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## QUICK FACTS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Athletics Phone .....	(310) 825-8699
Ticket Office .....	(310) UCLA-WIN
Location.....	Los Angeles, CA
Enrollment .....	37,500
Founded.....	1919
Colors.....	Blue and Gold
Nickname.....	Bruins
Conference.....	Pacific-10
Conference Phone.....	(925) 932-4411
National Affiliation .....	NCAA Division I

## UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL

Chancellor .....	Dr. Gene Block
Director of Athletics .....	Dan Guerrero
Sr. Women's Administrator.....	Petrina Long
Faculty Athletic Rep.....	Donald Morrison

## UCLA GYMNASTICS INFORMATION

Head Coach.....	Valorie Kondos Field (UCLA '87)
Coach's Phone .....	(310) 206-6420
Record at UCLA (Years) .....	355-80-1 (18)
Career Record (Years).....	same
Assistant Head Coach.....	Chris Waller
Assistant Coach.....	Jim Foody
Volunteer Assistant Coach.....	P.J. Irvin
Athletic Trainer .....	Lorita Granger
2008 Record.....	18-6
2008 Post-Season.....	7th, NCAA Championships

## GYMNASTICS FACILITY

Home Arena (Cap.).....	Pauley Pavilion (12,819)
Training Facility .....	Yates Gym
Meet Director.....	Janet Ferrari

## SPORTS INFORMATION

Gymnastics SID .....	Liza David
Sports Information Phone.....	(310) 206-8140
Sports Information FAX.....	(310) 825-8664
E-mail Address .....	ldavid@athletics.ucla.edu
Shipping Address.....	J.D. Morgan Center, 325 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90095
Athletics Hotline .....	(310) 825-8575
Web Site .....	www.uclabruins.com

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

**On the Front Cover:** Pictured, clockwise from top left - Melissa Chan, Ariana Berlin, Anna Li, Brittani McCullough, Kristina Comforde. **On the Back Cover:** Pictured, clockwise from top left - Mizuki Sato, Niki Tom, Allison Taylor, Marci Bernholtz, Talia Kushynski.

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**Purchase:** Copies of the 2009 gymnastics media guide can be purchased in person at the UCLA Ticket Office for \$6.00. By mail, make checks payable for \$8.00 to UC Regents and mail to UCLA Sports Information Office, PO Box 24044, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

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Valorie Kondos Field and Chris Waller celebrate after winning the 2004 NCAA Championship



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Marci Bernholtz



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Luisa Portocarrero

THE 2009 SEASON

# TV/RADIO ROSTER



**Kaelie Baer**  
Freshman



**Ariana Berlin**  
Senior



**Marci Bernholtz**  
Sophomore



**Melissa Chan**  
Senior



**Kristina Comforde**  
Senior



**Tauny Frattone**  
Freshman



**Aisha Gerber**  
Freshman



**Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs**  
Freshman



**Tiffany Hyland**  
Freshman



**Talia Kushynski**  
Sophomore



**Anna Li**  
Junior



**Naomi Manea**  
Freshman



**Brittani McCullough**  
Redshirt Sophomore



**Alyssa Pritchett**  
Freshman



**Mizuki Sato**  
Sophomore



**Allison Taylor**  
Sophomore



**Niki Tom**  
Sophomore



**Vanessa Zamarripa**  
Freshman



**Valorie Kondos Field**  
Head Coach



**Chris Waller**  
Assistant Head Coach



**Jim Foody**  
Assistant Coach



**P.J. Irvin**  
Volunteer Asst. Coach

# 2009 ROSTER



**2009 UCLA Gymnastics Team:** Front row (L-R): Alyssa Pritchett, Talia Kushynski, Niki Tom, Melissa Chan. Middle row (L-R): Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs, Ariana Berlin, Marci Bernholtz, Allison Taylor, Mizuki Sato, Vanessa Zamarripa, Anna Li. Back row (L-R): Aisha Gerber, Tiffany Hyland, Brittani McCullough, Naomi Manea, Kaelie Baer, Tauny Frattone, Kristina Comforde

