

Whelan representing Canada on world stage



By Jake Courtepatte

Earning the crown of the queen of Canadian rhythmic gymnastics earlier this summer, Carmen Whelan now has her sights set on the world stage.

The 19-year old from Aurora finished 41st overall in late August's Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships in Peasro, Italy, nineteen spots above where she finished in her first worlds in 2015.

"The most important thing I will take away from this competition is how important consistency in training is," said Whelan following competition. "In this sport, one drop is enough to knock you out of the competition. By watching how the more experienced gymnasts practice and analyzing what I can apply to myself in the future, I know that this is the main aspect I must improve on in training in order to perform consistent, clean routines in competition.

"This will also help to improve my confidence going into competitions by not worrying about the possibility of mistakes on a skill that may be inconsistent during practices."

A few mistakes in her ball and hoop routines gave Whelan a shaky start on Day One, landing her in 49th place heading into the second day of competition.

"Day One didn't go as planned," said Teresa Orr, National Team Director for Rhythmic Gymnastics at Gymnastics Canada.

It was her clubs and ribbon routines that really wowed the judges on Day Two, landing her in 41st place.

Whelan called the experience "an incredible feeling."

"It's always an honour to have the opportunity to compete on the world stage and after preparing all summer, overcoming injuries and pushing through the good and bad days of training. It's a nice feeling to know that all your hard work is paying off!"

The worlds were just the latest in a whirlwind summer for Whelan, who placed first at the Canadian National Championship in Edmonton in May. After second place finishes in the 2015 and 2016 events, Whelan swept all four apparatuses in this year's competition.

With little time to rest, next up for the budding star is the Senior Pan Am Championships in Daytona Beach, Florida, set to be held in mid-October.

"I've received great feedback from judges and coaches and plan to apply all their corrections when we return," says Whelan. "As well, each time I compete I learn a bit more about how I need to do in order to prepare physically and mentally so I can perform at my maximum capability. This includes what I do as a warm up and timing so I'm not tired before heading onto the carpet as well as visualizing my routines."

Whelan trains out of the Silhouettes of York Rhythmic Gymnastics Club.