

Especially for young readers



The Mini Page



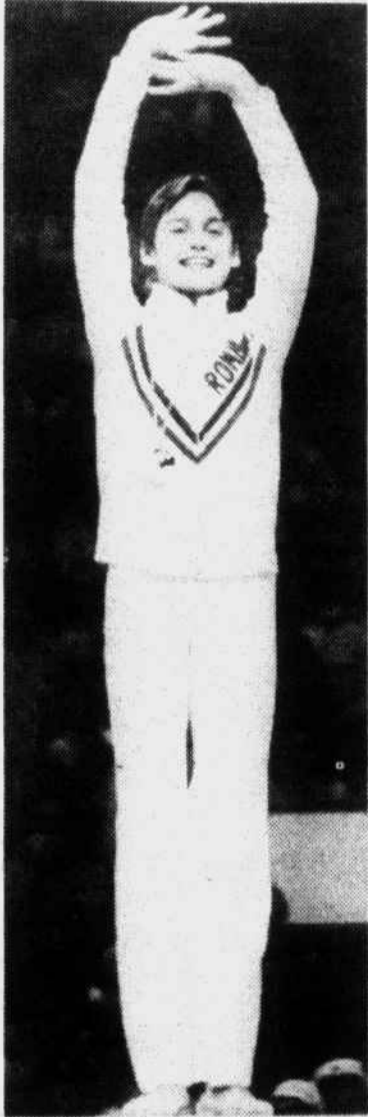
Distinguished Achievement Awards Winner 1975

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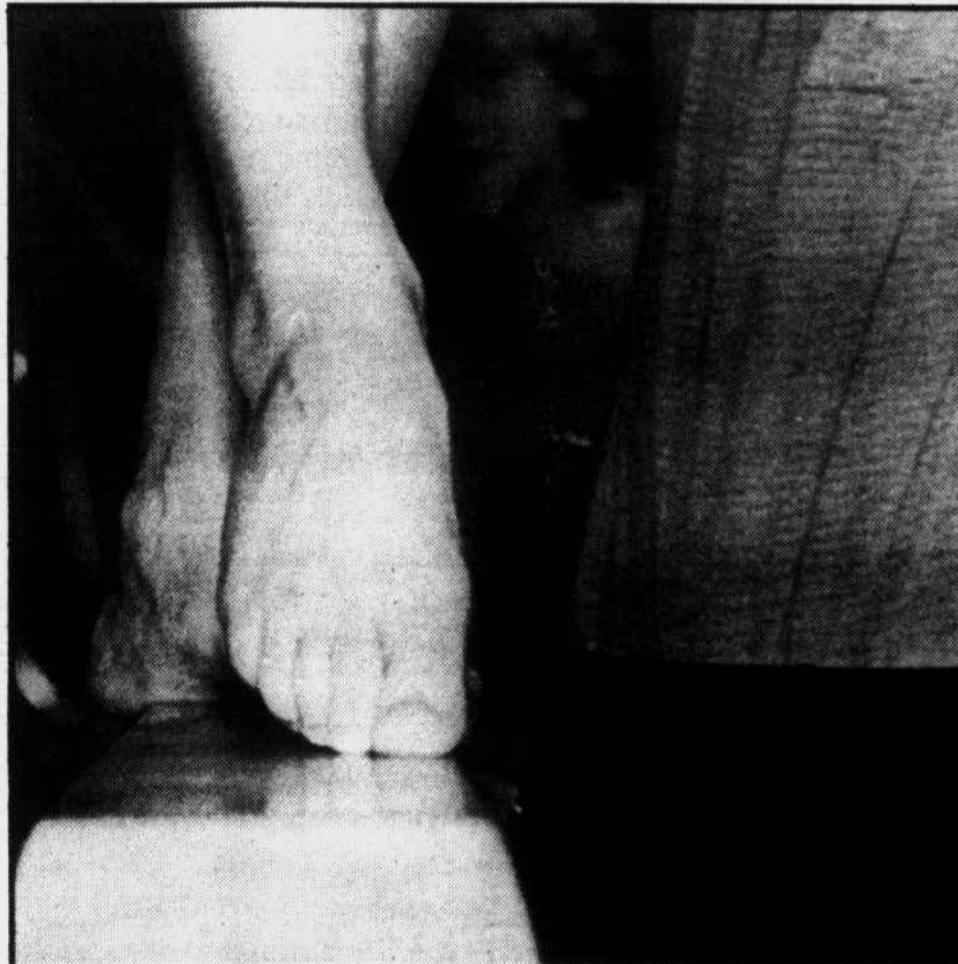
By BETTY DEBNAM

On the Beam with the Best.

