The goals for the Oklahoma men’s gymnastics team remain unchanged from year to year: conference championship, NCAA championship. Since Mark Williams took over as head coach in 2000, more often than not those lofty aspirations have been realized.

The 2007 squad claimed the program’s eighth Mountain Pacific Sports Federation championship and came within 0.8 points of a three-peat for the national title.

For most programs that would constitute a year to remember. But for a program that owns four national titles since 2000, the Sooners were left wanting more.

With a talented lineup headlined by the past two NCAA all-around champions in senior co-captains Taqiy Abdullah-Simmons and Jonathan Horton, this year’s Sooner squad is determined to reclaim its position as the preeminent team in collegiate gymnastics.

The OU lineup will be fortified by the return of All-Americans Reed Pitts and Jacob Messina from injuries that derailed their 2007 seasons, while the addition of ultra-talented freshman Steven Legendre should provide added depth to an already formidable roster.

Oklahoma returns six gymnasts with 30 career All-America honors between them (including 11 last season) and eight returnees who accounted for an amazing 40 individual event titles in 2007.

The entire schedule will build towards the championship season in April. Williams will try to develop consistent depth throughout the year while making sure his superstars are rested and primed for the stretch run.

With both Horton and Abdullah-Simmons entertaining Olympic aspirations for ’08, health and fresh legs will be of paramount importance for reaching both team and individual goals.

As two of the most accomplished gymnasts in OU’s storied history, the senior co-captains will have the added motivation of wanting to go out on top with a third NCAA team title during their time in Norman. Only twice in program history has a senior class been a part of three national championship teams (2005 and 2006).
OU boasts four gymnasts with All-America credentials on floor in Russell Czeschin, Reed Pitts, Jacob Messina and two-time defending NCAA champion Jonathan Horton. Freshman Steven Legendre, perhaps the team’s most explosive athlete on floor, will have an big impact. Walk-on Bobby Shortle could also add depth on the event.

Abdullah-Simmons and Horton will also anchor the OU vault lineup as both earned All-America distinction on the event last season. Czeschin will be counted on as a consistent presence, while Jackson and Chris Brooks will also be valuable assets. Legendre and Garrett Carr have the ability to perform explosive vaults and could put up some big scores in 2008.

OU has the reigning national champion (Horton), as well as 2007 high bar All-Americans Abdullah-Simmons and Brooks. Williams has a number of options on how to fill the h-bar lineup, including Laughton, Carr, McNamara, Jackson, Legendre and Messina. With several gymnasts capable of high value skills, the event could be key to help separate the Sooners from their competition throughout the season.
### Alphabetical Roster and Pronunciations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Yr.</th>
<th>Ht.</th>
<th>Hometown (High School) (Club)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taqiy Abdullah-Simmons</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>Philadelphia, Pa. (Home Schooled) (Houston Gymnastics Academy)</td>
<td>TAH-key ab-DOOL-uh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Brooks</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Houston, Texas (Cypress Creek HS) (Houston North Gymnastics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrett Carr</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>Mandeville, La. (Fountainbleau HS) (Aces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Czeschin</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>Independence, Mo. (Fort Osage HS) (Great American Gymnastics Express)</td>
<td>shuh-SHEEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corey English</td>
<td>So.</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>Covington, La. (St. Paul’s HS) (Mandeville Sports Complex)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.J. Grimes</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>5-5</td>
<td>Ulysses, Kan. (Ulysses HS) (Littlestar Gymnastics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Horton</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>Houston, Texas (Cy-Fair HS) (Cypress Academy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Jackson</td>
<td>So.</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Harrisburg, Pa. (Central Dauphin HS) (Artistic Sports Academy Plus)</td>
<td>lawton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Laughton</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Northridge, Calif. (Sunland Christian School) (SCATS Gymnastics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Legendre</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Port Jefferson, N.Y. (Spring Creek Academy) (World Olympic Gymnastics Academy)</td>
<td>la-ZHAHN-druh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle McNamara</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>Littleton, Colo. (Heritage HS) (5280 Gymnastics)</td>
<td>MAC-nuh-mare-uh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Messina</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Matthews, N.C. (East Mecklenburg HS) (G&amp;J Speedway)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed Pitts</td>
<td>So.</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>Allen, Texas (Allen HS) (Eagle’s Wings Athletics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby Shortle</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>5-2</td>
<td>Brunswick, Ohio (Brunswick HS) (Gym World)</td>
<td>SHORT-uhl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Weaver</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Garland, Texas (William J. Palmer HS) (Colorado Training Center)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Head Coach**
- Mark Williams  
  Ninth Season  
  Nebraska, 1980

**Assistant Coach**
- Daniel Furney  
  Third Season  
  Oklahoma, 2004

**Assistant Coach**
- Rustam Sharipov  
  Third Season  
  Kharkov State, 1997  
  roos-TOM SHARE-ee-pahv

### By Class

**Seniors**
- Abdullah-Simmons
- Horton
- Weaver

**Juniors**
- Brooks
- Carr
- Czeschin
- Laughton
- McNamara
- Messina (RS)

**Sophomores**
- English
- Jackson
- Pitts (RS)

**Freshmen**
- Grimes (RS)
- Legendre
- Shortle

### By State

- **Texas** (4)
  - Chris Brooks
  - Jonathan Horton
  - Reed Pitts
  - Joseph Weaver

