

# Georgia Wins Sixth National Title

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## Women's NCAA Gymnastics Championships

Photograph © Mike Lorenzen



University of Georgia Women's Championship Team

Auburn University played host to the 2005 NCAA National Championships, April 21-23. The usual cast of perennial powerhouses qualified from the NCAA Regional Championships, with three additions who have not had a team presence in recent years (Brigham Young, Iowa State and Penn State). The first session in team preliminary competition featured Michigan, Utah, Nebraska, LSU, Penn State, and Oklahoma. LSU and Utah both were strongly favored from this session, each having spent time with #1 rankings at various points in the regular season and Michigan came into the meet with momentum from another Big 10 Conference title and a strong regional meet. Nebraska has become a regular Super Six contender but suffered a devastating loss at their regional meet when former National All-Around Champion Richelle Simpson went down with a knee injury in her last pass on floor.

This was an historic event in a number of different ways from the very first rotation, with an all-around qualifier from Division III SUNY-Brockport (Cari Santore) who opened her floor set with a terrific tucked full-in, the first appearance by an athlete from the University of Arkansas (Dana McQuillen), the most recently added women's gymnastics program in the collegiate ranks, at a National Championships.

The session quickly proved to be very competitive with only .4 separating first through fifth places. Utah and Michigan left no doubt that they were moving on to the Super Six with very strong showings and great consistency throughout the meet, but LSU opened the door as they struggled on beam in the fifth rotation and had to count a fall. Nebraska and Oklahoma each had a chance to move on going into the last rotation, with the deciding factor set to be the Huskers' floor against the Sooners' beam.

To finish one of the more closely contested opening rounds in memory, Nebraska turned in the pressure performance of the day, Oklahoma suffered a couple of misses, and the Huskers edged LSU by .075 on their very last routine, capped by a remarkable 9.925 floor performance by freshman Emily Parsons.

The second session looked to be even more intense and included four teams that are almost taken for granted in terms of Super Six qualifiers—of Georgia, Florida, UCLA, and Alabama someone would not be moving on to team finals. Georgia came into the meet as the lowest seed after a fall-plagued regionals that left a lot of questions to be answered for their very young team. In the first rotation Georgia set the bar with a series of nearly perfect vaults for a 49.35, UCLA gave a bar clinic with the Schwikert sisters and Kristen Maloney, but Florida suffered some missed landings and scored only a 49.075 on floor. Alabama followed Florida with the highest floor total of the night with a terrific 49.475 while UCLA hit five strong beam routines and Florida struggled again with landings.

By the half way point of the session it was clear that UCLA and Georgia were on a roll and it looked like Alabama would not be denied their return to finals. With most attention on the powerhouses, Iowa State was quietly turning in an impressive and consistent performance that pushed them ahead of Florida and into the fourth spot, waiting to see if any of the favorites would create an opportunity. The three leaders had no intentions of letting anyone slip in. Georgia, UCLA and Alabama all kept rolling right through the last three rotations to set up a very exciting team finals competition.



Photograph © Mike Lorenzen

In the Super Six on Friday night defending champion UCLA started on floor with a great floor set capped by a 10.0 for senior Kristen Maloney but Georgia put the whole coliseum on notice by starting their championship run with a 49.325 on beam with hardly a wobble through the entire lineup. In the second rotation Utah and Alabama both had strong starts as the Tide turned in a 49.325 to match Georgia's beam, anchored by 9.9 sets from Miles and Humphrey. After the second rotation Nebraska and



Tasha Schwikert

Photograph © Mike Lorenzen

Michigan performed well but the meet appeared to be a four way contest between the only four teams to have ever won a national championship.

Georgia looked confident and aggressive on floor with polished dance and great landings that resulted in a 98.875 event total and a two tenth lead over the Utes who hit vault but took small checks on landings. Alabama suffered some balance checks and wobbles on beam and was only able to get to a 98.125 event total, giving the GymDogs a growing margin going into the second half of the meet.

In the fourth rotation UCLA gave another bar clinic led by Tasha Schwikert's 9.95. Michigan turned in a strong floor performance for a 49.4 that was closed out by Elise Ray's beautifully performed 9.95. Meanwhile on the vault, Georgia proceeded to stick virtually every landing for a 49.575 that appeared to put them in a commanding position before their final event.

Utah hit bars in the fifth rotation but Alabama made the next strong statement of the night with a memorable floor rotation that seemed to generate a huge wave of momentum, aided by thousands of faithful fans who gave the Beard-Eves Memorial Coliseum a distinctly Crimson hue. Ashley Miles finished their run with an unbelievable routine that earned unanimous 10.0's from the judges. UCLA closed out their night on beam with five great routines following a lead off fall, nicely punctuated with a pretty 9.925 effort from Maloney to give the Bruins a 197.15.

The sixth rotation saw Alabama on vault with momentum and Georgia on bars only needing to put together five solid routines to return to the top spot on the podium. Alabama was brilliant on vault and closed their night with a 10.0 for Miles' Yurchenko full that dropped from the sky. Georgia's lead proved insurmountable, however, and their fantastic night ended with a near record championship score of 197.825 and a historic reversal of fortune for the team that entered the championship in the 12th seeded position.

