

CAT SCRATCHES

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The Newsletter of The University of Arizona GymCats

Dear Friends, Alumni & Boosters,

February 5

As the second month of the season started, we were home for our second meet in a row to meet Pac-10 opponent UCLA. The week of training had gone well and the coaching staff was confident of a good meet. Health-wise, things were a bit better and so we were able to put up a pretty good line-up on paper. UCLA was looking very good this year but our focus would have to stay on our continual growth and improvement. This was also our annual "Flipping for the Fight" meet where the teams wear pink in support of Breast Cancer Awareness. Another outstanding crowd was on hand to cheer the team on.

We started off on vault with our usual line-up of: Molly, Aubree, Talyn, Sarah, and Deanna. Molly started us off with a clean vault that contained a few landing deductions for her 9.675. Aubree followed up with a 9.7 and Talyn came third with a 9.625. We were performing ok but not nailing any landings. Colleen was up next and it was a bit more of the same for a 9.7. Sarah was up next and she had been a bit off all evening. Her vault was the first example as she almost entirely missed the table but still found a way to land low and score a 9.475. Deanna was ready to make up for her vault mishap the week before and hit our best effort for a 9.8. Our event score was a 48.5 and when you consider all of the landing errors and Sarah's misfortune, you can easily come up with .7 that we left behind. There was nothing to do but march on to bars and try to capture some of those tenths.

Our usual line-up of Deanna, Molly, Aubree, Britnie, Miranda, and Sarah warmed up well and looked to be ready. Deanna did her job starting us off with a safe, hit routine and a 9.675. Molly also hit her set but with a few errors she brought her score to a 9.65. Aubree was third and for the first time this season, had some issues with her routine. After adding an extra giant and slinging her dismount, she received a 9.525. Britnie then saluted and hit a very nice routine that scored a 9.775. Miranda made a slight mental error on her release move and fell to the mat when she was a ½ inch too far. She finished up great but the fall plus losing value lowered her mark to a 9.075. Unfortunately, Sarah had the same issue on her release move and after her dismount, received an identical 9.075. It was a very rough bar rotation for a very rough 47.7. At least 1.0 to 1.3 below what it should have been. Our running meet score was a 96.2 and things needed to turn around quick.

After our poor bar performance, my mind immediately shifted from getting a good score to trying to learn something from this meet. With that in mind, I pulled Deanna aside as we marched to beam. Deanna was not slated to do any beam work this meet as she was still working back from the problems of the past couple of weeks. She had not even touched the beam during warm-ups and was preparing in her mind to get ready for floor. I am keenly aware of Deanna's competitive drive and I told her I wanted her to do a beam set.

I realized that she would have a total of 30 seconds of prep in the one touch to get ready but I didn't think that would be an issue, neither did she. Our beam line-up for this meet would then be: Aubree, Talyn, Sarah, Colleen, Britnie, and Molly with Deanna exhibition. Aubree recovered well from her bar routine to start us off with a good hit routine and a 9.675. Talyn was up second and had a good routine going until she fell on a leap sequence, her first fall of the year. She scored an 8.95. After the first two events, I was wondering how the team would react to the pressure of not counting this fall. Something had shocked Sarah back into the meet as she stepped up and hit a routine when we needed it on admittedly, her weakest event. She scored a 9.625 with some obvious errors but she didn't fall. Now the meat of the line-up was ready. Colleen hit a very good routine with some balance checks for a 9.75. Britnie followed her with an identical type of routine for a 9.775 and then Molly fought through some wobbles for a 9.75. Was it our best beam work, not by a long shot but they fought to not count that fall and when they succeeded, you could see some life resurfacing in the team. Our final beam set was Deanna on 30 seconds of warm-up and just as I expected, she hit her first meet beam routine in 3 weeks. She scored a 9.675 while our event score was a 48.575. Our running score was a 144.775, still below average, but as moral victories go, the beam team stepping up for us rejuvenated the team.

