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**McDONALD'S
 INTERNATIONAL
 MIXED PAIRS**

THE WINNING COMBINATION

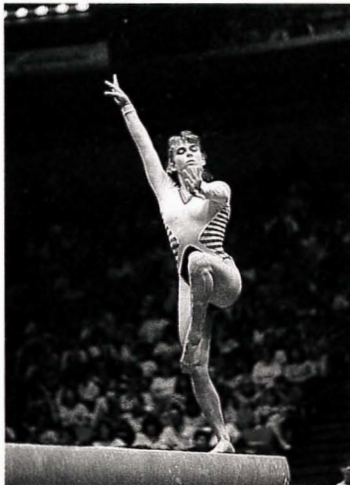
By Luan Peszek

The winning combination at the 1989 McDonald's International Mixed Pairs Competition was the U.S.'s Wendy Bruce and Li Jing from China. The competition was held in Jacksonville, FL on March 8.

This unique competition consists of male and female teams representing a total of 16 countries. Both the male and the female gymnast from each country are paired together for three rounds of competition, and each pair chooses their strongest events in order to score the highest combined total points to win. Countries not having both a male and female representative were randomly paired, which is exactly what happened with Wendy Bruce and Li Jing.

Bruce chose to start on vault and Jing started on parallel bars. After the first round of competition, the top eight pairs advance to the second round. They included: Olesya Dudnik and Vitali Marinich from the Soviet Union (19.500); Bruce and Li Jing (19.425); Phoebe Mills and Patrick Kirksey from the U.S. (19.400); Chelle Stack and Wes Suter from the U.S. (19.400); Juliet Bangerter from the U.S. and her partner, Pedro Tort from Puerto Rico (19.250); Henriette Onodi and Zsolt Horvath from Hungary (19.225); Karine Mermet and Stephane Cauterman from France (19.175); and Stella Umeh and Lorne Bobkin from Canada (19.150).

After the second round of competition, Mills and Kirksey had moved up from third all-around to first all-around with a score of 38.80. They were followed by Bruce and Jing with a 38.70 and Stack and Suter in third place with a 38.65. However, due to a rule that only one U.S. pair (both partners from U.S.)



U.S.'s Wendy Bruce



China's Li Jing

can participate in the third round, Stack and Suter were bumped and fourth placed Dudnik and Marinich (with 38.10) advanced to the third and final round of competition.

Unfortunately, Kirksey and Marinich both had a fall on pommel horse scoring a 9.0 and a 8.95 respectively. Mills said, "Patrick and I just wanted to go out and do the best routines we could. There's also a little bit of luck involved."

Brandy Johnson and Lance Ringnald were out of the competition after the first round. It was surprising because Johnson took first, and Ringnald second all-around, at the McDonald's American Cup only four days before the competition. Brandy's first event was vault and she scored a 9.875. Ringnald had a couple of breaks in his parallel bar routine and only scored 9.35. They learned it only takes one mistake, from one of the partners, to be knocked out of the competition.

"The McDonald's International Mixed Pairs provides an exciting change of pace from more standard international competitions," said Mike Jacki, executive director of the U.S. Gymnastics Federation.

This competition involves strategy in order to advance to the next round. And this year, Wendy Bruce and Li Jing had the winning combination.

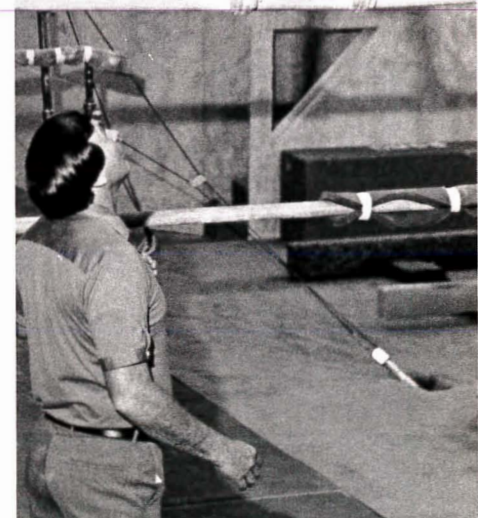
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