

# Panama All Star Trip

## October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> - Great weather for travel.

Everyone met in Atlanta for flight to Panama City, Panama.  
Smooth flight – no delays (yeah!) Arrived 9:00 pm  
Took bus to Miramar Intercontinental Hotel.  
I went to my sisters condo – 44<sup>th</sup> floor overlooking the ocean / bay.  
Sleep as soon as arrived.

Wednesday, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> full day in Panama

6:15 am Wake up

Meet team at hotel for bus ride to gym.

7:30 am bus ride

Had to take detour due to protestors walking the “main” thorough fare” across bay.  
President of Panama was going to ok corporations taking free zone. Changed mind but many were protesting this choice. (PEACEFUL – though)

Needless to say the normally short drive to the gym was extended as we had to drive all the way around the bay to get to the other side☺

8:30 am Arrival at gym

I met a coach from Colombia (physical education teacher) who is studying French so that he can coach in Quebec, Canada.

He was very excited to learn as much as he can. As some of our gymnasts warmed up kip cast handstand, he said “That’s there warm up?” I hope to teach someone that some day. And he proceeded to go watch closely.



He had additional questions, but I thought a very interesting view was asking how many and from where did all of these coaches come from. I told him how many coaches and how they were from different states. He said, “Wow. They are all helping each other move mats and prepare for the gymnasts.” I said, “Yes! That is our region. Region 5!”

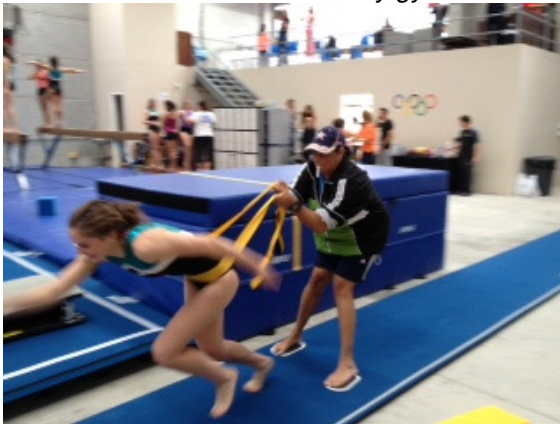


*Andres, head coach at No Limits (sponsor gym). Andres stepped back as we began workout and said "I can't believe this is really happening." He put his hands to his mouth as eyes teared up. You could see his true joy in hosting this clinic. He said "so many good gymnasts. I can't believe it."*

*It was a great feeling to start the day's workout.*

*Appreciative and inspiring.*

*Even the coaches joined in on the drills. The coach from Venezuela was high energy. When her gymnast made a giant blind in to a front giant, everyone cheered. And the coach yelled out, "She is from Venezuela and she is my gymnast!" She was so excited about gymnastics.*



*Afternoon the gymnasts went on sightseeing trip and shopping! Double decker bus. A bit breezy – so the other option of a yacht cruise was cancelled.*



**Thursday, Oct. 25th**

*Another day of clinics for the gymnasts and the coaches. Lori Koch played a language learning game on balance beam. The US gymnasts paired up with a camp gymnast. They would perform a skill and teach each other how to say the skill in the other language. Very good lesson for all. The one I liked was the cartwheel called "half moon = media luna."*





*It was an exciting day. One of the gymnast from Venezuela caught her first jaeger. Another made her first blind to front giant. And another flipped her first yurchenko. They do not have pits! And this new gym had the first pits in the country (that's what I believe they told us).*



*The gymnasts and coaches alike were very excited! They were so appreciative of the work, spotting and corrections of the US coaches.*



*They hosted a "Gala Spectaculare" – a show which was performed by the All Star team as well as the gymnasts from the host club, No Limits. They brought in special sound system and special lighting (colorful). TV coverage and a full house.*





*The Panamanian gymnasts started the show with a fun dance routine. This was followed by the performances of the All Star team on bars, beam and floor to show more advanced skills. They were amazing.*

*“Intermission” was a tumbling display performed by the gymnasts from No Limits. They performed their tumbling passes with big smiles of excitement.*

*One of our gymnasts (Rachel) finished her floor routine and ran by the audience with “High 5’s”. They loved it!*

*Finished the gala with more impressive skills by the All Star Team including a piked full-in on floor, front tuck on beam, high jaegers on bars and a double twisting double tuck dismount on bars. “WOW!” was the response.*

*The grand finale was the regional dance from nationals.*

*The Gala was a huge success.*

*Dinner and much needed sleep after.*

***Friday, Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>***

*Last day of clinics. The day started with an extended bus ride due to protesters walking (and blocking traffic) across the corridor which crosses the bay. Then there were a few fires set up in a few intersections to prevent cars from passing through. All in all it was a peaceful demonstration to encourage President Martinelli (Panama president) not to sell the “Free Zone” land up by Colon.*

*We were a bit late arriving but still got a great workout in for the gymnasts. By this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of workouts, everyone seemed more comfortable. They were all becoming friends.*



*The 2 hours of coaching clinics (after the morning workouts) each day were given to the attending coaches who were absorbing as much information as possible. I think we are all a bit spoiled in this respect.*



**Saturday, Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>**

*The All Star team made a visit to the Panama Canal where they toured the Miraflores locks. Watching a video of it's origin gave everyone a quick history lesson. It is very impressive to watch the large ships come through. And you could see where the construction for the new canal was taking place. This new canal will allow for the larger ships to pass. It is due to be complete in 2014 celebrating the 100 years of the Panama Canal.*



*The technology for the locks in the Panama Canal is very amazing.*

*Then the All Star team headed up the coast to the beaches and stayed at Bijao.  
Fun and relaxation in the sun for the weekend.*

**Monday, Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>**

*Heading back home. What a great trip for all.*

*Region 5 gymnasts and coaches are showing and sharing our great sport of gymnastics with the world!*

## ***Ciaó***

*Kittia Carpenter*