For our last event of floor, we switched around the performers to help with fatigue and pressure. For this meet, the line-up would be: Talyn, Molly, Mykle, Aubree, Sarah, and Deanna. Talyn is very comfortable in the lead-off spot and did a great job starting us off with a 9.7. Molly, in her first time not being in the lead-off position, took the baton, so-to-speak, and ran with it to hit her best floor routine to date and a 9.8. Mykle has been getting more and more comfortable each week and this week was no different as she hit her routine for a 9.7. Aubree then got the crowd (and the team charged with fist pumps) as she nailed a set for a 9.8. Sarah was now looking like old Sarah and stepped out to hit her best of the season and a 9.875. We watered Deanna this meet as she was working to regain her expertise on her tumbling skills. She is very talented and even her watered down set is better than most. She hit and our final routine of the meet scored a 9.85. Our final event score was a 49.025, much more of what we expect on every event. Our final team score was a 193.8.

This meet was basically the tale of two halves. The first half being marked by inconsistency and missed skills. The second being characterized by resolve and heart. As a team, we will definitely look at the missed opportunities and try to learn from them. We have the necessary athletic ability, we just need to keep learning and working hard to prepare for the meets to come. We will put this meet to rest and look forward to our 3 week road trip before returning to McKale in March.

Arizona vs. UCLA				
	Vault	Bars	Beam	Floor
Aubree	9.7	9.525	9.675	9.8
Talyn	9.625		8.95	9.7
Mykle				9.7
Colleen	9.7		9.75	
Deanna	9.8	9.675	9.675	9.85
Britnie		9.775	9.775	
Molly	9.675	9.65	9.75	9.8
Miranda		9.075		
Sarah	9.475	9.075	9.625	9.875

February 12 R.I.P. – Rite Aid

We were back on the road for another 3 weeks and the first stop was Corvallis, OR for a dual with Oregon St. We have had a storied rivalry with OSU over the years and I know that all of the alumni have memories of competing here in rainy Oregon. For those of you who have never had the pleasure, there is really not much to do in the city of Corvallis. Ever since I have been at Arizona (and even before that) the team has been making a trek to the local Rite Aid on the day of competition because that was the only shopping or thing to do during the day. It has become such a team tradition that the older team members pass down stories to the rookies of tales of shopping in this very big and unusual Rite Aid. They carried everything from camping equipment, to pets, to clothes and the team would browse endlessly at this small town do-it-all store. I myself have 20 years of memories including hearing an announcement to “Please do not let the animals loose” and then finding out the culprit was none other than Kristin McDermott. We purchased emergency items such as degreaser to clean the vault board as well as valentines for those back home. The team often purchased items there for special motivational team projects; the latest being the “pink sock” tribute. Well, it is my sad duty to let you all know that that big old Rite Aid that holds so many memories for all of us is no more. It has been replaced by a new modern, much smaller and sterile version that certainly holds no allure. A sad day for us all. From now on, I am not sure what the team will do – maybe we will stay in Eugene!

Of course, after our shopping trip, the reason we were here was for a meet. We came into this meet with the goal of continued improvement of the mental game as well as trying out some new routines and line-ups. It was also the return for Katie as her foot was finally healed enough to get her back out there. Our first event was bars and our line-up would be: Deanna, Molly, Aubree, Britnie, Miranda, and Sarah with Katie in exhibition. Deanna did her job of starting us off with a 9.65. Molly followed and had good swing for a 9.7. Aubree was up third and hit one of her best so far and received a 9.775. Britnie saluted next and had a pretty flawless routine that was marred by a step on her dismount. Her score was our second 9.775. Miranda was up next and even though she had a great week of training, had the same error as last week, barely missing her Deltchev and taking a fall. Her score was a 9.05. But unlike last week, Sarah was able to put down her set for a 9.8 and we escaped without counting a fall. Katie then saluted for both her first time this season and her first time ever on bars. She did a good job and even with a big error on her dismount earned a 9.45. Our event score was a 48.7, not our best but a lot better than last week, a definite mental victory.

