

UIC WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS



February 13, 2002*Contact: Shawn Sullivan*312.996.5880*ssulli3@uic.edu*www.uicflames.com

This week for the Flames: The No. 42 Flames (8-5) travel to Gainesville, Florida on Friday to take part in the SunTrust Mardi Gras Madness, which features three of the nation's top 19 teams. On the ledger in the Sunshine State are the host Gators (6-5) who are currently ranked 14th, No. 19 Penn State (3-6) and No. 7 Stanford (4-2).

Where: Stephen C. O'Connell Center (11,120)

When: Friday, Feb. 15 @ 7 PM

Television: Tape-delayed, Sunshine Network on March 3 @ 11 AM

On the Net: Live scoring can be accessed at www.GatorZone.com

FLAMES QUICK FACTS

Location: Chicago, IL

Founded: 1896

Enrollment: 24,410

Nickname: Flames

Colors: Navy Blue & Fire Engine Red

President: James J. Stukel **Chancellor:** Sylvia Manning

Athletic Director: James W. Schmidt

Faculty Athletic Representatives: Edward Deam, Sylvia Furner

UIC on the Web: www.uicflames.com

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS STAFF

Head Coach: Peter Jansson

Alma Mater (Year): Stockholm (1984)

Overall Record: 138-111-1 (12th season)

Email Address: Pjansson@uic.edu

Co-Head Coach: Mary Jansson

Alma Mater (Year): Illinois (1982)

WOMEN'S SQUAD AT A GLANCE

2000 Dual Meet Record: 15-8

Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 8/5

Newcomers: 5

So far, so good: The 2002 season has been one of steady improvement for the UIC women's gymnastics team. Starting out slow, with two consecutive scores below 191.00, the Flames have started their climb to elite status. Their season average has now elevated to 192.240, following three straight wins over No. 54 Southeast Missouri State, No. 41 Illinois and No. 39 Illinois State. On January 25 at the Cardinal Classic, hosted by Ball State, the Flames beat then No. 34 North Carolina and current No. 34 Ball State. Here is a look at the Flames thus far in 2002:

1/11	at Auburn (Illinois, Centenary)	190.350
1/20	at Western Michigan (Ball State)	190.900
1/25	at Ball State (Cardinal Classic)	192.225
2/2	SOUTHEAST MISSOURI ST.	191.400
2/10	ILLINOIS	193.950
2/12	at Illinois State	194.600

average = 192.240

The Flames: The cast of the 2002 Flames is a healthy combination of veteran leadership, steadily blending with a host of newcomers. Early on Atlin Mitchell (Surrey, B.C., Canada/Elgin Park) and Nadia Ori (Highland Park, Ill./Highland Park) have been the catalysts. As captains for Peter and Mary Jansson's team, Mitchell and Ori have provided that stability in their routines and during practice. Seniors Sara Casica (Chicago, Ill./Queen of Peace), Kimberly Sommer (Wheaton, Ill./Glenbard South), Erica Varner (Delaware, Oh./Rutherford B. Hayes) and Amy August (St. Charles, Ill./St. Charles) have all hit big routines on the season for the Flames. Coupled with that bevvy of experience is a corps of newcomers that are just starting to make their presence felt. Highly-touted recruits Alyson Cacciatore (Glenview, Ill./Glenbrook South), Stacey Magiera (Carpentersville, Ill./Barrington) and Jennifer O'Neil (Hull, Quebec, Canada) have each brought with them lofty credentials into their respective

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collegiate careers. Add to that trio red-shirt freshman Jamie Grabowski and sophomore Megan Fey, and you have compiled a strong young group of gymnasts.

The 2001 Flames: The start of the 2001 campaign didn't have a rosy outlook following season-ending injuries to Sara Casica, since-graduated Chrissy Johnston, Jackie Messerges and Erica Varner. However the Flames pulled together and finished the season with a record of 15-8, marking the Flames' second-best record in the last 11 seasons. It was a record-breaking season for the Flames as they tied the school team-scoring record with 195.7 points on their way towards their third-straight Illinois Classic title on March 16. UIC added another team-record on the floor exercise with a 49.275 in a 195.35-194.8 victory over in-state rival Illinois State on February 18. Since-graduated Cheryl Rubinger proved to be a catalyst for UIC's success as she set the school-record in the all-around competition three times, before rolling to a high mark of 39.425 against Western Michigan on February 24. Rubinger's classmate Laura Jungels captured another record against the Broncos as she turned in a near-flawless performance of 9.950 on the balance beam. Rubinger, along with teammate Amy August, were the lone representatives for UIC at the NCAA South-Central Regional at the University of Nebraska. Rubinger did not disappoint as she placed second overall on the balance beam with a score of 9.850 while August competed on the uneven bars apparatus.

