-year-old Shane Wiskus from Spring Park will compete for the men's team.

Hunger credits the overall friendliness of the state for part of the success in producing some of the world's best gymnasts. "Minnesota is a very welcoming and friendly gymnastics community," Hunger said. "Sunni [Lee] has been to our gym to train. Sarah has taken Grace to her gym to train. That wouldn't happen in other parts of the country."

It may not be the flashiest building on the map, but Champlin's gymnastics headquarters has gained the respect it rightfully deserves from gymnasts and beyond. "I think TCT has always

had a huge impact on the gymnastics community," Nichols said. "Not only from the gymnasts they have produced but I think people see that TCT has a family and that they grow kids into amazing people and athletes. I'm so excited that a gymnast from TCT is going to the Olympics. I think it allows people to see how amazing the gym and the coaches are."

McCallum understands the importance of competing not only for herself but for the region she is from.

"I feel really honored to represent my state," McCallum said. "I think it's amazing that we have three Minnesotans that are going to the Olympics in one sport. It says a lot about our gyms here, that we're up and coming."

With her dreams of Olympic competition nearly fulfilled, McCallum is ready to step into the spotlight. Hunger and

Jantzi said she is feeling the best physically she has in her career and even though her performance at the U.S. Trials was good enough to make the team, they know she hasn't quite scratched the surface.

"Grace has another level to go," Jantzi said.

"I'm just going to go out there and have a lot of fun," McCallum said. "I always compete better when I'm having fun, I'm calm and I enjoy every moment."

Whether on the world's biggest stage in Tokyo or local competitions, the legacy of Twin City Twisters spans much farther than padded floors and warehouse walls in Champlin. "We help kids achieve their goals and develop life skills. The gymnastics success is just a byproduct of that," Hunger said. "Are we proud of Grace? Absolutely. Are we any less proud of the kid that never made it? Not at

all. We're proud of them all. We try to take the approach that every kid that walks through our doors deserves to get the best experience we can provide for that kid."

From searching for land in rural Champlin 33 years ago to now being one of the premier gymnastics gyms in the country, Twin City Twisters has exceeded even the highest expectations. "I feel so blessed," Hunger said. "I don't know how I stumbled into this life. I'm incredibly grateful for everything I've had. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Editor's Note: As of press time, the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games were scheduled to take place July 23-Aug. 8. It was uncertain at the time whether or not the Games would be played due to a rise in COVID-19 cases among athletes and coaches.



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