

Bethesda Teen Ranks Highest Of Any Us Team In History At 2021 Acrogyrnastic World Championship

Bethesda resident Nicole Powell and her acrobatic gymnastics team scored fourth in the sport's 2021 world championships, surpassing all previous U.S. teams in their category.



Maryland, Rockville, Sep 28, 2021 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Bethesda resident Nicole Powell, with fellow teammates from the premier Xtreme Acro acrobatics team, ranked fourth in the 11 - 17 age group of the women's group division at the 2021 Acrogyrnastics World Championships in Geneva, Switzerland last June. No US team has ever come in fourth or above in this category through the history of the world championships. Falling short of the bronze by a mere fraction of one point, a minuscule margin in these competitions, the team was nevertheless honored to compete on the World Team and score a new highest position for the US.

"My goal since I was a little girl was to be on the US team at the world championships and I made it," says Powell. "I had setbacks and ups and downs, but it's incredible to realize I've achieved exactly what I had been working toward for the last seven years."

Powell's climb to the top of the acrogyrnastics ladder was not a smooth one. In May 2016, while practicing for that year's national championship, she plummeted to the ground from a 12-foot height. Rushed to the hospital with a neck injury and put in a neck cast, doctors told her she would never again complete. Traumatized physically and emotionally, Nicole decided to retire from acrogyrnastics. Her

coach, however, refused to let the young gold medalist end her exceptional career. Pushing through the pain and fear of her accident, Nicole worked with her coach and two short months later, competed with her partner at the 2016 nationals. The duo's outstanding performance landed them on the USA team for the 2016 Acro Cup in Poland. There, they won another gold medal, just five months after Nicole was told she would never compete again.

The future looked bright until the 2017 national competition. Hoping to again make the US team for the world championships, Nicole fell on her rear during her performance. Though unhurt, the fall cost her a spot on the US team that year. It also brought to light that Nicole, a healthy, rapidly growing teenager, was outgrowing her partner's ability to support her in the "top" position. She was forced to find a new partner.

It was then her sister suggested Nicole team up with their younger brother Shawn who had zero gymnastics experience and was not athletically inclined. The two ultimately partnered and what played out reads more like a Hollywood film than a real-life story. After a year of grueling workouts and training, while also attending school, the siblings began competing and won five gold medals in 2018. The duo split when Nicole, still developing physically, outstripped her brother's ability to support her physically. For Nicole, this meant finding a new partner plus training newly as the "base" rather than the "top" position she had always held. Nonetheless, the two continued to compete separately with other teams and went on to win several more gold medals. They both also made the USA team for the [2021 Acrogymnastics World Championships](#).

Acrogymnastics is not the only activity the siblings participate in together. Nicole and her brother both work at StarBrite Dental, in Rockville, MD, a premier dental practice founded by Dr. Maryam Seifi, their mother, which employs the entire family.

"I am so proud of Nicole," says Dr. Seifi. "Not many teens have the drive and insistence on perfection that have made Nicole a gold medalist in acrobatic gymnastics."



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