



2019 Annual Report

# Valleys Gymnastics Academy



# A message from the Directors

2019 has been another incredibly busy year for VGA. From grassroots to elite development provision, the club has seen growth and success in a number of areas over the past 12 months. A particular highlight includes the substantial growth in the number of children and young people taking part in gymnastics across the 5 local authorities VGA now operates within. Operating from dedicated facilities, to school and community halls, bringing gymnastics to a number of local communities has been VGA's mission, and is something we are immensely proud of!

Of course we have to mention the competitive success VGA gymnasts have achieved over the last year - from regional and grassroots competitions, through to Welsh and British National competitions, as well as Welsh international representation and British Squad selections. This is testament to the continuous hard work of our gymnasts and coaches, along with the club structure that's been implemented over recent years.

None of the club's successes over recent years would be possible without the continuous support from our members. Gymnasts, parents and guardians, we would like to thank every one of you for choosing VGA as your club to participate in gymnastics and physical activity, and we look forward to another busy year with you in 2020!

## **Board Members**

Melissa Anderson

Elizabeth Lewis

Aled Jones

Nicholas Gordon

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# Community Development

Engaging with children and young people of all ages and backgrounds lies at the heart of VGA's ethos. Our inclusion and equality work remains as the foundation of our daily operations, and we wish to continue serving the many local communities across South East and Central Wales through innovative and industry leading partnership working. Below are some examples of the community work we so proud of in 2019:-

## Community Engagement

Through partnership working with Street Games, local sport development units, various Leisure Trusts, FE and HE institutes, Millennium Volunteers, Sport Wales and Welsh Gymnastics, we have been able to deliver some fantastic community projects:-

- Street Games Family Engagement sessions (Caerphilly Lead)
- Street Games Family Walking Groups
- Street Games 'Fit and Fed' holiday hunger programmes
- Blaenau Gwent Sole Sisters (alternative facility / environment for community gymnastics delivery)
- Free-running / Freestyle - following the Street Games principles
- Cardiff MET Phd Research Project - understanding teenage girls and physical activity in socially deprived areas
- Tempo Time credits - encouraging individuals to get involved in our community based programmes in exchange for universal time credits which can be exchanged at VGA or other venues across South East Wales
- Links to schools, colleges, universities, return-to-work schemes and student work experience placements (volunteering/training opportunities)



# Community Development - Continued



## Schools Gymnastics

VGA work with a number of primary and secondary schools across South East and Central Wales on a weekly basis. From 'after school clubs' to lunch time 'taster sessions', VGA's aim is to provide gymnastics sessions to those pupils who might not normally have the chance to attend regular sessions within a club environment.

The club also work with a number of special needs schools, Pupils Referral Units and Positive Futures programmes, ensuring accessible gymnastics sessions are available for all. Our special needs school sessions are now run on a weekly basis. More recently, we have added 'home educated' sessions to the Crumlin timetable, as well as hosting the local school gymnastics competitions.

## Charity

VGA continuously donate to local and national charities. Some of these donations take place on a weekly / monthly basis, whereas others are annual events:-

- Local food-bank 'drives'
- Collections on behalf of the Red Box Project
- 'Save the children' Christmas Jumper Day
- Annual activities for Children in Need
- Sport Kit donations for a children's home in Botswana



# Workforce Development

Investing in the 'up-skilling' of our workforce is imperative to delivering quality services in each of the clubs venues across South East and Central Wales. VGA prides itself on not only recruiting high calibre staff of volunteers, but also in facilitating the continuous professional development needs of our leaders, coaches, managers and admin staff.

With significant investment into workforce development throughout 2018/19, below are some of the courses our staff members have enrolled on and completed throughout this period:-

- Welsh Gymnastics Leadership in Gymnastics Award
- UKCC Level 1 General Gymnastics
- UKCC Level 1 Women's Artistic Gymnastics
- UKCC Level 2 General Gymnastics
- UKCC Level 2 Women's Artistic Gymnastics
- Level 4 Men's Artistic Gymnastics
- University South Wales Professional Mentoring Course
- Level 2 Diploma in Team Leading
- Level 3 Diploma in Management
- Sport Wales Talent Coach Programme



# Gymnastics for All (GFA)



Providing opportunities for everyone to take part in gymnastics and physical activity, no matter what age, gender or ability level, will always been 'backbone' of VGA's operations. Having this ethos has resulted in a GFA programme that includes a variety of gymnastics activities and services for our members.

Our pre-school gymnasts experience fundamental movement patterns, as well as key exercises that promote the development of cognitive skills. social interaction and key communication skills. Many of our preschoolers progressed onto various classes on offer at the club - from competitive recreational gymnastics, to the artistic disciplines and team gym.

Following on from preschool we aim to develop children and young people's physical literacy so that everyone can be confident and competent in the fundamental movement skills of sport and physical activity. Each of our classes focuses on various fitness components, including coordination, strength, balance, flexibility and aerobic fitness - essential for individuals' health and wellbeing, as well as future sporting activities.

