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Grace under pressure: Isanti's McCallum overcomes obstacles to earn Olympic berth

by John Wagner

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When the pressure to earn a spot on the U.S. Olympic women's gymnastics team was at its greatest, Grace McCallum turned into "Amazing Grace."

The Isanti native overcame a variety of injuries and delays to finish fourth at the Olympic Trials held in St. Louis on Sunday, June 27. And the Olympic selection committee picked McCallum to join Simone Biles, Sunisa Lee and Jordan Chiles as the four-member team that will represent this country in Tokyo later this month.

For Sarah Jantzi, McCallum's coach at the Twin City Twisters facility based in Champlin, that decision was no surprise because of her pupil's relentlessly positive attitude.

"I think Grace's mindset wasn't, 'I think I can make it.' It was, 'I'm going to make it,'" Jantzi said. "She came in willing to fight for everything, and she never gave up."

Still, there were no guarantees. Following the competition, McCallum and the rest of the

See **MCCALLUM** on page 18

The Grace McCallum file

Full name: Grace Ann McCallum

Age/birthday: 18/Oct. 30, 2002

Hometown: Isanti

Parents: Edward & Sandra

Siblings: Rachael (19), Madelyn (15), Joseph (13), John (10), Xavier (7).

High school: Connections Academy

Future college/major: University of Utah/Kinesiology

How many hours do you train?

"I train 4-5 hours per day, 25 hours per week. I think I train a little less than most elites. I feel we're pretty efficient, so we do our work and then get out."

Favorite gymnasts growing up: "Nastia Liukin or Shawn Johnson. Nastia showed so much elegance and grace in her gymnastics, and Shawn showed the powerful side of gymnastics."

Favorite gymnastics event to perform: "Uneven parallel bars. I love the feeling of swinging, and of flipping over the bar. My favorite is doing a 'ricna' over the bar."

Favorite food: "Any type of fruit. Probably raspberries."

Favorite singer or band: "I don't have a favorite. I listen to



everything."

Favorite Movie or TV show: "Any comedy. I watch a lot of those with my family."

Favorite hobby: "In the summer we hang out at the lake and do a lot of swimming."

What is something nobody knows about you: "I probably have about 200 leotards, starting from when I began gymnastics. And I really love knitting and crocheting. I have crocheted a couple of blankets. It's not something you would think an athlete would do, but it's really calming. I get into a rhythm and keep going, and I find it relaxing."

—John Wagner



Isanti's Grace McCallum competes on the vault during the women's U.S. Olympic Gymnastics Trials Sunday, June 27, in St. Louis. AP Photo/Jeff Roberson

Play Inc. Arts



Play Inc. Arts Summer Youth Theatre 2021

Junior Theatre Troupe prepares to perform a "Fiddler on the Roof."

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Rodeo Jubilee Days



Rodeo Jubilee Days and fun activities

It was a great weekend for families and children to enjoy Isanti's Rodeo Jubilee Days.

See photos on pages 12-15, 32.

Bring on the cotton candy and the rides

The Isanti County Fair, Chisago County Fair return in mid-July

by Rachel Kytonen

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Both the Isanti County Fair and Chisago County Fair are returning in 2021 with plenty of exhibits, vendors, carnival rides, grandstand events, 4-H events and more.

The Isanti County Fair will be held July 21-25 at the Isanti County Fairgrounds, 3101 High-



The Isanti County Fair will be held July 21-25 with free Kids Day activities, including face painting, from 8:30 a.m. to noon on July 23. File photo

way 95 NE, Cambridge. Fair times include 3-11 p.m. on July 21; 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. July 22-24; and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on July 25. The carnival and midway open at 3 p.m. on July 21; 1 p.m. on July 22; 10 a.m. on July 23; and at noon on July 24 and July 25. More detailed information can be found at isanticountyfair.com.

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