



Dedham rhythmic gymnast competed in Junior Olympics championships

Contributed to The Dedham Times

Last weekend Bea Edmonds (**photo, left**), a 4th grade student at Oakdale Elementary School, competed nationally at the 2008 Junior Olympics Compulsory Championships Level 5, held in Columbus, Ohio. She and her teammates Regina Wu and Emily Chen represented the Northeast Region. To qualify for the team, Bea placed among the top ten performers at Regionals, held in Newton in April.

For Bea, this was the second year in a row she placed second at Level 5 Child in Massachusetts. Participants compete individually, but their scores are combined to determine regional dominance. Last year the Northeast took first place.

She competed in three apparatus, hoop, jump rope and ball, as well as floor gymnastic routine.

Rhythmic Gymnastics is an Olympic sport, combining elements of ballet's grace, gymnastic's flexibility, and the schoolyard's games.

Choreographing these elements to create amazing competitive routines is the job of the team's coach, Varduhi Nahapetyan, who was the national champion of Armenia three times, as well as a competitor in many international tournaments.

The members of the team practice three hours a day, three times a week. Bea also studies with the Boston Ballet in Newton, Chinese language in Lexington, and synchronized swimming at the YMCA in Needham. Her favorite summer sport is swimming the butterfly events for the Dedham Clippers.