We rotated to vault and planned on trying out a new line-up order: Talyn, Aubree, Molly, Colleen, Sarah, and Deanna. Talyn, started us off with a 9.625 followed by Aubree and a 9.725. Pretty good so far. Molly had some problems on her vault but landed it for a 9.525. Colleen then basically missed the table but was able to still stick the landing on her effort for a 9.725. Sarah was up fifth with a solid effort and a 9.8 and we finished with Deanna scoring a 9.825 with a step. Once again it was a solid, not great effort. A number of small errors throughout the line-up left us with our second 48.7 and a 97.4 running score. We knew we had some strong routines in the next half of the competition so we rotated to floor.

Our floor line-up for this meet was a little re-ordered from last week: Talyn, Molly, Mykle, Aubree, Deanna, and Sarah. This was Talyn’s second week leading off and she is doing a great job. She started us off with a very good 9.75 and we were set up nicely. Molly then hit a pretty good routine herself for a 9.725 followed by Mykle with an identical 9.725. Then a few problems hit. Aubree over-rotated her first pass (double pike) a bit and took a number of steps out of bounds. She finished up nicely but all of the deductions

resulted in a 9.6. Deanna saluted next and had almost the same situation in her routine. She landed long on her first pass (double Arabian), took steps ending up out of bounds. She finished well but received a score of 9.625. After a promising start, we were in salvation mode. Sarah wasn't fazed at all though as she hit a really nice routine with only very minor deductions for a 9.875. Believe it or not, our third 48.7 in a row. It was starting to feel like nothing we did was going to exceed to the good status. Our running score after three events was a 146.1. We had one event left and it has been both a blessing and a curse for us this year (just like bars). I 100% believed we would not count a fall as we marched to beam, it would be more a matter of how precise our beam work would be.

We had a new beam line-up this week as Colleen needed a rest. The new line-up would be: Aubree, Talyn, Sarah, Deanna, Britnie, and Molly with Katie in exhibition. Aubree was over her floor score quickly as she started us off with a solid set and a 9.7. Talyn was up next and even though she had to repeat her series, she retained her composure to finish her routine with any major breaks but received a score of 9.625. Sarah then came up and had a little bit of a rough routine. The judges liked what they saw though and scored her at a 9.7. Deanna was up fourth but missed a foot on her series. There was our first fall but she finished strong for a 9.15. We now had to worry about counting a fall but with the athletes remaining (including Katie), I never considered that they would fall; it would be a matter of how well they stayed on. Britnie had a really nice routine going even though she had to cut her series short. A pretty significant deduction on her dismount lowered her score to a 9.725. Molly came up and just like any great closer, sealed the deal with a conservative routine and a 9.825. We escaped the fall but still had one more routine. Katie was our most consistent beam worker last year and when she mounted and hit her first beam routine of the season, the entire team cheered. It has been a long wait for her and a 9.725 was her initial kick-off. It was a rough beam rotation for us and we survived for a 48.575. Our final team score was a 194.675.

Overall, I felt that we had made definite progress from our last meet in McKale. The team was focused and fought hard regardless of what came our way. The coach in me still sees the 195's (at least) that we keep leaving behind with these assorted errors and lapses that have occurred. It was a building meet in front of a good crowd and it should benefit us down the road. It was nice to see Katie back and many of the team gained further experience on their routines. We will return to Tucson for three days of training then we will be off again, this time flying east to Tuscaloosa, AL to meet the University of Alabama in a dual competition.

Arizona @ Oregon St.				
	Bars	Vault	Floor	Beam
Aubree	9.775	9.725	9.6	9.7
Talyn		9.625	9.75	9.625
Mykle			9.725	
Colleen		9.725		
Deanna	9.65	9.825	9.625	9.15
Britnie	9.775			9.725
Katie	9.45			9.725
Molly	9.7	9.525	9.725	9.825
Miranda	9.05			
Sarah	9.8	9.8	9.875	9.7

February 19 After returning from the rainy northwest for three days of training, the team continued heading east for our second away meet of the month. This meet would have us landing in Tuscaloosa, AL to meet the #1 ranked team in the nation, Alabama. The workouts had gone well but the pounding of the season was starting to show in the team. Aubree was having issues with a shin and a few other girls were feeling a bit under the weather with something that was going through the team. Nevertheless, we were excited to be a part of Alabama's "Breast Cancer Awareness" meet and the notoriety that came with it. They were expecting a sellout, the first 5000 fans received free shirts and they had even replaced the normal lighting on the outside of Coleman Coliseum with pink lighting in honor of the event.

