

Suffering athletic agony reaps golden rewards

By Shelley Smith

Anyone can be in athletics, but not just anyone can be an athlete. The endless hours, the sweat, the aches—not only of burning muscles, but of defeat and frustration, are integral parts of being an athlete, yet, they are only dents into what it takes to be good.

Steve Elliott, a sophomore from Amarillo, Texas, is a world class tumbler and a Big Eight diving champion.

He's an athlete and he's good.

But, he didn't get to where he is today without suffering, without paying for every time he stepped into the gym or onto the board. Elliott said despite all he's been through, with what he has achieved, it's been more than worth it.

Elliott won the national championship title in the floor exercise two weeks ago, placed sixth in the vault, and helped lead Nebraska to its second consecutive NCAA team title. Earlier this season he won the

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Big Eight title in the three-meter dive for the second straight year, and placed second in the one-meter dive.

"Sure there were times when there was a lot of pain and soreness through all that, but I wouldn't trade it for anything else. Especially after the season's over—it was all worthwhile standing up on that first-place block," he said. "You feel every day of it, but being best in the nation is quite an accomplishment. But you can't be at the top without paying for it in some way."

He said he never really thought of being anything but an athlete.

Elliott began tumbling when he was six just because "it was something to do."

"The Boys Club was just a place to play around after school. Tumbling was just something to keep the kids active," he said.

It wasn't until Elliott was in junior high school and had won the national tumbling

championship in the 13-14 age group that he said he realized he was an athlete.

"I knew then that I had good ability in tumbling. Being national champion for that age group shows a lot of potential," he said.

With that championship as a base, Elliott said he decided to devote the time necessary to try and ready his full potential.

"Athletics can teach so many things about life and yourself. They teach you organization, how to work with other people, self discipline. It's important to go out and apply yourself and do what you can do and be satisfied," he said.

There was another reason why he decided to pursue an athletic career, too, he said.

Elliott's father won the trampoline national championship in 1955. He competed throughout the United States and Canada and won many awards, Elliott said.

Steve set his house on fire when he was four years old, destroying his father's closet and all of his father's newspaper clippings, medals and trophies.

"He had nothing to show for what he had done. As I grew older I realized this more and more. One of my goals was to go out and do my best to give my parents something to show. I wanted to be something to show for his accomplishments," he said.

Elliott's parents were in Lincoln for the NCAA championships two weeks ago, and Steve said they were more excited about the standing ovation he received after winning the floor exercise, than his routine.

"I was really hoping the crowd would be that way because I knew my parents would be proud. My mom was overwhelmed, she couldn't believe I had gotten so much recognition at the college level," he said.

"I gave my dad the team championship plaque to take home," he said.

Elliott said he realized how much athletics have given him in return. So much of what he has done outside the athletic arena has been because of his athletic ability, he said.

"I've traveled all over, met so many people and learned so much about life. I work in the summer because of my athletic ability, most everything I can do is because



Photo by Mark Billingsley

of athletics," he said.

Spending 3-5 hours a day in a gym or pool is not unusual for Elliott during both seasons. Off-season, however, he doesn't even know where to begin spending all of his free time.

"I can't imagine other students what they do when they come home from

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school. If I had this much free time I know I would get close to a 4.0 in school," he said.

"I guess you just have to sacrifice some things for others," he added.

Elliott said he has always been known as an athlete; always associated with athletics.

"God has given me some abilities and I want to fulfill those abilities as best I can. I'm honored to have the media exposure that I've had—it's nice to be known as an athlete, but I'd rather be known as a person," he said.

When he's not training, competing or studying, Elliott said he spends most of his time alone, thinking.

"You get so wrapped up in everything. When you come down you've got to think 'where am I going.' You need time to sit and relax—to step back and look at everything as a whole—from the outside in," he said.

"It's nice to be out there for a while," he said.

Living with another gymnast (Kevin Dunkley) has been beneficial, Elliott said, in that both of them share similar interests.

However, he said living with a non-athlete might keep him a little more "sane."

