

GERRAUGHTY

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and snapping of her wrists in gymnastics — the sport she gave up for track at age 15 — lingered in Gerraughty's ligaments and tendons.

The pesky condition remained when she enrolled at UNC, though she thought nothing of it until two months later. That's when bone spurs began to form in the fingers on Gerraughty's right hand after throwing coach Brian Blutreich asked her to alter her shot put technique.

But because "she trains like a maniac," as UNC head coach Dennis Craddock put it, the Sultana of Shot kept throwing — and winning.

Since 2003, she's won nine of the 11 ACC titles for which she's competed, and she's set or broken her own school records 19 separate times in four different events. Oh, and her personal best in the shot? That's the top mark in collegiate history.

"Laura has done things that no other athlete has done (at UNC)," Craddock said. "She is without question the best one for her age that we've had come through here."

Considering Gerraughty is one of only a handful of Tar Heels ever to compete in the Olympics while still in college, that's not hard to believe.

"(Shot put) was the event (at the 2004 games)," said Jeri Daniels-Elder, the U.S. women's throwing coach. "They were the stars, and it was incredible."

But, alas, stardom didn't equal success. Gerraughty's top throw left her more than six feet short of a finals berth, even though her personal best would have placed her second in the prelims and fourth in the medal round.

So why the discrepancy? Most of it, she said, had to do with the incredible time demands she encountered in preparing for the

Olympics. Part of it can surely be chalked up to tight nerves. But maybe, just maybe, some of it was the result of another kind of tightness: the one in her wrists.

For the record, Gerraughty insists the condition wasn't a factor, and Daniels-Elder said that if it was bothering her, "she never indicated it to me."

But just four months later, during Winter Break, the nagging problem finally exploded into a full-blown catastrophe.

"I stopped throwing (the shot)," Gerraughty said. "I called (Blutreich) — I felt so bad — and was like, 'I can't do this anymore.'"

The best shot putter in the country had been betrayed by her own body, those lingering bone spurs finally leaving her unable to cock her wrist, let alone heave a shot 50-plus feet.

And, in what was the track gods' cruelest trick, Gerraughty retained the full ability to throw a discus, a hammer and a 35-pound weight. Heck, she could've thrown a baseball if she wanted. Anything but the shot.

"I can't put the shot to my neck," Gerraughty explained. "I physically can't bend (my wrist) back far enough."

"Originally, when we saw the doctors they were like, 'There's nothing we can do for you,' so Coach Craddock said, 'Well, why don't you just keep competing (in your other events) and be done?'"

But the more Craddock mulled it over, the more he realized red-shirting her this spring was a better option.

"The thought that overrode everything else was, 'Look how much she's done for our program,'" Craddock said. "Whatever Laura needs to finish up her career, that's what I want to see happen to her."

Gerraughty agreed to sit out the outdoor season, cautiously hoping that the break would buy her enough time to fix the problem. So far, though, her efforts have been fruitless.

"I'm still where I was before," Gerraughty said. "I'm pretty much through with all the traditional western medicine, (but) we still have some alternative therapies to try."

"I put up a message on throwers' Web sites — 'Hey, anybody ever have this before?' Unfortunately, most people e-mailed me back and said, 'I've had this, and I had to stop throwing.'"

And if the prospect of abandoning what you do best is a terrifying feeling, imagine how you'd feel if that thing was something you did better than anyone else in the country.

"I was definitely in therapy, seeing a sports psychologist to try and figure it out," Gerraughty said. "I've used all the support systems available to me in trying to figure out how to handle it. The pendulum has definitely swung both ways. I was really optimistic ... then it was on to just total despair."

So where does she go from here? Gerraughty recently had surgery to remove the bone spurs, and if the alternative approach works, Blutreich said he thinks she'll be able to make a full recovery.

But if she can't pull off a successful comeback, at least one person thinks Gerraughty can remain at the apex of American track.

"I really, really think that her future is in the hammer throw," Daniels-Elder said. "I always thought she could be the next great American hammer thrower. ... She could be as good as she wants to be."

So even if Gerraughty never again throws a shot, she could still have the opportunity to drop the hammer on her competition — literally.

And if hammer throwing doesn't work out either, Gerraughty could always lobby the Olympics to include one more event: water balloon launching.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

OFFICIALS

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have questions or concerns or want to talk about something," Payne said.

He said Margaret Jablonski, vice chancellor for student affairs, has held meetings with many student groups throughout the year.

Jablonski's office also holds open office hours for all students from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. every Tuesday.

Students who want to get in touch with administrators should come to the student affairs office's office hours, Payne said, or they should relay their concerns through student government officials.

Former Student Body Vice President Alexa Kleysteuber, who served as chairwoman of the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor, said Moeser is relatively available to the student body.

SACC coordinated three open-house events this year, which Kleysteuber described as benefi-

cial to students. "They have all had surprisingly good attendance," she said. "They have hit at a good time because they have been able to address important issues on campus."

Jonathan Pourzal, coordinator of SAW, said the group's troubles with reaching administrators began in early April when it requested a meeting with Moeser regarding the treatment of dining hall employees.

Pourzal said officials told the group that although Moeser would not meet with them, other administrators were available.

After staging the sit-in April 13, Moeser still did not agree to attend a formal meeting on CDS issues.

Wednesday's rally resulted in two meetings with Aramark Corp., UNC's food services provider and the corporation that employs CDS workers. One meeting was for students and one was for workers. Moeser did not attend either.

Pourzal said he thinks the meetings were not productive.

Student government officials, on the other hand, meet with Moeser and other administrators on a regular basis.