We started on bars with the same line-up we had been using for most of the season: Deanna, Molly, Aubree, Britnie, Miranda, and Sarah and we would add Katie as an additional exhibition. Deanna was pumped and ready to go as she led us off with a hit and a 9.7. Molly followed by hitting her routine as well. Her score was limited to a 9.575 because of some execution errors. Aubree then saluted and hit a very good routine for a 9.75. Britnie followed with a hit and a 9.725. Miranda was up next and even though, at this point she was only 50% for the season, she was relaxed and confident. She did a great job getting back on the plus side with a great routine for a 9.8. Sarah was up last for the regular lineup and even with some handstand errors, hit her routine for a 9.7. Our final bar routine was Katie as she is getting used to competing bars again after a year and a half off. She improved on last week's effort as she hit her set for a 9.575. Even though we didn't have stellar bars, it was good to go six-for-six and carry that momentum into our next event. Our event score was a 48.675 as we rotated to vault.

We used the same vault line-up as the week before for this meet: Talyn, Aubree, Molly, Colleen, Sarah, and Deanna. Talyn has been working very hard on the little things to improve a vault score and this night, we saw some to the results. Talyn saluted first then stuck her vault cold to give us a great start. She received her career high of 9.85 for her effort. Aubree followed Talyn's cue and hit her own great vault for another 9.85. Molly then hit a very good 9.775 followed by Colleen with a 9.8. After four vaults, it was a great team effort. All that was left was to see how we would finish. Sarah kept the momentum going as she hit a great effort for a 9.85 and then Deanna finished our effort with a 9.875. A great vault team effort. When you are dropping a 9.775, things are pretty good. Our event score was a 49.225, a season high, and our running team score was a 97.9 at the turn.

We were also using the same line-up as in the previous meet for this competition: Talyn, Molly, Mykle, Aubree, Deanna, and Sarah. Talyn took the momentum of her vault to her floor routine as she started us off very well with a 9.75. Molly followed her with a 9.7 routine and then Mykle set earned a 9.65. We needed to stop the downward trend of our scores and Aubree had the answer as she hit a great routine that earned a 9.85. Setup nicely, Deanna then hit her best floor set of the year and scored a 9.9. Sarah finished our floor effort with her own hit set and a 9.75. The team fought back from mediocrity to earn a respectable 48.95 event score. At this point, our running event score was a 146.85. We had hit 18-for-18 routines (19-for-19 if you include Katie) and the team was motivated to finish this big meet off right.

Because of injury and illness during the week, we had a new beam line-up for this week: Deanna, Sarah, Colleen, Katie, Britnie, and Molly. Aubree and Talyn were taking the week off but Colleen and Katie were back and ready to go. Deanna started off looking great but unfortunately had a fall on an acro skill and like that, the pressure was on. Her score was a 9.2 and we were hoping to drop it. Sarah saluted next but just like Deanna, she was

not able to complete a no-fall meet and fell on a jump. Her score was a 9.0 and just like that, after going so strong, we were counting a fall. Oh well, nothing to do now but try and salvage the best team score possible. Colleen did a great job returning to the line-up and was our first beam hit for a 9.775. Katie followed for her first routine of the season in the regular line-up. She did a great job fighting off the nerves and hit her routine for a 9.725. Britnie followed her with a great routine that had a sizeable deduction on her dismount for a 9.75. Molly then finished off our meet with our fourth hit in a row and a 9.8. We had to count a fall and our resulting event score was a 48.25.

Even though we were not able to finish off the no-fall meet, we put up a pretty good team score of 195.1. Oh what could have been. There was still plenty of positive out of this meet. Talyn, Aubree, and Deanna all had set some new personal high scores. The 195 would help us in our bid for our 24th straight trip to the post-season. And performing for what most likely will be the highest attended gymnastics meet of 2010 was great. The final attendance was a complete sellout of 15,075 fans. Certainly the biggest gymnastics crowd I have ever witnessed. We have now competed five times on the road to only two home meets. We still have one more road meet before we can return to Arizona for a while. Next stop Lincoln, Nebraska...