Facilitating opportunities for gymnasts of all ages and abilities to experience competitions is an integral part of our GFA programme - from our 'in-house' recreational club competitions, local / regional competitions, right the way through to to Welsh National grass-roots competitions. Working towards and participating in competitions at various levels promotes discipline, focus, a strong work ethic, as well as providing opportunities to set and achieve goals and make new friendship groups.

# Disability Gymnastics

Our disability gymnastics programme ensures that gymnastics is adapted to meet the needs of each and every gymnast. Through the delivery of a range of opportunities, VGA ensures that activities can be tailored to suit an individual's needs. All of our mainstream sessions are fully inclusive, and therefore can support children with additional needs. We also provide specific and dedicated disability sessions within our weekly programme.

We offer a fully competitive pathway for those who have the ambition to compete, with gymnasts regularly competing in in-house, regional and national events. VGA has also been represented at the Special Olympics UK and World Games in the last few years by our very own Bethany Paul. Based on the competitive success Bethany has achieved nationally and internationally, she was shortlisted for numerous awards in 2019, including the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year award!

Valleys Gymnastics Academy achieved Insport Gold accreditation in 2019 (one of only 11 sports clubs across Wales). This means that the club's structures, policies and programmes have been recognised as fully inclusive by Disability Sport Wales (DSW). DSW describes VGA as:-

*"innovative and inclusive ... with a clear club ethos which ensures to support its members and community overall. VGA are an excellent example of inclusive gymnastics which should be shared with other clubs within gymnastics and the community."*



# Women's Artistic Gymnastics

VGA boasts a large women's artistic gymnastics competitive programme and is one of the leading clubs in Wales, with gymnasts competing across a number of levels - Novice, Regional Grades, National Grades and Compulsory Levels. Highlights from 2019 include medalist at all Welsh competitions entered, VGA gymnasts being selected for to represent Wales at various British Finals competitions and a number of gymnasts selected for Welsh Development Squad - as well as the newly formed South Central Development Squad. Several of our most talented gymnasts continue to train weekly with the Welsh Academy in Cardiff and in 2019 Halle Cegielski was selected to join the Welsh Academy full time after securing a place in the 2020 British Foundation Squad - a fantastic achievement.



Priorities for 2020 include reviewing the current squad groups training needs, along with competition priorities - gymnasts will be entered for future competitions based on their ability level and 'readiness' demonstrated in training sessions. The 'up-skilling' and recruitment of additional women's artistic coaches will continue to be of high importance throughout 2020.

Gymnasts within our 'Recreational Assessment' programme have been working hard in 2019, achieving success at the Invitational and Regional events in which they competed. These gymnasts will continue to be assessed with regards to suitability for future VGA Squad groups, as well as consideration for future Welsh and South Central Squad trials.

Gymnasts from the satellite venues who demonstrate the attributes needed for Squad gymnastics are offered the opportunity to join VGA and St Tydfils Squads.

## 2019 WAG Welsh Squad Selections

- Halle Cegielski
- Genevieve Hooper
- Millie Cox
- Molly Watkins
- Ffion Williams
- Madison Allen

# Men's Artistic Gymnastics

With a growing number of gymnasts involved in Men's Artistic Gymnastics at VGA, 2019 has seen success across a number of age groups and levels - from Welsh regional competitions, to Welsh and British national competitions, as well as selections for international competitions and training camps.

Highlights from 2019 include x5 VGA gymnasts becoming Welsh Champions at the 2019 Welsh Regional Grades (across the Club Development and Elite Grades), Ben Scourse being selected for the '2019 British Foundation Squad', Harrison Harris being selected to represent Wales at the 2019 Home Nations international, medalists at the prestigious London Open competition, as well as x5 VGA gymnasts bring selected for an international training camp with Welsh Gymnastics.

Priorities for 2020 include reviewing the current squad groups training needs, along with competition priorities - gymnasts will be entered for future competitions based on their ability level and 'readiness' demonstrated in training sessions. The recruitment of an additional MAG coach is also of high importance, given the number of MAG gymnasts of varying ages and levels now training at the club.

'Recreational assessment' gymnasts will continue to be assessed with regards to suitability for future squad groups, as well as consideration for future Welsh Squad trials.



## 2019 British Squad Selections

- Ben Scourse - British Foundation Squad

## 2019 MAG Welsh Squad Selections

- Harrison Harris • Clint Alleyne • Owaint Lewis • Morgan Lucas • Ben Scourse • Charlie Williams • Wil Wheeler
- Ellis Barber • Tommy Duggan • Jack Prosser • Quade Caddick • Jacob Lambird • Evan Maddern

# Team Gym

A relatively new discipline in VGA's history, Team Gym has gone from strength to strength over the past couple of years. Regularly participating in the 'AG Events' competitions, our gymnasts have achieved significant success across various age groups and team formats.

On top of that, a number of our gymnasts were selected to attend a Team Gym training camp in Italy, as well as x3 of our gymnasts being selected to compete in a friendly international competition in Ireland.

Team Gym is continuously growing as a discipline in Wales, and with additional training and competition opportunities of the horizon, we anticipated another busy year in 2020 for Team Gym gymnasts and coaches!

