

# O'Connor reaching top form

By DINITA JAMES  
Staff Writer

Patty O'Connor, sporting a Long Island accent, a 5-foot-1 frame and long, long hair joined the UNC gymnastics team at the beginning of spring semester, a difficult feat because the team had been practicing since September.

O'Connor, however, makes light of the fact. "I thought about it when I was coming," she said, "but then I got here and the girls accepted me readily, it wasn't that hard."

O'Connor had not worked out for a year before her arrival at UNC in January. She admits that this layoff made the adjustment a little more difficult.

"There's a lot of physical work," she said. "There's a lot involved mentally too. At one point you can do a certain amount of things. But when you come back in, you expect to still be able to do them. When you can't, it's very depressing."

Coach Ken Ourso said he expected O'Connor to be in top form soon. "She's been in gymnastics long enough so that by the time the State and Regionals come around, she'll be in good shape. Tuesday was her worst day. She's usually not moody, but she got a little upset. She'll just have to be realistic and understand that it will take awhile to get back in shape."

O'Connor's progress nevertheless has been quick. In the first meet, she competed in one event. In the second and third meets last weekend, she competed in three, and now bars is the only event that remains to complete the all-around slate. Both Ourso and Patty are hopeful that she will be able to compete all-around in the tri-meet Saturday against Madison University and the University of South Carolina.

"I should be ready," O'Connor said. "I'm used to doing all-around. I've never done anything else. I hate to be a specialist and have to sit and watch most of the time."

O'Connor puts a lot of the blame with herself, saying she doesn't push herself hard enough in work-outs.

"It's hard in gymnastics," she said. "You have to do it yourself. Coach has been very supportive. I had my doubts about coming here, and he understood and tried to make it easier. He also knew I'd been out for awhile, and he helped me accept not being able to come right back to the level I had been at a year ago."

O'Connor wasn't even at her best a year ago. Her high school coach knew less than she did, and she ran her own work-outs. "It was bad for me," she said. "I had no discipline and didn't do anything I didn't want to."



Staff photo by Andy James

## Aprille Shaffer

She reached peak form when she worked out with Muriel Grossfeld, a former Olympic competitor and coach of the 1968 and 1972 U.S. Olympic teams.

"She really helped my gymnastics," O'Connor said. "I moved to the elite level under her, and because it was an Olympic year (1976), I automatically tried out. I didn't make it to the finals."

"I'm not going to try out in '80," she said. "It's too much work. I don't have the desire to go that far anymore and, at 18, I'm too old."

Her main interest now lies in making up for lost time. "When I was younger, I did gymnastics. Now I want to get out and do different things," she said. "I had no personal life when I was younger, because gymnastics took all my time. Now I want to enjoy all the things I had to miss."

If O'Connor is able to compete in all four all-around events in the meet Saturday at 2 p.m. in Carmichael, it will ensure the return of her career to an upward trend.

In the meet Saturday, UNC is a two point favorite over Madison and a 10 point favorite over USC. Cary Tregalles will continue to compete with a fractured styloid process of the ulna, and Leslie Smith will return after a week layoff because of an injured ankle. With the team at full strength, Ourso has set a team goal of scoring 130 points. Of course, going hand-in-hand with this is the win over the two opponents. "If we score 130 points," Ourso said, "there is no question that we'll beat both of them."

# Speedy Shaffer on the spot

By DEBORRAH JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

The Atlantic Coast Conference, especially N.C. State, has obtained many of its finest athletes from High Point-Andrews High School. Some of Andrews' most famous products include Wolfpack football players Ted Brown and Johnny Evans.

But all of Andrews' outstanding athletes weren't football players who wanted to spend four years in Raleigh. One Andrews athlete, now a starting guard on UNC's women's basketball team, knew Carolina was the only place she wanted to play college basketball.

"I've always wanted to come here," Aprille Shaffer said after UNC's 94-60 victory over ASU. "I've never really thought about anywhere else. I signed the earliest I could sign."

Shaffer's arrival at UNC didn't come a minute too soon. UNC athletic officials had just hired a new full-time women's basketball coach who wanted to break away from UNC's traditionally slow offensive game to a faster paced game. Shaffer was the quick guard coach Jennifer Alley could use.

In addition, Shaffer's experience at Andrews made her an excellent overall prospect. At Andrews, she was selected all-conference and all-state and made *Parade* magazine's All-America team. The experience she gained from participating with other collegiate prospects in the Junior Pan American trials and the East-West All-Star Game was also considered important.

Though the transition from high school basketball to the collegiate level has not been easy for Shaffer, she says

she has now adjusted to the use of a 30-second-shot clock (not used in high school) and likes the running game.

It was evident Shaffer had made all those needed adjustments in Carmichael Auditorium Tuesday night against ASU. Hitting nine of 13 attempted field goals, she was the Tar Heels' leading scorer with 18 points. In addition, she tallied four assists and five rebounds.

After that game, called Shaffer's best of the year by UNC assistant coach Tony Baldwin, she spoke of the team's overall performance as the key to the win.

"The team played good defense and we didn't let them shoot like they did in the first game," she said. "We were rebounding this time too." In the earlier game ASU beat UNC by nine, 93-84.

"We've not reached our full potential yet," she said. "We'll play good basketball and then we'll have a mental lapse. Whenever we get it together for a whole game, we'll be able to beat anyone."

"I don't understand why UNC doesn't have more support of its women's teams like other schools," she said. "Over at State, sororities and fraternities come out to the games. At their last game they had 6,000 people there. I know we're not nationally ranked, but we've hired a full-time coach and we're on our way up."

Shaffer and her teammates leave Saturday for Columbus, Ohio, for an evening game with Ohio State. The team will spend next week preparing for the first women's ACC Tournament to be held Feb. 9 through 11 in Charlottesville, Va.

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