

CAT SCRATCHES

Jan 2014
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The Newsletter of The University of Arizona GymCats

Dear Friends, Alumni & Boosters,

Well it is finally here. After 4+ months of hard training, it was time to get out there and see what kind of a team we have. I personally think that this squad has a ton of potential but we are still a bit "green" if you know what I mean. As things go along, I am sure that we will see which athletes settle into their roles and really start to strut their stuff.

January 11 For the opening competition of the season, the team headed north to the Windy City of Chicago. In the week prior, the temperature in Chicago was sub-zero and we were hoping for a little bit of a break when we arrived. The weather cooperated with mid-30's and we all were very eager to get the season started. I travelled 15 athletes with the intention of every single one of them saluting a judge in the meet. For the first time in a long time we have quite a bit of depth and there is quite a bit of competition within the team to see who will be out there. Our meet was with Illinois-Chicago and they do run a good meet. They were nice enough to allow us 2 exhibition routines on every event and I intended on using them.

As the visiting team, our first event was bars. Warm-ups were a little shaky and I did do some shuffling to the competitive order based on what I witnessed. When there is depth, there is no sense risking the team with someone who is shaky. The final line-up would be: Krysten, Gabby, Lexi, Jordan, Shelby, and Allie with Selynna & Ali performing exhibition. I should have been a little nervous putting the first two routines of the season in the hands of freshmen but in reality they have been so consistent in practice, I knew that if they stayed calm they would be fine. Krysten proved me right with an excellent start to her collegiate career. A 9.75 and the season was under way. Gabby then saluted and had a good but a little conservative routine for a 9.675. A solid start. Now it was time for the veterans. Lexi stepped up for a solid routine and a 9.75. Jordan followed with a hit and a 9.725. Shelby had problems with her mount and fell on her release, scoring an 8.9. I had all the faith in Allie to get us out of this, our first tense moment of year. She came through saving us from counting a fall with a 9.8. Our first exhibition was Selynna and she started her collegiate career with a bit rough, but successful routine for a 9.625. Ali then stepped up to salute. She missed the entire season last year so she has been waiting for this for a while. She hit a decent set and scored an identical 9.625. Our event score was a 48.7. A good start for the first event of the year.

We rotated to vault with most of the nerves subsided. Just like bars, we have many capable athletes on vault and after watching warm-up, I did some

juggling. Our line-up for this meet became: Jessie, Shana, Mackenzie, Jordan, Kristin, and Shelby with Amber & Selynna performing in exhibition. This was Jessie's first time in the official vault lineup and she didn't disappoint. For our second consecutive event, we start out with a nice 9.75. Shana stepped up next and scored a 9.65. Mackenzie then saluted for the first time in an Arizona leo and hit her vault for a 9.725. Jordan then hit a very good vault for a 9.8. Kristin then hit another great vault for a 9.85 followed with Shelby and an identical 9.85. It was a great backside of the lineup. Amber then saluted for a solid vault that landing deductions reduced to a 9.65. Selynna then performed her first collegiate vault for a 9.7. It was a good event for us, scoring a 48.975. We still gave away a few tenths but at the turn, we had a 97.675 team total.

We rotated to floor and for the second half of the meet, we were going with all veterans in the official line-ups and every one of them had the ability to score above 9.8. It made sense to me that they would take this one home. Our floor line-up for this meet would be: Shana, Amber, Allie, Jordan, Jessie and Kristin with Shay & Barbara performing exhibition. Shana did a great job starting us off with an energetic routine and a 9.775. Amber then had a routine that was better than the score might suggest. She bounced out of bounds after second pass resulting in large deductions. Her score of 9.575 was accurate but I know that it will not be her norm. Allie then stepped up and hit a great set and her second 9.8 of the meet. Jordan then hit an excellent routine that scored a 9.85. This was followed by another great routine from Jessie for another 9.85 and an excellent routine from Kristin for a 9.9. Great floor. Shay stepped up for her first competitive routine in four years. You all remember that Shay was a manager for the team last season. She has since "un-retired" and is looking good. She looked good for her first 2/3rds of the routine but ran out of gas and fell on her last pass, scoring an 8.825. Barbara was up next and has been looking great in practice. Unfortunately she went down with an injury after her second pass and couldn't finish. We are hopeful that she was not seriously injured and will be back soon. Our event score was a nice 49.175 and our running team score was a 146.85.