## Class Breakdown:

**Seniors (3):** Ariana Berlin, Melissa Chan, Kristina Comforde

**Junior (1):** Anna Li

**Redshirt Sophomore (1):** Brittani McCullough

**Sophomores (5):** Marci Bernholtz, Talia Kushynski, Mizuki Sato, Allison Taylor, Niki Tom

**Freshmen (8):** Kaelie Baer, Tauny Frattone, Aisha Gerber, Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs, Tiffany Hyland, Naomi Manea, Alyssa Pritchett, Vanessa Zamarripa

## Roster by State/Country:

**California (10):** Ariana Berlin, Melissa Chan, Tauny Frattone, Tiffany Hyland, Talia Kushynski, Naomi Manea, Brittani McCullough, Alyssa Pritchett, Mizuki Sato, Niki Tom

**Canada (3):** Marci Bernholtz, Aisha Gerber, Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs

**Illinois (3):** Kristina Comforde, Anna Li, Vanessa Zamarripa

**Indiana (1):** Kaelie Baer

**Texas (1):** Allison Taylor

## Roster by Height:

Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs, Niki Tom, Melissa Chan, Alyssa Pritchett, Vanessa Zamarripa, Ariana Berlin, Marci Bernholtz, Mizuki Sato, Talia Kushynski, Allison Taylor, Brittani McCullough, Anna Li, Kristina Comforde, Aisha Gerber, Tauny Frattone, Naomi Manea, Kaelie Baer, Tiffany Hyland

Gymnast	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown (Club/High School)
Kaelie Baer	5-6	Fr.	Columbus, IN (DeVeau's/Columbus East HS)
Ariana Berlin	5-2	Sr.	San Diego, CA (SCEGA/Patrick Henry HS)
Marci Bernholtz	5-2	So.	Unionville, ON (ASF Gymnastics/Thornhill Secondary)
Melissa Chan	5-1	Sr.	Los Gatos, CA (Airborne Gymnastics/Los Gatos HS)
Kristina Comforde	5-4	Sr.	Burr Ridge, IL (Illinois Gymnastics Institute/Lyons Township HS)
Tauny Frattone	5-4	Fr.	Lake Forest, CA (Olympic Gymnastics/El Toro HS)
Aisha Gerber	5-4	Fr.	Cambridge, ON (Oakville Gymnastics/Galt Collegiate Institute)
Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs	5-0	Fr.	Toronto, ON (Sport Seneca Gymnastics/Northview Heights Secondary)
Tiffany Hyland	5-8	Fr.	Dove Canyon, CA (Diamond Elite/Sage Hill HS)
Talia Kushynski	5-2	So.	Sherman Oaks, CA (Waller's GymJam Academy/Van Nuys HS)
Anna Li	5-4	Jr.	Aurora, IL (Naperville Gymnastics Club/Waubonsie Valley HS)
Naomi Manea	5-6	Fr.	Tustin, CA (Team OC/Northwood HS)
Brittani McCullough	5-4	R.So.	Corona, CA (SCEGA/Centennial HS)
Alyssa Pritchett	5-1	Fr.	Orange, CA (Wildfire Gymnastics/Calvary Chapel HS)
Mizuki Sato	5-2	So.	Fair Oaks, CA (Technique Gymnastics/Bella Vista HS)
Allison Taylor	5-3	So.	Dallas, TX (VOGA/Spring Creek Academy)
Niki Tom	5-0	So.	Northridge, CA (JAG/Chatsworth HS)
Vanessa Zamarripa	5-1	Fr.	O'Fallon, IL (Midwest Twisters/O'Fallon Township HS)

