

Cameron set for Pan

Am Games return

CAMERON, Katrina

By Iain Colpitts

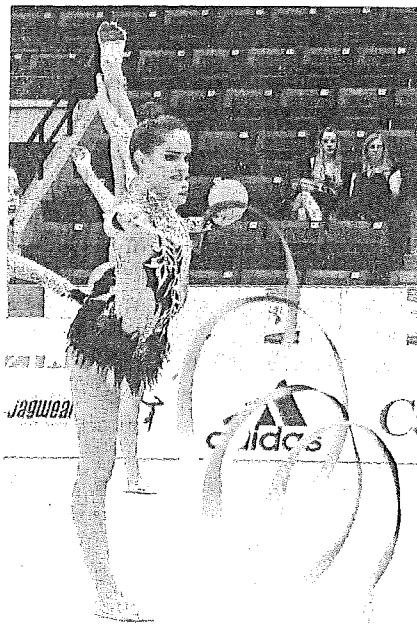
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Katrina Cameron remembers her first experience at the Pan American Games. The Mississauga native was 16 years old when she was chosen for Canada's rhythmic gymnastics team for the 2011 Pan Am Games in Guadalajara, Mexico.

She'll be back as one of two returning members of that team for the 2015 Games in Toronto.

"You'll never get used to that type of feeling," Cameron said of competing at the Pan Am Games. "You can try and imagine it when you're training, but when you're in the stadiums, it's always exciting."



Cameron was the second youngest member of the 2011 team, which also went on to become the first Canadian team to qualify for the rhythmic gymnastics group event at the London Olympics the following year.

The Canadians won the all-around silver medal at the 2011 Pan Am Games and finished 11th at the Olympics.

Cameron is now the oldest woman on a team that includes fellow 2011 and 2012 team member Anjelika Reznik, twin sister Victoria Reznik, Lucinda Nowell, Maya Kojnevikov and Vanessa Panov.

"When I was 16, we were the babies on the team, me and Anjelika," Cameron said. "We didn't really think much on our own, we just kind

Mississauga's Katrina Cameron is the captain of the Canadian rhythmic gymnastics team that will compete at the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games. Staff photo by Iain Colpitts

of listened to what our team captain said and just went along with it. Now that I'm older, I'm trying to look after myself and look after the team."

Cameron will serve as captain of this year's team, which will compete at the Toronto Coliseum (currently known as Ricoh Coliseum) from July 17 to 20.

She's the oldest member of the team, but can relate to all her teammates, particularly 15-year-old Panov, the youngest on the team who, like Cameron in 2010, went to last year's Youth Olympics before earning a spot on the senior team.

Like any Canadian athlete, Cameron is thrilled about performing on home soil, especially since she hardly ever gets to compete in Canada as a lot of competitions the team goes to are overseas.

She was fortunate enough to participate in last year's Pan Am Championships at the Hershey Centre. Canada earned the last Pan Am Games qualifying spot by placing fifth in that event.

Earlier this week, Cameron and her teammates came back from a Grand Prix event in Germany with an encouraging result. Although they placed sixth out of seven teams, they finished higher than Brazil, the 2011 Pan Am gold medalists and the favourites heading into this year's event.

"They happened to beat us in 2011 and last year at the Pan Am (championships), so the fact we could beat them at this competition is exciting because it shows we can do it and we have a chance of medaling," Cameron said.