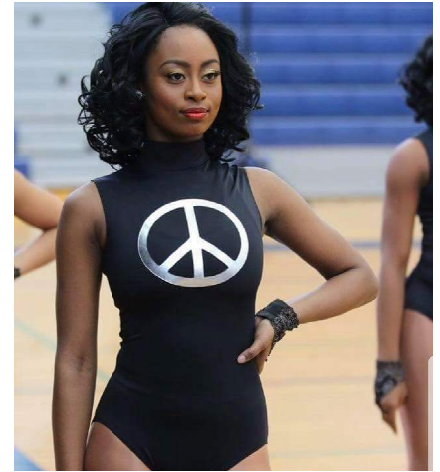


about you
HOLLAY!TM
cheer and dance
magazine

Q&A Moment

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Lady Gems Dance
Washington, DC



What age did you started dancing?

I have danced in many plays and performances since the age of 4. At 8, I was told I wouldn't be able to dance anymore. Despite this being said to me, I took my medication and did strength training to improve my health and kept dancing every chance I got. Then I was able to audition for the Lady Gems at 14. Although I didn't make it the first time, they explained how I could improve and at the age of 15, I auditioned again. I joined the Lady Gems, where I received a variety training and encouragement as a dancer and a student.

What is the best experience as a dance athlete?

My greatest experience as a dance athlete was performing a routine that had a strong meaningful message for the audience. It empowered many, including my teammates. It provided the audience with a visual understanding of how African American females struggle with illnesses on a daily basis. The routine also provided a solution for the understanding of these illnesses, "love". As an African American female with an autoimmune disease myself, I am very proud of the outcome and to be a part of a message that impacts my everyday life.

How do you prepare for a performance/competition?

Like all teams and/or groups preparing for performances and competitions, we practice hard for a vast amount of time. Something unique that the Lady Gems do is take time to discuss the purpose of the routine as well as what we are striving for. This is then connected to how we portray the routine. We also have discussions allowing the team members to give the coaches insight in order to further the team's success. Overall this made me realize that if you never communicate then you apparently don't want other to know your ideas and if you don't keep trying new things then you don't ever plan on growing.

Tell us how you balance your academics and your extracurricular activities as a dance athlete.

Balancing my academics and extracurricular activities were difficult when I didn't understand the important factors needed to do so. Time management is important. You must allow yourself to develop a mental schedule and understanding of the importance of each activity. Although my

love for dance is strong I also know, and have been told multiple times by my coaches, that my academics come first. Once these two are developed, your next focus simply becomes developing ideas for your free time.

Tell us how about your career plans for the future.

My plans for the future are to attend the college of my choice and receive my Bachelor's degree in Biology. With this I will fulfill my dream of becoming a zoologist and extend my love of animals by conducting research on what may benefit and harm them.

What is your advice for anyone starting out as a dance athlete?

I want people to remember that all the time and sweat put forward will be worth it at the end because the things you learn when dancing, cheering or when involved in any sport/ club is also a life skill. Your love and dedication for something can make the challenges appear as rewards. Coaches are hard on you because they love and want the best for you. Despite this being said you must want the best for yourself in order for you to improve.