

# Jody stands out in gym crowd

By Gary Olson  
Staff Writer

Highland Park's gymnastics team stands out in a crowd.

Friday, at Williams Arena, in spite of the seemingly mass confusion of the Minnesota State High School Gymnastics Tournament, the Scots were always easy to find.

First, their coach, Bob Lewis, was the only black among the myriad of coaches, judges and competitors.

Secondly, and perhaps the most unusual aspect of the Region 2 championship team was Jody Cohen, the lone girl in this year's "boy's state tournament."

Coinciding with the tournament at Williams Arena is the Minnesota State High School Girl's Gymnastics Tournament at Armstrong.

Jody wasn't eligible for that since the St. Paul school system is one of few in the state that doesn't have a gymnastics program for girls.

So, she competed with the guys. Another step for women's liberation?

"I'm nervous, excited

and happy to be here," Jody explained just before taking her turn in the free exercise.

The St. Paul schools will probably have a girl's program next season, but if not, Jody will be back helping her male teammates. "I'm really looking forward to next season," she smiled. "I'd like to see a girl's team at Highland, but if there isn't, I'll just continue to work the mats like I did this year."

Lewis had to get a special permit from the MSHSL to continue as the Scots' coach. He started the season as an elementary teacher but changed jobs midway through the season.

He now leaves Stillwater prison each day to conduct practice.

"I am NOT in jail," he laughed. "I just work there." Lewis works in a vocational program providing job development for the convicts.

He isn't sure whether he will be allowed to coach the Scots next season. It may take another special permit . . . from the Minnesota State High School League, NOT Stillwater prison.

**GYM NOTES:** Armstrong won its fourth straight team championship Friday, scoring 148.79 points to runnerup Alexander Ramsey's 133.70. Fairmont was third with 131.20, followed

by Cooper, Park Center, Grand Rapids, Highland Park and Minneapolis Edison . . . The championship makes the Falcons the first team to win four titles in a row since Minneapolis North did it in 1959-62 . . .



Highland Park gymnastics coach Bob Lewis and Scots' gymnast Jody Cohen watch a teammate during the opening session of the Minnesota State High School

Gymnastics Tournament Friday at Williams Arena. Jody was the lone girl to compete in the boy's tournament. Staff Photo by Sully Doroshov