

gymnastics

Gymnast finds awareness is the key



Photo by Julie Howard

Contemplating why you didn't hit a routine is common among gymnasts, and to Cindy Gleason it's no different. The freshman recorded a lifetime best of 31.85 in a meet recently.

By JULIE HOWARD
Of the Emerald

With a running start towards improvement, freshman Cindy Gleason continues to move upward in the women's gymnastic ranks.

Her running start was, and still is, awareness. Starting out as an awkward eighth grade gymnast, an awareness of where improvement was needed helped Gleason to move from a one-event competitor in high school to the number two all-around position behind Oregon's leading all-around scorer, Wendy Halberg.

As a former high school teammate of Halberg's at Sheldon High School in Eugene, Gleason watched the Duck ace then and watches her now.

"When I was learning the ropes as a high school sophomore, Halberg was already established and earning most of the team points," Gleason explained.

But Oregon coach Henriette Heiny describes Gleason as a very good potential gymnast in her own right.

"Cindi's a strong individual who has her own individual motives for accomplishment," Heiny said. "If she makes up her mind to, she can do more and more."

At the recent Western Hemisphere Games in Hayward, California, Gleason competed as one of the top two all-around gymnasts representing Oregon (Halberg being the number one competitor). Though the games were a challenge to her, Heiny felt Gleason fit right in because of the attitude she took about herself.

Although scoring highest on the vault, both the Oregon coach and Gleason herself felt she had given

her best performance of the season in the bars competition and one of her better beam performances.

"It was her best college performance," Heiny said.

The bars competition is normally Gleason's toughest event, yet she's aware what needs to be changed in order to improve.

"I'm going to have to use more difficult moves on the bars to raise my score there and I need to eliminate my wobbles on the beam also, develop a steadiness and maybe incorporate some aggressive dance moves into that event," Gleason said.

Practicing ideas of improvement may not be such a bad idea in view of the recruiting going on at Oregon. Heiny hopes to land as many as five gymnasts the caliber of Halberg for next year's competition. Though number two now, Gleason knows it may not be easy to maintain that position.

"I'm going to have to work very hard this coming year to stay where I am," she said. "Having one year of college experience under my belt will help a little. That combined with a lot of work and I think I can be right in there. Gymnastics is a sport you can't take lightly. You have to work at it all year and it requires constant concentration."

Gleason's seriousness is reflected in the way her life revolves around the sport which dominates much of her time from early September to late March. For gymnastics, she gave up a music scholarship.

She played the viola for four years and toured Europe as part of the American Youth Symphony in Chorus. And even though she's an outdoor-recreation enthusiast,

she sold her horse because gymnastics left her no time to ride. Snow-skiing hasn't even been attempted because of its risk and because Gleason devoted her winters to her sport.

Gleason avoids idle hours. She not only goes to school full-time, practices gymnastics three and one-half hours a night Monday through Friday, and works part-time, but still manages to get together with friends and go bike riding, go to the coast or enjoy most any outdoor activity.

"I get bored just sitting around," she admits.

The hectic, fast-paced, life of a college student and athletic competitor also keeps her from other leisure activities such as sewing, cooking and especially reading, something she loved in high school but can't find the time for now.

Looking past her college career, Gleason would like to coach gymnastics, having already taught intermediate and advance classes at the Oregon Academy of Artistic Gymnastics and a parks and recreation course as a high school gymnast.

But realistically, she knows she doesn't want to have to teach in a classroom situation. She's chosen business as her major instead. And though she's not sure which specific aspect of business, she's eager for the opportunity of advancement.

Just like in gymnastics.

Randle, NY have dispute

NEW YORK (AP) — M. Donald Grant, chairman of the board of the New York Mets, reacted angrily Tuesday to third baseman Lenny Randle's announced decision to quit baseball.

Randle said Monday night that he would not report to the Mets' spring training base at St. Petersburg, Fla., this week because the club had treated him "like a number rather than an individual."

Randle was reportedly upset over the Mets' refusal to extend the five-year, \$400,000 contract he signed last season after being acquired from the Texas Rangers.

"What's the value or point of a contract?" asked Grant. "If we change it now and he hits three homers in a game, he'd come back and want to tear it up again. It's the same thing all over baseball."

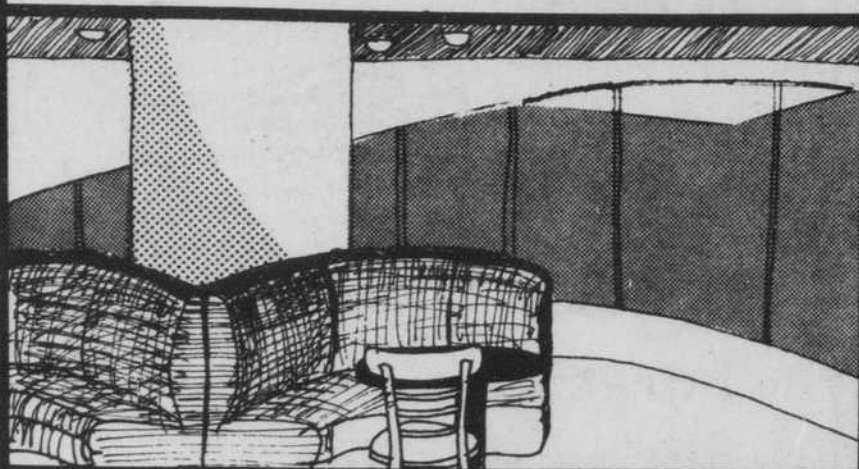
Grant said the Mets had deliberately signed a long-term contract with Randle last year when he came to New York on waivers after being fined \$10,000 and suspended 30 days by the Rangers for slugging his manager, Frank Lucchesi, during spring training.

"I didn't want to face him this year and have him say we took advantage of him at a bad time," Grant said. "I wanted to get it done then and there."

Randle batted .304 for the Mets last season and set a club record with 33 stolen bases. He insisted that his argument with the club was not over money but rather over the length of his contract.

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