

## Dr. Sho Fukushima to Retire from Navy Men's Gymnastics Program After 24 Years at Academy

Mids had two gymnasts compete at NCAA Championships this spring

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**ANNAPOLIS, Md.** -- [Dr. Sho Fukushima](#) has announced his retirement as head coach of the men's gymnastics team and as a professor in the physical education department at the United States Naval Academy after 24 years in charge of a multi-talented program that succeeded both athletically and academically. A five-time honoree as Coach of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Gymnastics Coaches (NACGC) and two-time Men's Team Coach of the Year by USA Gymnastics, Fukushima is coming off a 2015 season that saw two Mids compete at the NCAA Championships and seven earn All-America Scholar-Athlete accolades.

"After being totally embraced in this sport for the more than 55 years including 45 years of assisting younger people, I am deeply indebted to gymnastics as a powerful guidance in my life," remarked Fukushima. "Consisting of magnificently complex human movement, this is one of the most challenging matters I have sought answers within during both my personal and professional life."

"Sho's personal and professional contributions to gymnastics for our midshipmen, our Brigade, and on a national scale have been extraordinary," said Navy Director of Athletics Chet Gladchuk. "It is difficult to grasp the magnitude of his influence on so many lives over a very lengthy and distinguished career. He has set the bar for collegiate competition and training in the sport and has been a wonderful mentor to so many at the Academy. His balance of our moral, mental, and physical mission makes him one of our finest educators. As he now leaves coaching and teaching behind, we wish him great health and enthusiasm for the next chapter in his life. He will be greatly missed on the Yard, and it will be very difficult to replace this legend in our profession."

A strong believer in the complete student-athlete, Fukushima produced 62 All-America Scholar-Athletes and 41 NCAA Championship qualifying performances during his tenure in Annapolis that began in 1991. In his final season leading the Midshipmen, Fukushima helped the talented duo of [Mitchell Larios](#) and [Jonny Tang](#) qualify for and compete in the NCAA Championships at the University of Oklahoma in April. In the classroom, captain [Joshua Steves](#) led a group of high achievers in their studies with his second consecutive CoSIDA Academic All-America honor. Those three individuals' success on the national stage marked the conclusion of a strong campaign for the team that included a first place result at the Navy Open and runner-up finishes at the USAG and ECAC Championships. Scholastically, the 2015 Midshipmen squad posted the fifth highest GPA in the nation at 3.286.



Dr. Sho Fukushima was a five-time NACGC Coach of the Year

Prior to coming to the Naval Academy, Fukushima was a three-time Coach of the Year in the Pac-10 as the head coach at the University of California, Berkeley in 1984, 1987 and 1989. Fukushima had also found success on the

international stage as he coached five Olympians and five USA National Team members since retiring from his competitive individual career.

"Coach Fukushima has done more for the Men's Gymnastics program than many of us realized," said [Eric Poletti](#), the 2015-16 team captain. "I think his style of coaching and discipline was a new experience for a lot of us and really opened our minds to pushing through adversity, opposing opinions, and coming together to accomplish goals as a team in an individual sport. He'll be remembered for pushing us to our limits and making the most out of every opportunity we had to succeed."

"Navy Gymnastics with more than 100 years of history will live on," said Fukushima. "Strict discipline, hard training and intricate skills embodied in gymnastics have nurtured young boys into Junior Officers at the Academy! The tradition has to move on forward and it will be increasingly better than a generation before."

Fukushima's retirement is effective October 31.

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