

CAT SCRATCHES

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The Newsletter of The University of Arizona GymCats

Dear Friends, Alumni & Boosters,

February 1 February is always an important month for collegiate gymnastics because a team really has to find its groove before the final push in March. For our first meet of February, we welcomed Pac-12 foe Washington to McKale Center for a dual meet. Barbara, Jessie and Jordan were out for this meet so some of our line-up options were limited. I knew we would be fine if we could continue the energy and focus from the previous weekend. The team had a good week of practice and was incredibly motivated for this week's opponent.

On vault, we changed up the line-up slightly based on this weeks training. The line-up would be: Amber, Shana, Gabby, Mackenzie, Kristin, and Shelby with both Selynna and Allie performing exhibition. Amber got us off to a solid start with a 9.75. Shana followed with a 9.725 and then Gabby's first vault in the line-up scored a 9.75. It wasn't the blazing start of last week but not bad. Mackenzie then received a 9.8 on her vault which made me feel a little better. Kristin had been on a roll with her vaults and the landings in particular. This meet those landings were not quite there and her hops cost her to the point of a score of 9.75. Shelby finished us up with an excellent vault and our high vault score of 9.875. Both Selynna and Allie had solid efforts which received identical 9.7's. Our event score of 48.925 was actually pretty good but I knew we had left tenths out on the floor. We were actually behind in the competition by .15 as we marched to our second event.

Without Jordan, bars would probably be the biggest question mark. Not that we didn't have capable routines, there just wasn't the experience on this event as we were already competing 2 freshmen. I decided on a 3rd freshman to complete the line-up which became: Krysten, Gabby, Lexi, Shelby, Allie and Selynna with Shana and Krishna both saluting bars for the first time this season in exhibition slots. Krysten did her usual great job starting us off with a 9.775 but it actually was her roughest routine of the year. Gabby followed with her own 9.775 that resulted mainly from not sticking her dismount. Lexi then hit one of her best so far and received a 9.8. Shelby also hit a nice routine and we doubled up again for another 9.8. Allie then saluted for really super set and a 9.875. Selynna had hit in all three of the previous meets in exhibition and I fully expected her to do the same here. I was wrong. She had some real trouble and 2 falls. Her score was an 8.5. Fortunately the first five had hit. Shana then had a pretty good routine in spite of scraping her foot on the rail during her Tkatchev. Her score was a 9.775. Krishna then saluted for her first collegiate routine and unfortunately didn't have the same performance

we had been seeing in the gym. Two falls gave her an 8.4. Bars was over and a 49.025 isn't all that bad. Slightly over a 9.8 average. But again, it wasn't the performances I was expecting. The word that kept coming to mind was sketchy. We are obviously good enough to score high, I just don't want us to keep leaving tenths behind. Our running team score of 97.95 had us move slightly in the lead by .2.

After last week's improvement on beam along with no real medical improvements, the same line-up as last week was set to compete: Amber, Allie, Shay, Lexi, Shelby, and Shana. Amber did a great job again in the lead-off spot with a 9.8. Allie then followed up with a great routine herself and a 9.85. Shay then saluted determined to redeem herself from last week. Boy did she ever as she scored a 9.875. Lexi had a few breaks but held on for a decent score of 9.75. Shelby had an incredible set going until a landing error lowered her score to a 9.8. Shana then stepped up and finished off our beam routines with our 6th hit in a row. Her score was another 9.8. It was our best beam effort of the season so far and it came at a time when I felt the team really needed it. The team was very pumped with the 49.15 but more by the way we had competed on the event. I knew now we had the best possible mental set up for our floor team. As we proceeded to march to floor, our running score was a 147.1 and we had opened up a .65 lead.

As with beam, I kept the floor line-up identical to the re-shuffled one from last week: Shana, Selynna, Amber, Mackenzie, Allie, and Kristin. Shana was more than ready even though she had just finished beam. She hit her set and we were off with a 9.8. For this meet, we decided to up the ante with Selynna and increase her difficulty to new high for her. I didn't think it was all that risky as she had been training very well and I absolutely believed the other five would hit regardless. She did a great job, hitting her new tumbling passes and scoring a 9.85. Amber then followed with her own great routine and a 9.875 followed by Mackenzie and the identical score. Allie was up next and just like last week, really put on a show and received a 9.9 from the judges. And for our final routine of the meet, Kristin nailed her set once again and received a 9.9, once again. It was a fantastic floor rotation scoring a 49.4.

