

CAT SCRATCHES

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The Newsletter of The University of Arizona GymCats

Dear Friends, Alumni & Boosters,

March 6 For our first meet of the last month of the regular season, we returned to L.A. for a tri-meet with UCLA and Georgia. Obviously 2 high quality programs but our emphasis was our continued growth towards the post-season. We have been struggling with complete meets all season and this meet would end up presenting another challenge.

Our rotation was bars-beam-floor-vault and we were using our normal bar rotation to start off the meet: Katie, Britnie, Aubree, Molly, Deanna, Miranda, and Becca exhibition. The bar squad has been doing well all season but for some reason, this day it wasn't to be. I don't really have much to go into other than out of seven routines, we hit three. Very discouraging to say the least. We started out a very tough meet counting two falls and a season low event score of 47.575.

So we gathered ourselves, marched to beam with the expectation to get back on track with some quality gymnastics. We were going with the same beam squad that did so well the week prior up in Utah: Aubree, Deanna, Shana, Jordan, Molly, and Katie with Ellen performing exhibition. Initially, the nightmare of the first rotation seemed to come along with us as Aubree missed our first beam set. But, as I have come to expect, the team wasn't about to lie down. The next six athletes including Ellen all hit and certainly redeemed the competitive spirit. After another near disaster, the beam squad had come back with a very impressive 48.85. Our running meet score was 96.425 but at this point, a useful team score was a long shot. Our current thoughts were to learn what we could and produce the best individual routines possible.

We rotated to floor with only one minor change to the usual line-up. I switched Molly and Becca and the new order would be: Molly, Becca, Katie, Aubree, Deanna, and Miranda. Except for Miranda, everyone in the floor line-up had had issues in the previous two events. It was going to be interesting to see how this worked out. We had been working all week on extra steps and stuck landings on difficult tumbling but as it turned out, there was some improvement and still some more improvement needed. Molly started off by hitting her skills but extra steps out-of-bounds due to a bouncy floor cost us. Becca was able to adjust a little better and certainly wanted to make up for her previous week's problems. A 9.75 was a good score for this meet. Katie did well on her routine, scoring a 9.7 and then Aubree also got back on track from the previous week for a 9.8. Deanna and Miranda unfortunately both had problems with their tumbling passes and we lost some valuable points. Our event score was a 48.4 and our running score was 144.825.

We rotated to vault and I really believed we would compete well. The team has never given up regardless of the situation and I knew that wouldn't change now. We used the exact same line-up as the week before: Molly, Jordan, Mykle, Aubree, Miranda, Deanna with both Shana and Barbara performing exhibition. Molly stepped up and delivered by far the best vault of her career. A big stick and a 9.85. From there, the rest of the vaulters ran

off our best vaulting of the year. 9.825, 9.875, 9.85, 9.775, and 9.9 were the scores for the scores for the rest of the regular line-up. Shana and Barbara were also up to the task as they scored 9.725 and 9.775 respectively. It was a little sunshine at the end of the competition. Our event score was a 49.3, giving us a final team score of a 194.125. There were some fine individual performances but we headed back to Tucson to get back in the gym and look forward to a complete meet for our last home competition of the year.

Arizona @ UCLA w/ Georgia				
	Bars	Beam	Floor	Vault
Becca	8.35		9.75	
Aubree	9.775	9.275	9.8	9.85
Barbara				9.775
Mykle				9.875
Deanna	9.05	9.7	9.675	9.9
Britnie	9.725			
Katie	9.175	9.875	9.7	
Ellen		9.675		
Molly	9.125	9.775	9.45	9.85
Miranda	9.775		9.475	9.775
Shana		9.8		9.725
Jordan		9.7		9.825

March 11 Our only home meet in March was also our final home meet. It was special as we would honor our lone senior, Miranda, and also give our home fans one last look at this years team in McKale. After a less than expected outing in LA the week before, we also had plenty of motivation to not get caught up in the emotion but take this meet as serious business. This meet was also a little different as we would welcome three teams to McKale to make this competition a real four ring circus. BYU, New Hampshire, and Texas Woman's were happy to see our nice weather but were all focused on giving us a great competition.

