



It is time, once again, to take a peek into the future to see how gymnastics has evolved. So let's fast-forward to 2056, when sunny La Paz, Bolivia—the “heart of South America”—plays host to the Summer Olympics. It's August 5, and the teams are about to march into the Jim Holt Memorial Coliseum. A family of four from Colorado has made the trip.

**Ricky:** Mom, Dad, thanks for bringing us to the Olympics! I can't wait to see how KU3 does!

**Mom:** Who is KU3?

**Ashley:** That's Kohei Uchimura's grandson, Mom. He's won 10 straight world all-around titles. His grandfather only won six in a row. Like every other annoying 14-year-old boy at our gym, Ricky is obsessed with him.

**Ricky:** Am not.

**Ashley:** Then why is your bedspread a Japanese flag and your YahGoogle!book password RicKU3?

**Ricky:** That's not my password anymore. And why are your walls covered with pictures of that creepy Jason Cyrus-Bieber?

**Dad:** Kids, enough bickering!

**Mom:** Hey, I just read in the official program that the oxygen level in this arena is controlled.

**Dad:** That's because La Paz is at 12,000 feet, more than twice as high as what we're used to in Denver. That makes this the highest Olympics in history. The Wi-Fi sure is good!

**Ricky:** In geography we learned that the Andes mountains are, like, 10,000 feet higher than the Rockies. This is the coolest summer vacation ever!

**Ashley:** Technically, it's a winter vacation, you egghead. We're below the equator.

**Mom:** Ashley, ever since you turned 16 you've developed quite an attitude! Can't you try to be a little nicer to your brother?

**Ashley:** You're kidding, right?

**Dad:** Hey, the teams are marching in now.

**Ricky:** And the U.S. is starting on pommel horse. That can't be good. Look, they're all praying!

**Mom:** The Koreans are on vault, and it says here in the program that each of the four team members has a vault named after him. Impressive.

**Ricky:** I know, they're cosmic vaulters. They all kick out of their triple Dragulescus!

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**Dad:** Draga-what?

**Ricky:** It's named after some Romanian dude who did it, like, 50 years ago. But he only did two flips with a half turn.

**Mom:** What's that in the middle of the arena? It looks like a giant playground.

**Ashley:** It's called freestyle exercise, Mom. It replaced men's floor exercise in 2049. First, they changed the mat from square to round, because nobody did corner moves anymore. But that didn't improve things, so they added walls and stuff to give it a parkour feel. Now it's a cool event!

**Ricky:** Whoa ... that's Jordan Jovtchev over at the swinging rings. He's a dinosaur!

**Dad:** Oh, he's mentioned here in the program. He's been receiving a Wild Card berth ever since 2020. Now he's 83. It says here that he only practices once every four years, during podium training at the Olympics.

**Ricky:** Too bad he's so old. Since his routine doesn't have the required 40 skills, he'll never make finals.

**Mom:** I heard Oksana Chusovitina is here too.

**Ashley:** She actually got in via the Continental Representation rule. She's representing Anarctica. Four years ago she competed for Nepal. I love her. She just had two hip replacements, so now she can vault again!

**Ricky:** Wow, all four Americans absolutely nailed pommels. Three 9.4s, and a 9.7 from

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Jonathan Horton III! Did you see what he did on the middle pommel?! He's got to be stoked with that set.

**Ashley:** The U.S. coach sure is. Even at 90, Yin Alvarez can still spin like a top! He just gave Horton a big smooch on the forehead!

**Dad:** Son, I can remember back at the 2036 Denver Games when the scores were different: 14.69125312, 15.25175817 ...

**Ricky:** What the heck are you talking about?

**Dad:** No, really! They actually got rid of the 10.0 a long time before that. They used open-ended scoring to eliminate ties and confuse fans.

**Ashley:** Dad, please, we weren't born yesterday. We all know you're a lousy liar.

**Dad:** But ...

**Mom:** Check out the six-packs on the Ukrainians. They're all ripped! Wait, don't the men wear shirts anymore?

**Ashley:** Not since the Pro Gymnastics Challenge sold out Madison Square Garden. I saw it on the ESPN Gymnastics Channel. The FIG liked the idea.

**Ricky:** Did you see that? KU3 just kicked out of his quadruple flyaway from rings. Perfect toe-point and stuck, as usual! Everyone else cowboys it.

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**Mom:** Well, I'm looking forward to the women's compulsories this afternoon.

**Ashley:** Women don't do compulsories, Mom. When the Men's Technical Committee decided to bring them back for Los Angeles 2028, the women voted against it. They never agree on anything ... sort of like Ricky and me.

**Dad:** Well, that session certainly went by fast. And look, the Americans are winning!

**Ricky:** It's not the first time. But the men are still waiting for their first team gold since 1984. They always struggle in the Team Final, which has stricter rules. If you make a tiny mistake, like bent legs on a circle, a buzzer goes off and you're not allowed to finish. So everyone does watered-down sets.

**Dad:** Sounds pretty extreme.

**Ricky:** It is. But TV suggested the format, and the FIG fell for it. It's been happening for years.

**Mom:** Guess I'll go get us some lunch while they set up for the women. Here's the program, kids. Maybe you can read up on some of the teams.

**Ricky:** It's summer! I don't want to read anything.

**Ashley:** Give me that ... Hmmm, it says here that all four Chinese girls were born Dec. 31, 2038, which means they all meet the 18-year-old age requirement by one day. How lucky is that?

**Ricky:** I see them over at the uneven perpendicular bars. They're barely as tall as the low bar!

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**Ashley:** It also says the U.S. women are going for their 12th straight Olympic title. Oh, there's head coach Nastia Liukin. She runs WOGA-El Paso, one of her parents' seven gyms. Love her spike heels!

**Mom:** I'm back! Take a saltena, everyone. It looks like they're about to start. Perfect timing!

**Ashley:** I can't believe it ... all the Italian women are warming up Amanar vaults. What is this, an NCAA meet?

**Ricky:** How do they expect to score with an Amanar? All the Americans vault a Biles.

**Dad:** I see that the U.S. is on parallel beams. Is that a good event for them, Ashley?

**Ashley:** They're OK. They all have standing double backs, but they need work on their back tosses.

**Mom:** Who is that coaching the Russian women's team?

**Ashley:** That's Kelli Hill. She moved to Moscow in 2040 after the Rodionenkos fired everyone else.

**Dad:** What did that Australian just do on the floor exercise? It was amazing! **Ricky:** It was a quadriffis, Dad. Everyone's doing one on the new Turbo-TumbITrak floor platform.

**Ashley:** Ever since the requirements became so severe, there's only time for one tumbling pass now. I think the FIG needs to realize that the sport is called Artistic Gymnastics.

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**Ricky:** I just got an IG alert on my iWatchG24. It said to keep an eye on Bolivian Maria Alicia Gonzalez de Salazar. She's supposed to be awesome.

**Mom:** Did it say anything else?

**Ricky:** Yea ... it's the 100-year anniversary of IG magazine, available in print, digital and holograph formats. What do they mean by print, Mom?

**Mom:** It's my favorite version. It's also where the KU3 poster on your bedroom wall came from!

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