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## Schuett seeks perfection in gym, classroom

By *Tyler Emerick* April 7, 2010 at 7:32 pm

Perfection is a heck of a thing to strive for.

With the temptation of taking the “student” out of student-athlete so widely practiced — for example, all the “one-and-dones” in college basketball — slacking in the classroom has often become an accepted part of college athletics.

The strange part is, most athletes already develop a strong work ethic in their respective sports by the time they reach the collegiate ranks, but many don’t translate it to the classroom.

But then again, most athletes aren’t ASU junior gymnast Brittany Schuett.

As if 2009 and 2010 First-Team Pac-10

All-Academic honors weren’t enough, the Canadian earned the highest grade-point average of anyone on the list for the second consecutive year as well, coming in at a perfect 4.0.

“I’m pretty excited about it — just to know that the work I’ve put into it has paid off,” Schuett said.

Sorry Stephanie McGregor of Oregon State, your second-place 3.98 GPA isn’t quite good enough.

Under 30-year coach John Spini, ASU has consistently produced All-Academic gymnasts year in and year out.



PERFECT 10: ASU junior gymnast Brittany Schuett, a double major in speech and hearing sciences and psychology, has the highest grade-point average in the Pac-10 with a 4.0. (Photo Courtesy of Steve Rodriguez)

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“I’ve always believed in coaching the student-athlete, not just the athlete,” Spini said. “I’m very proud of that fact.”

For Schuett, however, the grades didn’t always come easily.

“I wasn’t always that high of an achiever in school,” Schuett said. “From first to grade eight, I was a 75 percent student. It’s different in Canada — an 80 percent to a 100 percent is an A, and then the 70’s are Bs. So when I was in eighth grade, average was all I expected from myself.”

Average would never be good enough again.

“When I went to high school, honor roll was set at 80 percent, so I was like ‘I can do that, bump it up 5 percent,’” Schuett said. “And so, I kind of got in that frame of mind that as long as each test I got back was better than 80 percent, that was all that I needed.

“Well, when I came down here, I heard that now I need a 90 percent to get an A, so I had to change my expectations of what I needed to do in class.”

Now a junior, the double major in speech and hearing sciences and psychology doesn’t even succumb to the most basic of all college students’ instincts.

“I could never procrastinate on an assignment to the last hour before its due,” Schuett said. “I’ll end up spending that whole hour panicking at the fact that’s due that I won’t get anything done.”

## Gymnastics

“I did just about every sport growing up, but figure skating and gymnastics were my favorites,” Schuett said. “When it came down to having to choose between one or the other, my toes got too cold from skating, so gymnastics it was.”

Good choice.

During her prep career, Schuett was named to the 2005 Level 10 Ontario team for the Canadian Championships.

That was a feat especially impressive given the fact that in the Pac-10 alone, five top gymnasts hail from Ontario, including sophomore Second-Team All-American Elyse Hopfner-Hibbs of UCLA.

“Where I’m from, our province in particular, we are kind of like the powerhouse,” Schuett said. “So, especially in the Pac-10, those were the girls I grew up training with or would always see at competitions. So at every meet now, we do a Canadian picture — we like to joke that we are taking over.”

The only international Sun Devil gymnast barely recalls her first season with the team.

“It was a whirlwind,” Schuett said. “I was here for a week and a half before we started competing, and I was in two events right away. It was just a lot of change and a lot of adjustment right away. Plus, I had only ever met the girls once. It was a lot of different personalities to get to know and figure out where I fit in with the team.”

During her freshman season, Schuett posted a career-high of 9.825 on her best event, the floor exercise.

Safe to say she adjusted quickly.

“I feel like my gymnastics has changed a lot, mostly in confidence,” Schuett said. “I never particularly liked competing when I was back home, just because I was always so afraid that I wasn’t going to show my best, that I wasn’t going to be perfect. Now having to compete every week, I have a lot more confidence in myself, and I attribute a lot of that to my coaches.”

Spini sees the habitual diligence within his athlete.

“Brittany is always demanding perfection,” Spini said. “She’s always thinks through [her routine]



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every single time.”

### Smarts on the mat

“I think a lot of the discipline goes back and forth between the [academics and athletics],” Schuett said. “I grew up knowing as soon as I came home from gymnastics, I didn’t have time to do other stuff. That that was my homework time. I’ve just been able to schedule my time effectively.”

Gymnastics is a sport in which strong, cool-tempered minds are at a premium.

“When you have somebody so intelligent like Brittany, they will sometimes over-think things that are simple,” Spini said. “But I think it relates to what she demands from herself.”

Schuett’s favorite event should be no surprise to anyone.

“I like doing floor, but I love working beam,” Schuett said. “Just because it is such a perfectionist’s event, and I like working toward that. That’s a lot of what drew me to gymnastics in the first place, because [trying to be perfect] has always been a part of my personality.”

Well that’s just perfect.

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