

CAT SCRATCHES

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The Newsletter of The University of Arizona GymCats

Dear Friends, Alumni & Boosters,

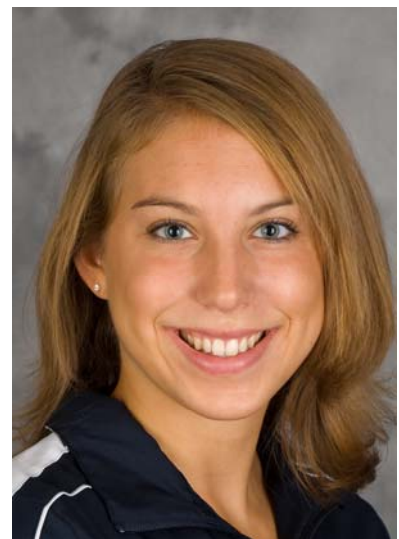
A Whole New Year

I want to say welcome back to everyone and hope that you are all doing well. Here in Tucson, there has been a whole lot of change. As many of you know, the gym has undergone massive change along with the entire east side of campus where all the athletic facilities reside. Besides ourselves, there will be a new basketball/volleyball practice facility just north of us. Directly behind the gym is a new diving facility that will be the finest outdoor facility of its kind in the country. Inside of McKale has also undergone some changes. There is a new \$700,000 curtain that will be lowered for our competitions. This will enclose the competition floor and make McKale one of the premier gymnastics venues for "Large Arena" competition sites. There is also a new addition to the Gymnastics Ring-of-Fame as Karin Wurm's name was very deservedly added to the list. I am very proud of the fact that of the four sports that compete in McKale Center, we have the largest number of Ring-of-Fame Honorees.

I guess along the theme of change, our team is no different. We had five members end their careers after last season: Suzanne Alvey, Danielle Hicks, Rachelle Silberg, Melanie Weiser, and Karin Wurm. Their contributions are greatly appreciated and certainly will be missed. On the plus side, we have five new freshmen joining the squad with high hopes of making their own history. Let me introduce you know to the 2008-09 University of Arizona Gymnastics Team:

SENIORS

Erica Anderson Erica is coming off her best collegiate year by far. After years of hard work, Erica was able to add depth to the bar line-up last season. She was voted the Most Improved Gymnast for 2008 and with one more year, she is making her final push to be her best. Her strongest event at the moment is bars where she had some quality performances last year. I would not be surprised to see Erica competing in the bar lineup this season. Erica is a fine student with aspirations in the medical field after her time here at Arizona is up.





Briana "Beamer" Bergeson Beamer has always been an outstanding Beam and Bar worker since stepping on campus three years ago. She had high scores of 9.875 on Bars, 9.9 on Beam, and 9.8 on Floor. She was named 2nd Team All-Conference on Beam. She has been working to increase her skill level on all of her events and will be competing some of the most difficult gymnastics in country on Bars and Beam. I am sure she will be a main performer on her three main events and who knows, she may even make a guest appearance on vault for the first time in her collegiate career.

Alexis Greene Alexis had a great season last year coming off surgical repair to her Achilles tendon. Not only did she make a full comeback she actually broke into the all-around. She competed all four events for most of the year and was named 2nd Team All-Conference in the All-Around. Her high scores last season were 9.85-Vault, 9.9-Bars, 9.875-Beam, 9.85-Floor and 39.175 AA. She injured her knee in the last meet of the season but after a summer of rehab, she should be at full speed by the time her final season begins. Alexis was also named Academic All-American and 2nd Team Academic All-Conference last season.

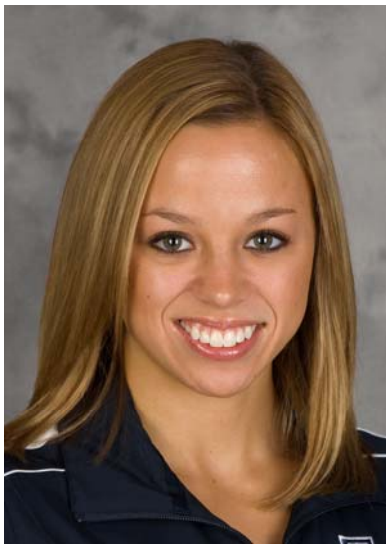


Bree Workman Bree had her best and most productive season last year. She competed on Vault and Floor virtually the entire season with high scores of 9.85-Vault and 9.875-Floor. Besides her primary events I am looking for Bree to also make an impact on the Beam squad. She has the capabilities to be one of the top gymnasts in the conference in what I feel will be an excellent final season. Bree was named Academic All-American last season.