Arizona @ Alabama				
	Bars	Vault	Floor	Beam
Aubree	9.75	9.85	9.85	
Talyn		9.85	9.75	
Mykle			9.65	
Colleen		9.8		9.775
Deanna	9.7	9.875	9.9	9.2
Britnie	9.725			9.75
Katie	9.575			9.725
Molly	9.575	9.775	9.7	9.8
Miranda	9.8			
Sarah	9.7	9.85	9.75	9.0

February 28 Our third away meet in a row and in the month of February had the team traveling to the chilly Midwest and Lincoln, Nebraska. We were competing in the Master's Classic, an annual invitational the University of Nebraska hosts every year. This was our first time back to this competition since 1992, when we won the meet over then #1 Alabama. We could only hope to have that kind of success. All four teams in the meet (Nebraska, Arizona, Denver, West Virginia) were ranked in the top 25 so the prospects for an exciting event looked good. The team was excited to be in a four-way meet for the first time this season. There is action all around and the competition can be very intense. Our rotation for the meet was Floor-Vault-Bars-Beam and so after a very, very early flight (where 3 team members pushed my patience with being on time!) we were rested and motivated to compete well.

The floor apparatus was a little different than most of the other floors we see during the year. We had a few issues in warm-up making adjustments but no excuses; I felt we needed to start off strong. As we prepared for our first event, the only change to the line-up would be a reshuffling of the order. The line-up would be: Molly, Talyn, Mykle, Aubree, Deanna, Sarah. Molly had no problems being the first routine up in the meet. She had a solid routine that earned a 9.675. Talyn stepped up next and hit a very nice set that

received a 9.725. Mykle was up third but had a pretty rough time out there. Her score an 8.9. We now needed to pick it up. Aubree has really developed into a fine floor performer. She was just the one to get out there, perform, smile and get us back on track with a 9.775. Deanna had difficulty with this floor all day so it was no surprise that her routine was basically a fight for survival from start to finish. She managed not to fall but all that effort only resulted in a 9.65. Sarah was last and hit an ok routine for Sarah. Her 9.775 was our final mark and our event score was a 48.6.

Our score on floor definitely felt like a survival score to keep us in the meet rather than a success so we all gathered to channel our energy in picking it up on vault. We had the same line-up as before: Talyn, Aubree, Molly, Colleen, Sarah, and Deanna. Talyn started us off with a solid vault and a 9.675. Aubree immediately upped the mark with a great 9.8. Molly had a few issues with her vault but still received a 9.625. Colleen then got us going again with a 9.8. This was followed up with Sarah nearly sticking a great vault and a 9.85. Our final vault was Deanna who also performed very well for a 9.8 with a step. Our 48.925 was a nice comeback from floor. Our running total was 97.525 and had us sitting in second behind Nebraska at the turn.

We took the positive vibe from vault right to bars with the same line-up as in the previous meets: Deanna, Molly, Aubree, Britnie, Miranda, Sarah and Katie exhibition. Deanna has been working very hard to get every little bit out of her routine. It showed as she started us off with a nice 9.75. Molly followed her up with a 9.65 that was hampered by a few handstands. Aubree was next and like Molly, had a few handstand errors and a step on the dismount for a 9.675. Britnie then stepped to tie her season high at 9.825 with a stuck dismount. Miranda then performed an equally nice routine that unfortunately did have some minor dismount deductions, but not many for a 9.775. Sarah was then set up by the fact that the first five had hit. She took advantage and swung pretty aggressively for a 9.85. Katie was our final bar worker and kept the hit train rolling along a nice routine and a 9.625. It was a very strong bar effort for a 48.825. We had plenty of energy as we rotated to our last event, beam. Our running score was 194.75.