In the all-around competition, the girls from UCLA battled for the title. Tasha Schwikert was near perfect scoring 39.725 to narrowly win the all-around over her teammate Kristen Maloney who scored 39.625. Two Ashley's tied for third with a score of 39.575 – Ashley Postell of Utah and Ashley Miles of Alabama.

Maloney stole the show on both vault and beam, drilling a Yurchenko double and one-and-a-half on vault and floating through a gorgeous beam routine

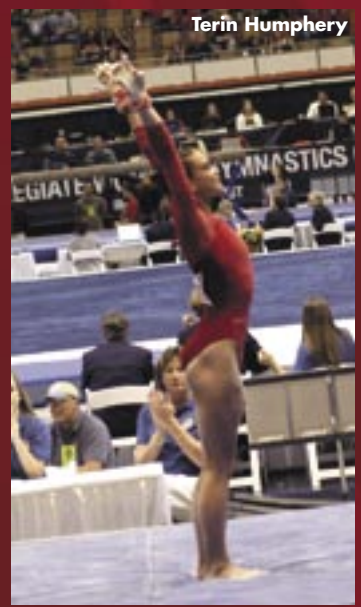


Courtney Bumpers

Photograph © Mike Lorenzen

for matching 9.9375's on each event. University of North Carolina's Courtney Bumpers stole the show for the evening with a perfect 10.0 to capture her first solo national champion title (she shared the honor last year with Alabama's Miles) with an impressive array of tumbling that included a double layout punch front, Arabian double front and front to double pike.

2004 Olympic Silver Medalist on bars, Terin Humphrey of Alabama, won the bars title scoring 9.9375.



Terin Humphrey

Photograph © Mike Lorenzen

## 2005 Women's NCAA National Championships Results



Team	Results
Georgia	197.825
Alabama	197.400
Utah	197.275
UCLA	197.150
Michigan	196.575
Nebraska	196.425

All-Around Results		
1. Tasha Schwikert	UCLA	39.725
2. Kristen Maloney	UCLA	39.625
3. Ashley Postell	Utah	39.575
3. Ashley Miles	Alabama	39.575
5. Kelsey Ericksen	UGA	39.525
5. Katie Heenan	UGA	39.525
7. Annabeth Eberle	Utah	39.500
7. Terin Humphrey	Alabama	39.500
9. April Burkholder	LSU	39.475
10. Tabitha Yim	Stanford	39.450
11. Emily Parsons	Nebraska	39.425
12. Rachel Tidd	Utah	39.400
12. Elise Ray	Michigan	39.400
14. Jenny Deiley	Michigan	39.375
15. Ashley Kupets	UGA	39.325
16. Erin Dethloff	Iowa State	39.300
17. Janet Anson	Iowa State	39.250
17. Laura-Kay Powell	Iowa State	39.250
19. Breanne King	Florida	39.225
19. Orley Szmuch	Florida	39.225
19. Jordan Schwikert	UCLA	39.225

Vault Results		
Place	Gymnast	Team Score
1	Kristen Maloney	UCLA 9.9375
2	Janet Anson	Iowa St. 9.9000
3	April Burkholder	LSU 9.8875
4	Ashley Miles	Alabama 9.8500
5	Alisha Robinson	Univ. of Missouri 9.7938
6	Annabeth Eberle	Utah 9.7688
7	Katie Heenan	UGA 9.7563
8	Jenny Deiley	Michigan 9.7375
9	Brittany Smith	UGA 9.6563

Uneven Bars Results			
Place	Gymnast	Team	Score
1	Terin Humphrey	Alabama	9.9375
2	Kelsey Ericksen	UGA	9.9250
3	Tasha Schwikert	UCLA	9.8875
3	Ashley Postell	Utah	9.8875
3	Rachel Tidd	Utah	9.8875
6	Tabitha Yim	Stanford Univ.	9.8750
7	Ashley Miles	Alabama	9.8500
8	Lauren Mirkovich	Michigan	9.8375
9	Lisa Bennie	LSU	9.8250
10	Dana Filetti	Alabama	9.7750
11	Annie Gagnon	LSU	9.3375
11	Elise Ray	Michigan	9.3375
13	Katie Heenan	UGA	9.3250

Balance Beam Results			
Place	Gymnast	Team	Score
1	Kristen Maloney	UCLA	9.9375
2	Kristi Esposito	Nebraska	9.9125
2	Elise Ray	Michigan	9.9125
4	Kate Richardson	UCLA	9.9000
5	Terin Humphrey	Alabama	9.8625
5	Tasha Schwikert	UCLA	9.8625
7	Tabitha Yim	Stanford Univ.	9.8375

Floor Exercise Results			
Place	Gymnast	Team	Score
1	Courtney Bumpers	Univ. of N. Carolina	10.0000
2	Ashley Miles	Alabama	9.9750
3	Emily Parsons	Nebraska	9.9250
3	Tabitha Yim	Stanford Uni.	9.9250
5	Kelsey Ericksen	UGA	9.8750
5	Michelle Emmons	UGA	9.8750
5	Terin Humphrey	Alabama	9.8750
8	Laura-Kay Powell	Iowa St.	9.8375
8	Annabeth Eberle	Utah	9.8375
10	Gritt Hofmann	Utah	9.8000
11	Kristen Maloney	UCLA	9.7625
12	Kate Richardson	UCLA	9.3375
13	April Burkholder	LSU	9.2625