It was exciting to be on a 196 pace after 3 events in the first meet of the year. Our beam line-up for this meet was: Allie, Amber, Jessie, Lexi, Shelby, and Jordan with Shay & Shana performing exhibition. Allie was up first and had a good routine going until falling on her aerial cartwheel. She finished up for a 9.25. This definitely put the team in a bind. We had to go 5-for-5 now. Amber did a good job getting us back on track by hitting her routine and scoring a 9.7. Jessie then had a miss and fell on her series, scoring a 9.25. Now we knew we had to count a fall. Lexi was up next and had a great routine going until a miscue on her dismount caused another fall. Her score was a 9.275 and we now were counting 2 falls. Shelby didn't let it faze her as she was up next. She hit a very nice routine that scored a 9.825. Jordan then finished the regular line-up with an outstanding routine and a 9.85. Shay then saluted for her first collegiate beam routine and hit a nice set for a 9.775. Shana finished our meet with a final hit and a 9.7. Our beam performance was the one downer of the evening. Our event total of 47.9 is severely below our capabilities and we know it. Our final team score was a 194.75 as the meet came to an end.

There were a lot of good things to come out of this meet other than beam. We were able to have a look at a lot of different athletes/routines. We have a lot of quality depth this year and I want to make sure that every quality routine

gets evaluated so we can determine what the ultimate line-up is at any given time. For this meet, we set a program record that 15 separate athletes saluted the judges. Now we will regroup back home in Tucson and get ready for our next meet in the Bay area.

	Bars	Vault	Floor	Beam	All-Around
Selynna	9.625	9.7			
Shana		9.65	9.775	9.7	
Allie	9.8		9.8	9.25	
Gabby	9.625				
Barbara			Inj		
Amber		9.625	9.575	9.7	
Kristin		9.85	9.9		
Lexi	9.75			9.275	
Krysten	9.75				
Jessie		9.75	9.85	9.25	
Mackenzie		9.725			
Ali	9.625				
Shelby	8.9	9.85		9.825	
Jordan	9.725	9.8	9.85	9.85	39.225
Shay			8.825	9.775	

January 19 For our second meet of the season, we were back on the road heading west to Palo Alto, CA. This was a tri-meet with host Stanford and including Sacramento St. Both of our opponents have good programs and we know that we had to be on our game to be successful. We focused on the errors from Chicago as we prepared with the goal of fixing them. We arrived on Saturday early and headed for a nice day at Fisherman's Wharf. It was probably the first sunny day we have had at the wharf in the last 5 years, definitely nice. After that, it was on to the hotel to rest and prepare for an afternoon competition the next day.

This meet was a tri-meet that was being run in a quad-meet format. By that I mean that all four events had their own judging panels and the team would rotate thru the meet in Olympic rotation. Our draw was to start on floor and then on to vault, bars, and beam. We were allowed one exhibition routine per event and just like last week, we were going to take advantage to see more routines. Our floor line-up for this meet would be: Shana, Amber, Allie, Jordan, Jessie, and Kristin with Mackenzie performing exhibition. Shana did a superb job as the "lead-off hitter", with a great routine and a 9.775. Amber had a virtual repeat performance from last week as she hit but went out of bounds for a 9.6. Allie then stepped up but had a fall on her second pass. Her score of 9.275 definitely put some pressure on the rest of the floor line-up. Jordan got us back on track with a great 9.825 set. Jessie had a few little bobbles on her landings but held on for a 9.775. Kristin then came up last in the official line-up and like last week, hit a homer with another 9.9. Mackenzie then saluted for her first floor routine of her collegiate career. She had a great routine going until she under-rotated her last pass and fell. Her score of 9.25

shows that she has great potential. With a few rough spots our event score was a 48.875 and we marched to vault.