**Head Coach:** Valorie Kondos Field (19th year)

**Assistant Head Coach:** Chris Waller (7th year)

**Assistant Coach:** Jim Foody (2nd year)

**Volunteer Assistant Coach:** P.J. Irvin

**Team Managers:** Jordan Anderer, Alyssa Kitasoe, Brianna McCullough

**Staff Athletic Trainer:** Lorita Granger; **Student Trainers:** Sheila Mazdyasni, Matt Wong

## Pronunciations:

Kaelie Baer .....	KAY-lee BEAR
Ariana Berlin .....	are-ee-ON-uh
Kristina Comforde .....	... com-FORTY
Tauny Frattone .....	... fra-TONE
Aisha Gerber .....	AY-sha
Talia Kushynski .....	TALL-ya coo-SHIN-ski
Naomi Manea .....	muh-NAY-uh
Brittani McCullough .....	Muh-CULL-uh
Mizuki Sato .....	mi-ZOO-key SAH-toe
Vanessa Zamarripa .....	zam-uh-REEP-uh
Valorie Kondos Field .....	CON-dose

# SEASON PROSPECTUS

Early on in preseason training, it became evident to the UCLA coaching staff that this 2009 Bruin squad had that something special. As the season approaches, that perception has not waned one bit. The Bruins look every bit a strong, deep and cohesive unit with an unparalleled spark, enthusiasm and energy that they hope will take them to an NCAA Championship.

UCLA head coach Valorie Kondos Field has lauded her team's character and cohesiveness as big strengths for the squad.

"This team is very even in personality, demeanor and character," Kondos Field noted. "They are very much a 'team'. They are all extremely coachable. That is our strength - the character of each of the individuals and how they combine to make up a team."

The sheer numbers of the team will also benefit the Bruins as they go through the rigors of the regular season. With an 18-member squad, competition will be fierce for spots in the line-up, and with several upperclassmen working through preseason injuries, the underclassmen, which make up more than half of the team, will play big roles early on.

Leading this youthful squad are seniors **Ariana Berlin**, **Kristina Comforde** and **Melissa Chan**. Berlin personifies the heart of a champion, battling through adversity to compete in every meet of her collegiate career. Defying the odds is what Berlin does best, and while competing in the lower-scoring leadoff position on every event for the Bruins, she turned in a stunning performance at last season's Pac-10 Championships to place third in the all-around. Berlin has been UCLA's rock in many ways and will go down as one of the most consistent Bruin gymnasts ever, hitting 95% of her career routines without a fall. She enters the 2009 season looking as strong as ever.

Comforde is a fiery competitor who earned All-America honors on every event in which she competed last season. She enters the 2009 campaign with a shoulder

*Ariana Berlin*



injury, however, that may keep her out for an extended period of time. But with her resolve and determination, which she displayed last year in coming back from a severe bone bruise quickly and in better shape, ruling her out would be premature, not to mention disheartening, as Comforde is a valuable all-arounder who is capable of 9.9 routines on all four events.

Chan has also battled injuries throughout her career. When healthy, she has been a fierce competitor, particularly on balance beam, where she has posted a high of 9.95. Last season, she saw most of her action on floor exercise but also came in on vault and beam.

"Our senior class is extremely strong," said Kondos Field. "All of them are great competitors. They all love to compete, and they all have that kind of quiet thunder about them, where they know their strengths, and they know that they're going to be ready to go. They're great leaders both in the gym and out."

**Anna Li** and **Brittani McCullough** are both coming off preseason surgeries to remove bone spurs in their ankles and are expected to return to all-around action by mid-season. Both are sensational all-around competitors who are capable of 9.9+ routines on all four events.

Li hit the ground running in 2008, winning the all-around in five of the first six meets of the season, scoring a 9.975 on uneven bars and recording career-bests on floor exercise after upgrading to a double layout mount. Injuries in February slowed her momentum, but she finished the year earning first-team All-America honors on uneven bars. McCullough, the 2008 Pac-10 Freshman of the Year, also had a strong start to the season, placing in the Top 3 in the all-around in six of seven meets. Her season came to a crashing halt on Mar. 9, however, when she suffered a ruptured Achilles tendon. McCullough is recovered from the Achilles injury and is progressing well towards her return.

The surprise of the preseason has been the emergence of the sophomore class. All five sophomores worked hard in the off-season and come in looking better than ever.

Most improved amongst the group is **Marci Bernholtz**, who Kondos Field says is going through "the exact opposite of a sophomore slump." Bernholtz has blossomed since last season, when she was mostly a beam specialist. This year, after working hard in the off-season to strengthen her knee, she is now fully training on all four events and has shown big improvements in her tumbling and consistency.