When the results of the meet were announced, we had won the meet 196.5 to 195.175. It was a great meet for us as we all had a chip on our shoulder for what had happened up in Seattle one year ago. On the individual side, it was also quite successful. Shelby took the vault title. Allie tied for the bar title and tied with Kristin for the floor crown. And Shay had earned her first individual title on beam. Thus came an end to our brief two-week home stand. Now we are off on the road for the next three meets. If we can compete like we did at home, it will be a fun time.

	Vault	Bars	Beam	Floor	All-Around
Selynna	9.7	8.5		9.85	
Shana	9.725	9.775	9.8	9.8	
Allie	9.7	9.875	9.85	9.9	
Gabby	9.75	9.775			
Amber	9.75		9.8	9.875	
Kristin	9.75			9.9	
Lexi		9.8	9.75		

Krysten		9.775			
Krishna		8.4			
Mackenzie	9.8			9.875	
Shelby	9.875	9.8	9.825		
Shay			9.875		

February 7 Our first meet back on the road had the team heading up to Salt Lake City, UT for a dual meet with the Utes. We had not been there for a dual meet for 12 years so no one except the coaches had any experience for a meet such as this. Utah has historically had large crowds and we knew that would be a learning experience for the team. A reported 13,000+ were in attendance and crowd noise could certainly be an issue. Jordan, Jessie, and Barbara were getting better but still out so we would go into the meet with basically the same line-ups that had been successful in McKale.

Our bar line-up was exactly the same as the previous week: Krysten, Gabby, Lexi, Shelby, Allie, and Selynna with Shana performing in exhibition. I had confidence in this line-up even with so many freshmen. Krysten was first up and afterward admitted that the crowd got her a little over-excited. Her nerves caused a few uncharacteristic errors but scored a 9.675 to start us off. Gabby then had her own rough spots and scored a 9.725. Lexi almost missed her release move but somehow caught it and finished for a 9.775. We were hanging in there so far. Shelby however had an error releasing for her Pak-Salto which caused a fall. She finished up well for a 9.175. With the added pressure Allie then stepped up and hit a great set for a 9.85. Selynna was definitely focused on performing better than her last bar routine. She did just that as she got the team out of a problem as she hit her set and received a 9.775 from the judges. Shana then saluted for the first time on bars since last season. She had a few rough spots but made it through her routine for a 9.575. For as rough as the rotation had gone, we managed a 48.8 and I was happy with that as we marched to vault.

We made an adjustment to the line-up for vault after warm-up. The line-up was now: Amber, Shana, Allie, Mackenzie, Kristin, and Shelby. Amber started us off with a great effort and a 9.8. Shana then saluted and then hit her best vault in her career for a 9.825. Allie then saluted for her first vault in the official line-up and received a 9.8 from the judges. Mackenzie continues to impress as she hit a 9.825. Kristin was a bit under the weather but landed her vault with a few steps for a 9.75. Shelby finished our vaulting with a big vault with a step and a 9.8. It was a solid effort for a 49.05. Still a bit below my expectations but for the situation, a 97.85 still had us on a decent pace.

As everyone knows, floor has been a good event for us in recent weeks. The line-up of Shana, Selynna, Amber, Mackenzie, Allie, and Kristin remained unchanged. Shana did a great job getting us started with our second 9.8 lead-off score in a row. Selynna then stepped up and just like last week, hit a great routine and scored a 9.85. Amber kept her string of excellent floor work with a 9.875. As most of you know, Mackenzie mounts with a double front in her floor routine. She made the pass but her momentum carried her out-of-bounds. Nevertheless, she stayed with her routine and scored a 9.6. Allie had been having a really good meet so far and floor was more of the same. She scored a 9.875 on her routine. Kristin was feeling terrible but was able to rise

to the occasion. Even with some landing errors on her first pass, she was able to earn a 9.75 from the judges. This was a good rotation for us. Even with an ailing Kristin, we managed a 49.15. We had a running score of 147.0 going into the last rotation. All things considered injuries, illness, etc.: we were only 1.1 behind the #4 team after 3 events. I was satisfied with that as we rotated to our final event.