We opened up on vault with our standard vault line-up: Molly, Jordan, Mykle, Aubree, Miranda, and Deanna with Shana performing exhibition. Molly hit her vault to start us out with a 9.65 and we consistently built from there. Every competitive vault outscored or tied the vault before it. Both Aubree and Miranda had 9.875's and we finished with Deanna nailing a 9.925. Shana had the only landing issue, and received a 9.5. Overall a very nice opening rotation that scored 49.125. We had a slim .15 lead over the rest of the field as we rotated to bars.

Because of the problems we had in LA, I changed up the bar line-up for the first time in many weeks. I moved Katie to the 6th spot and dropped everyone else down one. The new line-up would be: Britnie, Aubree, Molly, Deanna, Miranda, Katie with Becca in exhibition. Britnie had a bit of a tough time with her opening skill but fought through her routine to start us out with a 9.625. Aubree then followed and had some difficulty herself causing her to ad-lib but she stayed with it to dismount and receive a 9.725. At that point it was getting critical that we started swinging clean. Molly got us on track with a hit and a 9.775. Deanna, Miranda, and Katie all finished up well with three consecutive 9.8's. Not to be outdone, Becca added our fourth 9.8 to finish the rotation. Even with a rough start, we recovered well for a 48.9. Sometimes you just have to fight. It wasn't very pretty but we fought and we were able to extend our lead to .625 at the halfway point.

We rotated to beam looking to keep the momentum going with our line-up of Aubree, Deanna, Shana, Jordan, Molly, and Katie with Ellen in exhibition. Right off the bat, we seemed to have a little hiccup when Aubree fell on her series and received a 9.2. Deanna was able to get back on track with a 9.75. Shana then followed with a 9.8 and Jordan a 9.75. We seemed to be headed for a nice rotation. Then it came apart when Molly had difficulties with her series and scored a 9.35. Katie finished the regular line-up with a 9.8 and Ellen finished beam with a hit and a 9.65. We had let the complete meet get away and our event score was a 48.45. We regrouped and carried a frustrated intensity to floor. Our lead had fallen to .275 and we were determined to get it right on floor.

Our usual line-up of Molly, Becca, Katie, Aubree, Deanna, and Miranda warmed up and were ready to finish big. Molly did a great job starting us off with a bang and a 9.8. Becca then followed with a second 9.8 and then Katie with a 9.775. Aubree then nailed for a 9.825, Deanna a 9.875 and finally Miranda a 9.85. A 49.15 was a nice response to the beam score. I had no idea where we stood in the meet but was very pleased by the fight and determination.

When the results were announced, we had won the meet with a 195.625. BYU was second with a 195.3, followed by UNH at 194.625 and then TWU with a 191.475. Individually Deanna won vault, floor, and the all-around while Shana and Katie tied for second on beam. After those ceremonies, we honored Miranda as our lone senior this year.



“Miranda Russell comes from Oshkosh, Wisconsin and a gymnastics family. Her parents and siblings are all current or former gymnasts. What sets her apart is that she has a real independent streak that motivated her to leave her home in Oshkosh, WI and venture south for a unique experience. I will always be thankful for that independent streak. From the moment she arrived on campus, we became aware of Miranda’s work ethic and passion for not only her athletics, but everything in her life. She had a very good freshman year, competing in the all-around (not very common for a freshman) and becoming a major contributor and part of the program. She really came into her own her sophomore year where she was earned a Pac-10 Gymnast of the Week honor, was named to the Pac-10 All-Conference team and was awarded the U of A Sophomore Female Student Athlete of the Year. Her junior year is where things went off track and really defined who Miranda is today. Early that season she sustained a season ending knee injury. For someone who had been training since being a toddler, it wasn’t a happy time. We all expected that with surgery and rehab she would be back ready go in 2010. It didn’t quite

work out that way as the knee didn’t want to respond. She struggled by contributing only on one event and always in significant pain. She will tell you, that it was character defining at the very least. It would have been easy to give up but she carried on, giving the team everything she had. So after last season, she underwent a 2nd knee surgery on the same knee, more rehab and reinvented both her physical and mental condition. And even though she stills deals with discomfort that determines the intensity of her training, she is back for her 5th year performing at her highest level and leading this team in every way, serving as our team captain. I couldn’t be

more proud of the senior campaign she is having. She has been named a Pac-10 Special Performance of the week, this year and set personal highs on the three events she competes. Her current high scores are 9.875 on vault, 9.9 on bars, 9.9 on beam, 9.925 on floor and 39.4 in the all-around. She has competed in 52 meets wearing an Arizona leo, has 15 career event titles and has amassed a total of over 1419 points so far.