"Kevin's gone as much or more than I am. It would be nice to have someone here when I get home to talk to—to hold the fort down. Talking to another athlete, sometimes, is like talking to yourself." If Elliott should ever quit being an athlete, he said it will be because of physical limitations.

"I'll never stop being active. But whenever my body can't handle it, I guess I'd have to retire," he said.

Uniqueness keys grassroots business survival

By Mary Jo Pitzl

There's only one Heart's Content and only one Kuhl's Restaurant and their owners take pride in that uniqueness.

Kuhl's has weathered years of downtown renovation and construction, holding fast to its location at 1038 O St. for 13 years.

Owners at both these commercial enterprises hold no grand illusions of franchises, conglomerates or world-wide recognition

On the other side of town, the needlework specialty shop, A Heart's Content, while not as long-established, has nonetheless woven its way into the local business scene.

Owners at both of these commercial enterprises hold no grand illusions of franchises, conglomerates or world-wide recognition. Running a restaurant on O Street and selling needlework supplies in the Piedmont Shopping Center are their main aspirations. And Kurt and Pearl Kuhl and Millicent Scott are as pleased as punch with their grass-roots businesses.

"We've tried to make a kind of homey, family atmosphere," Pearl Kuhl said of her 120-seat restaurant. And if their success is gauged by the variety of clientele, Kuhl's has reached its goal.

"We get to see a lot of different walks of life," Mrs. Kuhl said. She explained that the downtown location brings in students as well as business people, and the restaurant's proximity to the hotels attracts travelers.

Also, Kuhl's becomes the cafeteria for UNL athletic

teams when the university is closed during Thanksgiving, semester and spring breaks, Mrs. Kuhl said.

The Kuhl's business experience extends further than the 13 years their restaurant has been open downtown.

Mrs. Kuhl started working in restaurants while in high school and hasn't stopped yet. About 15 years ago, the restaurant she was working for went up for sale and she and her husband bought the business. After a few years' work at their 17th and Van Dorn streets location, the Kuhls moved downtown.

Kurt Kuhl said their restaurant is unique in that it serves three meals a day. The combination of moderate prices and friendly atmosphere keeps clients coming back, he said.

He also credited "tight control" for what he described as the restaurant's constant growth.

He and his wife are a vital part of that tight rein, working full-time with their 25 employees.

As for competition, the Kuhls aren't ruffled.

"I don't think of any restaurant near here as competition," Mrs. Kuhl said. "More as friends and neighbors."

Friends and neighbors were the foundation of A Heart's Content, a needlework shop started by five women in the Piedmont Shopping Center in August, 1977.

Millicent Scott said a common interest in needlework and church affiliations brought her together with co-owners Sally Campbell, Betty Henkle, Diane Oldfather and Carolyn Neill. The five formed a partnership and bought up a home-based needlework shop that was going out of business.

"All of us have learned how it is when you run your own business," Scott said. At first there was fear of the unknown she said, since none of the partners had business experience. But "one thing at a time seemed to work itself out."

She said the shop has never run into financial difficulty. "We couldn't make a living doing this," Scott said, but the shop has always registered in the black.

A Heart's Content carries the top line in needlework equipment, does custom designing and needlework, and offers various classes.

"We have just expanded our horizons a lot," Scott said, referring to a Scandinavian needlework technique the shop is now marketing. There also is some talk among the partners of wholesaling their creations.

Scott said the shop was furnished and decorated by the partners themselves on a low-cost budget. "We found the fixtures and hung the wallpaper," she said. "We also made smocks to match the wallpaper," she added, indicating her heart-motif smock.

The store's name evolved from a mutual love of hearts and their use in needlework designs. Originally called "Stitch to Your Heart's Content," the shop's full title couldn't fit on the sign, so all but the last two words were cut.

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When the store first opened, Scott said there were a lot of mistaken identity problems. They would get phone calls from people curious about what the shop is, she said.

Scott said she is happy with the steady business the career women and housewives have generated at their jointly-owned store.

"Men have only been involved when we ask them to be, she said. "They haven't interfered."