

Written by John Crumlish

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Mexican Olympian **Elsa Garcia** refers to her 21st-place all-around finish at the world championships in Nanning in October as "an actual comeback," and she is eager to continue her rejuvenation in the coming next year.

Despite refraining from major competitions after she competed at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Garcia performed credibly in Nanning, where she also helped Mexico to place 14th in team standings and thereby qualify for the 2015 worlds in Glasgow. The top eight teams in Glasgow will qualify for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro; an additional four teams will qualify for Rio at an Olympic test event to be held in early 2016.

The 24-year-old Garcia competed even more assertively at last month's Central American and Caribbean Games in Veracruz, Mexico, where she placed second all-around, sixth on vault, fourth (tie) on uneven bars, seventh on balance beam and fifth on floor exercise. Garcia also led Mexico to the team title in Veracruz.

In this IG Online interview, Garcia evaluates her performances in Nanning and outlines her plans for the year ahead.

IG: Your all-around finish was a surprise for many people, because we have not seen you much in competition recently. How much of a surprise was it to you to make the all-around final?

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EG: I went to Nanning with two goals in mind: qualifying the team to next year's worlds and the all-around final. I refused to not be in that final. Of course it was kind of nerve-racking because I competed on the first day and there were many countries with excellent gymnasts left to compete the next day, and I wanted to know if I had made the final.



Elsa Garcia (Mexico) at the 2011 Worlds

IG: You had an excellent competition except for some problems on the bars in the all-around final. What do you think caused the mistakes on the bars?

EG: My mistakes on bars were part of me trying to be perfect-thinking about the whole routine instead of element by element. I wanted to do so perfectly the 1-1/2 pirouette-Jaeger that I didn't do it well at all. Then I was so concerned of losing points by the requirements that I got into an even bigger mess. I actually forgot to do a toe on-Tkatchev, and the deductions go on and on. At the end of the competition I was not particularly happy with my competition but reminded myself that these year's worlds have been my first international competition in a long time. I had been away from international competitions because, after London 2012, I started going to college and had to find time to do gymnastics at an elite level and go to school, and that kept me really busy in my hometown. So I take Nanning as an actual comeback, and it motivated me a lot for next year.

IG: Overall how close to totally healthy were you in Nanning?

EG: Actually I was pretty healthy at Nanning - only the normal training pain, but not injury pain.

IG: The Mexican team did very well, with you in the all-around final, Alexa Moreno in the vault final, and the team advancing to Glasgow. Now you will have an important year ahead, for yourself and your team. What will your strategy be for 2015, so you can be at your personal best and help your team even more?

EG: I think we reassured that Mexican gymnastics is still growing and that we want more, with those two finals and the team result. So for next year the first thing is that I will take a break from school, so that I can concentrate just on gymnastics and work on many upgrades in all the events. I want to give myself time to be ready and compete new skills totally ready. As a team we have to have more training camps because this team is a relatively new team, and if we want to be in the top 16 at worlds and fight for our team's place at the (2016 Olympic) test event we have to train as a team. We all have to be stronger physically and mentally and we have to make every training count, believe that we can, not leave it to fate and work, work, work.

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