But as I mentioned before, this only tells part of the story of Miranda who goes by her middle name Jo to her teammates. She is outstanding in the classroom. She has been named an Arizona Academic Champion 4 years running, all of the years she was eligible, Academic All-Conference for the past 3 years, every year she was eligible, and Scholastic All-America for four consecutive years, every year eligible and I am positive she will be adding more of those honors this year. She is on track to graduate this spring, Magna cum Laude, with a degree in Spanish and minor in Political Science. But there is still more.

Miranda has been quite active within the department and giving back to the community. Every year during Miranda's time on the squad, the gymnastics team has won the athletic department Directors Cup for Community Service, due in large part to Miranda's efforts and commitment. She has been a member of the Peer-Athletic-Leaders group as well as the Student-Athlete-Advisory-Council where she serves as Vice-President this year. Obviously after all of this, Miranda is set up for the next adventure in her life. She is currently considering a teaching position or possibly attending law school. I believe that someday she will also return to the gym and give back to the sport that has been a defining part of her life. I know that she will always be welcome to coach beside me. She will be greatly missed by her coaches and teammates. Her devotion and commitment is not something that can be replaced, but rather something that the younger team members can strive for. She is the ultimate definition of student-athlete."

BYU / New Hampshire / Texas Woman's vs. Arizona				
	Vault	Bars	Beam	Floor
Becca		9.8		9.8
Aubree	9.875	9.725	9.2	9.825
Barbara				
Mykle	9.75			
Deanna	9.925	9.8	9.75	9.875
Britnie		9.625		
Katie		9.8	9.8	9.775
Ellen			9.65	
Molly	9.65	9.775	9.35	9.8
Miranda	9.875	9.8		9.85
Shana	9.5		9.8	
Jordan	9.7		9.75	

March 19

For the last meet of the regular season, it was back to the beginning: back to Los Angeles and back to competing against the rest of the conference. For us, it was our third time at UCLA this season and we really had the goal of improving on the first two efforts. By purely luck of the draw, we had the exact same rotation that we did at the Pac-10 Preview: Bye, Bars, Beam, Bye, Floor, Bye, and Vault. So with new post-season leotards, the team was motivated and focused for a good showing.

After the various situations we have had on bars for the previous three meets, I really felt we needed a change to start off strong, confident start to the competition where quite a few of the best bar workers in the nation would be competing. Therefore, the line-up going into our first event would be: Aubree, Britnie, Molly, Deanna, Miranda, & ????. That's right, we warmed up and one-touched seven athletes and I went over the fine details of mid-rotation substitutions with the meet referee. Along with those five, both Becca and Katie

were ready to go and waiting in the corral. The plan was that I would choose the routine I wanted after we had started the rotation and I could see how things and scores were going. It was going to be a 4 judge panel and every angle of a routine would be up for scrutiny. Also, the last time we were on these bars, we had 4 falls in 7 routines: something had to change. Aubree accepted the challenge of the lead-off set with confidence and then went out and got us off to a great start and a 9.725. Britnie then followed with a solid 9.75. Molly had a little trouble on her dismount and her score was a 9.65. Of course the entire time I was considering my move and it was coming soon. Deanna was determined to have a better set than 2 weeks earlier and did just that with a 9.775. It was at this point that I knew that we needed Miranda to hit very well to have a good rotation so I felt that we should go with Becca who has a great routine that had finally been getting consistent. As Miranda saluted to go, I pointed to Becca and quickly brought my attention back to a great routine that scored a 9.85. We didn't have any falls and it was up to Becca to see if she could improve our score. She did just that as she hit our sixth routine for a 9.75. It was a great start to a big meet. Our event score was a 48.85 and we immediately rotated to beam.

