



# Gymnastics Now

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## Project Pitch

Ever heard of “The Gymternet”? Maybe yes. Maybe no. But you’ve almost certainly heard of Simone Biles. Nastia Liukin. Nadia Comaneci.

Gymnastics Now is the go-to source for gymnastics news, covering men’s and women’s gymnastics at the college and elite (i.e. Olympic) levels.

Launched in February 2020, Gymnastics Now has seen rapid growth in the past two years, and the Gymnastics Now app is the next step in getting the latest gymnastics news, training clips, photos, and more in readers hands.

While gymnastics is a fan-favorite Olympic sport and is especially popular every four (or five) years, in the general sports landscape it is still growing. A variety of outlets currently exist across different mediums to provide fans with news about the sport, but most, if not all, lack money and manpower, resulting in an overwhelming “blogger” – or informal – aura surrounding these outlets and, as a result, opinions infiltrating their content.

Enter: Gymnastics Now.

Gymnastics-Now.com is dedicated to reporting the news, the facts, about the sport in a comprehensive manner that others do not for fans, athletes, and coaches alike that want a consistent and reputable news source that they can rely on.

After almost two years of successful reporting and exceptional growth, Gymnastics Now is launching a mobile IOS app with the goal of being one click away from readers at any given time.

## Definition, Justification + Exploratory Research

### Purpose Statement

The goal of this project is to create an IOS mobile app for Gymnastics Now readers so that they can read the latest news, watch the latest training videos, and be part of the Gymternet with the click of a button.

### What makes the Gymnastics Now app innovative?

The Gymnastics Now app will be the first of its kind in the industry and an innovative app in the sports landscape, in general. The app will utilize RSS feeds to import Gymnastics Now’s original content *and* other leading sources content in the gymnastics industry to give

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readers the most comprehensive and latest news updates in one place. Additionally, the app will feature sections dedicated to exceptional photography, video, forums, and more.

## Problem Statement

Right now, Gymnastics Now is able to provide good coverage of the sport to its target audience and has achieved “proof of concept” in this regard versus other outlets in the industry. Now, the outlet needs to go a step further to create a product that provides great coverage that is truly comprehensive and accessible, eliminating possible tangible or intangible barriers in the process and becoming an industry leader in the process.

## How does the Gymnastics Now app solve this problem?

To date, there is not a dedicated gymnastics news app on the market (Apple or Android, etc.). When Gymnastics-Now.com launched, it was for a reason: there wasn't a dedicated news outlet focused on gymnastics coverage, and certainly not one that was comprehensive with its coverage (outlets previously focused on just men or just women, just elite or just college, etc.).

A very niche market, there are already very few gymnastics outlets to begin with, and an app? Forget about it. That being said, it's something that would be welcomed by the target audience – the “Gymternet” – and take this rapidly growing outlet to the next level.

## Exploratory Research

The Gymnastics Now mobile app will be an extension of Gymnastics-Now.com. Its purpose is to provide comprehensive coverage of men's and women's elite and college gymnastics, just like the website, but the app will strive to be a one-stop shop for gymnastics fans of all different types.

Since this mobile app is essentially the first of its kind for the gymnastics news industry, there aren't any direct competitors or references for a product of this kind. That being said, I did a substantial amount of competitor research in the lead-up to launching Gymnastics Now in February 2020 and since then, and I've compiled a list of websites that have a variety of good things going for them, things I don't like, things I want to improve, and overall inspiration, namely in their content and features.

Firstly, the style of and look of the main [Gymnastics Now website](#) will carry over to this app. It might look aesthetically different due to the adjustment to mobile, but overall, the colors, fonts, layout, etc. will draw from the already-established and successful website.

[International Gymnast](#) and [Inside Gymnastics](#) are both magazines that also have a secondary digital presence. While they have had apps in the past, they were simply PDF versions of the print magazines and didn't format that content any differently or provide

any special features. That being said, those apps were essentially a waste of space on user's phones since they were only releasing issues every other month and small issues at that.

[International Gymnast](#) is a legendary outlet in the gymnastics industry. Although its presentation and overall approach is now very antiquated, the nuts and bolts provide great inspiration for this product. Namely, it's well-rounded approach to content and the way it breaks up its websites: a tab dedicated to the current quad's Olympic Games (the biggest event for gymnastics), news, interviews, and photos.

