

Any concerns that Shepard freshman Skylor Hilger had about adding a double full twist to her floor routine were answered quickly Saturday, Jan. 12.

Hilger attempted the trick on her first floor pass during the Neuqua Valley Invitational and landed it. Unfortunately for her, she also went out of bounds, a deduction of a couple of tenths.

“I’m happy that I ended up over-rotating rather than under-rotating so that I know I can do my double full well,” Hilger said. “When I start my routine, I’m so hyped up. I have to go less hard because I go too hard on the twisting. It’s good to know by doing it in a meet.”

Hilger’s fourth high-school meet was perhaps the one from which she learned the most. Hilger finished eighth in all-around (34.10) with some new routines and new tricks since her last outing Dec. 28 at the Oswego Invite.

Hilger was fifth on vault (9.45), 11th on uneven bars (8.65), tied for 13th on beam (8.2) and tied for 19th on floor (7.8) at the eight-team meet. Prairie Ridge co-op, third at state last year, won with 145.775 points.

“It was a good experimental meet because I changed a lot of things,” Hilger said. “I think those routines will be best for me as long as I do more stuff at practice and keep perfecting them.”

Hilger’s lesson from floor is that she can keep the double full but just switch it to her second tumbling pass when she competes Saturday, Jan. 19, at Lincoln-Way’s junior varsity invitational at Lincoln-Way East.

“I’m taking that (double full) into my second pass so I won’t have too much

power now,” Hilger said. “It wasn't a very good floor routine for me. I've done way better. I've been rearranging the floor passes so I can have the best landings and perfection for Saturday.”

Hilger started the meet on vault and again landed her pike Yurchenko strongly with a mere step, tying her season-high 9.45 from Dec. 15. Prairie Ridge sophomore Rachael Underwood won the event with a 9.85.

Uneven bars and beam had frustrating results for different reasons. Hilger struggled with her new uneven bars routine, which includes a new mount from a springboard. On beam, she had a near-flawless routine but then fell on one of her jumps, a skill she rarely misses.

“(That) was very upsetting because I never fall on those. It's one of those if you don't worry about it (then you miss),” Hilger said.

“I changed up a few things (on bars). It wasn't my best routine, but it wasn't my worst. In practice, I'm getting stronger with it. I think it's just repeating it, which is a key to a lot of routines, and getting used to doing routines as a whole and not each skill individually.”

The Lincoln-Way JV Invite was supposed to be Hilger's final regular-season competition. However, she has been added to Glenbard West's home dual against York Tuesday, Jan. 22 in Glen Ellyn before competing at the Hinsdale Central Regional at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31.

Teams at the regional include Hinsdale South, which has several gymnasts that are Action Gymnastics teammates with Hilger during the club season. Hilger met the Glenbard West gymnasts when they also competed at the Oswego Invite and received an invitation to take part in one of the

Hilltoppers' dual meets.

"I thought that was very nice of them (to ask). I wanted to take the opportunity for more practice and getting things down," Hilger said. "They are very nice, very welcoming, very nice girls, funny, very supportive. I'm glad I'm able to do that dual meet."