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OC ALL STARS

Profiles in Parenting Champions

Collin Tjin shows off his dribbling skills.



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OC ALL STARS

BY LAUREN FELECHNER



BEHIND THESE STUDENT CHAMPIONS ARE PROUD PARENTS WHO CHEER, WIPE TEARS AND WEAR OUT TIRES ON THE MINIVAN.

With a multitude of sports and athletic programs made readily available to youngsters and families throughout Orange County, it's no wonder that the OC has bred some of America's greatest professional athletes and Olympians throughout the decades. Following in these footsteps are Parenting OC's hand-picked OC All Stars.

From a 5-year-old basketball phenom to a 17-year-old softball superstar, from tennis and water polo to gymnastics and baseball—these All Stars have made headlines, taken titles, broken records and wow'd fans with skill levels and dedication that are surely beyond their years.

Behind every great athlete is an even greater support system, and these kids are no different—whether it is Dad coaching the team or Mom attending every practice and game.

From left to right: (top row) Jackson Schnoor, Alyssa Palomino, Kevin Johnson and Katie Ta (bottom row) Lydia Pannel and Collin Tjin.



LYDIA PANNELL

Girls Gymnastics

Age: 11

Sport & affiliation(s): Gymnastics at SCATS in Huntington Beach.

Accolades & achievements: First place, All Around at State in Level 4; fourth place, All Around in Level 5 at State; seventh place, All Around in Level 6 at State; third place, All Around at State in Level 7; and first place, All Stars for Regionals.

Why did you enroll in gymnastics? “It’s fun.”

What’s been the coolest moment in your gymnastics career so far? “Being on the All Star Regional Team for Southern California was really cool. Also, I got to go to Stanford’s Gymnastics Camp last year! Just recently I did a ‘giant, giant, double back’ on bars into the pit without the belt. That was awesome!”

What are your plans for the future with gymnastics? “I’ve dreamed about going to the Olympics, but only five girls from the entire country get to go—and that’s only once every four years! I’d like to try to go Elite and compete around the world.”

BLAKE PANNELL

Parent

Home: Huntington Beach

What have you learned from being a parent of an athlete?

“As a parent of an 11-year-old athlete, it’s balancing her own personal desires and expectations while simultaneously encouraging her for what we see she is capable of. We knew something was up when she started walking at 9 months. We enrolled her in a Mommy and Me community gym class at 3 years old, and she jumped up on the beam—from there it was easy.”

How do you encourage Lydia? “For us, it’s reminding her of what she has already accomplished and encouraging her that she’s headed in the right direction.”

Moment in Lydia’s athletic career that you are most proud of: “One day, the coaches had all of the girls try an aerial. Lydia had never attempted an aerial, but when it was her turn, she jumped, flipped and completed her aerial. It was amazing.”

Advice for other parents with an athlete: “For a parent of an athlete, you know your child better than anyone else. Find the one sport or activity where you see them excel and focus on that alone—then let all of the other extracurricular activities fall by the wayside. I’ve met too many parents with extracurricular ADD and enroll him or her thinking it could be athletic “nirvana,” and instead all it does is un-focus their child from the sport or activity they are good at.”