



MEN'S GYMNASTICS

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32nd Edition Of The Windy City Invitational Set For 7 p.m. Saturday Night

Men's gymnastics team locks horns with five of the top 10 teams in the nation

Jan. 11, 2002

Chicago, Ill. - It's comparable to rounding up Duke, Kentucky, Kansas and Maryland, and having them square off in a round-robin basketball tournament.

It rivals a Florida versus Miami football game, and then following that with a Nebraska-Oregon gridiron tilt.

Basically what it comes down to is that the 32nd annual Windy City Invitational will feature the cream of the crop in men's collegiate gymnastics.

The "Windy" annually boasts one of the finest fields in all of gymnastics. This year will be no different, as the defending NCAA Champion Ohio State Buckeyes headline a field that includes six of the top 15 teams in the nation.

The host Flames, ranked No. 15, will welcome the second-ranked Michigan Wolverines, the aforementioned Buckeyes (No. 3), Illinois (No. 5), Iowa (No. 7) and Minnesota (No. 8) to the Physical Education Building. Starting time is set for 7:00 p.m. on Saturday evening.

"We don't have the soldiers to compete with some of these teams, but don't get me wrong, we do have some soldiers," said UIC head coach "CJ" Johnson. "Our expectations are hitting our routines to the best of our abilities and to try not to do more than we are capable of."

What Johnson believes the Flames are capable of is finishing in the top five and completing clean routines.

Leading the Flames into battle is a nifty mix of veteran leadership and exuberant youth. Seniors Matt Soucie and [Anthony Cirullo](#) bring the "been there done that" attitude, while newcomers like [Neil Faustino](#) and [Keith Kerrigan](#) have Johnson

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Senior Matt Soucie leads the Flames into the 32nd annual Windy City Invitational Saturday night at 7 p.m.

eager for the season to begin.

"Soucie is a little banged up right now, but he'll be alright," said Johnson. "I am anxious to see how Faustino does with a bit of a shoulder injury and excited to see Kerrigan go to work."

David Livingston has improved immensely since last season, as told by his impressive preseason, and is ready to go for the Flames. Matt Musielak, Ambrose Jackson and Jon Joyce are also being called upon by Johnson.

"I am looking for strong jobs from Musielak, Jackson and Joyce," Johnson said. "I am really counting on those guys."

The rest of the field will counter with several All-Americans and returning National Champions.

Ohio State returns a solid group of athletes, including 2001 NCAA all-around runner-up Raj Bhavsar. Minnesota's Clay Strother was the only two-event winner at last year's NCAA event finals, winning the 2001 floor exercise and pommel horse titles. Scott Vetere of Michigan is the 2000 NCAA champion on the vault and horizontal bar.

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