Peter Jansson's Career Record

Season	Record	Pct.
1990-91	9-12	.429
1991-92	3-12	.200
1992-93	9-8	.529
1993-94	10-11	.476
1994-95	14-11	.560
1995-96	16-11	.593
1996-97	10-8	.556
1997-98	13-10	.565
1998-99	18-5-1	.771
1999-00	13-10	.565
2000-01	15-8	.652
2001-02	8-5	.615
Totals	138-111-1	.552

2002 Flames' Season Highs

Team Score: 194.600 (at Illinois State)

Vault: 48.800 (at Illinois State)

Bars: 48.875 (at Cardinal Classic)

Beam: 48.000 (VS. ILLINOIS, at Illinois State)

Floor Exercise: 49.000 (at Illinois State)

Notes

Record-ing: On Tuesday at Illinois State, the Flames tallied a team score of 48.800 on vault. That score eclipses the old team record of 48.725, set twice, once in 1999 and once again in 2000.

Career-night: For Atlin Mitchell, the trip down I-55 Tuesday night was well worth the trip. The red-shirt sophomore tallied a career-high on vault, winning the competition with a score of 9.875. She came within .025 of equaling her career-best on floor with another winning effort, this time scoring a 9.850.

Academically speaking: There are currently four UIC gymnasts who have been named Scholastic All-Americans. Nadia Ori received the honor in 2000 and 2001, while Amy August, Sara Casica and Nahia Sanzo de Azua received the honor in 2001.

Sommer-time: Senior Kimberly Sommer has arguably been the Flames' most consistent gymnast all season long, seemingly able to come up with a big routine when most needed. Sommer has been a stalwart on a trio of events in 2002, recording season-highs this year of 9.800 on bars, 9.725 on vault and 9.775 on beam.

That is fresh: Rookie Alyson Cacciatore made a statement Tuesday night against Illinois State, winning the beam competition with a huge score of 9.850, equaling the Flames best this year (Sara Casica). The 2000 Illinois High School Association all-around champion, Cacciatore has steadily moved her way into the UIC rotation.

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2002 UIC FLAMESWOMEN'S GYMNASTICS ROSTER

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Event(s)</u>	<u>Hometown/High School</u>
Amy August	Sr.	4-11	AA	St. Charles, Ill./St. Charles
Alyson Cacciatore	Fr.	5-2	AA	Glenview, Ill./Glenbrook South
Sara Casica	Sr.	5-0	AA	Chicago, Ill./Queen of Peace
Megan Fey	So.	5-4	AA	St. Charles, Ill./St. Charles
Jamie Grabowski	Fr.	5-1	AA	Algonquin, Ill./Jacobs
Ashley Henning	Fr.	5-2	AA	Palatine, Ill./Fremd
Candace Jackson	Fr.	5-3	AA	Yorkville, Ill./Yorkville
Ashley Kuhn	Fr.	5-2	AA	Gurnee, Ill./Warren
Stacey Magiera	Fr.	5-5	AA	Carpentersville, Ill./Barrington
Jackie Messerges	Sr.	5-2	AA	Downers Grove, Ill./Downers Grove South
Atlin Mitchell	So.	5-8	AA	Surrey, BC, Canada/Elgin Park
Jennifer O'Neil	Fr.	5-3	AA	Hull, Quebec, Canada/Secondaire de l'ile
Nadia Ori	Sr.	5-2	AA	Highland Park, Ill./Highland Park
Nahia Sanzo Ruiz de Azua	Fr.	5-0	AA	Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain/Ikastola Olabide
Kim Sommer	Sr.	5-6	BB, UB, V	Wheaton, Ill./Glenbard South
Erica Varner	Jr.	5-3	AA	Delaware, Ohio/Rutherford B. Hayes