Unlike on bars, the line-up was unchanged for this meet: Aubree, Deanna, Shana, Mykle, Molly, and Katie. Aubree once again hit our opening routine and started us off with a 9.75. Deanna followed her with another hit and another 9.75. The next 2 routines were from freshman competing in their first Pac-10 Championship meet. We would see how they would handle the pressure. Shana was up to the task as she hit a really nice routine that earned a 9.8. Jordan then saluted and performed easily her best beam routine of the year for a 9.85. Molly was up next and was performing the routine she had been waiting for all year. Up to she turned to ready for her dismount, I had .05 in deductions. Then as she went for her round-off, she missed one foot and fell, twisting to the ground. After she was helped back to the training area, it was up to Katie to complete a very good beam rotation. She was more than up to the task with a beautiful set and a 9.9. It was a little bit of a downer about Molly but the beam team had performed stellar for a 49.05. We were very excited to have a 97.9 at the halfway point.

Doug informed me that Molly wasn't seriously hurt but she had a serious enough sprain that she would not be able to continue. That meant that I would have to sub in both of the remaining events. So after the bye, our new floor line-up would be: Mykle, Becca, Katie, Aubree, Deanna, and Miranda. Mykle did a great job of stepping in unexpectedly and hit our first set for a 9.625. Becca then did a great job of building on that for a hit and a 9.725. Katie then saluted and hit her set. Some foot faults lowered her score to a 9.675. Aubree then saluted and unfortunately landed a little out of control on her first pass and stepped out of bounds. Her score was a 9.65. Then in a little bit of ugly deja-vu, Deanna had difficulty landing her first pass and stepped out of bounds, scoring a 9.7. Both routines were virtually flawless but .2+ in deduction in the first 10 seconds is never good. For our final routine, we still couldn't get it back together as Miranda fell on her second pass and scored a 9.075. After two great rotations, it was a bit deflating to score a 48.375 and not have a score of over 9.725. But even though our running total was a 146.275, I knew this would only motivate the team to come back as strong as ever on our final event.

After our third bye, we rotated to vault with the line-up of: Shana, Jordan, Mykle, Aubree, Miranda, and Deanna. Shana took the challenge of replacing Molly and starting us off and even though she had some landing errors, got us going with a 9.65. Jordan then stepped up and hit a big vault for a 9.8. Mykle built off of that and drilled her vault for a 9.85. Aubree kept up the quality work as she received a 9.825 for her vault. Miranda then absolutely drilled her best vault ever in my opinion for a 9.85. VERY CONSERVATIVE score I felt. Deanna then finished off our vaulting with an outstanding effort and a 9.875. As I

predicted, it was a very aggressive and fun rotation giving us an event score 49.2. Our final team score was a pretty respectable 195.475.

Our struggles on floor had cost us 2 positions as we ended up in the 5th spot behind OSU, UCLA, Washington and Stanford while ahead of Cal and ASU. Knowing that we could have finished third in this high quality field only motivates us more as we head into the post season. Individually, Deanna was 4th on vault while Mykle and Miranda followed right behind her in 5th and 6th. Miranda finished in 8th on bars, .05 from first. Katie tied for 2nd on beam where Jordan finished tied for 7th. Finally, Deanna finished 6th in the all-around. There was far more good than bad and our score had raised our national ranking to 20th, virtually back to where we started the season. We had qualified for the post-season for the 25th consecutive year and we are looking forward to Regionals.

Arizona @ Pac-10 Championships				
	Bars	Beam	Floor	Vault
Becca	9.75		9.725	
Aubree	9.725	9.75	9.65	9.825
Mykle			9.625	9.85
Deanna	9.775	9.75	9.7	9.875
Britnie	9.75			
Katie		9.9	9.675	
Ellen				
Molly	9.65	9.225		
Miranda	9.85		9.075	9.85
Shana		9.8		9.65
Jordan		9.85		9.8

As a final recognition from the regular season, Deanna Graham, Aubree Cristello and Katie Matusik were all named to the 1st team All-Conference Gymnastics Team. It is a very nice honor and very difficult to obtain. It is based on your entire season and especially the results at the Pac-10 meet. Only 4 institutions placed athletes on the 1st Team and we had three. I am very proud of all of them.

