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Bryan Allen, 16, top center, of San Jose made the final rounds of 'America's Got Talent' with the 18-member troupe AcroArmy. Bryan's been training with ATA Gymnastics San Jose since age 9.

San Jose gymnast, 16, competes with AcroArmy on 'America's Got Talent'

BY LEETA-ROSE BALLESTER

At 16 years old, San Jose AcroGymnast Bryan Allen has competed all over the world. Now he's making his way home from Radio City Music Hall as a finalist on "America's Got Talent."

Up against four musical acts and a magician, Bryan and the 18-member, high-flying AcroArmy didn't win \$1 million, but he said being part of the show was a priceless experience.

"I am literally having the time of my life with all of these athletes," he said. "It's been an honor."

Bryan said that in world-wide competitions the judges' feedback is vastly different than on the televised talent show.

Usually, there is a point system for sticking a landing or pulling off an amazing feat, with little verbiage about a performance. On "America's Got Talent," however, the judges remarked that the troupe's

performance was "death defying" and "thrilling."

"They really do inspire us to push more," he said. "They are on their feet! Throughout the weeks we would have ups and downs, but they uplift us."

Bryan said one of the most difficult and newest maneuvers he did on the show was the "three high." Two people make up a base support with one person on their backs—and Bryan hovering over the stage in a one-arm handstand on his partner's head.

This is a long way from the tumbling and floor exercises he started doing at 9 years old, he said.

Bryan has trained at San Jose's ATA Gymnastics, located on Blossom Hill Road and Snell Avenue, throughout his entire gymnastics career. He said it was pretty early on that coaches asked if he would join the Acro team.

Alayna Davis, ATA head coach, said it was amazing to see the team's hours of

training come to fruition on live television.

"It's been a real privilege to coach Bryan from a young developing athlete to the amazing, strong and talented AcroGymnast he is today," she said. "All that hard work and determination over so many years of training is finally getting showcased to the entire country."

Following a silver-medal earning routine in France, Bryan and Santa Cruz teammate Brennan Atsatt, 18, who also trains at ATA, were approached by well-known AcroGymnast and choreographer Arthur Davis to join the AcroArmy troupe.

The team is made up of award-winning acrobats and gymnasts from all over the United States, each handpicked by Davis.

"Bryan has been an integral part of our group from the beginning," the choreographer said. "This experience has been one of the best and most intense

adventures of our lives. AcroArmy has a very strong bond, and together we are tremendously grateful to be able to bring inspiration and the beauty of our sport to the world in this way."

Bryan said that this will probably be the peak of his career, and he may retire from competing in the sport after such a great ride.

What will the Santa Teresa High School student do now that he's headed home? Well, he's a lot like many other teens in that respect.

"I want to spend time with my family and friends," he said. "I'm probably going to sleep and veg out."

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