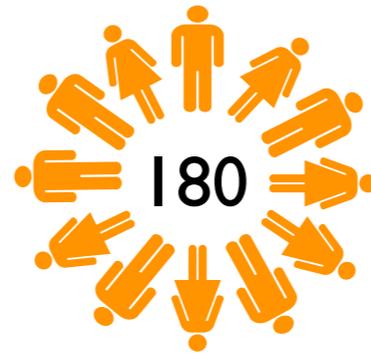
Gymnasts from other classes and disciplines at VGA will continue to be regularly assessed for consideration for Team Gym,



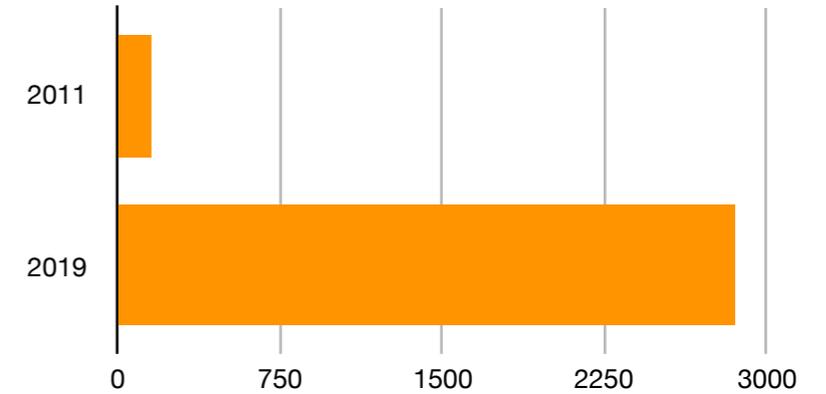
# 2019 Stats and Facts



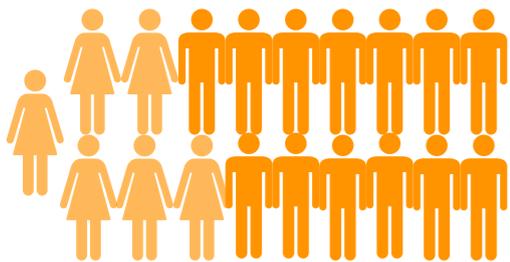
Now operating within 5 Local Authorities across South East and Central Wales



Significant growth in workforce (coaches and leaders)



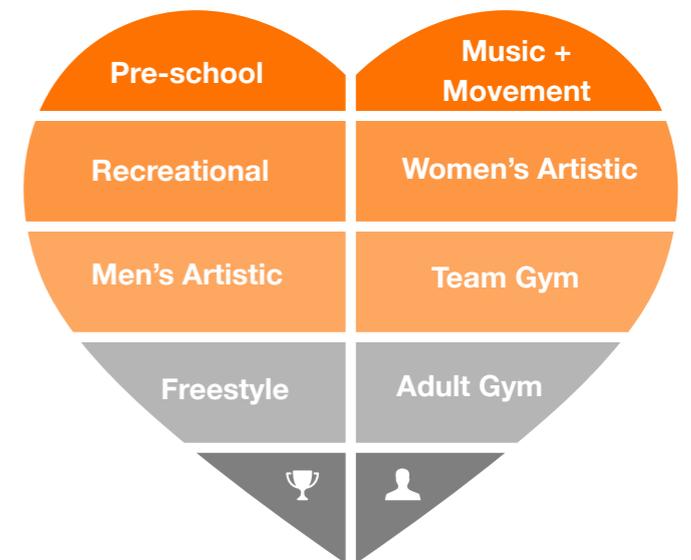
Significant growth in membership



X19 Gymnasts selected for Artistic Welsh Squads



Weekly sessions running from dedicated venues, leisure centres and community hubs / schools



A comprehensive menu of activities on offer for all!

# 2019 Awards + Nominations

## Awards Won in 2019

- ★ Argus Sports Awards - Outstanding Services to Sport in Gwent - Melissa Anderson - Winner
- ★ Argus Sports Awards - Disability Sports Performer of the Year - Shauna Morgan - Winner
- ★ Argus Sports Awards - Sports Team of the Year - Team Gym (Harray Mannay, Ethan Smith, Tom Brook, Ethan Edwards) - Winners

## Nominated in 2019

- ★ British Gymnastics - National Club of Year Award - VGA - Finalist - TBC
- ★ British Gymnastics - Inclusivity Award - VGA - Finalist - TBC
- ★ Welsh Gymnastics- Gymnastics for All Award - VGA - Finalist - TBC
- ★ Welsh Gymnastics- Gymnastics for All Award - Jaz Mcellan - Finalist - TBC
- ★ Welsh Gymnastics- Community Coach of the Year - Tara Edwards -Finalist - TBC
- ★ Welsh Gymnastics- Young Leader of the Year - Ffion Evans - Finalist - TBC
- ★ Welsh Gymnastics- Emerging Talent of the Year - Ben Scourse - Finalist - TBC
- ★ Argus Sports Awards - Young Sports Personality of the Year - Ben Scourse - Finalist