- **Louisiana** (2)
  - Garrett Carr
  - Corey English

- **Pennsylvania** (2)
  - Taqiy Abdullah-Simmons
  - Ian Jackson

- **California** (1)
  - Jason Laughton

- **Colorado** (1)
  - Kyle McNamara

- **Kansas** (1)
  - C.J. Grimes

- **Missouri** (1)
  - Russell Czeschin

- **Ohio** (1)
  - Bobby Shortle

- **North Carolina** (1)
  - Jacob Messina

- **New York** (1)
  - Steven Legendre

### By Event

**Floor Exercise**
- Russell Czeschin
- Reed Pitts
- Bobby Shortle
- Joseph Weaver

**Pommel Horse**
- Garrett Carr
- Corey English
- Jason Laughton

**Still Rings**
- C.J. Grimes
- Jason Laughton
- Kyle McNamara
- Joseph Weaver

**Vault**
- Garrett Carr
- Russell Czeschin
- Kyle McNamara
- Reed Pitts

**Parallel Bars**
- Garrett Carr
- Corey English
- Jason Laughton
- Kyle McNamara

**High Bar**
- Garrett Carr
- Jason Laughton
- Kyle McNamara

**All-Around**
- Taqiy Abdullah-Simmons
- Chris Brooks
- Jonathan Horton
- Ian Jackson
- Steven Legendre
- Jacob Messina
## 2008 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>Rocky Mountain Open</td>
<td>Colorado Springs, Colo.</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Jan. 20</td>
<td>Nebraska &amp; Air Force</td>
<td>Lincoln, Neb.</td>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>MICHIGAN</td>
<td>NORMAN</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>NEBRASKA*</td>
<td>NORMAN</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Winter Cup</td>
<td>Las Vegas, Nev.</td>
<td>9 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Winter Cup Finals</td>
<td>Las Vegas, Nev.</td>
<td>9 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Iowa City, Iowa</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>Pacific Coast Classic</td>
<td>Oakland, Calif.</td>
<td>9 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Mar. 8</td>
<td>Ohio State</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Mar. 15</td>
<td>MINNESOTA</td>
<td>NORMAN</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Mar. 22</td>
<td>Penn State</td>
<td>State College, Pa.</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Apr. 5</td>
<td>MPSF Championship</td>
<td>Lincoln, Neb.</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Apr. 17</td>
<td>NCAA Team Qualifier</td>
<td>Stanford, Calif.</td>
<td>3 p.m./10 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Apr. 18</td>
<td>NCAA Team Championships</td>
<td>Stanford, Calif.</td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Apr. 19</td>
<td>NCAA Event Finals</td>
<td>Stanford, Calif.</td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All times are Central and subject to change.

Home meets are indicated by ALL CAPS and held at the Howard McCasland Field House unless otherwise noted.

* Double dual at Lloyd Noble Center

## Schedule Breakdown

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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</table>
| 2 | Wins for OU at the Pacific Coast Classic in two appearances.  
The PCC is regarded as one of the country’s top invitational events, drawing a field that includes several of the nation’s top 10 teams.  The meet is televised by Fox Sports in the Bay Area. |
| 3 | Teams on OU’s 2008 schedule that advanced to the team finals at the 2007 NCAA Championships (OU was the sixth).  
The Sooners will face defending national champion Penn State in State College, Pa., and will host Michigan and Minnesota.  OU will also face Stanford and Illinois at the Pacific Coast Classic. |
| 8 | MPSF titles in the past nine seasons for OU.  
Oklahoma has ruled the conference under head coach Mark Williams, winning consecutive crowns from 2000-2003 and 2005-2007.  Only the 2004 Sooners did not claim the conference title, finishing in second place. |

Home meets for the Sooners in 2008. Oklahoma hosts Michigan, one of only two teams to beat OU in the regular season last year, on Jan. 26. OU will also participate in a double dual with the women’s team against Nebraska on Feb. 1 at the Lloyd Noble Center, and hosts 2007 NCAA qualifier Minnesota on March 15.

The old way of judging Men’s Gymnastics was based on the 10.0 system. Every routine that you saw had the highest possible score of a 10.0 if it was performed without any deductions and had the highest possible difficulty allowed. Men’s collegiate gymnastics has recently adopted the FIG (Federation of International Gymnastics) Scoring System of an open-ended Code of Points. Now, when watching USA and college gymnastics, you will see scores like 15.3, 14.8, 13.9 and so on.

Men’s college gymnastics is judged using three components:

First, the gymnast performs his 10 best or hardest skills. These 10 skills each have value parts ranging from A, B, C, D, E, & F. “A” value corresponds to 0.1 points, “B” to 0.2 points, and so on to an “F” that is worth 0.6 points. The gymnast is free to have as much difficulty as he can do in those 10 skills.

Second, of those 10 skills, the gymnast performs five that must be used to fulfill the five special requirements on each event. Every time a requirement is fulfilled the gymnast is awarded 0.5 points. The gymnast receives a maximum of 2.5 points for all five requirements on each event.

Third, every gymnast is given 10 points for the execution of the event. If the gymnast falls down or breaks form, the judge takes away points from this total.

After the routine is finished the judges go through the following process: First, they add up the difficulty of the 10 highest skills (max unlimited). Next, they add up the special requirements (max 2.5). Then they add 10 points for execution and make any necessary deductions. This gives them a final score.

In the old scoring system, if the gymnast performed a perfect routine it would look like this:

3.5 for difficulty + 2.5 for special requirements + 4.0 for execution with no deductions = 10.0

With the new scoring system this now looks like:

3.5 difficulty + 2.5 for special requirements + 10.0 for execution with no deductions = 16.0 (The difficulty of 3.5 can be more or less depending on the gymnast’s capability).

Special Note: Not all events are necessarily equal now. You will tend to see higher scores on vault and rings and lower scores on pommel horse and parallel bars.

Examples:
• A good pommel horse score ranges from 14.5-15.3
• A good rings score ranges from 15.5-16.3.
• A good vault score ranges from 15.8-16.4.