HEAD COACH: Peter Jansson

CO-HEAD COACH: Mary Jansson

2002 UIC FLAMES INDIVIDUAL SEASON HIGHS

<u>Name</u>	<u>FX</u>	<u>UB</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>BB</u>	<u>AA</u>
Amy August		9.850	9.850	9.775	
Sara Casica	9.850	9.800	9.700	9.850	38.775
Alyson Cacciatore				9.850	
Jamie Grabowski	9.775	9.700		9.650	
Stacey Magiera				9.250	
Jackie Messerges		9.825	9.650		
Atlin Mitchell	9.850		9.875	9.400	
Jennifer O'Neil	9.825	9.800	9.700	8.500	37.675
Nadia Ori	9.825	9.800		9.775	
Kimberly Sommer		9.800	9.725	9.775	
Erica Varner	9.800		9.775		

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FLAMES PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Alyson Cacciatore...CATCH-a-TOR-EE
Sara Casica...Ca-SEEK-uh
Megan Fey...FAY
Jamie Grabowski...GRUB-ow-SKEE
Ashley Kuhn...KOON
Stacey Magiera...ma-JEER-uh
Jackie Messerges...ma-SIR-jiss
Nadia Ori...OR-E
Nahia Sanza Ruiz de Azua...Naya
Kimberly Sommer...SUMMER

FLAMES FLOOR MUSIC SUMMARY

Sara Casica: song from Carmen
Alyson Cacciatore: medley of music from Jock Jams
Jamie Grabowski: medley of music from the soundtrack from "Austin Powers" and Jock Jams
Nadia Ori: medley of music from "Gypsy Kings"
Atlin Mitchell:
Jennifer O'Neil: Guitar medley
Erica Varner: music from Hernando's Hideaway

MEET RECAPS

January 11, 2002 at Auburn

Head women's gymnastics coach Peter Jansson has said that this is a "bonus season" for UIC senior Sara Casica.

After Friday night, the bonus points are already beginning to add up.

After battling injuries throughout her career, Casica now seems healthy as ever, as she was victorious in the all-around competition at Auburn with a total score of 38.775, edging out the 38.500 posted by Illinois' Ashley Williams.

UIC, as a team, finished third in a tight battle for the top-spot. The host Tigers won the meet with a score of 192.625, while Illinois (191.575) edged the Flames (190.350). Centenary College finished fourth with a score of 186.950.

Freshman Jennifer O'Neil also showed flashes of why Jansson is so excited about the prospects of this year's recruiting class. Her all-around score of 37.675 was good for sixth-place.

Kimberly Sommer equaled O'Neil on the bars, tying for third-place with a score of 9.775, while Atlin Mitchell and Amy August also had good performances on the night.

Mitchell tied for fourth-place on the floor exercise (9.725) with O'Neil, and August tied for seventh-place on the vault, scoring a 9.725.

Casica's top finish was on the beam, where she finished in a tie for fourth with a score of 9.725.

January 20, 2002 at Western Michigan

During a journey to Kalamazoo, Michigan in January, one can expect snow, icy roads and bitter cold temperatures.

The UIC women's gymnastics team expected to drive home with a well-rounded effort behind them, but due to a few poorly timed mistakes and the prowess of opponents Western Michigan and Ball State, the Flames were defeated at Western Michigan by both squads.

Ball State won the meet with a team score of 194.500, while Western Michigan's 192.925 was good enough to get by UIC's mark of 190.900.

"We built some character up here today," said UIC head coach Peter Jansson. "We started off better on the beam, but we had a few unexpected mistakes on floor and we fell apart on bars."

Kimberly Sommer had a good afternoon for the Flames, recording the team's best scores on beam and the uneven bars, scoring a 9.725 on each apparatus.

Amy August had the best overall finish for UIC on the day, placing third on vault with a score of 9.725.

"We are practicing hard and we have the talent, so everything will come around for us soon," added Jansson.

January 25, 2002 at Cardinal Classic

The University of Illinois at Chicago women's gymnastics team had been on the cusp of breaking out and making it known throughout the NCAA South-Central Region that the Flames are for real.

But a few falls here, a few mistakes there cost the Flames in their first two outings of the season.

But Friday night, everything began to mesh together at Ball State's Cardinal Classic, as the Flames finished second overall and won three of the four individual event titles, on their way to a score of 192.225.

Bowling Green won the title with a score of 192.700. UIC was followed by last weekend's nemesis Ball State (191.625), the ACC's Tar Heels of North Carolina (190.550), Wisconsin-River Falls (179.175) and Wisconsin-Eau Claire (173.875).

Atlin Mitchell was victorious on the vault, with a score of 9.850, which was also a career-high for the Canada native. Fellow Canadian Jennifer O'Neil, Kim Sommer and Erica Varner also vaulted well, tying for 12th-place with solid scores of 9.650.

