

ON OUR RADAR

Chellsie Memmel

Nerves of Steel

Chellsie Memmel began the summer of 2003 as USA Gymnastics' best-kept secret. The 15-year-old

Height: 5' 1" **Weight:** 105 lbs.
Birth Date: June 23, 1988
Birthplace: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Accomplishment: Won the individual all-around title at the 2003 Pan American Games



PETER READ/WIREIMAGE.COM

gymnast ended it with a coming-out party. On August 20, Memmel came off the U.S. women's bench to lead a group of limping underdogs to its first team gold medal ever at the World Gymnastics Championships, in Anaheim, California.

Mommel wasn't even supposed to be in Anaheim. In June, she finished 10th at the U.S. nationals and failed to qualify for the worlds. "I was disappointed at my finish," she says.

But during training camp for the worlds, an injured U.S. gymnast had to leave the team. On August 5, the team coordinator called Memmel, who was competing at the Pan American Games. Memmel's fortunes turned around faster than a somersault. On August 7, she flew to Texas for camp. By August 10, she was at her first world championships, even though she didn't know if she'd have the chance to compete.

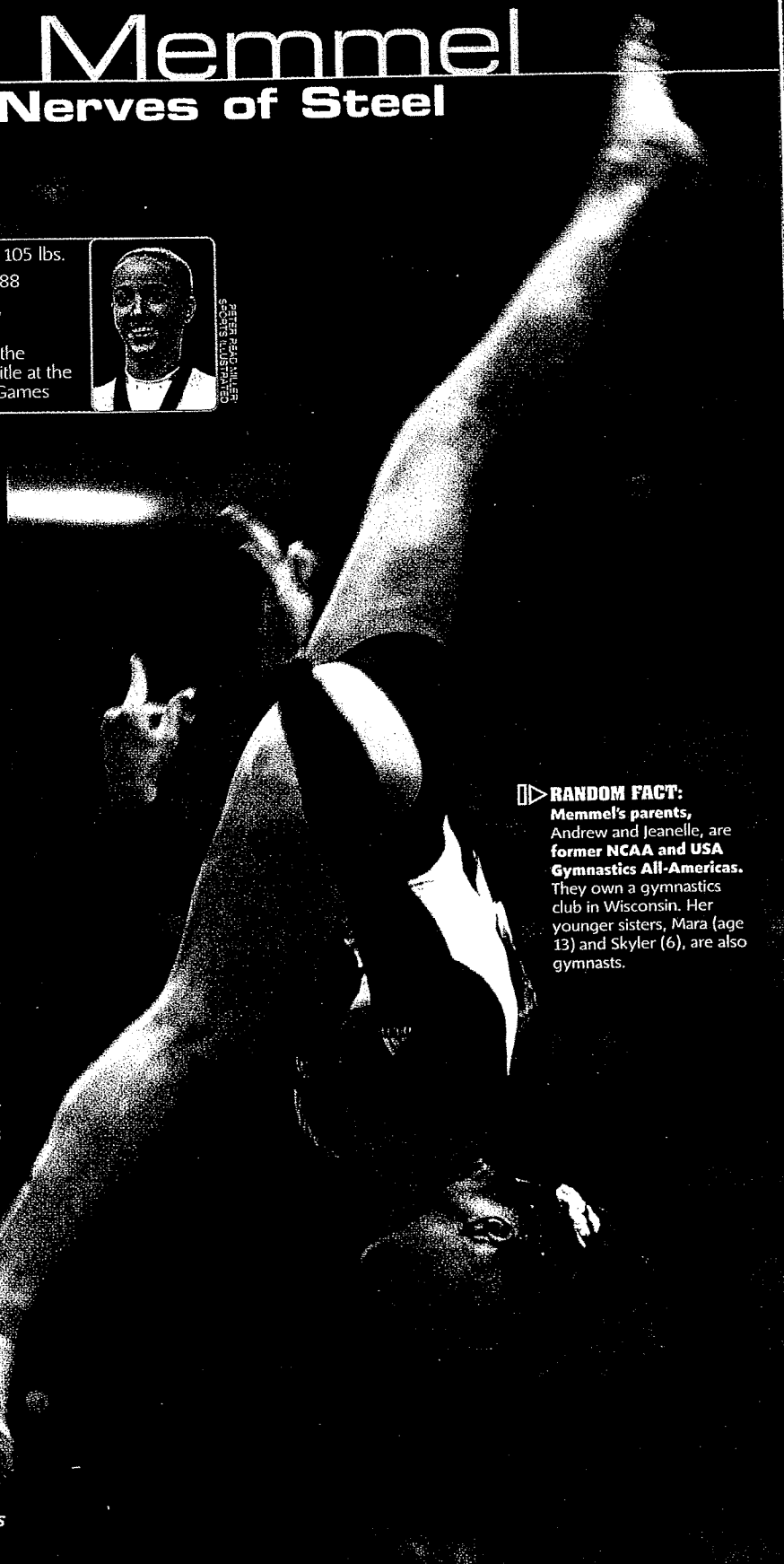
"[As an alternate,] you train like you are going to compete," says Memmel, who practices five hours every day. "You have to be ready to go out there and perform on short notice."

However, before the team finals, three of her teammates went down: U.S. vault champion Annia Hatch (knee injury), world balance beam champ Ashley Postell (stomach flu), and defending world uneven bars champ Courtney Kupets (torn Achilles tendon). Memmel was thrust into the starting lineup.