We made some changes to the beam line-up for this meet. Beam is our most competitive situation in the gym and we wanted to try a new combination. Our line-up would be: Aubree, Sarah, Katie, Colleen, Britnie, and Molly with Talyn in exhibition. Aubree got our final event off to a great start with a 9.725. Sarah then followed with a really nice routine, tying her season high of 9.775. And then, finally after a long road back, Katie performed like the confident gymnast of last season and knocked down a 9.8. The momentum and energy carried over from vault and bars was obvious. And just that fast, we hit a glitch. Colleen was performing an excellent for the first half of her set and then fell from the beam on her side flip. Her score was a 9.225. It would be ok if the last two could bring it home. Unfortunately that wasn't to be as Britnie fell for the first time this season. The routine was otherwise excellent as she received a 9.3. Molly then fought through her routine but made sure we would not count another major error. Her score from the judges was a 9.75. Talyn finished up our meet with a hit routine to put in her stats and a 9.525. Our event score took the hit with a 9.3 and our final team score was a 194.75.

It seems like a broken record but oh what could have been. We had a mostly successful meet that carried the blemish of counting a fall. The final team rankings were: Nebraska – 1st, Arizona – 2nd, Denver – 3rd, and West Virginia – 4th. We had some great results individually. Sarah tied for first on Vault and Bars and took second in the All-Around. Britnie tied for third on Bars and Katie tied for third on Beam. After the meet, we had dinner delivered to the arena and we caught our flight out of Lincoln to arrive home back in Arizona late. March and the final push is now here. We will train hard to make

sure that our last four regular-season meets (three in McKale) are the best they can be. I hope you can be there.

Arizona @ Master's Classic				
	Floor	Vault	Bars	Beam
Aubree	9.775	9.8	9.675	9.725
Talyn	9.725	9.675		9.525
Mykle	8.9			
Colleen		9.8		9.225
Deanna	9.65	9.8	9.75	
Britnie			9.825	9.3
Katie			9.625	9.8
Molly	9.675	9.625	9.65	9.75
Miranda			9.775	
Sarah	9.775	9.85	9.85	9.775

Upcoming Meets We will have three home meets in the month of March. First we will meet Washing on Friday, March 5th at 7:00 PM. Then we will host Minnesota on Friday March 12th at 7:00 PM. This will be our senior meet where we will honor Sarah Tomczyk. Finally, the big one. We are proud to be hosting the 2010 Pac-10 Gymnastics Championships right here in McKale Center. This exciting meet, which will feature all seven programs in the Pac-10, will happen on Saturday, March 27th at 4:00 PM in the afternoon. I hope everyone makes plans to come out and support the team in this really important month!

Alumni Sightings **Erica Anderson, Beamer Bergeson, Alexis Greene, Lisha (Stone) Slinde, Gina Martin-Mueller, Kara (Fry) Meyer, Mary Reiss** and of course **Jessamyn Salter** and **Jamie Holton** were all in attendance at the UCLA meet. Congratulations are in order as Lisha was in town visiting one last time before the expectant birth of her twin boys. Speaking of births; **Lindsay (Compitello) Hendrickson** gave birth to her first, a boy named Blake born February 3rd. Blake weighed in at 6 lb. 9 oz. And finally along that line; **Jamie (Duce) Quintero** is expecting her first child in August. Congratulations to Jamie and Daniel. We occasionally see **Beamer Bergeson** and **Alexis Greene** as they stop by the gym for workout and rehab respectively. **Mary Reiss** dropped by the gym to drop off a preview of her new book "Gym Rats". Karin Wurm and Melanie Weiser have been in touch as they have been on another road trip, hopefully ending here in Tucson for the Pac-10 Championships.

Boosters We have already had donations to our program by some of our most loyal supporters. I just want to thank you again for your contributions that make such a big difference to a program like ours.

If you would like to donate, just send a check made out to "University of Arizona / GymCats" and send it to me here at the office. I will get it to the proper people. Your donation is tax deductible and greatly appreciated.

Cyberspace You can keep up on important information on the team at the Official University of Arizona Athletics Website (www.arizonawildcats.com/gymnastics). You can also follow the team on Facebook (**University of Arizona Gymnastics**) and Twitter

(AZGymnastics). And of course, the archives of the old newsletters reside at www.u.arizona.edu/~ryden/gym.html. In fact there is an entire segment of GymCat supporters who receive this newsletter electronically. Please contact me if you would like to be put on that list.

Remember to log into our twitter account during home meets to receive instant score updates!

Until next month...

Bill