"We just picked up the phone and called and scheduled a meeting," said former Student Body President Matt Calabria. "I can't think of a time when we were turned down for a meeting."

Moeser has a busy schedule and often attends back-to-back meetings throughout the day, according to his calendar.

Last year, a comprehensive study by The Daily Tar Heel revealed that Moeser met with student leaders about 25 times during 2003 — roughly the same number of meetings he held with faculty leaders.

Calabria said he was generally able to reach Moeser when necessary. "We found that access to the chancellor was about as high as it could be, considering his time restraints."

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FAISON

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unorthodox method of proposing legislation without first contacting town officials.

"It does stand in direct contrast to the way other state legislators work," Jacobs said. "They do try to consult with county officials."

Faison's redistricting bill would split the county into districts and increase the number of county commissioners from five to seven. He says it would give the more rural parts of the county a voice on the Board of Commissioners, which now has five Democrats — all of whom are from Chapel Hill or Hillsborough.

"I think I'm right on with the people," Faison said. "I think on the issue of district representation, the county commissioners are completely out of step."

Commissioner Stephen Halkiotis said Faison is using the bill to push a

political agenda. "He's basically doing it for political purposes, to bring the right-wing conservatives in," he said.

But Insko said detractors should listen to the group that wants the change. "It might not be a majority of people in Carrboro or Chapel Hill who want that legislation, but it may be an important minority."

Faison's first annexation bill proposed that residents being annexed get the chance to vote for the officials who decided on the annexation. That would have allowed the more than 850 annexed residents to vote in this year's Board of Aldermen race.

The most recent legislation would suspend forced annexations while a study committee examined the rising number of such moves in the state.

"This is not about what Carrboro would have a right to do," Faison said. "This should be about what is right for the citizens

in the community." He added that his job as a legislator is to listen to people's needs and wants above those of public officials.

Some say those beliefs have slid over into Faison's other legislation. His proposals include health insurance legislation that would provide coverage for low-income citizens and drive down the incentive for premiums. Faison also has proposed a 5 percent salary raise for all state employees.

Critics say such bills are infeasible, especially given the state's budget problems.

"He's basically trying to force-feed legislation," Halkiotis said.

Faison said that isn't so. "Governments can sometimes lose their way. ... My philosophy is the people's interests come first, and I'm here to serve the people."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

ENROLLMENT

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not be able to protect access."

Western Carolina University, one of six system schools designated a focused-growth institution, has experienced a rapid expansion during the last several years.

The school's student population grew by more than 20 percent between 2000 and 2004.

"It's not difficult to give access," said Chancellor John Bardo. "It's difficult to give access with quality."

Despite added funding that

comes with WCU's status as a focused-growth school, Bardo said, per-student expenditures from the state have declined.

Overall, the UNC system is projected to grow by about 7,000 students in the 2005-06 academic year, which would represent an increase of 3.6 percent.

That comes on the heels of steady growth for the last several years, all while state funding has remained essentially flat.

"It is not a long-term sustainable situation," said Jeff Davies, UNC-system vice president for

finance. Still, Broad said she hopes the university won't face a choice between enhancing access and maintaining quality. A move to cut enrollment growth, she said, would be a significant blow.

"It seems to me that to consider that is to fundamentally go against not only the mission of the university, but all of the strategic directives that have guided our actions over these past few years."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Taiwan leader visits China

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NANJING, China — A historic trip to China by the head of Taiwan's opposition party began Tuesday with a flurry of eggs and punches from angry supporters of the island's president at Taipei airport. Hours later, he was welcomed with flowers and speeches by Chinese communist officials who hailed his arrival as a sign of reconciliation.

The contrasting treatment underscores controversy surrounding the visit by Nationalist Party Chairman Lien Chan, the most prominent Taiwanese political figure to come to the mainland since the two sides split amid civil war in 1949.

Lien says his journey aims to lower tensions between the sides. Detractors say he is selling out Taiwan's interests and allowing Beijing to exploit divisions within Taiwanese society.

"Taipei and Nanjing are not too distant, but it still took 60 years to come here," Lien said on reaching the eastern city of Nanjing. "It certainly took too long to make the journey."

It wasn't an easy journey. Nationalist supporters seeing Lien off at the airport in Taipei, Taiwan's capital, scuffled with backers of President Chen Shui-bian. Chen's party wants formal independence for Taiwan, while Lien's party

favors eventually uniting the self-ruled island with the mainland.

The rival groups detonated fireworks and blew air horns while shoving, kicking and punching each other. Lien supporters, gripping flags, tried to break through a police cordon but were pushed back.

Lien's visit is the first by a Nationalist leader since the party, which once ruled both Taiwan and China, fled the mainland following its defeat by the communists. It includes a meeting Friday with Chinese President Hu Jintao — the first encounter between leaders of the two former enemies in six decades.

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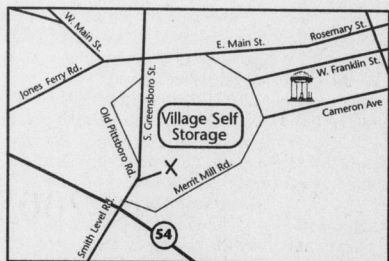
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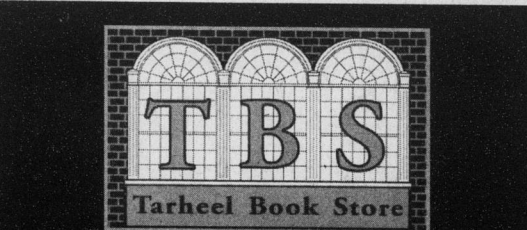
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