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Introduction to Computers

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How Gabby Douglas Won the Olympics

The Olympic Games have brought the whole world together for many generations. Coming from all corners of the earth, Olympic athletes travel a long road of practice and unending work. As the Opening Ceremony begins and the whole world watches, they all hope that their talents shine and that their sacrifices, dedication, and efforts pay off. They hope to savor victory. At the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, Gabby Douglas brought her gracefulness and talent to the Olympic stage, doing performances so exciting that spectators were glued to her every move. She is clearly a great athlete. But Gabby Douglas won the Olympics because of her family’s support, her hard work, her determination to make history, and her perseverance to reach her goal.

Gabby’s athletic gifts were noticed at an early age by her family, but really by her sister. Arielle Hawkins, Gabby’s older sister, was the one who promoted Gabby’s gymnastic ability. She was also a gymnast until she broke her wrist while doing handsprings in her bedroom. She is seven years older than Gabby and was the one who noticed Gabby’s amazing flexibility. Arielle said that Gabby was very flexible from the first day. Arielle gave Gabby two days of training on how to do a cartwheel when Gabby was four. As soon as she had mastered it, Gabby taught herself to do a one-handed cartwheel. She had that mastered the same year. Arielle told her mother that she should enroll Gabby in gymnastics, but, at first, Mrs.Hawkins did not agree. Arielle thinks this was because her mother kept remembering the broken wrist. Finally, Mrs.Hawkins allowed Gabby to start gymnastics, but that was not until she was 6 years old (Register).

Gabby had to sacrifice time with her family in order to become a better gymnast. Since Natalie Hawkins did not want to move her three other children just to continue Gabby’s sport, they made a compromise to let Gabby move. In 2010, when Gabby turned 14, she left her family, her hometown, and moved west to Des Moines, Iowa ("New Heights for 'Flying Squirrel'”). Travis and Missy Parton became Gabby’s host family. Gabby started playing the role of big sister to the four Parton daughters: Hailey, age 10; Elissa, age 6; and the twins Lexi and Leah,age 7 (Cazeneuve).

Even though Gabby sacrificed time with her family, she had to now truly believe in herself. Soon, Gabby was training with Liang Chow. Mr.Chow is known for training Olympic Gold Medalist and World Champion Shawn Johnson ("Gabby Douglas Biography"). Mr. Chow saw the talent that Gabby, now known as the “Flying Squirrel,” had. Gabby’s nickname became the “Flying Squirrel” because of her fantastic “tumbling and release skills”. Mr.Chow was unsure if there was enough time to train her properly. Therefore, he decided to raise the difficulty level in Gabby’s training. He said that he had to believe in Gabby and she had to believe in herself (Cazeneuve). Throughout the year of 2010, Gabby accomplished quite a few things. She went to her first elite meet in Chicago, Illinois at the 2010 CoverGirl Classic. There, she placed sixth on the vault, third on the balance beam, and ninth in the all-around junior division. Then, she went to the Junior National Championships, where she placed fourth in the all around and received a silver medal on the balance beam. After that, at the Pan American Championships, Gabby took the uneven bar title and also won a share of the US team gold medal. Gabby won more medals during the rest of the year and, in the end, it really helped her to train for the Olympics and believe in herself ("Gabby Douglas Biography").

Gabby’s win in the Olympic trials was one that was quite memorable. That night was one of the most important nights in Gabby Douglas’s gymnastic career. Gabby was about to do her signature event, the uneven bars. Gabby’s grasp on an Olympic spot had been pretty secure so far. Now she had to nail this event. She started her routine and was doing brilliantly. Then her hold on the bars slipped and, just for a second, both her grasp on the bar and the Olympic spot was in a very dangerous situation. But, in the end, there was no need to worry. She won by a sliver that night, by 0.10 of a point to be exact (Whiteside). When Gabby found out that she had won she did her “‘Dougie’ dance” and, when announced as one of the five members of the US gymnastics team, she cried on national television. Her competition with Jordyn Wieber had been pretty interesting to watch. For both of them, the all-around title had come down to their last event. Wieber jumped, vaulted and landed an exact 15.8 for her score. When it was Gabby’s turn, she jumped, vaulted and landed with a secure 15.3. She earned her spot in the Olympics automatically after that brilliant performance (Register). Gabby did so well that night that a Games volunteer, Carl Reid, told Gabby’s family that a girl offered him 100 pounds (about 162 American dollars) for Gabby’s autograph (Cazeneuve).

In order to become a successful gymnast you must have a gymnastic ability that is very strong and have the qualities to reach your goal. You should also have very good coordination, strength, balance, and stamina to accomplish being a good gymnast (“Gymnastics”). In 1948, Mary Lou Retton performed in the Games. She had the finesse and all of the other qualities needed to become an Olympic gymnast, and she was the first woman from America to take “the gold medal in the individual all-around event” (Macy and Costas 11). Like Retton, Gabby had the qualities and a strong gymnastic ability to make her dreams come true. Not only did Gabby want to get a gold medal, but she also wanted to make a difference and for it to count for something, something that other girls could look up to (Cazeneuve). When you see her perform you can tell that she is never hesitant and her legs are “pencil-straight”. Not only does she rise “high to the rafters with ease,” but she also lands with lots of security. And not once does she stop smiling. But the one quality that truly makes Gabby stand out is her grace, which makes her look “like a ballerina in a jewelry box” ("New Heights for 'Flying Squirrel'”).

Gabby Douglas won the Olympics because not only did she go after her dream persistently, but she also kept moving to the future. She had a dream, and then she chased it. She spent every single second of her life trying to make her dream a reality, and every single time she got a bit farther it added up to her big moment. As she traveled the road to her destination, she had lots of family support. Due to all of these reasons, Gabby Douglas was able to reach her goal, win the Olympics, and make a difference.

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