We also went with last week's line-up for beam: Amber, Allie, Shay, Lexi, Shelby, and Shana with Selynna performing exhibition. Amber unfortunately didn't have her same success on beam as she had on floor. She had a fall on her routine and received a 9.275. Allie though seemed to be on a mission. She saluted next and nailed her final routine of the meet for a 9.825. Shay was coming off a beam victory last week. It was not to be this week though as she fell and received a 9.125. Now the 196 was not looking good. For a second time, we rebounded from a fall with a hit. Lexi nailed her routine and scored a 9.85. Shelby was up next and for a third time, we had a fall. Her score was a 9.35. A third rebound wasn't in the cards though as Shana also fell and scored a 9.175. Selynna was up for our final routine and her first collegiate beam routine. I was very proud of her that after all the "carnage", she was able to focus and hit a pretty nice routine that scored a 9.75. As an event, there was not much more to say. It was a really poor beam performance on our part. 4 falls, counting 3. An event score of 47.425. Those of you that know me well can probably just insert what was going through my head.

Our final score of 194.425 was 2 points lower than we hoped and I believed we should score. There were high spots for us. Allie competed in the All-Around for the first time this season and she scored a new personal high. Lexi had a pretty good night on her 2 events. Selynna hit 3 sold sets that scored well. Not much more to say other than we will take this loss with us the rest of the year. Learn from it, grow from it, and use it as a wake-up call. On to the next.

	Bars	Vault	Floor	Beam	All-Around
Selynna	9.775		9.85	9.75	
Shana	9.575	9.825	9.8	9.125	
Allie	9.85	9.8	9.875	9.825	39.35
Gabby	9.725				
Amber		9.8	9.875	9.275	
Kristin		9.75	9.75		
Lexi	9.775			9.85	
Krysten	9.675				
Mackenzie		9.825	9.6		
Shelby	9.175	9.8		9.35	
Shay				9.125	

February 15 Our second road meet for the month had us heading due east to a competition we have never taken part in before. The Metroplex Challenge is a huge club meet which is highlighted by a collegiate session held on a podium. We were in the session along with Oklahoma, LSU, and

Kentucky. We were going to start on beam and rotate in Olympic order. It was a big test for us coming off the beam performance of last week. Jordan and Barbara were still not available but after an amazing 5 days were every day had significant improvement, Jessie was healthy enough to give it a go on beam. After a very easy flight to DFW on the day before the meet, we took the team bus up to the Matusik residence where Mary Matusik graciously hosted the entire team to a great meal. It was great to see Katie again as well as the rest of her family. Also joining us was one of next year's freshmen, Madison Cindric, and her family. It was a good start to hopefully a successful weekend.

After a good week of beam training, we were ready to pick up on the event that was weak in Utah and put it behind us. With Jessie back and looking good, after warm-ups the line-up would be: Amber, Allie, Lexi, Shelby, Jessie, and Shana with Shay performing exhibition. Amber did a fantastic job leading us off for the first routine of the meet and a 9.8. Allie then also had a nice routine for a 9.775. Lexi was up third and had a great routine going until she missed a foot punching for her dismount and took a fall. Her score was a 9.15. Now there was pressure to not let this get away from us before we hardly had a chance to get going. Shelby was up to the challenge as she got us back on track with a 9.8. Jessie then saluted on beam for the first time in a month and looked like she had never left. She rocked a routine for a 9.875. It was now on Shana. She had a momentary rough spot on her first acro skill but regained her composure and hit the rest of her routine to make sure we didn't count a fall. Her score was a 9.675. She finished off our beam and looked good except for a fall on her series. Her score was a 9.15. Our event score was a 48.925, a pretty decent result. I can say that it was the best the beam team has looked on the road which was a definite step forward and a goal of ours. We marched to floor to start our leg events.

