

Why Stephen Nedoroscik is my new Strengths Hero



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I've always been a fan of Olympic Gymnastics. I was 12 for the 1984 Olympics when Mary Lou Retton was a dominant force, and I thought Bart Conner was adorable. So, it's not surprising that I keep up with the Team USA athletes, but like many sports fans, I had no idea who Stephen Nedoroscik was until recently. Now I am his #1 fan.

Based on what I've read, Stephen has been a gymnast for many years; however, early on he realized that he was successful in only 1 of the 6 apparatuses. Rather than focusing on being an all-around gymnast, he decided to focus on one discipline: the pommel horse. Stephen put in the time and effort, and the big results followed. Accolades began to pour in. He attended Penn State, (as a Wisconsin fan, I can still say GO BIG 10!) where he became the NCAA National Champion on the pommel horse as a **freshman**. Within 4 years, he placed 1st at the US National Championships. Clearly, he found his mission.



Fast forward to the 2024 Olympics, where there are only 5 slots for Team USA and Stephen earns one of them. While it could be considered a risky move since he only competes on one apparatus, this brings me to why he is my Strengths Hero.

Since I am a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach, people often ask if having Strengths in multiple domains (there are 4) is superior. Isn't it better to be well-rounded, which leads to being more versatile? Who wants to be known for being good at only one thing? While I am a firm believer that your Strengths are your Strengths and if you leverage them, you will be successful, I also say this:

Teams should be well-rounded, and individuals should be sharp.

When **individuals** have clarity on who they are, how they work best, and can achieve near-perfect performance, their talents are crisp and acute.



They are conscious of what they can contribute. Every day they bring their best selves to their activities and relish in their triumphs. A **team** employs a directory of unique strengths, and when it utilizes the talents of each individual team member, it accomplishes its goals with more precision and effectiveness. Again, the team is well-rounded not the person.

In men's gymnastics, Stephen is sharp as his dominant domain is competing on the pommel horse. His narrow focus ensures that he consistently provides that near-perfect performance. When Stephen chose to focus on his dominant apparatus, his ability to excel made him an obvious choice for Team USA. Thus, he was able to help the team reach its goal for the 2024 Olympics, which was to receive a team medal. And they did! The first in 16 years!

We can all take a lesson from Stephen – understand where you excel and invest the time and effort to help you achieve your greatest success!

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