

2008 SEASON RESULTS

Date	Opponent	Result	Score	Record (Pac-10)
Jan. 4	at Lady Luck Invitational vs. Oregon State (193.875) Arizona State (192.475)	1st	194.975	2-0 (1-0)
Jan. 20	at Cal State Fullerton (191.025) Brown (183.025) Wisconsin-Eau Claire (176.525)	1st	196.125	5-0
Jan. 27	Stanford	W	195.050-195.025	6-0 (2-0)
Feb. 1	at Washington	W	195.975-194.425	7-0 (3-0)
Feb. 8	at IGI Chicago Style Meet Stanford (196.700) Illinois (194.775) Washington (194.250)	1st	196.875	10-0
Feb. 17	at California	W	195.225-189.425	11-0 (4-0)
Feb. 22	at Arizona	W	196.575-196.050	12-0 (5-0)
Feb. 24	Utah	L	195.825-197.450	12-1
Mar. 2	Oregon State	W	196.775-195.950	13-1 (6-0)
Mar. 9	Arkansas (196.425) Alabama (195.925) Cal State Fullerton (192.625)	3rd	195.800	14-3
Mar. 15	at Georgia	L	196.925-197.900	14-4
Mar. 29	at Pac-10 Championships	3rd	196.200	18-6
Apr. 12	at NCAA Southeast Regionals	2nd	196.625	
Apr. 24	at NCAA Team Prelims	4th	196.725	

Boldface indicates home meets.



Niki Tom

2008 BEST MARKS

Gymnast	VAULT	BARS	BEAM	FLOOR	AA
Ariana Berlin	9.875	9.900	9.850	9.850	39.400
Marci Bernholtz	—	8.300	9.875	8.925	—
Melissa Chan	9.800	—	9.150	9.850	—
Shavahn Church	—	9.875	—	—	—
Kristina Comfote	9.925	9.900	9.900	9.850	39.000
Ashley Jenkins	—	—	9.650	9.900	—
Talia Kushynski	—	—	—	9.675	—
Anna Li	9.875	9.975	9.900	9.925	39.600
Brittani McCullough	9.900	9.875	9.900	9.875	39.375
Natalie Padilla	9.900	9.725	—	9.850	—
Mizuki Sato	—	—	—	9.875	—
Jordan Schwikert	9.900	9.925	9.900	9.925	39.400
Tasha Schwikert	9.950	9.950	9.900	9.975	39.675
Allison Taylor	—	9.800	—	9.150	—
Niki Tom	9.825	—	9.850	9.825	—
UCLA Team Scores	49.425	49.475	49.350	49.300	196.925

Boldface indicates gymnast's collegiate career bests.



Jordan Schwikert

Anna Li



Armed with its deepest team in years, the 2008 Bruins entered the season with high hopes and expectations, particularly with the cloud of injuries surrounding the 2007 team behind them. With the return of top all-around competitors Kristina Comfote and Brittani McCullough, who both had to miss all of or big chunks of the 2007 season due to injuries, and the addition of six quality freshmen, UCLA looked to have a large amount of depth on every event.

UCLA's depth got tested in a hurry, though, after freshman Shavahn Church underwent arthroscopic knee surgery, and sophomore Ashley Jenkins broke her toe in late December. The Bruins had strength in numbers to start the season, however, and posted a win at the Lady Luck Classic in Las Vegas in the season opener against Oregon State and Arizona State. Anna Li, who grew up in Las Vegas, won the all-around and three events to lead the Bruins to victory.

The Bruins cruised to victory in a quad meet at Cal State Fullerton two weeks later, thanks in large

part to the strength at the front of the lineup. High scorers for the Bruins on three events came from gymnasts competing early in the lineup - Comfote on bars (No. 3 in the lineup) with a first-place mark of 9.9, Marci Bernholtz on beam (No. 2 in the lineup) with a meet-high 9.875, and Natalie Padilla on floor (No. 2 in the lineup) with a career-high 9.85 to place second overall. As a team, UCLA went 24-for-24 and swept the all-around standings, with Li taking home first-place honors for the second-straight meet.

UCLA hosted Stanford in a big conference showdown the following week. The Cardinal had won both dual meets the year prior, so the Bruins were out for revenge. UCLA and Stanford traded leads after the first two rotations, but the Bruins regained the advantage by .225 after hitting six balance beam routines. With UCLA ahead, 146.5-146.275, the two teams switched events, with the Bruins ending on floor exercise and Stanford on balance beam.

Like UCLA in the previous rotation, Stanford hit 6-for-6 on beam, scoring 48.75. On floor, however, things started out a bit rocky for the Bruins, as McCullough

scored 9.525 and Melissa Chan, making her season debut, scored 9.55. It got worse, however, when Comfote suffered a significant bone bruise on her knee on her opening tumbling pass and could not complete her routine. Needing to regroup after their teammate's injury, it was up to Li and Tasha Schwikert to preserve the lead. Li scored 9.875 on her routine, and Schwikert needed to score 9.8 or better for the win. The All-American stepped up to the challenge, sticking her first two passes. On her dismount, however, she took a small step just out of bounds for the one-tenth deduction, but with everything else in her routine perfect, she got the score she needed for the 195.05-195.025 victory.

