

U.S. Qualifies 10 to finals at 2012 Acrobatic Gymnastics World Age Group Championships

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The 2012 World Acrobatic Gymnastics Championships made its North American debut April 16-18 at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Competitors from 23 countries flipped, twisted and danced their way to World titles and berths to the 2013 World Games.

Ten U.S. team members qualified for the final round of competition at the World Acrobatic Age Group Gymnastics Championships Saturday at the HP Field House.

Mixed pair Joshua Miles of Realis Gymnastics/Temecula, Calif. and partner Kiley Boynton of Realis Gymnastics/Riverside, Calif. finished eighth among a field of 17 pairs as the two-day qualifying round of competition concluded. The duo solidified their spot in finals at their first Age Group Worlds by earning 27.65 points for their dynamic routine Saturday, moving them up from 11th place after the first day.

"Yesterday we did a routine that was kind of shaky, but now I think we're back in the groove," commented Miles, 16. "After two days of competition, we're all warmed up now, so hopefully we're going to do a killer routine tomorrow."

Women's group Hannah Silverman of Clarksville, Md./Emilia's Acrobatic Gymnastics Club, Christina Antoniades of Eldersburg, Md./Emilia's Acrobatic Gymnastics Club and Emily Ruppert of Baltimore, Md./Emilia's Acrobatic Gymnastics Club qualified for finals in sixth position after earning a combined score of 55.3 for their balance and dynamic routines.

U.S. women's pair Kathleen Davis and Maren Merwarth, both of Acrobatic Gymnastics of San Antonio/San Antonio, Texas qualified in fifth place after earning a total of 55.4 points. With their combined score of 54.8, the second U.S. pair, Taylor Mayo and Katarina Partalas, also of Acrobatic Gymnastics of San Antonio/San Antonio, Texas finished eighth among the 31 pair field and would also have qualified to the medal round had it not been for the one-per-country rule instituted in international competition.

"There are possibilities — the scores are very close to each other," said Vladimir Vladev, who coaches both groups at Acrobatic Gymnastics of San Antonio, noting that all teams will start with a clean slate in tomorrow's final. "The goal was first to come to Worlds, then to place in the top eight, and then to get a medal."

In the 11-16 age group, Rachel Zorn, Holland Kollar and Sophia Handel, all of 1st Class Gymnastics/Annapolis, Md., also qualified to finals, posting the eighth best combined score with 54.35. The other U.S. group in the event, Elissa Joseph of Xtreme Acro/Brookeville, Md., Kendall Meyer of Xtreme Acro/Silver Spring, Md. and Cameron Jones of Xtreme Acro/Potomac, Md., ended their competition in 10th place with 52.45 points.