

Watson floors 'em at Elite Canada

Robert Watson of the Richmond Gymnastics Club.

By [Don Fennell - Richmond Review](#)

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No one knows for certain, but at the age of 18 Robert Watson just may be the youngest ever gymnast to win the senior men's all-around title at Elite Canada.

And that speaks volumes about the potential future success of the Richmond Gymnastics Association athlete, who recorded a personal-best score of 15.2 in the floor exercise routine Sunday in Mississauga, Ont.

“He had a very hard, but good preparation for the competition,” says Frank Szabo, Jr., head coach of the Richmond Gymnastics Association. “A break of a couple months after the Puerto Rico Cup in July helped him regroup and learn some new tricks, and also to gain consistency needed to step up to the level of a senior athlete.”

Watson is no stranger to success. As a junior he competed for Canada at the 2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, qualifying for the all-around final. He also gained valuable experience at that year's Commonwealth Games in New Delhi.

“Those experiences exposed him to so much and developed a more mature mind and prospect,” says Szabo.

Watson has also shown another great strength: perseverance. He endured through a difficult 2011 hampered by a shoulder injury to not only become Elite Canada's senior men's all-around



champion last week, but also earned silver medals in event finals for the high bar and parallel bar.

“I was certainly pleased about winning that’s for sure,” Watson chuckled. “My floor performance on the first day was probably one of the best I’ve ever done and the score reflected that. We trained really hard and developed a lot of consistency, so I felt completely confident with my routine and was able to stick almost all my lines.”

Watson, who hopes to compete in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, is now focusing on the Pacific Rim championships, which will be held next month in Seattle. He’ll be joined at the multi-nation event by Richmond teammate Joshua Stuart, who is a junior. Richmond will be the only Canadian team with more than one athlete.

Stuart, 16, also endured a challenging 2011 season but has rebounded with a consistent 2012 campaign.

“He’s been a very consistent performer and achieved his silver medal (men’s all-around) quite comfortably,” says Szabo.

“He did exceptionally well on the parallel and high bars over two days, and his level of difficulty and execution was well above other athletes in his age group.”

Two other Richmond gymnasts, Jason Scott and Devy Dyson, competed at the Elite Canada meet in the senior men’s division. Scott placed sixth all-around and Dyson ninth all-around.

Training at the Richmond Gymnastics Club offers Dyson a new environment, says Szabo, but being a hard worker “he’s been a very good addition to our program.”

Scott, who has already competed at the national level for Canada, earned a bronze medal on the pommel horse exercise.

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