JUNIORS

Miranda Russell

Miranda had another outstanding season last year. Once again, as in her freshman year, Miranda competed in the all-around virtually every meet. She was one of the mainstay performers last year for the team and her high scores were: 9.85-Vault, 9.85-Bars, 9.875-Beam, 9.875-Floor, 39.4-All Around. With all this experience, I expect her to be one of the team leaders on the competitive floor. She has been working to upgrade her routines on all four events and the progress is looking great. She has a goal of contributing to the team's success on all events and I think she has a great shot. Miranda was named 2nd Team All-Conference in the All-Around, Academic All-American, 1st Team Academic All-Conference and the U of A Female Sophomore Athlete of the Year.



Sarah Tomczyk

You may not recognize the name, but you will recognize the face. Sarah Specht was married over the summer here in Tucson and in January, Sarah Tomczyk will make her gymnastics debut. You may recognize the face, but you may not the gymnastics. Sarah has been working very hard this summer to take her routines to the next level. She has upgraded her already high difficulty on Vault, Bars, and Floor and is very focused on becoming a mainstay performer on Beam. Last season Sarah was a big scorer for the team with high scores of: 9.8-Vault, 9.85-Bars, and 9.925-Floor. With the new skills, these scores have a very good chance of increasing. Sarah was named 2nd Team Academic All-Conference.

SOPHOMORES

Colleen Fisher

As a freshman, Colleen stepped in and filled vital spots in the line-up. She was a solid scorer on Vault and our leadoff routine in Beam, competing on both events in every meet. She also contributed on floor but was unable to train bars due to a broken finger she competed with all year. After learning the ins-and-outs of collegiate gymnastics, Colleen is set to have a coming-out year. She has been working to improve all of her events and is focused on contributing to the team



beyond her usual two events. Her high scores last year: 9.8-Vault, 9.85-Beam, 9.775-Floor.



Kristen Schmieder Kristen was certainly one of the unsuspecting heroines of the team last year. When the team was hit by injuries that severely reduce the depth of the Bar team, Kristen worked hard to increase both her difficulty and consistency and stepped up for the team for virtually the entire season. She also added much needed depth to the Beam squad. Her high scores last year were: Bars-9.725, Beam-9.65. Kristen's gymnastics has really matured over the summer and I expect her to compete for the team on multiple events this year. Kristen was named Academic All-American last year.

FRESHMEN

Rebecca Cardenas Becca has traveled from Honolulu, HI, where she trained with the Hawaiian Island Twisters, to join the team. Becca is a four-time JO National Qualifier and multiple state champion. Becca is a classical All-Arounder by definition. She is an excellent athlete and equally capable of great gymnastics on all four events. The transition to collegiate gymnastics has gone well for Becca and her training has been impressive. I can certainly foresee Becca competing on any or all events this season. I can't really pick a favorite yet for her but I am absolutely sure that she will play a big part during the competition season.



Talyn Curry Talyn traveled the furthest of all of our incoming freshmen. Talyn hails from Westborough, MA where she competed for Giguere's Gymnastics. Talyn is a four-time JO National Qualifier and former state champion. Talyn has been doing quite well in the gym and I can see her adding needed depth to the beam and floor teams.

Deanna Graham

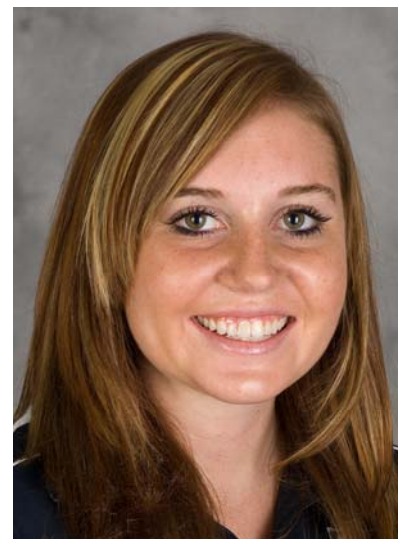
Deanna traveled the least of the entire freshman class to join our program, about 20 minutes! Deanna is a home-grown Tucsonan and I think she is destined to make a mark on her hometown university. Deanna was trained at Springs Gymnastics and has been around our program for years. She has been a camper since she became an optional gymnast and we have watched her mature and improve every step of the way. And it hasn't just been an uneventful trip. Deanna is a multiple JO National Qualifier, Multiple National Champion, Regional Champion, State Champion, and Arizona State Gymnast of the Year. I believe that Deanna will immediately make an impact on Vault and Floor. And I am pretty sure she will have a good chance of saluting a beam judging panel. She is working very hard on her bar work and soon may also make some noise there.