Inside Gymnastics is a very similar outlet and covers the same aspects of the sport, but its approach and style is more modern, albeit still antiquated. (I worked for this outlet full-time out of college and ran this website/edited the magazine for two years.) The nice thing about Inside Gymnastics' website is its ["Events" section](#) which is similar to what I think about when creating a calendar section for the app.

[The Gymternet](#) is a longstanding blog that primarily focuses on coverage of the women on the national and international stage. What Lauren Hopkins, the website owner, does well here is providing a vast database of information that dedicated gym fans want and can't find basically anywhere else, including a [Gymnast Database](#) that features bios and profiles on athletes, a high-level [calendar section](#) for each year (in list form), and [detailed result breakdowns](#) that are otherwise hard to find, especially after a meet has concluded and is "archived" by the organizers.

[Balance Beam Situation](#) is one of the most popular gymnastics blogs in the world, but arguably the best part of BBS' website is its clickable [Code of Points](#) (the rulebook for gymnastics). It's another resource that people want to be able to access, learn, and look at for reference, but it typically just resides in a dark, secluded place on the [International Gymnastics Federation's cluttered website](#).

[FB Curves](#) is one of the best gymnastics resources that comes in app form, and this is a great source of inspiration for a future Code of Points section on the app.

Links to sources:

- [Gymnastics Now](#)
- [International Gymnast](#)
- [Inside Gymnastics](#)
- [The Gymternet](#)
- [Balance Beam Situation](#)
- [FB Curves](#)
- [International Gymnastics Federation](#)

## Technology Justification

A logical extension of a news website is a cohesive and complimentary app. In this case, I have elected to design an IOS app for two main reasons: 1) I have grown up using Apple products and being an “Apple person” and therefore know the technology from a user perspective and 2) We learn SwiftUI, a.k.a. the IOS coding language, in the Emerging Media program.

## The Must-Have Features (& then some)

- News Feed (1.0)
  - Purpose: To provide users with the latest news, features, etc. from Gymnastics Now and other sources, giving readers the most comprehensive and up-to-date look into their favorite sport.
- Photo Galleries (1.0)
  - Purpose: A *huge* draw for gymnastics fans (and athletes!), a photo section will feature curated meet galleries from Gymnastics Now photographers.
- Video Feed
  - Purpose: In the grand scheme of a year, the number of gymnastics meets are few and far between, especially for Gymternet faithfuls, so the community sustains itself by watching and sharing the latest training clips from athlete’s social channels and YouTube. This feed will provide that experience but take away the necessity for fans to hop around to different apps and handles to find what they want to see.
- Podcast
  - Purpose: A home for the Gymnastics Now podcast(s), fans will be able to pop in their earphones, tap the latest episode, and listen wherever they are.
- Comments (1.0)
  - Purpose: The Gymternet loves to talk, you guessed it, gymnastics! Here, users will be able to talk with fellow gymnastics fans about the latest breaking news items, predictions, and beyond.
- Event Calendar
  - Purpose: A clickable calendar for users to check-in and get the latest information on upcoming meets, including when, where, and how to watch.
- Bios
  - Purpose: Past, present, and future stars all have a story, and fans want to know them! Here, users will be able to look up athletes and read more about them, as well as find articles featuring them.
- Settings (1.0)
  - Purpose: A basic settings section that will be a catch-all for necessary features developer details, and eventually, premium features.

## Proposed Development Milestones

### Alpha Milestones and Reflection

25% - Updated prototype of Gymnastics Now IOS app, including minimum of all 1.0 features. Logo and branding assets fine-tuned and established. UX/UI research.

50% - Features containers and overall wire-frame established in preparation to build out features.

75% - Adding content and branding. Continuing to optimize/add features.

100% - Polish and present Alpha.

Alpha development was slower than anticipated, but the vision for this project really came together during this phase, with heavy emphasis on researching comparable apps already on the market. *The Athletic* was the source of much of the design inspiration for the wire-frame of the app. The major challenge of Alpha development was simultaneously building the app while still learning SwiftUI and XCode. This became a particularly sticky issue while trying to connect the back-end of the existing WordPress site to the app in order to import the news feed. The Alpha 100% saw this come together, successfully, albeit leaving much to be desired in the way of visual design.

### Beta Milestones and Reflection

25% - Review UX/UI and accessibility of existing alpha. Continue to make it better.

50% - User testing. Continue to make it better.

