

CAT SCRATCHES

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The Newsletter of The University of Arizona GymCats

Happy Holidays!

Dear Friends, Alumni & Boosters,

Homecoming 2008 We held an alumni tailgate for the Homecoming game this year and had a great turnout! Besides the current team, alumni in attendance were: Mary Reiss, Sarah Galecki, Jamie Schell, Monica Bisordi, Stevie Fanning, Katie (Johnson) Ranne, Kristine (Harper) Neely, Jamie (Duce) Quintero, Jessamyn Salter, Andi McCabe, Karin Wurm, Melanie Weiser, Rachelle Silberg, Danielle (Hicks) McAfee, and Jamie Custer. They traveled from as far as Maryland and Illinois as well as California and of course, Arizona. I am very proud and thankful for such a strong alumni presence with our program. Once you are part of the family, you are always part of the family.



Team Halloween Party

The annual Halloween party was a lot of fun as usual. This year we mixed it up a bit by adding a Guitar Hero competition to the mix to go with the Costume contest and the Pumpkin carving competition. I underestimated how much the girls were into this Guitar Hero thing and the excitement showed as each "Band" of three strummed, played, and sang their way to victory!



Best Costume:

Miranda Russell,
Colleen Fisher,
Sarah Tomczyk,
Kristen Schmieder
*(Richard Simmons and 3 of
his loyal clients)*

Best Pumpkin:

Colleen Fisher
Beamer Bergeson
(Buddha Pumpkin)

Best Rock Band:

Sarah Tomczyk (Vocals)
Katie Matusik (Drums)
Becca Cardenas (Guitar)



Newest Members of the Family

We are very excited about the newest additions to the GymCat family. They will have some big shoes to fill but we feel that we have definitely found the right group of athletes to meet the challenge. There will be one addition to this year's squad at the semester and then four additional newcomers starting in the fall. If you happen to attend any club meets this year and you notice that any one of them is competing, be sure and root them on, loud and proud. They are the next in a long line of GymCat heritage.

Britnie Jones

Britnie will be joining this year's team after the holiday break. She is currently training at Sunray's Gymnastics in Phoenix which is also the club from which current team member Jillian O'Neal is from. The same club that also produced other members of our family: Brina Weissman, Stevie Fanning, Nikki Beyschau, Amanda Goins, Danyra Varela, Heidi Hornbeek, and Tania Schneider. Britnie also has the distinction of being our first "legacy" gymnast. Her mother, Nancy (Altmann) Jones was a GymCat from '79-'84 and her father, Randy Jones, was a member of the U of A Men's Gymnastics team from '78-'80. Britnie is a very talented all-arounder. Her beam routine may end up being the most difficult beam routine in the entire NCAA. I know that she will immediately have an effect on Bars, Beam and Floor line-ups. She is a J.O. National qualifier, where she placed second on beam last year, and a multi-time State and Regional Champion.

Aubree Cristello

Aubree found her way to the desert all the way across the country from her home in Glenville, NY. Aubree currently trains at World Class Gymnastics and is a "classic" all-around gymnast in every sense. Aubree doesn't have a weak event and I am sure will vie for competition time on all four events from the moment she arrives on campus. Aubree is very powerful and her current routines contain a great deal of difficulty. The experience of competing high-level skills will surely aid her in her transition to NCAA gymnastics. Aubree is a multi-time J.O. National qualifier as well as a multi-time State and Regional Champion.

Mykle Douglas

Mykle hails from Plano, TX and currently trains at WOGA, the gym of current freshman, Katie Matusik. Mykle is an exceptional powerful and dynamic gymnast. She is a national-level all-around competitor and is a 4-time J.O. National Qualifier as well as being a former State and Regional Champion. Her best events right now are probably Vault, Beam and Floor. I know that she will have an immediate impact on the team in those events. Although bars is not considered her strongest event, I am confident that she will develop into a very good bar worker. Don't be surprised if it doesn't take Mykle all that long to be competing in the all-around.

Ellen Pitluck



Ellen is the next in a number of GymCat's that have come to Tucson from Chicago, IL. She is the first gymnast however from Illinois Gymnastics Institute where she currently trains. As all of the members of this recruiting class are, Ellen is a complete all-around gymnast. But she too has her specialties and for Ellen, that would be bars. I expect Ellen to vie for spots in the line-up on all four events but I think she will immediately make a mark in the bar line-up. Her very high difficulty level as a result of multiple release moves will be obvious. Ellen is a multi-time J.O. National qualifier and a Region 5 All-Star team member.

Molly Quirk



Believe it or not, we have two excellent gymnasts that found the 2500 miles between New York and Tucson to not be a problem. Molly hails from Glenmont, NY and is a teammate of Aubree Cristello's at World Class Gymnastics. I know it sounds like a broken record but it is music to my ears, Molly is a total all-around gymnast and will certainly be in the mix to compete on every event from her very first meet on. Molly has a classic style with some big difficulty mixed in. In that true all-around style, I don't feel that Molly has a best event; rather all of her events will have an impact on the team.

Intrasquads

As the end of the semester seemed to be speeding up to meet us, the team was anxious for the first intrasquad. It was held on Friday, Dec. 5th, and team would perform on two events, vault and beam. Jillian would not be participating due to wrist surgery and Erica would be out do to injury. Beamer, Alexis and Katie would only be able to perform on beam.