With the injuries in January, the floor depth has diminished. Fortunately the floor line-up has been doing a great job because the line-up doesn't look to be changing until we can get a few more athletes ready. So the line-up again was: Shana, Selynna, Amber, Mackenzie, Allie, and Kristin. Shana quickly recovered from beam and gave us a very good lead-off routine with a 9.775. Selynna made all of her tumbling passes and dance bonus but big landing errors on both her first and last passes dropped her score to a 9.6. Amber then came back with a good routine and our second 9.775. Mackenzie made it a 3-peat when she received a 9.775 from the judges. Allie then stepped up for our best floor routine that earned a 9.825. Kristin simply over-powered the floor and couldn't control her landings. She went out of bounds on both her first and last passes and her score was a 9.4. The scores were conservative but we didn't help ourselves with a lack of control on our landings. A 48.75 was our low floor score for the year, giving us a 97.675 team total at the half way point. It was time to focus and we rotated to vault.

Just as the case with the floor, the line-up remained unchanged (Amber, Shana, Allie, Mackenzie, Kristin, Shelby) except with the addition of Gabby performing in exhibition. Amber was on a roll and vault was no different. She started us off with a great effort and a 9.825. Unfortunately, our performances stalled right there. Shana had a very good vault that scored a 9.775 with a hop. Both Allie and Mackenzie had some landing issues for identical 9.75's. Kristin also couldn't stop her vault landing and received a 9.725. Shelby also could stop her feet on her landing and scored our third 9.75. Gabby was more solid on her landing but a pike down left her at a 9.7. For the second event in

a row, it was a very average result – 48.85. And for the second event in a row, it was a lack of control on landings where our main deductions came from. We were sitting at a 146.525 as we prepared for our last event. We were struggling a bit but we did have one last chance to salvage the competition.

Just like vault, we had the same line-up with a new exhibition: Krysten, Gabby, Lexi, Shelby, Allie, and Selynna with Ali in the seventh spot. Krysten had been waiting around the entire meet, trying to keep warm just for this 30 seconds of action. She was ready. A great lead-off routine and a 9.875. Considering this tied our highest score, things were looking up. Gabby followed and hit a good routine that scored a 9.75. Lexi then saluted focused on a bit of redemption from her beam performance. She did a great job and scored a 9.85. Shelby then was up and unfortunately had a tough time with a pirouette netting her an 8.625. So it was up to our last bar routines. Sound familiar (last week)? Allie stepped up and got us back on track with a very good 9.825. She was followed by Selynna who came through under the pressure once again with a 9.8. Then came one of the highlights of the season so far. Many know the struggles that Ali has had with injury and how hard she has fought to get her gymnastics to a point of helping the team. As she saluted the team was totally focused and as she hit every skill including a new dismount that has been giving her fits. When she landed that dismount and received a 9.825, the team let out a huge cheer. They really are a close group and it was a good way to finish a somewhat frustrating competition.

Our final event score was a 49.1 and our final team total was a 195.625. All things considered, it was a decent score that will help erase the earlier 194's we subjected ourselves to. We are keenly aware of the tenths we left behind but all we can do is learn and move forward. There were some nice individual performances certainly. Allie had another good all-around meet and finished third with a 39.175. Amber had an awesome three events and it was great to see Jessie come back (if only on beam) in such a huge way. Krysten really showed up great on her bar set. We win, lose, and fight as one united group though. We will return to Tucson to work on rough areas and prepare for our last meet of the month and our annual duel in the desert with in-state rival ASU.

	Beam	Floor	Vault	Bars	All-Around
Selynna		9.6		9.8	
Shana	9.675	9.775	9.775		
Allie	9.775	9.825	9.75	9.825	39.175
Gabby			9.7	9.75	
Amber	9.8	9.775	9.825		
Kristin		9.4	9.725		
Lexi	9.15			9.85	
Krysten				9.875	
Mackenzie		9.775	9.75		
Ali				9.825	
Shelby	9.8		9.75	8.625	
Jessie	9.875				
Shay	9.125				

February 22

For the last meet of the month and our 5th away competition so far this season, we traveled north for our annual dual meet with ASU. We were still dealing with injuries and sickness issues but the calendar waits for no one and it was time to get on that bus. It was going to be a 10-ring circus as the meet had been designated a double-dual featuring a men's meet at the same time. We had the usual rotation of Bars-Vault-Floor-Beam. After a good week of practice, I was hopeful none of these new issues would be a problem.