After a comfortable dual meet win at Washington, the Bruins had another matchup with the Huskies and with Stanford and Illinois at the IGI Chicago Style Invitational in Li and Comfote's home state of Illinois. Li made the hometown crowd proud by winning the all-around with a career-high 39.6 and taking first place on bars and beam. UCLA and Stanford were tied at the halfway point of the meet, but strong performances on floor and vault sealed the win for the Bruins for the second-straight over their conference rivals.

UCLA continued to cruise after the win in Chicago, picking up conference dual meet victories at Cal and at Arizona. The Bruins also regained the services of Comfote, Jenkins and Church heading into the big showdown against Utah. But just as those gymnasts came back from their injuries, the Bruins were dealt a blow when Li suffered a concussion and foot injury during the Utah meet. With Li not at full strength, the Bruins lost for the first time, snapping a seven-meet winning streak.

The Bruins rebounded to defeat Oregon State the next weekend, 196.775-195.950, on the strength of all-around performances by Schwikert and McCullough, but the injuries, and losses, mounted in the Bruins' home finale on Mar. 9 when McCullough suffered a season-ending Achilles rupture.

After the losses to Arkansas and Alabama in that home quad meet, the Bruins had an even more daunting challenge on the road against No. 1 Georgia. Despite a brewing tornado in the area, the Bruins posed a strong challenge for the Gym Dogs. Although Georgia won the meet, UCLA recorded a season-best 196.925, with five different Bruins recording career-high marks.

The Bruins moved into the post-season with hopes of defending their titles at the Pac-10 and Regional meets. At Pac-10s, the Bruins were just .125 out of first place until the final rotation, when a rocky floor set dropped UCLA to third. With Schwikert unable to do floor due to an Achilles injury, the Bruins had to tinker with their lineup and ended up counting a fall. Ariana Berlin was a bright spot for the Bruins, scoring 39.4 in the all-around to place third despite competing in the leadoff position on all four events.

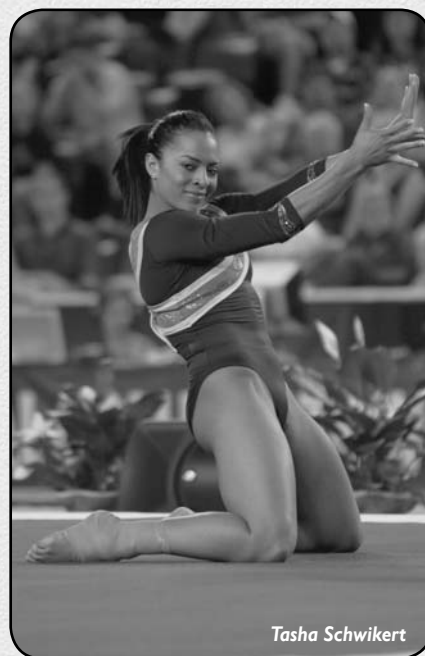
Once again, the Bruins were shipped out to the East Coast for the NCAA Regional Championships, traveling to Florida to try to earn a bid to the NCAA Championships. The Bruins did just that with a second-place finish, punching their ticket to nationals for the 24th season after outpointing Nebraska, who, along, with UCLA and Florida, had been a Super Six team just a year ago.

The Bruins faced a mighty challenge at the NCAA Preliminaries, going up against stiff competition, with only three spots in the Super Six available between UCLA, Georgia, Utah, Stanford, Michigan and Denver. The Bruins had one of their highest marks of the season, 196.725, which would have placed them in second place in the afternoon preliminary session. But against the field in the evening session, the score was only good enough for fourth place, just .225 out of second place and .175 out of third place. Schwikert ensured that the Bruins did not come home empty-handed, however, winning the all-around for the second time in her career and then claiming the uneven bars title two days later.

Allison Taylor



Tasha Schwikert



THE YEAR IN PICTURES



With Coach Wooden



All bundled up in Chicago



The Bruins ran into former classmate (and Male Groupie) Maurice Jones-Drew at LAX



Niki Tom is congratulated by Allison Taylor and Natalie Padilla after her first routine in Pauley Pavilion



Inside the team huddle



The Bruins qualified to the NCAA Championships for the 24th time in program history.



Bruins at the NCAA Championships banquet.



Natalie Padilla, Ariana Berlin and Kristina Comfote posed for a promotional photo for a meet giveaway item



Riding out a tornado watch in the basement of the hotel just before the competition at Georgia



Tasha Schwikert and Kristina Comfote finished 1-2 on uneven bars at the NCAA Championships