

Gymnasts converge on Pine Valley

Facility hosts Alberta Gymnastics Federation sanctioned Junior Olympic Level 6-8 training camp Oct. 27-28

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For the first time in its short history, the Pine Valley Gymnastics Centre in Tawatinaw hosted the Alberta Gymnastics Federation sanctioned Junior Olympic Level 6-8 training camp.

One hundred gymnasts spent Oct. 27-28 at the world-class facility developing skills, conditioning and learning new skills with the help of 30 coaches.

"This is a really cool facility out here, there's nothing else like this in the entire province," said coach Amy Miller of Altadore Gymnastics Club, who brought her team all the way up from Calgary.

"It gives the kids both a great opportunity to do gymnastics with great coaches but also the experience of sleeping in the dorms and camping out. It gives way more of a team experience, there are no distractions and we have the whole place to ourselves."

Dozens of clubs from across Alberta spent the weekend at what was as much as team building exercise as it was a



training camp.

"We have classroom sessions with sports psychology and nutrition," said Miller. "They have a campfire and board games planned for tonight. It's a great team building experience."

As Alberta is a national leader in gymnastics among youth, some of the eight-to-15-year-old gymnasts were among the best in their age group in the country.

Level 6 is the first skill level where gymnasts are able to make particular selections

in their routine. Up until this level athletes perform the exact same set of techniques for judges, but at this level they are able to mix it up a bit.

"Lots of these kids have been doing competitive gymnastics since they were four or five years old, starting with even two to three hours a week," said Miller. "They're pretty dedicated."

For the remainder of the year, they will continue training back at their respective gyms after this and other workshops throughout the winter months, taking technical classes in artistic gymnastics, flips, vaults, lache and even trampoline.

Gymnastics season officially kicks off in the new year with the 2019 Gym Power International Cup in Edmonton Jan. 10-13.

The Pine Valley Gymnastics Centre hosted 100 gymnasts for the Oct. 27-28 Alberta Gymnastics Federation sanctioned Junior Olympic Level 6-8 training camp. LEFT: Morley Ahlquist practices on the balance beam. RIGHT: Coach Samantha Floyd helps Shea Petrunia with a handstand.

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