



Amanda Castillo

4-11 Senior
Sanford, FL

**** Seven-time All American ****

*** 2007 & 2008 All-SEC First Team ***

Standing at just 4 feet, 11 inches, Amanda Castillo turned her energy into a passion when she started her first gymnastics class at five years old.

“My parents saw I had a lot of energy, so they signed me up into dance classes. The dance teacher said I should go into gymnastics, because I was rolling all around all over the place,” Castillo said.

Using her energy and passion to her advantage in her last season as a Florida Gator gymnast, Castillo strives to make sure she competes harder than she’s ever competed before. For Castillo, this is her last time to give everything she’s got, and she wants to be there 100 percent for her teammates.

“I don’t want any regrets, I don’t want to lie in bed thinking I should’ve, would’ve, could’ve. I want to lie down at night after the season is done and know that I’ve given it my all and have no regrets,” Castillo said.

Having no regrets means getting back up on her feet when something gets in the way. During meets when things don’t go the way she or her teammates have trained so hard for them to go, Castillo says it’s normal to feel disappointed, but you have to put it in the past and move on to the next event.

“You have that feeling of ‘oh, man,’ but you have to overcome it because you have to be there for your team. You have to brush it off your shoulders and keep on trying. That’s the name of the game,” Castillo said.

Castillo learned the game early on when she, her father and two uncles would come to Gainesville and watch the gymnastics meets. Castillo, who says she hopes her energy and passion for the sport rubs off onto her younger teammates, grew up as a Gator fan and knew she wanted to be a Florida gymnast at the age of six when she got a sneak peak into Florida’s gym.

“My dad was showing us around campus and this lady that was watering the plants let me into the gym. So, at the age of six, I had my heart set on the Gators,” Castillo said.

While Castillo aspired to be a Gator, she also aspired to be just like Dominique Moceanu, a member of the U.S.’s 1996 gold-medal Olympic team. However,

since becoming a Gator Castillo has realized she stopped looking up to other gymnasts, but instead looked up to her parents who have become her motivation. Sacrificing so much for their energetic daughter to live out her passion, Castillo has come to realize how fortunate she is to have such loving and supportive parents.

“I just want to make them proud. That’s my motivation. I do this sport for myself because I love it, but also because I know [my parents] are behind me,” Castillo said. “My parent’s are my ‘anyways’ friends. No matter what happens, they’re there for me anyways and will love me anyways.”

No one knew that putting a ball of energy into a dance class would lead to such a successful career for Castillo, where she has earned seven All-American honors, claimed the 2007 and 2008 Southeastern Conference floor exercise titles and has earned collegiate bests that range from 9.925 (beam and bar) to 9.95 (six times, floor).

At first gymnastics was just a way for a very energetic five-year old to release some energy, but 17 years later the sport turned a lively young girl into an inspiring athlete who has no boundaries and continues to push the envelope for greatness.