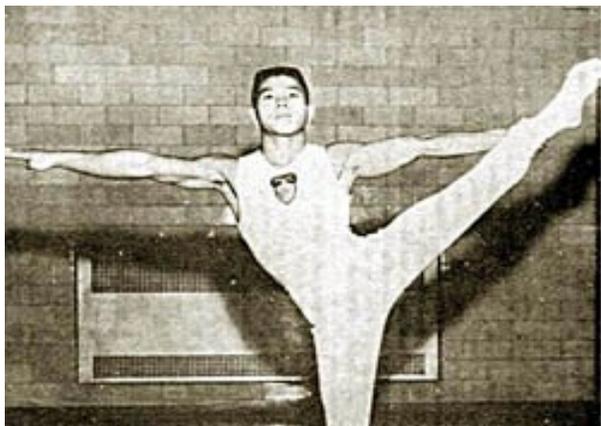


OLYMPIC GYMNAST MAKOTO SAKAMOTO HONORED IN 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1964 TOKYO OLYMPICS



Sakamoto in 1964 (age 17)

The most famous gymnast living in Hawaii was honored October 10th in Tokyo during the **50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games**. During the Opening Ceremony he was one of the 1,964 marching in to remember those who participated in the Olympiad. The 1964 Games were particularly memorable for the Japanese because it marked the return of Japan in sport and commerce from challenging times following WWII to world prominence.

Sakamoto competed in the 1964 Olympics when he was 17 years old and placed 7th in the Men's Team All-Around. Sakamoto was later inducted into the Los Angeles High School (1965), University of Southern California (2002), and USA Gymnastics Halls of Fame (1986). In 2011 he was named Master of Sport by USA Gymnastics, the highest coaching honor in US gymnastics.



Sakamoto Today

Today he is known affectionately as 'Mako Sensei' at Hawaii Academy—Kalihi Gym where he teaches gymnastics and apparatus classes on Saturdays and Sundays and demonstrates more than any other instructor.

CONGRATULATIONS and WELCOME HOME!

[Link to event: http://www.aroundtherings.com/site/A_48697/Title_Japan-Unites-to-Celebrate-the-50th-Anniversary-of-the-Tokyo-1964-Games/292/Articles]

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Additional Details:

Born April 8, 1947, in Tokyo, Japan, Makoto Sakamoto moved with his mother, sister, and two brothers to the US in 1955 to join his father who had moved ahead of them. His younger sister was born in 1956 making him the fifth of six sibling. He began gymnastics at age 10 and in just six years he became the all-around national champion on his way to six USGF, four NCAA, and 22 AAU national titles. In 1965, he became the only competitor to ever sweep a national men's competition. An extremely versatile gymnast, Sakamoto won the national all-around championship from 1963 through 1966 and in 1968 and 1972. He was the horizontal bars champion in 1963, 1965, 1966, 1967, and 1968; the still rings champion in 1965 and 1966; the horizontal bar champion in 1965, 1966, 1967, and 1968; the floor exercise champion in 1965 and 1967; the pommel horse champion in 1965 and 1966; and the vault champion in 1965 and 1968. He also won the NCAA Division I all-around, parallel bars, and horizontal bar championships in 1968. Sakamoto competed in the 1964 Olympics at age 17 and placed 7th in the Men's Team All-Around, 20th in the individual all-around (the highest ranked American). [view Video Clip]



Gymnastics Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games. All-around men's final HB_ Makoto Sakamoto.mp4

In 1966 and 1970 he represented the US in the World Championships. He competed in the World University Games in 1965, 1967 (bronze medal), and 1970. He bypassed the 1968 Olympics to train in Japan. He later competed in the 1972 Games in Munich after which he "retired" from formal competition. Sakamoto then began coaching at UCLA (1976-1984) where he brought up Tim Daggett, Mitch Gaylord, and Peter Vidmar who all competed in the 1984 Olympic Games. During this time he was the US assistant coach for the 1981 and 1983 World Championships teams and the 1984 US Olympic team. He then served as the gymnastics coaching director for the state of New South Wales (Sydney, Australia) from 1984-1987, then the Brigham Young University head men's coach from 1987-2000 (before they closed their program), and from 2000-2004 he coached the men's team at the San Diego All Stars, a private gym school. In 2005 he moved to Hawaii and has enjoyed sharing his gymnastics expertise with everyone in the state. He and his wife Masako (Yoshihisa) have two children (Douglas in Hawaii and Saki in California). At age 67 he is in great physical condition, can still do a handstand for over three minutes, and inspires everyone who watches him warm-up before teaching.

From His USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame Induction Introduction (2002):

Sakamoto emerged in the gymnastic world with a style and poise that began a new era of excellence in men's artistic gymnastics. He was unforgettable in 1965 when he won all seven events at the National Amateurs Athletics Union Championships. Fortunately for all, he continued in the sport as a coach at UCLA during a time when some of his gymnasts became Olympic winners. In his over 40-year professional career he was a multiple champion, both as a athlete and as a coach. He participated in the Los Angeles City High School Championships, AAU National Championships, World University Games, NCAA Championships, World Championships, and the Olympic Games. He was inducted in 1986 to the U.S. Gymnastics Hall of Fame. Mako coached at Brigham Young University and UCLA. He was the assistant coach to 1984 US gold medal Olympic team in Los Angeles. He was Peter Vidmar's and Tim Daggett's personal coach at UCLA and helped coach Mitch Gaylord. Mitch, Tim and Peter were members of the 1984 gold medal Olympic gymnastics team. He gained a BA degree and a MA degree in teaching English as a second language and education. On his 53rd birthday, Mako performed 163 handstand pushups (in 30 minutes), touching his shoulders on each count, and without coming down from a handstand... a record no one has touched.