

# NATIONAL AAU JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

## Girls' Gymnastics

Comments by Wanda Obradovich, National Junior Olympic Girls' Gymnastic Chairman

Any lingering doubts concerning the quality or the quantity of gymnastic talent in the United States were erased completely by the outstanding performances of the 26 Regional finalists at this competition. All 14 regions were represented as the young gymnasts continuously won the applause and praise of coaches, spectators, and competitors. The levels of performance and difficulty have increased dramatically from last year. The final results were impossible to predict as the ladies went to the last event and the last competitor to determine the all-around champions in both age groups.

The girls completed in the Olympic events---balance beam, floor exercise, uneven parallel bars and vaulting---in both compulsory and optional exercises. The 13-14 age group utilized the joint AAU-DGWS low intermediate compulsory exercises and the 15-18 age group executed the AAU-DGWS high intermediate compulsory exercises.

To dramatize the excellence of performances, only 1.15 of a point separated the first and 6<sup>th</sup> place all around in the 13-14 age group; and 1.17 of a point separated the first all-around in the 15-18 from 6<sup>th</sup> place.

The junior (13-14) competition was truly exciting with Kim Chace, Region 4, the winner, leading Peggy Rowan, Region 12, and Debbie Mullen, Region 13, by only .63 at the end of the compulsory exercises. Kim maintained her lead turning in an exciting uneven bar routine to cinch her title by only .70 points. In the senior (15-18) division, Barbara Mason, Region 13, held a .67 lead at the end of the compulsory sets over Katheen Dennison, Region 7, and Candie Breese, Region 2. Then, from the 6<sup>th</sup> position, Deede Breaux, in a fantastic example of the courage, self-discipline, and desire to excel that makes these girls champions, put together four optional exercises of international level to move within .28 of a point of the first all-around winner, Kathleen