

Dominique Dawes

3-Time Olympic Gymnast, Olympic Gold Medalist; First African American Gymnast to Qualify for the Olympic Games

From Olympic Gold Medalist to Broadway, and from television analyst to President of the Women's Sports Foundation, Dominique Dawes continues on a path to inspire, motivate and lead.

Dominique Dawes is best known for her tremendous success as an Olympic gymnast who competed in three Olympic Games, (the 1992 Barcelona Games, 1996 Atlanta Games, and 2000 Sydney Games), won four Olympic medals, and has a permanent place in the U.S. Olympic Committee Hall of Fame. Fans across the nation and around the world remember her as a member of the gold-medal-winning "Magnificent Seven" at the 1996 Atlanta Games, where she also won a bronze medal as she wowed the crowd with her stunning performance in the floor exercise, becoming the first female African American gymnast to win an individual medal. She also earned a bronze medal with the U.S. team in the 1992 Barcelona Games and left an imprint in the sports world with her "back-to-back" tumbling pass. Dominique made a surprising comeback with an anticlimactic end in the 2000 Sydney Games.

Dominique's start in gymnastics began at the age of six. Her first and only coach, Kelli Hill, quickly realized her potential. She burst into the international spotlight in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. She was the first African American gymnast to ever qualify and compete in an Olympic Games. At these Games she and her teammates captured a bronze medal. Since then Dominique has won more National Championship medals than any other athlete, male or female, since 1963, as well as numerous World Championship medals. One of Dominique's greatest feats came when she swept all four events and won the All-Around title at the 1994 National Championships, as well as winning the 1996 Olympic Trials.

At the 1996 Olympic Games, Dominique and the US Gymnastics team made history and stole the hearts of Americans with their team gold medal. At those same Olympic Games, "Awesome Dawesome" (as she is known by her coach and teammates) became the first African American to win an individual gymnastics medal with her bronze on the floor. Following her triumphs at the Olympics, Dominique appeared on the Wheaties cereal box, performed in a music video by Prince, "Betcha by Golly Wow," and acted on a number of television shows. Dominique has also appeared on Broadway in the hit musical, "Grease," where she played the part of Patty Simcox.

As a result of her determination and ability, Dominique has received several awards including the Henry P. Iba Citizen Award, presented annually to two outstanding athletes who have demonstrated good citizenship. Dominique was named Sportsperson of the Year by USA Gymnastics, and she was also a finalist for the AAU Sullivan Award, which recognizes the USA's top amateur athlete and the Nickelodeon Kid's Choice Awards.

Dominique is a graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park. While she was a full-time student, she remained focused and committed to her multiple career opportunities. Due to her drive and dedication, Dominique is becoming a renowned public speaker, speaking on multiple issues including, but not limited to, health issues, sports participation, health and fitness, equality (African American/women's rights), being a team player, failure, and self-esteem.

Since 1994, Dominique has enjoyed being a spokesperson for many organizations and campaigns. She was the national spokesperson for the "Girl Power" campaign, which was a youth empowering initiative ran by the Clinton administration. The "Girl Power" campaign reached young people in the public system nationwide. Her focus during appearances is on the issues that young people and women face today, such as developing positive self-esteem, incorporating fitness/health/wellness in their lifestyle and empowerment to envision achieving their dreams and ultimately reaching their full potential. Some organizations that she has committed her time to are as follows: The Women's Sports Foundation, Girl Scouts of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America and many other organizations. She has spoken at a variety of different events from presidential inaugural events, corporations, youth-serving agencies to college events.

While continuing her commitment to helping today's girls realize their full potential, Dominique teamed up with Girl Scouts of the USA to launch "Uniquely Me! The Girl Scout Self-Esteem Program." The goal of this national program is to provide a nurturing environment and an educational curriculum to build a positive self-esteem in young girl's ages 8 to 18, with a specific focus on those in under-represented communities. Dominique also

teamed up with Dove to bring attention to the next phase of the “Campaign for Real Beauty,” addressing the critical issue of self-esteem in women and young girls. Dominique shares her unique experiences as a top athlete, role model and a positive television personality to inspire and empower girls to feel good about themselves and fulfill their dreams.

Dominique offers private lessons in the sport of gymnastics with the emphasis on strength and flexibility improvement, perfecting the fundamentals, mental toughness training while developing self-motivation and focus.

Additionally, Dominique continues to gain experience in the world of broadcasting. At the 2001 Goodwill Games in Brisbane, Australia, she commentated on the sports of men’s and women’s artistic gymnastics and women’s rhythmic gymnastics with TNT. She has also worked with her local CBS affiliate in Washington, DC, reporting general interest stories (Black History month features). At the 2002 NCAA National Gymnastics Championship in Tuscaloosa, AL, she provided on-air reporting with CBS Sports, and she provided commentary and analysis at the Big 12 Regionals in Lincoln, Nebraska, with FoxSports Net. She also worked with Comcast Sportsnet during the 2004 Athens Olympics. Dominique has appeared on CNN for an Olympic overview and was the analyst for the Big 12 Gymnastics Nationals for Fox Sports Net.

Dominique provided commentary for Yahoo! Sports during the Beijing Olympics as well as the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver. She was an Olympic analyst for the 2012 Olympic Games in London for FoxSports.com and for Good Morning America during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

This mother of four young kids continues to empower and inspire audiences through her transparent and emotionally captivating speeches. Her career may be best known for her Olympic feats; however, it’s her ability to make her journey to Olympic history relatable to many audiences.

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