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SPORTS

Taking it to another level

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Five members of the Cartersville Twisters men's gymnastics team will represent Team Georgia at the upcoming Southeast Regionals in Miami. Pictured are, from left, (front row) Caleb Yeager, Travis Blossom, (middle row) Karl Davis, Anton Stetsenko, Sam Cittadino, (back row) Yuri Kouznetsov and James Hess. CHRIS STEPHENS/
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The stat line looks like this: two all-around titles, 11 individual event titles and five gymnasts selected for Team Georgia to compete in the Southeast Regionals this weekend in Miami.

That's what local gymnasts Anton Stetsenko, Travis Blossom, Sam Cittadino, Karl Davis and Yuri Kouznetsov did March 14-15 at the state meet, representing the Cartersville Twisters.

"These guys did really good," said Andrei Kouznetsov, who is one of two coaches for the boys' team. "So, now we're getting them ready this

week by helping them polish their routines. We also want to make sure they are physically and mentally ready for the meet."

The boys, who are also coached by Matt Moody, will be facing their toughest competition of the year after they held off athletes from more than 40 gyms in the state meet.

Stetsenko will be representing the Twisters at Level 5 (8 years old), while Blossom will represent the Twisters at Level 7 (13 years old). Cittadino and Davis will compete in the Level 7 (12 years old), while Kouznetsov will compete in the Level 10 competition.

Cittadino and Blossom both said they feel like they have a little added pressure after both won individual all-around titles at the state meet. However, both said it was great to finally win the all-around competition.

"For the last few years, I've finished second," Blossom said. "So, it's nice to finally win it."

Cittadino echoed Blossom's comments, saying he too had finished second the last three years, and that he's happy he finally got over the hump.

Now, both gymnasts are looking to not only repeat the feats they accomplished at the state meet, but also come in with cleaner routines.

"I just want to do a little bit better than I did at state," Cittadino said. "I think it's important that I improve."

Both gymnasts said they wanted to improve on the pommel horse, as they felt it was their worst event at the state meet.

"I fell off twice at state," Blossom said. "So, I know I have some work to do on that. I just want to get better and improve."

Cittadino said it's important to "feel the rhythm" while on the horse. "You have to be comfortable on it."

Blossom said having four other people he knew at the competition will help him relax a little more.

"You're not by yourself when you go down there," he said. "There's people there rooting you on who want to see you do good. Plus, we get out of school for a day (Friday)."

"We're excited for the opportunities these guys will have this weekend," Kouznetsov said. "Hopefully, we can come home with more titles."

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