**Mizuki Sato** and **Niki Tom** had strong freshman campaigns and look even stronger in 2009. Although neither have yet to compete in the all-around, both are strong on all four events. Sato is one of the Bruins' top returners on floor exercise and will challenge for competition time on the other three events with her big skills. Tom was a regular on balance beam and a frequent contributor on floor exercise last year and has upgraded her routines to bring in the bigger scores.

**Allison Taylor** saw limited action last season on uneven bars as she dealt with a foot injury, but enters the 2009 season healthy and is looking to contribute on bars and floor exercise. **Talia Kushynski** sat out the summer with a stress reaction in her back but has come back strong and is expected to dazzle once again on floor with her edgy dance skills and improved tumbling.



*Brittani McCullough*

As impressive as their improvements in the gym have been, the sophomores also bring a valuable intangible to the squad - a sense of camaraderie and teamwork. "The sophomores just continue to amaze me," said Kondos Field. "They are so close as a class. They are truly sisters, all of them. They're extremely supportive, which is really remarkable and really nice to see."

The 2009 freshman class is remarkable not only in size but in stature. The class boasts a 2008 Olympian, a Canadian National Team member, a three-time Level 10 national all-around champion, two four-time Level 10 national qualifiers and a walk-on who could challenge all of them for a spot in the lineup on vault and floor.

Fresh off a 16th-place all-around finish at the Olympic Games, **Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs** is poised to become one of UCLA Gymnastics' all-time greats with her world-class skills and consistency. She was one of Canada's all-time greats, becoming the first Canadian woman ever to win a World Championship medal when she captured bronze on the balance beam in 2006. Hopfner-Hibbs should make an immediate impact in the all-around.

**Aisha Gerber** is another world-class athlete, having represented Canada at World Cup meets and becoming the first Canadian woman to medal at the America Cup (bronze in the all-around in 2006). She has a style reminiscent of former Bruin great Yvonne Tousek and will be another strong all-around contributor.

**Vanessa Zamarripa** is someone who Kondos Field says is "probably the most talented athlete in UCLA gymnastics history. She has no weakness. She's flexible, she's strong, she's beautiful." Zamarripa won a total of nine Level 10 individual national titles from 2003-07, including three all-around crowns, and is expected to continue her success at the collegiate level.

Four-time Level 10 National qualifiers **Kaelie Baer** and **Tauny Frattone** each bring big, powerful gymnastics

# SEASON PROSPECTUS

skills and will both be looked upon to compete on all four events for the Bruins. Both suffered significant ankle injuries at JO Nationals in May and were not fully recovered from those injuries when preseason began but have since regained their strength for the start of the season.

UCLA has a long-standing track record of turning walk-ons into big-time contributors, a la Ariana Berlin and Niki Tom, and **Alyssa Pritchett** looks to be the next walk-on success story. Pritchett is a vault and floor exercise specialist with big skills (Tsukahara layout full on vault and a full-in on floor) and performance skills. "Alyssa Pritchett continues to just be a shining light every single day," said Kondos Field. "She's a little blonde powerhouse whose smile will light up the entire gym. She is going to be really fun. You won't be able to stop smiling when you watch her on floor."

**Tiffany Hyland** and **Naomi Manea** are two other freshmen walk-ons who also look to contribute. Hyland is an uneven bars specialist who placed third in the all-around at the 2008 South African National Championships. Hyland has learned new skills, including a

Deltchev, since arriving at UCLA, and she has also impressed with her work-rate and effort. Manea is coming off shoulder surgery but hopes to contribute on three events when healthy. In 2007, she won the Level 10 State uneven bars title and tied for fourth at the Regional meet.

"The freshman class is amazing," said Kondos Field. "They are so different - they are all over the spectrum as far as their personalities go, but together they are a very, very strong group."

With big skills, dynamic routines, dazzling choreography, and an unwavering team spirit, the 2009 Bruins have all of the tools to bring back another title to Westwood.