Our vault line-up was Shana, Selynna, Mackenzie, Jordan, Kristin, and Shelby with Amber performing exhibition. Shana started us off with a 9.675. Selynna then hit for a 9.75 followed by an identical 9.75 from Mackenzie. Jordan then hit a great effort for a 9.85. Kristin then continued her string of great performances with a 9.9. This was followed by an identical 9.9 from Shelby. The last 3 vaults were great. Amber finished up our vault effort with a 9.6 on her vault. It was a good vault rotation with 4 different athletes achieving personal bests. Our event score was a 49.15 and our running score was 98.025 after 2 events, .2 behind host Stanford.

Bars had basically the same line-up as last week: Krysten, Gabby, Lexi, Jordan, Shelby, and Allie with Selynna performing exhibition. Krysten hit a great set to start us off and set a new personal high of 9.85. Gabby then stepped up and did the exact same thing: great routine for a new personal high of 9.85. Lexi then saluted and hit a good routine for a 9.75. Jordan then hit a very good routine for our third 9.85. Not to be outdone, Shelby made up for last week and nailed her routine for our fourth 9.85. Allie was our final routine in the official line-up and struggled just a bit but still scored a 9.725. Selynna then finished off our bars with a much better routine than last week and a 9.825. Overall, it was a good bar rotation. We left a few tenths behind but the 49.15 event score was an improvement over the week before. Our running team total was 147.175 and we had now moved past Stanford by .625.

We rotated to beam, our final event, with the line-up the same as last week only in a different order: Allie, Amber, Lexi, Jordan, Shelby, Jessie with Shay performing exhibition. The goal was to improve the performance from last week and the pressure of this situation would certainly add to that. Allie was up first and although she did not fall, some rather large execution deductions gave her a 9.525. Amber was up next and also was a little off. She stayed on but scored only scored 9.625. Lexi then raised the score another tenth as she received a 9.725 from the judges. At this rate, I knew it would not be enough to hold off a hard charging Stanford on floor. Shelby did come up with one more tenth as she scored a 9.825. That was finally where we needed to be. Jordan then took a big balance check for a 9.7. Jessie then stepped up for our final official beam routine and performed a great set for a 9.8. Shay was our final performance of the afternoon and her score was a 9.725. We had not fallen as we did in Chicago, but overall we left a lot of tenths behind. Our event score was a 48.675 and our final team total was a good 195.85.

Unfortunately for us, when the final team scores were announced, Stanford had indeed managed to catch us in that last rotation and pass us by a mere .075. It was a bit disheartening. Sacramento St. was third with a score of 192.45. When you look back, the team did make improvement and we learned more about our individual routines and where we still need work. We now return back home for our first home competition of the season. We will welcome highly ranked Oklahoma to McKale Center and I look forward to showing our fans this year's squad.

	Floor	Vault	Bars	Beam	All-Around
Selynna		9.75	9.825		
Shana	9.775	9.675			
Allie	9.275		9.725	9.525	
Gabby			9.85		
Amber	9.6	9.6		9.625	
Kristin	9.9	9.9			
Lexi			9.75	9.725	
Krysten			9.85		
Jessie	9.775			9.8	
Mackenzie	9.25	9.75			
Shelby		9.9	9.85	9.825	
Jordan	9.825	9.85	9.85	9.7	39.225
Shay				9.725	



January 25 Finally! After 6 months of training and 2 away competitions, we were very excited to be back in Tucson for our first home meet. It would be special for a number of reasons, first off because we were welcoming #1 Oklahoma to McKale Center. Secondly, we would be paying tribute to two former members of the family, Jim Gault & Heidi Hornbeek, who passed away this past fall. McKale looked great with a new scoreboard, signage and over 2100 fans cheering. Our focus was to perform to the same levels we see every day in practice. We had not been living up to that goal so

far. Barbara was still unavailable and new to the injury report was Jessie, who would also be sidelined for the meet.

