



Zdravka Tchonkova

Zdravka Tchonkova was introduced to the world of gymnastics at age 7 in her birth town Varna, Bulgaria. Her artistic gymnastics coach quickly recognized the youngster's natural physical ability for Rhythmic Gymnastics and advised her parents to sign her up in the local RG club "Spartak". It was the right decision. Immediately Zdravka fell in love with the sport of Rhythmic Gymnastics and that shaped her future. As an athlete for 15 years Zdravka competed at provincial, national and international tournaments, representing her club and country. At age 18 she was selected to be part of the National Team in Group. Few of Zdravka's achievements include 1st place and World Champion title at 1981 World Championships in Munich, Germany, 2nd at European Championships in Stavanger, Norway – 1982 and many more. After her retirement, she graduated the Sport Academy in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria with Physical Education Degree. Her coaching skills and creativity let her to a working contract in Canada totaling 31 years of coaching. Some of her achievements include qualifying the Canadian National Team Group to the 2012 London Olympic Games, first ever participation of Canadian Group in the OG. Zdravka's involvement in the sport does not end there, she contributes her time and knowledge as a judge, coaching course conductor and volunteer.

Following are Zdravka's selected awards and achievements throughout the years:

As an athlete:

- World Champion in RG Group, 1981 – Munich, Germany
- Silver Medal at European Championships 1982 – Stavanger, Norway
- Second Place at the very first RG World Cup 1983 – Belgrade, Serbia

As a coach:

- 3M Coaching Canada Award in recognition of outstanding contribution to coaching • 2000
- Gold Medallion, Order of Sport Excellence Achievement Award • Sport Manitoba • 2011

- Coach of Manitoba's Olympian Susy Cushman, **1992 Barcelona Olympic Games**
- Coach of the Canadian National Team Senior Group, who qualified for the first time in history and competed at the **2012 London Olympic Games**
- Coach of Canadian NT Group **Silver and Bronze Medalist** from **Pan Am Games, 1999, 2003, 2011**
- Coach of **Commonwealth Games Silver Medalist Katie Iafolla**, Malaysia, 1998
- Coach of Manitoba Winter Games **Gold Medalist Junior Group, 1995**
- Coached National Team athletes throughout career from Bulgaria, France, Malaysia, Switzerland, Mexico, New Zealand and China
- Course conductor for NCCP L1-3 courses 1996 until present
- Chartered Professional Coach, granted by Coaches of Canada • 2012
- NCCP L4 Certified Coach in Rhythmic Gymnastics

As a judge:

- International Brevet Judge Category 2 RGG & RGI since 2001 until present
- Judged many Canadian competitions, World Cup, Pan-Am Championships and International Tournaments

Community involvement:

- **Member** • GCG/RG National Team Advisory Committee • 1998 – 2008
- Member - RGM Board 1998-2008 & 2016 until present
- Member – RGM Judging Committee 2012 until present
- Technical Director for many Winter Challenge Invitationals
- Member – Western Regional Championships Organizing Committee 2006
- Member – Gymnastics Canada (GYMCAN) Program Committee 2019 until present





October 2018 Coach of the Month: Zdravka Tchonkova

She began her career in rhythmic gymnastics as a child, and went on to become a world champion. Now, Zdravka Tchonkova shares her expertise with Manitoba athletes.