"The combination of the talent that we have added to the team, the improvement of our returnees, and the character of each of these team members as individuals has brought this group a feeling of tremendous daily accomplishments," Kondos Field said. "To be able to maintain this energy and keep our team healthy are the ingredients we are looking for to win a sixth national championship."



## 2009 SCHEDULE

Day, Date	Opponent	Location	Time
Friday, January 9	@ Utah	Salt Lake City, UT	7 pm MT
<b>Sunday, January 18</b>	<b>Arizona</b>	<b>Pauley Pavilion</b>	<b>2 pm</b>
Friday, January 23	@ Fullerton	Fullerton, CA	7 pm
<b>Sunday, January 25</b>	<b>California</b>	<b>Pauley Pavilion</b>	<b>2 pm</b>
Friday, January 30	@ Arizona State	Tempe, AZ	7:30 pm MT
Sunday, February 8	@ Stanford	Palo Alto, CA	2 pm
<b>Sunday, February 15</b>	<b>Washington/CSUF/Boise State</b>	<b>Pauley Pavilion</b>	<b>2 pm</b>
Sunday, February 22	@ Nebraska w/ Minnesota, NC State	Lincoln, NE	1 pm CT
Friday, February 27	@ Oregon State	Corvallis, OR	7 pm
<b>Sunday, March 8</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Pauley Pavilion</b>	<b>2 pm</b>
<b>Sunday, March 15</b>	<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>Pauley Pavilion</b>	<b>2 pm</b>
Saturday, March 21	@ Pac-10 Championships	Palo Alto, CA	4 pm
Saturday, April 4	@ NCAA Regionals	TBD	TBD
Thursday-Saturday April 16 - 18	@ NCAA Championships	Lincoln, NE	TBD

Home meets in **Bold**. Meet times are local to site.

## SPECTATOR GUIDE

### Team Competition

Collegiate team competition involves the totaling of the five best individual scores on each event to arrive at a team score. Each team can put up a maximum of six competitors on each event. Two judges per event evaluate each athlete's performance. The judges' scores are then averaged to arrive at a final mark. A perfect team score is 200.

In a dual meet, the host team begins on vault, followed by the uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise. The visitor flip-flops with the host, starting on bars, and moving onto the vault, floor exercise and finishing on the balance beam. If there are more than two teams competing, each team will start on a different event, following the home order, vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise.

### Vault

The object is to get as high as possible off the horse, to stay up in the air long enough to flip and/or twist and to land far from the horse in perfect control. A proper, motionless landing is called "sticking" the vault. Vaults are divided into four categories: handsprings, forward saltos, backward saltos and vaults from a round-off. Each vault has a maximum value, usually from 8.8 to 10.0. The vault is judged in the areas of pre-flight (board to horse), repulsion (push off the horse), after-flight (distance and height), and landing. Gymnasts may only perform one vault. At the individual event finals at the NCAA Championships, gymnasts must perform two different vaults, which will be averaged for a final score.

### Uneven Bars

This event requires tremendous upper body strength. A smooth routine with circling moves, handstands, flips, release and regrasp moves, kips and flight from bar to bar will usually score well. Ten or more skills are required. Special requirements include a minimum of two bar changes, two different flight elements and a minimum C level dismount.



### Balance Beam

The balance beam is 16 feet long, four feet high and a mere four inches wide. Beam routines combine dance elements such as turns, leaps and jumps with acrobatic skills such as cartwheels, somersaults in the air, handsprings and rolls. Performing on the beam requires precise movement and intense concentration throughout the entire routine, which lasts from 70 to 90 seconds. Special requirements on beam include a dance or acro/dance combination, a full turn, a large leap or jump requiring a split, an element close to the beam and an acrobatic series with two or more flight elements.



### Floor Exercise

Floor exercise is an artistic event that combines powerful tumbling with beautiful dance. The selection of music and choreography showcase each gymnast's individual style. Two tumbling passes are required, with three different saltos required within the exercise. The combination of creative dance and daring acrobatics makes floor exercise one of the most enjoyable events.