Alumni Sightings **Kara (Fry) Meyer** came by the office with Saylor to catch up and say hi. She is doing well, working hard and soon Mike will be headed off for another season of baseball. I had a nice talk with **Melanie Weiser** and caught up with the happenings of her and the “crew”. She is doing very well and becoming very comfortable living in the D.C. area. **Cami (Banholzer) Scagliotti, Katie (Johnson) Ranne, Rachelle Silberg, Jamie Custer** and **Kristine Harper** were all in attendance at our UCLA meet at the beginning of the month. All are doing well. Cami surprised everyone by showing up very pregnant. She is due in a few months. Speaking of children, after 3 attempts, Nicci (Filchner) Goodman finally got a girl on the 4th try. Kylamarie Goodman, born 3/7/11, 7lbs 15oz.; Congrats. **Kara (Fry) Meyer** and **Sarah Tomczyk** were in the stands for our last home meet. Also at that meet was **Mary (Reiss) Farias** who was selling copies of her book. In attendance at the Pac-10 Championships rooting on the team were: **Katie (Johnson) Ranne, Rachelle Silberg, Jamie Custer, Cami (Banholzer) Scagliotti, Stacey (Walski) Van Dyke, Lisa (Heckel) Shabansky. Nikki Beyschau** stopped by the gym to say hello. She was in town for the Arizona state meet which was being held at the TCC. **Jamie (Holton) Morrison** was also there coaching her team. **Mary (Reiss) Farias** was also there, selling her current book and promoting her upcoming release this fall. She stopped by the gym the next day with her daughter Lola to wish the team luck on the upcoming meet.

Banquet Our team banquet will be held at the Mezzanine in the Jim Click Hall-of-Champions on Sunday, May 8th at 6:00 PM. For those who would like to attend, you can RSVP to Randi at randi@arizona.edu. The cost is \$20 a person. You can make your check out to University of Arizona/GymCats. We will be honoring this year's team and we hope that you can make it!

Kudos Miranda Russell was honored by the Pac-10 as the "**Special Performance of the Week**" for her meet against Boise St. Aubree Cristello was honored by the Pac-10 as the "**Gymnast of the Week**" for her meet against Illinois-Chicago. Katie Matusik was named one of four "**Student-Athletes of the Month for January**" by the C.A.T.S. Academic Program. Deanna Graham was honored by the Pac-10 as the "**Gymnast of the Week**" for her performance at our meet in North Carolina. Katie Matusik was honored by the conference as the "**Special Performance of the Week**" for her meet against BYU. Deanna Graham earned her second "**Gymnast of the Week**" honor from the conference for her efforts in our last home meet. Deanna Graham and Aubree Cristello were name **1st Team All-Conference in the All-Around** and Katie Matusik was named **1st Team All-Conference on the Balance Beam**.

Boosters We have already been receiving support from some of our most loyal supporters. Thank you so much! It means so much to our program and our athletes. The "9.8 Challenge" program has taken off. We have received commitments from many of you. Thank you for your support! As always, if you would like to support us directly, you can send a check to me, made out the University of Arizona/GymCats. As of this mailing the current 9.8+ count is at: 94.

Cyberspace The live webcast of our meets went over well. Once again, the meets as well as much more multimedia content will be available. Our Facebook page (*University of Arizona Gymnastics*) is doing very well and we are getting quite a few comments on it. Don't be afraid to let us know if you would like to see something. And finally you can check out all the videos directly on YouTube at *ArizonaGym*.

For those of you who follow my coach's show, please feel free to email thoughts, comments or questions to Valery Meusburger, our Sports Information Director, at vem@email.arizona.edu. We will work them into the show and hopefully give you some insight on what is going on inside the program. Check out the AllAccess on the Official University of Arizona Athletics Website (www.arizonawildcats.com/gymnastics) for more information on the coach's show and the live webcasts. 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.

If you are a team alumnus, I do want to put out a request that you go to the Facebook page "Arizona GymCats Alumni" and become a member. We don't use it much but it is a way to get to everyone if we plan something. There are 66 members currently but I know there are more of you out there.

Until next time...

Bill

