



Photo by JAMES GLADER.

Ivana Benson, center, of Valrico, won the national championship for Level 9 rhythmic gymnasts during the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympics/Level 9 championships.

Gymnasts win at Jr. Olympics

By TYANA MARLOWE
Special to the Tribune

RIVERVIEW » Twelve local rhythmic gymnasts recently returned from the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympics/Level 9 Championships with multiple awards.

Ivana Benson, 15, of Valrico, finished first to receive the national championship award for Level 9 seniors.

All 12 girls train at Tampa Bay Rhythmics in Riverview focusing on the sport that combines dance

and basic gymnastics with the use of the rope, hoop, ball, clubs and ribbon.

The 12 from the local team qualified to attend the national competition through their success at

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the regional championships — many being the regional champions for their level.

Levels begin at 4, and ultimately, competitors shoot for achieving level 10, where they can compete for the United States at international competitions.

The level 7-9 Individual

cluding Benson and Little, will now compete at the level 10 National Qualifying Competition. They traveled to Indianapolis July 17., where Benson placed ninth, qualifying her for Level 10 and the right to compete at the Visa National Championships, in Dallas Aug 12-15.

For information, call Tampa Bay Rhythmics, (813) 741-2827.

Tyana Marlowe is owner and trainer at Tampa Bay Rhythmics in Riverview.

& Advanced Group Junior Olympic Championship was held June 24 to 28 in Chicago. Group consists of four girls who do a floor routine and a ribbon routine together at the same time. Six individual girls and our group qualified and achieved success.

Group — Katya Marlowe, 12, of Valrico, Tiffany Paul, 14, of Riverview, Pamela Tang, 12, of Valrico and Kiersten Varga, 11, of Sarasota — achieved the title of advanced national champions for floor and

second for their ribbon routine.

The levels 7s, Alyssa Anthony, 12, of Brandon, finished 16th and Tang finished 22nd out of a field of 80 gymnasts.

The Level 8s — Paul and Marlowe — finished 12th and 31st, respectively, out of a field of 70.

The team's top finishes were in the level 9 division. Rachel Little, 16, of Lithia, finished ninth and Benson won the championship. The Level 9s who placed in the top 15, in-



Photo from Tampa Bay Rhythmic Gymnastics.

Gymnastics Katya Marlowe, left rear, Kiersten Varga, Pamela Tang and Tiffany Paul, front, strike a pose.