

# ILLINOIS WOMEN GYMNASTS GO BIG AT

## NCAA NATIONALS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

### SANDY OLDHAM, BREVET JUDGE

The NCAA WOMEN'S NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS were held at the University of Georgia April 24-26, 2008. I had the honor of judging this event, and it was with so much pride that I was able to see so many of our athletes from Illinois competing. I do remember many of these young ladies from judging them performing their first compulsory routines, and ending at level 10 or the elite level. I was fortunate to travel with a few of them on our Region 5 trips. It has been so much fun seeing their growth as gymnasts and as women. It was with a sad heart and a tear in my eye as I watched some of our seniors compete for the last time in their successful careers.

Here is a run down of some of our athletes:

Courtney Butler—Denver—Sr: Competed 9.85 on vault, and 9.85 on bars for her team. Great contribution to her team effort.

Beth Rizzo—Utah—So: First up on floor for her team in the Super Six and scored 9.80. Energetic routine.

Allison Buckley—Illinois—Fr: An individual qualifier in the all around as a freshman! Aggressive beam routine scoring a 9.825. Allison beam score earned her All American honors on that event. Loved her smile on floor. Scored a 38.525 in the all around counting a fall on bars. Looking forward to the next 3 years!

#### TEAM UCLA:

Kristina Comforte—listed as a junior, but I thought she was a senior (?). Coming back from some injuries, Kristina helped her team with 9.90 on vault, 9.90 on bars, and 9.85 on beam. Kristina made finals on both vault and bars! First vault was so strong, but the seldom competed second vault was a little short of completion. Kristina nailed her bar routine to score 9.90 and second place.

Anna Li—So. Anna contributed all season to the UCLA team score competing all around ever meet. She had a consistent meet at nationals scoring 9.725 on vault, 9.95 on bars, 9.775 on beam, and 9.75 on floor. Her all around total was 39.20 that put her in the top 20 with former Olympians and World Champions. In bar finals she definitely won highest Tkachev of the meet, and secured All American status on bars. She fought hard for a stuck landing, but had a few body waves to do it. They were in Anna's style: beautiful!

#### TEAM STANFORD:

Kelly Fee—Jr: Kelly has been a steady competitor for Stanford all season. In the Super Six finals she helped her team take home a 3<sup>rd</sup> Place trophy with consistent scores of 9.85 and 9.825 on bars, beam, and floor. Kelly's new floor routine was energetic and sassy. Really fun to watch her perform.

Liz Tricase—Sr: Liz has certainly given all she has to Stanford in her four years there. She has had to battle so many injuries, but never gave up the fight. She went out a true champion in my book. In the Super Six she scored two big 9.90's on vault and bars for her team. In bar finals she scored 9.8625 for 6<sup>th</sup> place. Finals were so close, and 2 degree's short of a handstand could make the difference in placement.

Danielle Ikoma—So: Did not compete. Injury??

#### TEAM MICHIGAN:

Tricia Wilson—Fr: Unfortunately, Tricia was out for the rest of the season with an injury. Saw Tricia early in the season rock bars. She definitely would have made finals! Looking forward to an outstanding sophomore year for Tricia.

Katie Lieberman—Sr: Katie looked strong on her events to help the Michigan effort. She vaulted to a 9.775, and danced to a 9.825. I really enjoyed the Katie smile on floor. Her routine was really a classic.

Kylee Botterman—Fr: As a freshman, Kylee made an immediate impact for the Michigan team. She scored 9.875 on vault, 9.90 on bars, and 9.85 on floor. I loved the crowd reaction to Kylee on floor. She knows how to work the fans with that smile. Kylee scored a 9.85 in bar finals to place 7<sup>th</sup> and earn All American honors.

IN CASE YOU HAVE NOT KEPT COUNT:

ILLINOIS HAD 4 ATHLETES IN BAR FINALS!! WAY TO GO COACHES!

Lindsay Borkan---Sr: Lindsay was on the podium to help her Penn State team mate compete in the all around. Lindsay gave me a little wave, which was a little more restrained from her usual thump on my judging table! She closed out a wonderful college career.

Congratulations to all our Illinois athletes. You make us all so proud. Congratulations to their coaches. I know you are proud. And to our seniors Katie, Liz, Lindsay, and Kristina, I will miss seeing you on the college scene. You will not be forgotten, and we thank you for all you have given the sport of gymnastics. We wish you the best in life and happiness in the future. We know that you will be successful in what ever direction life takes you.