We started out on vault and even though we only had eight athletes performing, the quality of vaulting was impressive. We are less than a month away from Minnesota but it looks like vault could be a very strong event for us. Judging is always tight and critical and yet five athletes went 9.8+. It was fun to watch, and with the added experience we will get from the upcoming meets, I think that we will see some really spectacular performances. Deanna had the high score with a 9.875 (and no where near a stuck landing). Both she and Bree have some of the highest vaults in the nation. Now they have to control them and stick those landings!

We had eleven athletes performing beam routines. The beam line-up may have the most change-over from last season and therefore take a little more time to solidify. Overall, the majority of the routines had a few too many balance checks. A bit of nervousness and pressing looked to be the overall cause. I am confident that as this group of athletes gains experience, that the

beam team will be very good and very solid. Beamer had our highest score with a watered routine, fighting through an injury. We had a group of athletes right below her that just need to clean it up a bit to get those big scores.

	Vault 1	Vault 2	Beam 1	Beam 2
Beamer			9.825	9.2
Becca	9.15	9.825	9.5	9.6
Talyn	9.65	9.675	9.5	9.5
Colleen	9.7	9.8	9.325	9.75
Deanna	9.875	9.85	9.1	9.625
Alexis			9.0	9.45
Katie			9.625	9.525
Miranda	9.75	9.55	8.925	9.45
Kristen	9.525	9.6	8.9	9.175
Sarah	9.575	9.825	9.625	8.85
Bree	9.75	9.825	9.35	9.45

The second intrasquad will be held on Saturday, December 20th, too late to make it into this newsletter. I will sure to update everyone in the next issue.

Holiday Party As the semester comes to a close and the team focuses on finals, we took a break to have our annual Holiday Party. It is nice to get together one last time off-campus and relax after a grueling semester of preparation. The food was great, the company was better, and now we are ready to take on a whole new season. I would like to wish a “Happy Holidays” to everyone in the GymCat family, old and new alike. Alumni, Booster, or fan it



doesn't matter. I you and your family have a wonderful holiday and a Happy New Year.

Pre-Season Rankings Our pre-season ranking is #18. This is based on a vote by the coaches and is largely based on last year's finish. I am certainly motivated to show everyone that our mishap at last year's Regionals was not the normal Arizona Gymnastics Team!

Alumni Sightings **Stevie Fanning** contacted me to let me know that she has moved to Denver. She was able to transfer within her company and is currently living very close to where the team stays when we compete against DU. **Nicci (Filchner) Goodman** sent out an announcement that she is expecting her third child. I was able to see a whole slew of alumni at the Region 1 Gymnastics Clinic in Phoenix. **Robin Horowitz, Jamie Holton, Gina Mueller Martin, Amanda (Goins) Dziawura** and **Nancy (Altmann) Jones** were all in attendance. Amanda introduced us to her new son, Drew. **Brooke (Stan) Laurie** contacted me about the electronic version of the Cat Scratches. She is married and is a trial lawyer in San Francisco. We had an incredible turnout for Homecoming. Refer to the beginning of this newsletter for details. Among the attendees was **Monica Bisordi**. She is in the process of opening her own Pilates studio in San Marco, CA. **Aubrey (Taylor) Kelly** gave birth to her first child, a boy, James, 7 lb. 13 oz., on November 7th. Six days later, **Kara (Fry) Meyer** gave birth to her first child, a girl, Saylor, 9 lb. 1 oz. A week after that, Aubrey, along with **Danielle (Hicks) McAfee**, brought James into the gym to introduce him to the team. I had a hard time getting the team's attention or practice started with a newborn around! **Heidi Hornbeek** was back in Arizona during a brief break from her surgical duties in Philly. She dropped by to say hello, see the new gym, and catch up. She is doing great and is already planning on what comes next after her residency is finished in two years. We had a pretty good alumni turnout for the 1st intrasquad. **Aubrey (Taylor) Kelly, Danielle (Hicks) McAfee, Jamie Holton, Kara (Fry) Meyer, Suzanne Alvey, Jessamyn Salter, Nicci (Filchner) Goodman, and Gina Martin-Mueller** were all in attendance to cheer on the first look of this years squad. Both Aubrey and Kara brought their newest family additions, James & Saylor, to the event for their first taste of their mother's legacy. There was one other alumnus in attendance – **Jenna (Karadbil) Leavitt** was judging. **Rachelle Silberg** sent an email to let everyone know she has started a new job. She will be a Sales Associate for CBeyond. I met up with **Shane Allbritton** and her husband for dinner while recruiting in Maryland. Shane is working in the D.C. area, designing museums.

Boosters Hopefully you have received the ticket mailer sent out by the Athletic Department by the time you read this. I really hope that you all can make it out and cheer on the team. We will be trying to implement some new items to the website and the competitions to make them exciting. As always, you all make it possible with your continued support.

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.

Phil & Linda Johnson and Noel & Judith Fedje both donated to the program in memory of Ree Vitale. All of our condolences go out to the family and a heartfelt thank you for the donation.

Cyberspace Last season, the live webcast of our meets went over well. Once again, the meets as well as much more multimedia content will be available. Check out the AllAccess on the Official University of Arizona Athletics Website (www.arizonaathletics.com) for more information. If you would like to see the full color version of the newsletter, it will be on the main website. It will also be on the same site as the archives, (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.

Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill". The letters are stylized and cursive, with a large loop for the 'B' and a trailing flourish.