As the home team, we rotated in Olympic order starting with vault. After the usual shuffling of the line-up after the warm-up, here was the order for this meet: Amber, Shana, Mackenzie, Jordan, Kristin, and Shelby with Gabby & Selynna performing exhibition. Amber had been a little off in the first two meets but something told us today was going to be different. When she nailed our opening performance for a 9.85, things got real exciting, real fast. Shana then hit for a 9.725. Mackenzie has been working very hard on her landings and her vault showed it with a 9.825. Jordan then hit her vault for a 9.8. Kristin then nearly stuck and received a 9.875. Shelby finished off the regular line-up with a great effort and a 9.85. Gabby then saluted for her first collegiate vault and scored a 9.675. Selynna finished our rotation with a good effort and a 9.725. It was a great way to start out such a big meet. Our event score was a 49.2 and we trailed Oklahoma by .25 as we marched to bars.

The bar line-up has been pretty stable so far. The first 6 would remain the same: Krysten, Gabby, Lexi, Jordan, Shelby, and Allie. Selynna and Ali would follow in the exhibition slots. Krysten does a great job starting off the team and did so again with a 9.825. Gabby then hit her season best for a 9.875 from the judges. Lexi did the same for a 9.85. Jordan was up next and had a great routine going until she fell from the bar on the giant swing going into her dismount. It was kind of eerie hearing 2000+ people all go silent at once. It was a scary fall but she was able to get up and walk off. She received an 8.55 from the judges. Now it was up the Shelby and Allie to block it all out and still come up with great efforts so that the team score wouldn't be jeopardized. Shelby did just that with a solid routine and a 9.8. Allie then handled the pressure and nailed her routine for a 9.9. Selynna then stepped up for a nice routine and a 9.775. Ali then finished off our rotation with a hit and a 9.65. Even though Jordan's fall was unfortunate, I was really proud of how the team refused to go down. We ended up with a very nice 49.25 for our event score and with a running total of 98.45; we were just .45 behind Oklahoma at the half way point. I knew Jordan would be out the rest of the meet so I started to prepare in my mind how we would adjust.

We marched to beam and my substitution decision was simple. A lot of time in these situations, I put the replacement athlete at the back to of the line-up and let the original 5 go first to build momentum. Jordan was slotted to go 6th anyway so I moved up Shana who was planning on performing exhibition. So the line-up became: Amber, Allie, Shay, Lexi, Shelby, and Shana with Krysten performing exhibition. Just like vault, Amber was terrific in the lead-off spot and gave us a 9.8 to build off of. Allie then finally hit the set she has been trying to do for the last 3 weeks for another 9.8. Shay was up next for the first time in the official line-up. Unfortunately, her hitting streak ended as she fell on a leap to receive a 9.075. The pressure was certainly on us now. Lexi was very confident though and nailed her set for a 9.825. Shelby looked great as she nailed also for a 9.85. We all know Shana is a gamer and not afraid to compete. She stepped up with confidence and hit a great set for a 9.775. Once again, we had avoided the huge hole of counting a fall. Krysten then saluted for her first collegiate beam routine. It was a good one and our final routine of the rotation scored a 9.75. It was by far our best beam effort so far this season. And it came at a very good time. Our event score was a 49.05

and our running score was a 147.5. We were only .55 behind the #1 ranked team going into the last event.

