

UAH Training Staffer has memorable experience in Beijing

Contributed by Antoine Bell
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UAH Athletics Trainer Carolyn Miller (center) pictured here with tennis super stars and women's Olympic doubles gold medalists Venus (left) and Serena (right) Williams.

When UAH Assistant Athletics Trainer Carolyn Miller received word that she would be headed to Beijing, China for the 2008 Summer Olympics, she was very excited. She knew that it would be an opportunity of a lifetime. She would not be disappointed.

"It was an amazing experience," said Miller, a SportsMed athletic trainer at UAH. "I was constantly busy working with the athletes, and the weather forced play to go deep into the night sometimes, so I really didn't have time to see very much outside of tennis." On one occasion, long rain delays forced a match to be played at 3 a.m. Beijing time.

However, the heavy rains turned out to be a blessing in that it kept the infamous Beijing smog under control. "It really rained a lot and it kept the weather clear," commented Miller.

Miller worked with USA women's tennis during the games. She had direct contact with a virtual who's who of American tennis stars as Venus and Serena Williams, Lindsay Davenport, Liezel Huber and Jill Craybas. She didn't get a chance to see much in the way of actual matches, but she did get a chance to see James Blake upset Roger Federer. "I was able to stick my head out and catch some of that match. It was awesome."

Miller will never forget the contrasting emotions when it came to winning and losing. She actually witnessed the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat at the same time. "When the Russian singles winner (Vera Zvonareva) was celebrating winning the gold medal, the Spanish doubles team (Anabel Medina Garrigues and Virginia Ruano Pascual) were crying after they'd just lost in the finals." Garrigues and Pascual were defeated by the Williams duo in the doubles gold medal match.

Among the many memories that Miller brought home from China, it was the sounds and the emotion that would stick out. "Hearing all of the different languages at the same time was a jumble of noise," said Miller. "It was amazing to be able to pick out English amidst all of the different languages."

Although she was unable to do much touring, Miller did get to visit the Forbidden City. And, as far as sampling the unique cuisine, she kept it simple, not straying too far into the bizarre. But she did try out some "snake on a stick". One guess at what she said it tasted like - chicken of course.

Miller has been a member of the Charger athletics staff since the summer of 2005. A native of Huntsville, she completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan in 2001. She earned a master's degree in 2002 from Indiana University. After graduate school she had the opportunity to work for the U.S. Olympic Committee at the training facility in San Diego, CA. While she was there, Miller had the opportunity to work with various elite athletes and accompany them on their competitions around the world.