

sports

Skyla Schulte followed her parents' footsteps to MSU, now she's blazing her own path toward stardom

[Bella Johnson](#)

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[Skyla Schulte's](#) Spartan roots go far deeper than just her two years on the Michigan State gymnastics team.

Schulte's parents met at MSU, and the gymnast's father, Pete Schulte, was a wrestler for the green and white.

"I grew up bleeding green ... obviously it influenced me, but they were never like the type of parents that pushed me to go here," Schulte said. "They wanted me to kind of find my own destiny and where I felt like was home, but Michigan State has always felt like home. And even when I did commit, they were like, 'Well, are you sure you don't want to visit other schools?' And I was like, 'No, I know this is where I want to go.'

"I just feel like this is right for me, and it's always felt like home," Schulte said.

Schulte said that following in her dad's footsteps as a student-athlete at Michigan State is a way for her to carry on the Schulte legacy, but Skyla is blazing a path of her own.

The 20-year-old sophomore started her gymnastics journey when she was just 3 years old.

"I was so excited to go to practice when I was little," Schulte said. "I just knew that this was the only sport I've ever wanted to do."

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Sophomore all-around competitor Skyla Schulte at practice on Friday, March 24, 2023 - one week before the Spartans travel to Pittsburgh, Pa for the second round of the NCAA Regionals tournament.

Despite being an underclassman, Skyla Schulte has already made a huge impact on MSU Gymnastics. During her freshman season, Schulte was named to the All-Big Ten First Team, received Second-Team All-American honors and was named the 2022 Big Ten Freshman of the Year.

On March 5, 2022, Schulte set the Michigan State all-around record with a 39.675 in a meet against Western Michigan. Schulte's school record was beaten exactly one year later by freshman [Nikki Smith](#) with a 39.775 in the tri-meet against Bowling Green and Long Island University.

Schulte closed off her freshman campaign as the lone Spartan competitor advancing to nationals. In the 2022 Seattle Regional Finals, Schulte put up a beam score of 9.925 to individually qualify for the NCAA National Championship in that event.



She was the first MSU gymnast to qualify for nationals since 2016, and although she was the sole Spartan qualifier in 2022, fellow freshman [Gabrielle Stephen](#) joined Schulte in Fort Worth for moral support.

“I did get to have Gabi (Stephen) there, so that was great. I'm so glad that she was there,” Schulte said. “But really being there as a team is really gonna I feel like fuel the fire for us.”

So far, Schulte's sophomore campaign has been just as remarkable as last year. The all-arounder set career records on two events — a 9.925 on vault and 9.975 on floor — and tied her career-high 9.950 on both the uneven bars and beam.

At the Big Ten Championship, Schulte was an elite competitor from start to finish to secure runner-up in the all-around with a 39.625.

Schulte is not only a fixture for the Spartans on the floor, but also off. The sophomore received a Big Ten Sportsmanship Award for her behavior toward her team, her opponents and the people around her.

As the Spartans head off to Pittsburgh for their 2023 Regional Championship, Schulte said that she is feeling a little more at ease than last year.

“I feel like there's like a different fire, like I want this year to be there,” Schulte said. “I'm feeling way more excited this year. I don't know if it's because last year I was a freshman, so maybe I was a little nervous or like what it is, but I just feel way more excited to be going to regionals this year. I'm really excited to see how far the team can go.”

Michigan State will be competing in the first session of the Pittsburgh regional semi-finals at 2 p.m. on Friday, March 31 against No. 7 California, West Virginia and Western Michigan. Regionals will be streaming on ESPN+.

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