

Linda's Beijing Journal: Day Six

By Charles F. Gardner

Wednesday, Aug 13 2008, 11:12 AM

Editor's note: Linda McDonald will write a daily journal for JSOnline, tracking the progress of West Allis gymnast Chellsie Memmel and commenting on the Olympic scene in Beijing. Linda is a nationally rated gymnastics judge, clinician and choreographer and close friend of the Memmel family. Originally from Green Bay, Linda now lives in Aurora, Ill.

Beijing - Today the U.S. women's gymnastics team won the silver medal in the team finals!

We had a very long day. The crowds are intensifying and it takes a lot longer to get to the venues. Of course, we did not want to be late, so we were off very early.

The Chinese won the gold medal. They are excellent gymnasts and very well-trained. They did, however, make some mistakes on uneven bars and beam. From a judge's standpoint, I believe the judges overlooked these mistakes.

Romania was the winner of the bronze medal.

Despite its mistakes, the U.S. would not have caught up with China. Again, in my opinion as a judge, the U.S. women were not cut any slack. Our mistakes were not overlooked. There were some changes in some U.S. routines, which devalued some of our A (difficulty) scores. We needed to be at the top of our game, and you cannot do that by lowering your difficulty score.

The U.S. women should be proud of themselves, each and every one of them. They are Olympians and medal-winners. Not every athlete leaves the Games with a medal around his or her neck. Achieving your goals and making an Olympic team is a dream come true. Leaving the Games with a medal makes it that much sweeter.

We shopped at the Super Store and bought our Olympic souvenirs. Then we walked around the Olympic Green and checked out more exhibitions as we were waiting for the Today Show to air.

The U.S. women and their parents were on the Today Show. We were able to see the girls for the first time since they left home on their Olympic journey. Tonight was a media frenzy as they were whisked away to do more interviews.

It certainly was great to see Chellsie and the rest of the girls. The first thing I did was give her a big hug. Then I put that medal around my neck and had my picture taken.

Chellsie revealed tonight that her right foot was broken. On Aug. 2, the team's second day here, Chellsie rolled her ankle while training the floor exercise. She had an X-ray, and she had a bone chip in the tibia where the bone meets the ankle. The doctors determined she would not do further damage by competing on the bars. Chellsie has been training for a week and competed with a broken bone in her tibia.

Chellsie Memmel is truly an amazing athlete. She told the team she would even do floor if they needed her. Not many athletes would make that kind of sacrifice for the team. Chellsie would, without giving it a second thought.

Chellsie got a tattoo of the 2005 World Championship logo on her foot after becoming the world all-around champion that year in Melbourne. When Chell gets home from the Olympics, she will be getting another tattoo. This one will say: PAIN IS TEMPORARY.