**Katie Matusik**

Katie comes to Tucson from McKinney, TX where she trained at World Olympic Gymnastics Academy (the gym responsible for the last two Olympic All-Around Champions). Katie is a four-time JO National Qualifier and a former Regional Beam Champion. Katie is an exceptional gymnast with a very classical style that our fans are really going to enjoy. Unfortunately, it will be a little bit of a wait to see everything Katie brings to the team. She sustained a shoulder injury at the JO National Championships that will limit her to just Beam this season. She is incredibly focused on bringing everything she can to that event and help the team in any way she can. I think that she will make an impact on our team score even if it is relegated to the one event. Katie's brother, Johnny, is also a student here at the U of A.

Jillian O'Neal

Jill is the latest in a long line of Phoenix area gymnasts that come to our program from Sunray's Gymnastics in Phoenix. Jillian herself is from Fountain Hills, AZ and is a Multiple JO National Qualifier and state champion. Jill has been dealing with a wrist problem that will force her to cease training on the tumbling events, vault and floor, until the problem can be repaired. This will leave her training both beam and bars this season and fortunately for us, they are her two best events. The opportunity is there for Jill to make a mark on the team score and I know that she is focused and determined to make sure that happens.



STAFF



John Court John is starting his eleventh year with the program. John serves as Recruiting Coordinator and Camp Director as well as his coaching duties. Besides coaching, John spends an incredible amount of time scouting gymnasts and traveling to see them. We have been working together long enough now that there isn't any part of the program that he doesn't have an impact on. He spends most of the time in the gym coaching the leg events - floor and vault.

Colleen Johnson Colleen is in her fifth year with the program. Besides coaching and choreography, Colleen is heavily involved in the marketing and promotions of the team, the team attire (Leos, Warm-ups, Public appearance attire, make-up, etc) and cutting every piece of custom floor music we use. In the gym she primarily spends her time around the beam area. With the new, larger gym, she has quite a trip to back and forth from the beams to the floor area for choreography and back again. Oops, my bad.



Doug Contaoi Doug is in his second full year with the program. Doug received his undergraduate education at the U of A and returns to Tucson after receiving his graduate degree from the University of Oregon and working as a Certified Athletic Trainer at American University. You all know how integral and important our trainer is to our success and Doug has fit in perfectly. The team is keeping him hopping with multiple surgeries, rehab, and annoying strains and pulls.

Neil Willey

Neil is our strength coach and he plays a critical role in the overall conditioning of the team. The team starts physical conditioning training almost the moment they arrive on campus in the fall. Neil and I have worked for a number of years to develop a system that both achieve the goals of the training as well as preparing the body to handle the punishment of such an abusive sport as gymnastics. Our team is always in great shape by the season and it seems that with each year and accumulation of new information, the team is better than the year before. Neil had a new addition to his family this summer. He and his wife, Katrina, welcomed a new baby girl, Jessie. We just know that he has hopes that she will grow up to be a gymnast after working with the team all these years!

**Brina Weissman**

Brina is in her fourth full year as our manager and is a very important member of the staff. Brina works directly between the athletes and the coaching staff handling any and all situations to improve practice and competitions. She manages the floor during our meets, organizing matting, music, and equipment for every routine we put out there. For you alumni, she has been the person that has been directly in charge of converting all of the old meets to DVD.

Jami Fryer

Jami is not exactly a new addition to the staff but this is her first official year as a manager. Last season, she shadowed Brina at the meets and whenever she could make it to practice to begin to learn all that is involved. This year, she is fully integrated and will assist the coaches at workouts and the meets. She is very excited to officially be a part of the program and we are glad to have her.



Special Guests

On the second day of official practice, we had some special guests visit the gym. Mary Roby, her husband Fred, and Fred's family, stopped by the new digs to take a look. As most of you know, the Gymnastics Training Center here at the University of Arizona is named after Mary. Mary was the Athletic Director for Women back when the department was split between men and women. She was the one who hired Jim Gault and has always been a big supporter of gymnastics and the team. The Roby's have been keeping a low profile and I had been wondering when I would see them again. As it turned out, it had been three years but it was such a nice surprise to see them walking through the door. I certainly hope it is not as long until the next time they visit.