Follow the Leader . . . Nadia



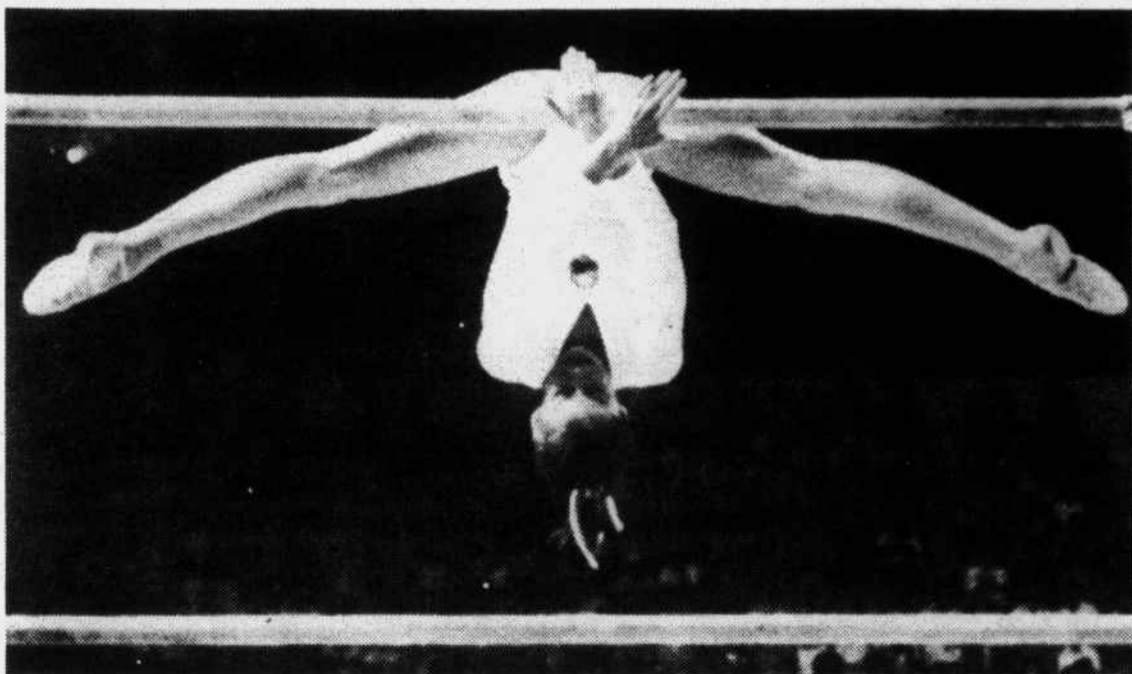
Nadia on the awards stand.



Trying to follow in Nadia's footsteps — A young American gymnast gets toe pointers from her coach. Gymnasts always try to stretch their bodies . . . even down to their toes. When they line up and march in as a team to compete, they should walk toe-heel, rather than heel-toe. In 1969 there were only 45,000 gymnasts in this country. Today, there are over 500,000.



Nadia on the air — She is holding her good luck Eskimo doll she carries when traveling. Her coach gave it to her when she came in thirteenth place in a 1969 competition. He told her not to do that again. She hasn't. Nadia collects dolls. She has over 200.



Nadia on the uneven parallel bars — This is a good example of "amplitude" (AM-pli-tood), a word that means, in gymnastics, stretching or extending one's body as far as possible. The score of 10 is perfect and unusual in gymnastic competition. Nadia scored 7 perfect 10s in the 1976 Olympics. She won 3 gold medals.

These photos have been especially prepared for newspaper reproduction.

"I want to be like Nadia and win medals in the Olympics," one 4-year-old told The Mini Page.

This country has flipped over gymnastics. The new interest really started when Olga Korbut won the hearts of millions of TV viewers in the 1972 Olympics.

Today, the best gymnast in the world is Nadia Comaneci (NAH-de-ah Koh-mahn-EECH) of Romania.

She started taking gymnastics at the age of 6. She went to a special school where she practiced four hours a day, six days a week. Her lessons were free.

American girls don't have this special chance. But they can try . . . and practice . . . and dream.

That's what more and more of them are doing.