

2005 Maccabiah Games

Every four years, the best Jewish athletes from all over the world come together to compete in the World Maccabiah Games, an Olympic-style competition held in Israel. The Maccabiah Games have been a quadrennial event since 1957 and are among the top international sporting events in the world. Maccabiah Games alumni include gymnasts Mitch Gaylord and Kerri Strug, The 17th Maccabiah Games were held July 10-21, 2005, and included a 600-700 member USA delegation. The Southern California gymnastics community is proud that three of our own Level 10 athletes, Adee Schoffman, Talia Kushynski, and Yvette Leizorek, were selected to the five-member U.S. Women's Gymnastics Team (unfortunately, Yvette was injured and was unable to make the trip to Israel). NAWGJ-SC donated \$250 to each of the Southern California gymnasts in support of their fundraising efforts to help defray the costs of travel to Israel.

Adee Schoffman submitted the following report about her experience:

This summer I competed along with my three teammates, Talia Kushynski, Robin Weissman, and Miranda Der as the Junior USA Gymnastics team at the Maccabiah Games in Israel. It was definitely a most amazing and life changing experience. The Maccabiah Games was my first international competition, as well as my first time competing at the elite level. The competition itself was amazing in many ways. Our team came in first at the team competition, and I finished second in the individual All Around on the first day of competition, which also happened to be my eighteenth birthday! I also competed in vault finals the next day against the open division, along with Talia who competed in bars finals. I don't think I could have ever asked for a better birthday present!

The first few days in Israel were very overwhelming. We started off each day with training from 7 to 9 am. We then boarded busses to tour Israel. The tours were very fun and informational. We spent a lot of time getting to know other athletes, both from our own country and the many other countries that participated. I am still keeping in touch with many of people I met. Most of my friends were from the Canadian and South African teams because they stayed in the same hotel as the US team. My friends and I all had so much fun at the games that we have all decided to try to meet up again in 2008 to compete in gymnastics for the open division.