Going into bars, Shelby was not feeling confident in her bars. I needed to find a replacement on the spot for a line-up position that had been the same since last season. I looked to the senior class to step up. Gabby was coming off of an entire day of stomach flu and was going to give it her all. The reworked line-up would be: Krysten, Gabby, Lexi, Selynna, Allie, Ali, and Shana exhibition. Krysten unfortunately had her first slip up of the year as she missed the bar with her feet on a toe circle. She recovered but her score of 9.65 was not a great start. Gabby was able to get through her routine but a landing deduction on her dismount left her with a 9.75. Lexi was up third but she missed catching the bar on her release move to score a 9.175. A pretty ominous start. Selynna was our first solid set and she received a 9.8 from the judges. Allie had a good routine with some minor errors that left her with a 9.775. Ali was our final routine in the regular line-up but unfortunately her routine was a struggle the entire way. Her score was a 9.575. Shana was up last but missed her Tkatchev for a 9.15. There is no way to put it other than a pretty weak start to the meet. Our event score of 48.55 put us in a big hole right off. We would now be trying to play catch-up and hoping ASU would falter.

We also had some issues with vault line-up right before the meet. Both Amber and Mackenzie were struggling. We decided to replace Amber with Selynna and hope that Mackenzie could figure it out. The new line-up became: Selynna, Shana, Allie, Kristin, Shelby, and Mackenzie. Selynna hit a pretty good vault but some hops left her with a 9.7. Basically the same for Shana for a 9.725. Allie almost stuck her vault and received a 9.775. Kristin had a huge vault but an equally huge step on the landing left her with a 9.8. Shelby then nailed her vault for a 9.85. Mackenzie had problems with her landing that left her with a 9.6. Overall, our vault effort was defined by landings or lack thereof. Our event score was a 48.85 with a running total of 97.4. Our hole was still just as big as we marched to our third event.

It was a bit of relief to know that the floor line-up was still intact. The only change was the addition so Shay to do exhibition: Shana, Selynna, Amber, Mackenzie, Allie, Kristin, and Shay. I will give the team credit. They don't give up and the floor performances definitely took a step up over the previous two events as a whole. The scores don't reflect it, but it was there. Shana got us started with a solid set for a 9.725. Selynna had a few steps on landings but scored a 9.775. Amber had a fantastic routine that received a 9.825. Mackenzie had some issues with landings. Her last pass had big steps that went out of bounds and her final score was a 9.6. Allie had a very nice routine for yet another 9.775. Kristin under-rotated her first pass a tad but continued strong for a 9.85. Shay then saluted for the first time with a new, re-tooled floor routine. She hit it nicely and received a 9.75. It was a good rotation performance-wise. Our event score of 48.95 wasn't anything to brag about just

like our running score of 146.35. The team was determined to keep fighting as we rotated to our last event.

Beam also had no changes to the line-up: Amber, Allie, Lexi, Shelby, Jessie and Shana. Just like floor, Amber had a beautiful routine and got us off and running with a 9.8. I am not sure if there was a conspiracy or what the astronomical odds are that one gymnast would score the exact same score on all four events but that is what Allie did as she hit her fourth consecutive routine for her fourth consecutive 9.775. Lexi was determined to not repeat her bar performance. She hit a great routine and scored our second 9.8. Shelby was up next. She had a great routine going until she fell from the beam on a second acro series. Her score was a 9.15. Jessie wasn't fazed though as she nailed to get us back on track with a third 9.8. It was on Shana now, just like last week, to make sure we at least didn't count a fall. Shana is a gamer and she did a great job of veteran performance and hit her set for a 9.825. It was by far our best event and it yielded our best event score of 49.0.

