

Hinsdale Central junior Emma Christoph was determined to land her second attempt at a tuck Tsukahara vault at the Naperville North Invitational Saturday, Jan. 5.

As Christoph sprinted toward the vaulting table, something happened and she stopped.

“I was ready to do it and then I started running down the lane. I didn’t think about it for a second, and it freaked me out a little bit,” Christoph said. “I was like, ‘I can do this. I can do this one. I just have to go back and re-think through it and go for it again.’ ”

With everything back in order, Christoph tried again. She not only landed it well, but she also got her sought after 9.0 score in the process to finish 14th on the event.

That was among several highlights for the Red Devils, whose 137.25 points earned fourth place among 12 teams. Glenbard West (141.70 points) won for the second straight year with Prospect (139.10) and Palatine (138.225) second and third.

Senior Erin Morgan did not compete on vault because of an ankle injury but finished second on floor (9.325) and fifth on uneven parallel bars (9.25) and balance beam (9.0).

Junior Cayley Brenk also had a top-10 finish with ninth on vault (9.2). Seniors Annie Zircher and Hannah Kapelinski also had top-20 finishes.

“(Morgan is) just steady as a rock on floor, but beam is harder, though, just to push off (the ankle),” Estoque said. “She did well. She always does. She’s so consistent.”

Christoph has scored as high as 9.1 on vault this season Nov. 29, but at Naperville North, each event had state-level judges with scores based on the average of two judges each event. At her last meet Dec. 22 at the New Trier Invite, Christoph was dejected about coming so close with an 8.975.

“I feel like at this meet there are a lot tougher judges and two judges so it’s more like an honest score. It feels like I worked for it more and I’m a lot more excited,” Christoph said.

“I was really hoping for a 9 because I was really working on it and I was able to land it, which was really exciting for me. I think (stopping and going back) definitely helped me because I got to think through it a lot more and just calm myself down.”

Morgan had another strong performance even though she sprained her ankle the first practice after Christmas and had to sit out a week.

The invite’s two-time defending invite champion on floor, Morgan overcame her injury to still manage second to Barrington freshman Abby Hasanov (9.35) by just .025. Morgan just returned to tumbling the day before.

“I was happy with that,” Morgan said. “I’m pretty surprised with this (overall), knowing my ankle isn’t 100 percent.”

Morgan also won all-around at the invite last year with a 36.375. With a 27.575 on her three events this time, she would have tied all-around winner Mackenzie O’Keefe of Glenbard West (36.80) with a 9.225 vault.

The Red Devils used two all-arounders. Brenk tied for 13th (34.20) and

Zircher was 24th (32.075).

Morgan hurt her ankle practicing beam when she had an odd landing on the mat after a full turn became wobbly. It was the first time Morgan could remember not competing as an all-arounder since hurting her ankle as a freshman.

“It’s a little weird. It doesn’t feel like I’m done with the meet,” Morgan said.

Competing last on beam, the Red Devils shared the second-highest team score with Prospect (33.775) behind Palatine’s 34.375. The Red Devils were fourth on floor (34.75) and uneven bars (33.50). Without Morgan, the Red Devils still were fifth best on vault (35.225).

All five Red Devils finished among the top 25 on beam. Besides Morgan, also fifth on beam at last year’s invite, Zircher (8.35) and Kapelinski (8.325) were 17th and 18th with Christoph 22nd (8.1) and Brenk 25th (7.9).

Brenk and Christoph led the success on vault. Brenk also just missed her season best, a 9.225 from the previous meet Dec. 22.

They earlier enjoyed success on floor. Christoph (8.6) was 18th, Brenk (8.475) tied for 19th and Zircher was 25th (8.35).

On the uneven bars, Brenk was 14th (8.625) and freshman Elle Bergevin was 23rd (8.2). Zircher added a giant swing to her routine but had to count a fall.

Bergevin, who usually competes only on uneven bars, came within range of her 8.7 season best from Dec. 12. Bergevin was excited about making her free hip, which led to her giants becoming easier.

“In practice, I had to do more of what I was doing well in routines so then I finally got it,” Bergevin said.

“Even though her score wasn’t one of her higher scores, I thought it was actually her best routine,” Estoque said. “She usually has trouble with her low bar, and today she didn’t have any. We’re trying (to add things). She tends to hit her feet on everything she does.”

The lower bar will remain the biggest challenge for Bergevin because she is one of the taller gymnasts around.

“My feet always hit the low bar so I have to straddle. (And) I have to keep my legs straight so it’s hard,” Bergevin said.