Alumni Tailgate

A number of alumni are planning on coming back for Homecoming. For many years, we had gymnastics tailgates for the football games in conjunction with the constant recruiting. Recruiting has changed in last couple of years and we do not really do many tailgates anymore. I do miss them though, with the alumni strolling by because they could always count on us being there. Because of interest, we are going to organize a tailgate for Homecoming on Saturday, October 25 for the alumni and the current team. If you would like to come, the food will be \$15 a person. You can RSVP to Colleen Johnson at 520-621-4024 or colleen1@arizona.edu by October 17. We will be there at 5:00 pm, out in front of the gym. Come on by, meet the current team, eat some good food and see the new gym!

Schedule Changes

There have been a few changes to our schedule over the summer. Our dual meet in Seattle has been changed to Saturday, February 7. The time is still 7 PM. The meet in College Park, MD has also been changed to a Saturday. That meet will be on Saturday March, 14th and will start at 4:00 PM. It has also been changed to at quad with Penn St. and Yale. Finally, the start time for the Pac-10 Championships which is being hosted by Stanford, will start at 4:00 PM instead of 5.

Alumni Sightings

Jaime Cranage has now moved to State College, PA where she is working as an Intensive Care nurse at a small hospital. She is now engaged and her fiancé is the Tennis Coach at Penn St. The wedding is set for November. **Sarah Galecki** and **Jessamyn Salter** both came back to coach at our camp. Sarah is moving back to Houston to start Graduate school. **Nicci (Filchner) Goodman** was in and out of town between stops in Georgia, Seattle, and El Paso. **Kara (Fry) Meyer** is expecting her first child. She kept it very low-key until it became a little obvious! **Katie (Johnson) Ranne** sent some photos of **Kristine Harper's** wedding. For the first time, we had two alumni get married on the same day (**Kristine Harper** & **Meagan Killpack**) and I was not able to attend either. I had a nice talk with **Jamie (Duce) Quintero** at the beginning of the summer to catch up. She has changed jobs and now works for Wells Fargo here in Tucson. **Andi McCabe** stopped by the gym one last time as she was just about to leave town. She has since had her first child; a son named Caden, and has moved back to Chicago to be closer to her parents. **Kristin (McDermott) Princiotta** called me after

she had attended the US Olympic Trials. A former National Team member herself, she was able to catch up with old friends and competitors as well as seeing John and Colleen who were at the meet also. Both Kristin and **Kara (Fry) Meyer** called me from back east as they were headed to the Parkette Reunion. We had a stretch of six Parkette athletes who competed for the program. Maybe they will run into some of the others. Kara was able to have lunch with **Rose (McLaughlin) Neale** who finished up school at NYU and is practicing Trust and Estate Law with a firm in Connecticut. Rose was also at the Olympic Trials and while she was sitting in her box seats, she looked over and noticed that **Jamie Schell** was in the next box. Jamie was there rooting on her old club team. On Friday, June 27, **Amanda (Goins) Dziawura** gave birth to her first child, a son. **Gabby (Zermoglio) Stigall** sent some photos of her family trip to NYC. I ran into **Mary Reiss** at the Phoenix Airport. She was returning from a business trip to Kansas City. I had lunch with **Melanie Weiser** while I was recruiting in Dallas. She has just started her new job working for the Big 12 Conference. **Jessamyn Salter** graduated from nursing school here at the U of A and is working as a registered nurse. **Matt Radelet**, our former trainer, got engaged over the summer. His plans are to start PA school shortly after his wedding next August. **Alli Hay** was married in August. She still works for Raytheon in Tucson while living with her husband, Rick, in Benson. **Lindsay Compitello** sent out a "Save the Date" card as she has recently become engaged. She is still in the Phoenix area and owns a Pilates studio in Scottsdale. I received a call from **Lisa (Heckel) Shabansky** to catch up. She and her husband have just purchased a second home, further north in Scottsdale. On a recent motorcycle jaunt, I was able to finally visit the homes of **Jamie (Duce) Quintero** and **Kara (Fry) Meyer**. Both live south of Tucson, Jamie in Sahuarita and Kara in Vail, but I had never been down to see where they live. **Emily Peterman** sent me an email letting me know that she is now engaged. She is living in Loveland, CO where she is helping out at a local club while she waits to get in to graduate school.

We are also updating a "Where are they now?" database for our alumni. We use this information on our recruiting webpage but it is also just nice to have. So if you get a chance, just email me with the info at ryden@arizona.edu or just return the information sheet.

Boosters As always, we really want to thank all of the Boosters who have helped our program over the years. A program like ours uses donations to directly affect the athletes. I hope that you can find it to continue your 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.