Amy August won the uneven bars title, scoring a 9.850, edging teammate Jackie Messerges and two other competitors who scored 9.825. O'Neil and Sommer added fifth-place finishes on the bars, tying at 9.800. Senior all-arounder Sara Casica got

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back to her winning ways Friday night, winning the beam competition with a score of 9.775. Sommer added a third-place finish to her exemplary evening, scoring a 9.700.

Casica finished as the runner-up in the all-around competition with a tally of 38.450, as Bowling Green's Marny Oestreg was the victor with her score of 39.100.

Nadia Ori also had a good showing in Muncie for the Flames, finishing eighth on beam (9.550) and 12th on the floor exercise (9.650).

February 2, 2002 SOUTHEAST MISSOURI ST.

In its first home action of the year, the University of Illinois at Chicago women's gymnastics team picked up their first victory of the season Saturday evening, beating Southeast Missouri State 191.4-189.675.

The women's team picked up all four individual event titles on the evening, as Amy August took the beam apparatus with a score of 9.725.

Kimberly Sommer tied for the win on bars with Ashley Godwin of Southeast, scoring a 9.75.

Sommer then teamed up with Jennifer O'Neil to tie for the win on vault with a score of 9.625.

Sara Casica added the fourth title of the night, winning the floor exercise with an explosive routine, which gave her a score of 9.85.

February 10, 2002 ILLINOIS

When the Orange and Blue roll into town, the stakes of competition increase dramatically.

For the University of Illinois at Chicago women's gymnastics team, the stakes were in favor of the Flames on Sunday afternoon.

The Flames knocked off Illinois 193.950-193.700 in front of nearly 800 fans, as UIC looks to be in control of the State gymnastics scene.

"This is our biggest rivalry when competing for pride so this was a big weekend for us," said co-head coach Peter Jansson.

In the women's competition, UIC took

three-of-four individual event titles on the afternoon, as Atlin Mitchell won the floor exercise (9.825), Sara Casica tied with Illinois' Jana Gallagher for the win on beam (9.850) and Erica Varner equaled two Illinois competitors, winning the vault competition (9.775).

Down 145.075-145.025 after three rotations, the Flames moved to floor exercise where they have been nearly flawless in the past two weeks.

It was no different on Sunday, as UIC outscored the Illini by .3 on the floor to garner the victory. The Flames grabbed the top four spots on floor, as Varner (9.800), Jennifer O'Neil (9.775) and Jamie Grabowski (9.775) followed Mitchell to stymie the Illini.

"The credit goes to the kids, it was that close after three rotations and they responded well," Jansson added.

February 12, 2002 at Illinois State

Competing against its second straight intrastate rival in 48 hours, the University of Illinois at Chicago women's gymnastics team defeated a Land of Lincoln opponent for the second time in three days, beating Illinois State 194.600-193.825, Tuesday evening in Normal.

The Flames, ranked No. 42 in the nation, were able to defeat No. 39 Illinois State with near flawless efforts on vault, bars and floor.

"We did the best we possibly can do on (those three) events," said co-head coach Peter Jansson. "There was a lot of good stuff tonight."

The Flames—winners of three straight—really made a statement on vault at the Horton Field House. UIC put together a season-high team score of 48.800, besting ISU by .65.

Atlin Mitchell was the winner with a big score of 9.875. Amy August was second (9.850), Kimberly Sommer and Erica Varner tied for fourth (9.700) and Jennifer O'Neil was sixth (9.675).

Mitchell also won the floor exercise with a score of 9.850, while the rest of the UIC floor crew was solid as usual, totaling another season-high of 49.000. O'Neil and Nadia Ori tied for second (9.825), while Erica Varner tied for third (9.800) with a trio of Redbirds.

Freshman Alyson Cacciatore seems to be locating her comfort zone in her first

year of collegiate gymnastics, garnering top honors on beam with a score of 9.850, equaling Illinois State's Carlee Wright.

However, beam was once again the Flames' nemesis, counting three falls on the night. Cacciatore's winning effort and Nadia Ori's 9.775 did aid the UIC cause.

"Nadia's routine on beam was a highlight for us and Alyson also was big," Jansson said.

Jansson feels pretty good about his squad right now, just needing to bandage up the beam routines.

"We just need to take care of the beam mistakes and we'll be all set," said Jansson, as the Flames eye the 195.000 mark.