The team was very motivated and focused as we marched to floor. Floor has been going well for us and we expected nothing different today. Allie had not even trained floor since the last meet and when we presented her with the situation, she showed her true team colors, offering to go out there and nail a floor routine “just add another layer of tape on my ankle...” So with that in mind, the line-up now became: Shana, Selynna, Amber, Mackenzie, Allie, and Kristin with Shay performing exhibition. Even though she was just off of beam, Shana did a great opening routine for a 9.85. Selynna then saluted for her first floor routine and scored a 9.825. Amber was having a great meet and her floor routine made it even better. A near perfect routine for a 9.9. Mackenzie then saluted for a very good routine and a 9.85. Allie then stepped up with no training this week as I mentioned before. You have to trust in your training and believe in your abilities. She hit an amazing routine and scored a new personal high of 9.9. Kristin was up last in the regular line-up and we did save the best for last. Only a slight hop on the landing of her first pass gave her a score of 9.925. Shay finished the meet for us with a good set but a fall on one of her tumbling passes left her with a 9.125. It was a superb last rotation with an event score of 49.425. Our final team score was a 196.925, finishing behind #1 Oklahoma by .65.

I am very proud of how the team showed up when the going got tense in the meet. Once again, confirming my belief on how far this team could go. So many individual performances were outstanding that it is hard to name them all. Off the top, both Allie & Amber were exceptional. Both were coming off weak efforts but came back with a fury. Shelby and Kristin continue to perform at an amazing level. Shana, Lexi, and the freshmen all rose to the occasion as they say. The only thing that changed the mood of what I was feeling was the fact that right after the meet, we paid tribute to Jim & Heidi. All of the alumni in attendance came down on the floor along with Heidi's parents, David & Kathie, along with her sister Hillary. We were also joined by Senior Associate Director of Athletics, Erika Barnes. I am hopeful that the great performance of the team on the night we honor them, makes them proud. Now on to next week.

	Vault	Bars	Beam	Floor	All-Around
Selynna	9.725	9.775		9.825	
Shana	9.725		9.775	9.85	
Allie		9.9	9.8	9.9	
Gabby	9.675	9.875			
Amber	9.85		9.8	9.9	
Kristin	9.875			9.925	
Lexi		9.85	9.825		
Krysten		9.825	9.75		
Mackenzie	9.825			9.85	
Ali		9.65			
Shelby	9.85	9.8	9.85		
Jordan	9.8	8.55			
Shay			9.075	9.125	



Alumni Sightings For the first meet of the year, it is always great to see some of the “family” out to cheer on the team. In Chicago, **Sarah (Specht) Tomczyk, Andi McCabe, Aimee Estella,** and **Jami Fryer** were all in attendance. They all look great and are doing well. Thanks for coming out! **Kiernan Andrews** and her daughter made it out to Stanford to root on the team. She looks great and is doing great with a new job. It was so nice to see all the alumni turn out for our first meet of the season. It made honoring Jim & Heidi that much more special. Here is my best shot at the alumni present: **Robin Hurowitz, Nancy (Altmann) Jones, Molly Quirk, Aubree Cristello, Becca Cardenas, Deanna Graham, Katie (Manciet) Frey, Jamie (Jones) Carr, Tania (Schneider) Schue, Stacy (Fowlkes) Huguez, Mary Kay (Brown) Daniels, Beth (Carey) Spencer, Lana (Lenkoff) Wilken, Noelle (Schnurpfeil) Rox, Jamie (Duce) Quintero, Nikki Beyschau, Kara (Fry) Meyer, Lisa (Heckel) Shabansky, Stacey (Walski) Van Dyke, Amanda (Goins) Dziawura, Heather (Kameoka) Woodall, Mary (Reiss) Farias, Randi (Liljenquist) Acosta, Brina Weissman.** Anyone I missed, I apologize.

Scheduling We recently received notice from conference office that there is a time change in our schedule from what has been advertised and printed. 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. The department has undergone some changes so I am unsure if there will be any gymnastics specific promotions. But your generosity is still greatly needed and appreciated. Promotions or not, you can always donate to the program directly through me. 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*	4:00 PM
FRI / FEB 7	UTAH (TV)	SALT LAKE CITY, UT	7:00 PM
SAT / FEB 15	<u>METROPLEX CHALLENGE</u> ARIZONA OKLAHOMA LSU KENTUCKY	FT. WORTH, TX	7:00 PM
SAT / FEB 22	ASU (TV)	TEMPE, AZ	4:00 PM
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*