

Senior Jorie Smith left the Hinsdale South girls gymnastics team's meet at Downers Grove South Tuesday with a feeling of accomplishment and carrying a case with her clarinet.

"I've got to practice when I get home," Smith said.

Smith had her best all-around meet this season by nearly a point as she helped the Hornets equal their season high in a 129.65 to 100.65 loss for their West Suburban Conference Gold Division dual opener.

Smith had a team-high 8.5 vault for fourth place overall and tied for fourth on balance beam by sharing the team-high 6.5 with senior Brenna Budaitis.

"Beam is definitely a highlight because I stuck it for the first time this year and it's a good thing," Smith said. "(And) I had a good vault. All around (my meet) was decent."

Budaitis was second in all-around (season-high 26.20) to Downers South sophomore Emily Tom (31.70). Sophomore Eva Bucke (24.30) and senior McKinsey Hultmark (21.95) also competed as all-arounders, and senior Shur Batmunkh worked everything but the uneven parallel bars.

The Hornets also scored 100.65 in their previous dual Dec. 7 at home against Riverside-Brookfield. On Tuesday, their 17.10 on uneven bars was a season-high team score by 1.85 points with Bucke scoring a team-best 4.9.

"I think the girls did OK. We're making progress from week to week," Hinsdale South coach Jennifer Fichter said. "They're getting stronger, which is really the key that we need to focus on. That's going to help us out as we improve our routines."

Beam also was a highlight for Smith since it's an event she didn't always compete last year. Smith was an all-rounder on the junior varsity I level, but for varsity she primarily was limited to floor and vault.

This season, Smith is a full-time all-rounder, especially because she and Batmunkh are the Hornets' only returnees with varsity experience last season.

"I like doing all of the events," Smith said. "It's a good variety, mixing it up, especially since I was focused on two events my freshman year. I like doing everything."

That includes outside of gymnastics. Smith has played the clarinet since fourth grade and is among several Hornets also involved in the school band as well as Budaitis and Bucke among others.

"I just like being a part of big group things," Smith said. "I love music, and making music with other people is something kind of special that not a lot of other people can say that they would be able to do in their life."

While her schedule may be somewhat hectic, Smith said she has been fortunate that she hasn't had to choose between gymnastics and her other interests.

"Since this is my senior year, I'm pretty much used to so many things that I have to manage all at once," Smith said. "It was a bit tricky at first. I didn't know how it would work out, but both the coaches and my band director and other activities have been very flexible with their schedules and what I can go to and what I can miss so it hasn't been too hard on me."

Is there any correlation for Smith between gymnastics and playing the clarinet?

"Practice, practice, practice and you will get it," Smith said.

-- by Bill Stone