Cyberspace You can keep up on important information on the team at the Official University of Arizona Athletics Website (www.arizonaathletics.com). We have just moved to a new ISP and are experiencing some growing pains. Before too long you will be able to access articles, videos, photos, podcasts and the newsletter from the site so please keep checking.

This year, I still plan to have the newsletter on the website. 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.

Until next time...



Our Current Alumni List:

Deborah Agard
Shane Allbritton
Stacey Allen
Nancy Altmann
Suzanne Alvey
Kiernan Andrews
Denise Austin
Cami Banholzer
Colleen Barfield
Anna Basaldua
Lisa Berglund
Hedy Berman
Nikki Beyschau
Monica Bisordi
Rita Bojorquez
Becky Bowers
Mary Kay Brown
Laurie Buckelew
Maureen Burt
Trude Cables
Bernadette Campbell
Beth Carey
Maureen Carroll
Kelly Chaplin
Karen Christensen
Jennifer Clayton
Lynda Coffelt
Cynthia Coleman
Lindsay Compitello
Leslie Crompton
Jamie Custer
Deborah Dahlquist
Kimberly Danloe
Colleen Daugherty
Renee Demers
Gretchen Diaz
Patricia Digiacomio
Leslie Distefano
Mary Drachman
Jamie Duce
Aimee Estella
Stevie Fanning
Michelle Fernandez
Sarah Fey
Nicci Filchner
Tanis Fink
Stacy Fowlkes
Stephanie Frank
Kara Fry
Sarah Galecki
Nicole Garrett
Shelly Gault
Bernadette Gentry
Kaley Gibson
Amanda Goins
Carol Grantham
Amy Greenberg
Michaela Grigg
Kristi Gunning
Stacey Gusky
Teresa Haag
Beth Hansen

Kristine Harper
Lynda Hartzler
Theresa Hartnett
Pamela Hastings
Alli Hay
Lisa Heckel
Susan Hergenrader
Christina Herrmann
Danielle Hicks
Melinda Hicks
Debra Holland
Patricia Holm
Jamie Holton
Heidi Hornbeek
Robin Hurowitz
Susan Howe
Laura Jager
Susan Jensen
Karen Johnson
Katie Johnson
Jamie Jones
Heather Kameoka
Jenna Karadbil
Kathy Kartchner
Maureen Kealey
Meagan Killpack
Lyric Kite
Deborah Koepsel
Leslie Kopman
Sandra Kostroski
Carolyn Larabee
Jodie Leekwai
Deborah Leggett
Sheehan Lemley
Lana Lenkoff
Randi Liljenquist
Lynda Lopez
Theresa Lovett
Carolyn Malott
Katie Manciet
Deborah Marshall
Jessica Marshall
Gina Martin
Patricia Martin
Kathleen McArdle
Andi McCabe
Kristin McDermott
Rose McLaughlin
Cori Messina
Susan Messenger
Cheryl Micklo
Kristen Micsion
Nancy Milberger
Jacqueline Mims
Diane Monty
Brittney Morgan
Alex Moss
Erin Muirhead
Melinda Nevins
Debra Nodorp
Kendra Nogare
D'Ann O'Bannon

Jennifer Odom
Sarah Parsons
Abby Pearson
Sandra Pederson
Donna Pierson
Emily Peterman
Marie Phillips
Tenli Poggemeyer
Mary Popanikolas
Sallie Porter
Kristin Powers
Cynthia Preble
Susan Preimesberger
Rhonda Rawson
Salley Rayl
Susan Rayl
Mary Reiss
Diana Rendall
Karen Riechers
Leslie Sabey
Amy Sachnoff
Jessamyn Salter
Jamie Schell
Tania Schneider
Noelle Schnurpfeil
Maria Schweitzer
Lyric Sears
Linda Shannon
Joneen Sigette
Rachelle Silberg
Laura Small
Christina Smith
Nancy Smith
Lynda Smith
Laurie Sowler
Brooke Stan
Karen Stephens
Susan Stockslader
Lisha Stone
Heather Straccia
Aubrey Taylor
Janet Thomas
Pamela Thompson
Karen Tierney
Andrea Todd
Susan Tompkins
Nancy Tregonis
Danyra Varela
Patricia Villamana
Karen Walker
Stacey Walski
Andrea Walters
Darci Wambsgans
Susan Warfield
Melanie Weiser
Elaine Whelan
Maria White
Sandra Williamson
Caroline Wood
Karin Wurm
Tracy Yerkes
Gabriela Zermoglio