Our final score was a 195.35, leaving a lot on the table. We won the last half of the meet but the hole we created on bars could not be overcome. We are basically in the midst of a 3 meet slump that we need to bust out of desperately. We now have 3 home meets in a row. I am hoping that is just what the doctor ordered.

	Bars	Vault	Floor	Beam	All-Around
Selynna	9.8	9.7	9.775		
Shana	9.15	9.725	9.725	9.825	
Allie	9.775	9.775	9.775	9.775	39.1
Gabby	9.75				
Amber			9.825	9.8	
Kristin		9.8	9.85		
Lexi	9.175			9.8	
Krysten	9.65				
Mackenzie		9.6	9.6		
Ali	9.575				
Shelby		9.85		9.15	
Jessie				9.8	
Shay			9.75		

Alumni Sightings Molly Quirk, Becca Cardenas, and Deanna Graham were in the audience for our meet with Washington. Of course at every home meet, Mary (Reiss) Farias, Brina Weissman, Aubree Cristello, and Randi (Liljenquist) Acosta are there working. It was great to see Katie Matusik, Katie (Johnson) Ranne, Kristine Harper, Aubrey (Taylor) Kelly, Jamie (Holton) Morrison, Diane (Monty) Bell, and Mykle Douglas all out to cheer on the team at the Metroplex Challenge! There was a great turn out for our meet at ASU. Nancy (Altmann) Jones, Britnie Jones, Becca Cardenas, Stacey (Walski) Van Dyke, Brina Weissman, Jamie (Jones) Carr, Stacy (Fowlkes) Huguez, Kristin (Powers) Holford, Lisa (Heckel) Shabansky, Tenli Poggemeyer were all in attendance.

***** PLEASE NOTE *****

Scheduling Please take note: the March 9th meet against Oregon St. will start at **12:00 Noon**, not 1:00 PM as has been stated previously.

Boosters I want to again thank everyone for your generosity last season. If you would like to donate, just send a check made out to “University of Arizona / Gymnastics” 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). We have a dedicated microsite at www.arizonawildcats.com/gymnastics that will focus on current info, videos, etc. You can also follow the team on Facebook (**University of Arizona Gymnastics**), Twitter (**AZGymnastics**), and Instagram (**ARIZONA_GYMNASTICS**). They have current articles, videos, and pictures of the team.

As always, the newsletter will be on our main website. The archives of the old newsletters reside at (www.u.arizona.edu/~ryden/gym.html). An entire segment of GymCat supporters receive this newsletter electronically. Please contact me if you would like to be put on that list.

Until next time...

Bill





2014 SCHEDULE

<u>DAY/DATE</u>	<u>OPPONENT</u>	<u>SITE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
SAT / JAN 11	ILLINOIS-CHICAGO	CHICAGO, IL	194.75
SUN / JAN 19	STANFORD	PALO ALTO, CA	195.85
SAT / JAN 25	OKLAHOMA	TUCSON*	196.925
SAT / FEB 1	WASHINGTON	TUCSON*	196.50
FRI / FEB 7	UTAH (TV)	SALT LAKE CITY, UT	194.425
SAT / FEB 15	<u>METROPLEX CHALLENGE</u> ARIZONA OKLAHOMA LSU KENTUCKY	FT. WORTH, TX	195.625
SAT / FEB 22	ASU (TV)	TEMPE, AZ	195.35
SAT/ MAR 1	UCLA	TUCSON*	4:00 PM
SUN / MAR 9	OREGON ST. (TV)	TUCSON*	<u>12:00 PM</u>
SAT / MAR 15	TEXAS WOMAN'S BYU BRIDGEPORT	TUCSON*	4:00 PM
MON / MAR 17	AIR FORCE	CO SPRINGS, CO	6:00 PM
SAT / MAR 22	PAC-12 CHAMPIONSHIPS	BERKELEY, CA	TBD
SAT / APR 5	NCAA REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	TBA	6:00 PM
FRI – SUN / APR 18-20	NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS	BIRMINGHAM, AL	1:00 / 7:00

**All Home Meets in McKale Center*