75% - Revisit content and features. Continue to make it better.

100% - Polish. Presentation of 1.0.

Beta development started slow but took off thanks to a major pivot that accelerated this project and got it back on pace for the 1.0 launch in the Spring. That pivot was deciding to use an iOS news app template instead of coding the entire app from scratch. The selected template already solved the back-end WordPress issue and allowed for customizations, additions, and a paid version, should that be pursued down the road.

After the template was implemented, Beta development focused heavily on branding the app, altering menus, and building out additional features. By the end of Beta development, the app had all 1.0 features functioning, paving the way for further feature development and optimization before 1.0 launch.

## 1.0

25% - Finalize main and sidebar navigation menus and photo gallery feature.

50% - Build out video feed.

75% - If necessary, finalize video feed and build out one of remaining feature options (podcast, event calendar, or bios).

100% - Polish. Presentation of 1.0.

We're shooting for the moon with the Gymnastics Now app. A one-woman team can only do so much, but so much is relative. This 1.0 will likely be a MVP with a news feed and, if we're lucky, some other features, but the goal is to have a usable app that features a news feed, photo section, video section, and settings tap that can be launched in the app store and then built upon over time.

## Competitive Advantage Report (CAR)

Simply put: an app like this, for the gymnastics community, does not exist. There is a market gap that the Gymnastics Now IOS app will directly address. A direct result of more than two years building the Gymnastics Now brand, I know the target market wants a product like this and will be eager to use it.

Beyond being one of the only, if not the only, gymnastics outlet dedicated to news reporting that is rooted in journalistic values, this app will also provide users with a feature that is not offered by anyone else in the industry: a combined news feed that features all of their favorite outlet's content in one spot.

## Target Market

The Gymnastics Now target market is vast but can be paired down to a few key points:

- Gender: 80% Women - 20% Men
- Race: Predominantly White/Caucasian
- Age: Over 70% of the target market's age ranges from 18-44
- Education: Predominantly High School or above
- Location: United States
- Interests: Gymnastics

## User Personas

Name	Demographics	Goals, Interests + Motivations	Tech and Social Habits
Alex Hyland	White college grad and former gymnast in her mid-20's working as a gymnastics coach	Wants to watch gymnastics, with an emphasis on NCAA, and see the latest news and videos when she checks her social channels	Frequently checks social media throughout the day but only has time to read articles and watch longer form content during breaks and in the evening
Syque Malone	Asian Pacific Islander with a high school degree in his mid-30s who never did gymnastics but became a fan after watching the Olympics	Wants the latest gymnastics news at his fingers, including college and elite, and is excited for any and all news and other features that he gets to read	Spends 8+ hours a day reading the latest news and watching gymnastics videos, meets, and other content; always has time for gymnastics

## Product Comparison

No similar options currently exist on the market. The market gap for this niche product is immense and felt by the target market.

## Competitor Research

Since no other similar and/or successful products currently exist that are direct competitors to this product, we examine two of Gymnastics Now's industry competitors below:

- Balance Beam Situation
  - Description: A gymnastics news website that is exclusively focused on women's gymnastics and is opinion-based.
  - Target Market: Women's elite and college gymnastics fans
  - Marketing Strategies: Few to none. Only active on Twitter, where it has a huge following.
  - Revenue: Google Ads-based, although specific numbers unknown. Owner and operator runs BBS as his full-time job.

- Keywords/Search Terms: Balance Beam Situation, BBS
- Appearance, Design, Features: Basic WordPress website, Clickable Code of Points is a huge traffic draw
- Distribution Methods: Website, Twitter
- Inside Gymnastics
  - Description: A gymnastics print magazine that is heavily focused on women's gymnastics, features, and photography.
  - Target Market: Major gymnastics fans
  - Marketing Strategies: Paid social, specifically on Instagram and Facebook. Mailers. Event marketing via booths at competitions.
  - Popularity: Unclear, although readership has been declining in recent years, thus resulting in a slight switching of gears to a digital emphasis, albeit at a slow rate.
  - Revenue: Print subscription and advertiser-based. Company operating "in the red" but currently has a staff of around five full-time employees plus contractors.
  - Keywords/Search Terms: Inside Gymnastics, Inside Gym, Inside Publications
  - Appearance, Design, Features: Website is a wordpress site with news, features, and photo galleries. No notable features.
  - Distribution Methods: Print, Website, Social