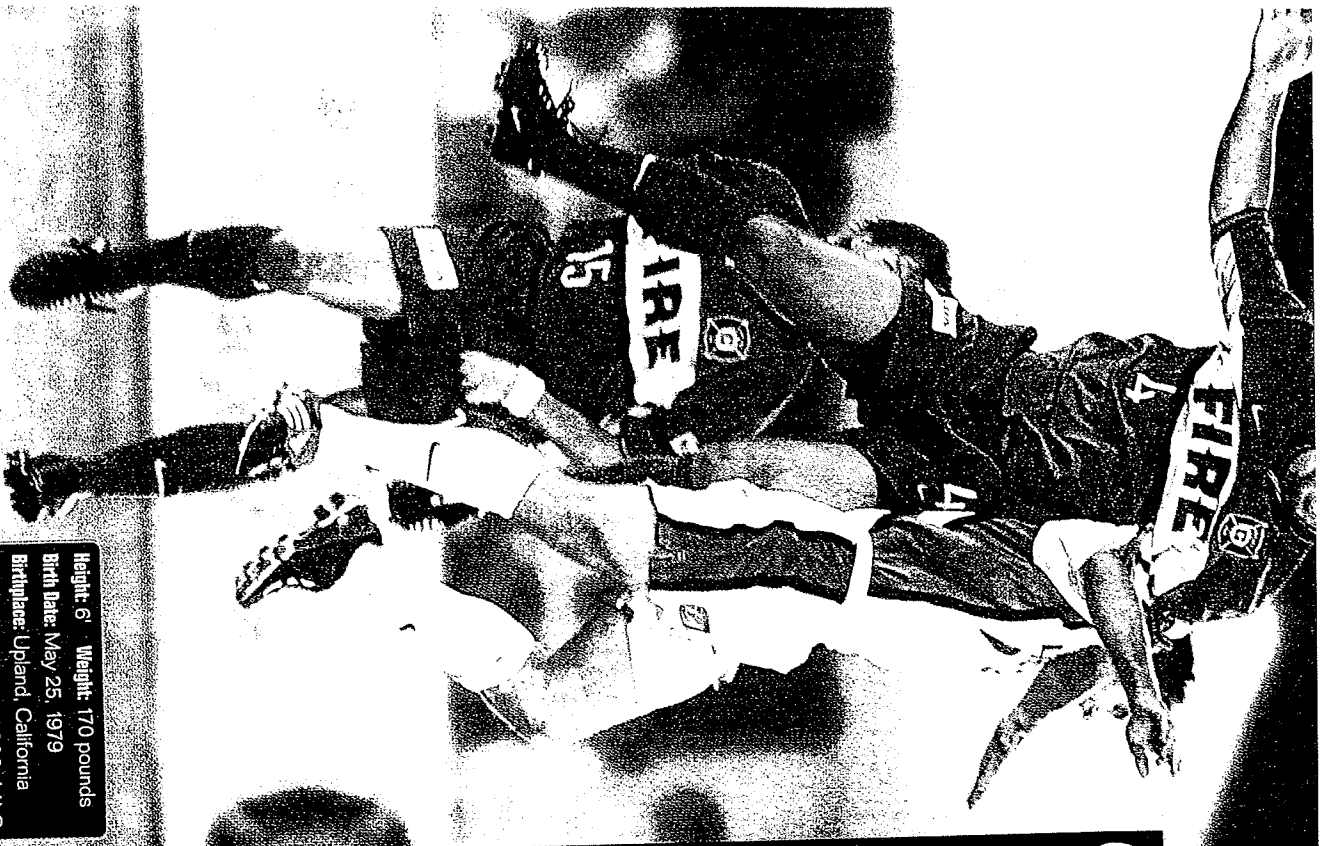
Mommel delivered like a closer. She was the only U.S. gymnast to do all four team finals events (balance beam, floor exercise, vault, uneven bars), and she earned the best score (37.887 out of 40). The U.S. upset defending champ Romania.

"No one expected us to win," says Memmel. "[But] we came together as a team and did what we went there to do. And that was win gold."

Mommel raised enough eyebrows to be considered a 2004 U.S. Olympic Gymnastics hopeful. The team trials begin June 24. Stay tuned. — by Shawn Nicholls



▶ RANDOM FACT: Memmel's parents, Andrew and Jeanelle, are former NCAA and USA Gymnastics All-Americans. They own a gymnastics club in Wisconsin. Her younger sisters, Mara (age 13) and Skyler (6), are also gymnasts.



Height: 6' **Weight:** 170 pounds
Birth Date: May 25, 1979
Birthplace: Upland, California
Accomplishments: 2000 MLS
Rookie of the Year, 2002
Defender of the Year



Carlos Bocanegra of the Chicago Fire patrols the soccer pitch with menace. Attackers who venture into the 6' defender's zone often find themselves muscled off the ball in a bone-jarring collision.

"[Carlos] is such a physical presence," says Fire goalkeeper Zach Thornton. "There aren't many players who are going to get the better of him." Since being drafted out of UCLA in 2000, Bocanegra has helped Chicago hold its opponents to the third-fewest goals (152, as of September 22) in the league. The 2002 MLS Defender of the Year says he has always been aggressive, but it seems his tough style was honed in another sport: football. Bocanegra was a defensive back, wide receiver, kicker, and punter at Alta Loma High School (Rancho Cucamonga, California). Football recruiters from colleges such as San Diego State and San Jose State were interested in him.

But Bocanegra was also a standout center midfielder at Alta Loma. When UCLA recruited him for soccer, he chose goal kicks over field goals. He also switched to defense. "It was a lot easier," says Bocanegra. "You only have to worry about playing the balls in front of you."

This season, Chicago is the surprise team of MLS. After trading three of its top 5 scorers in the off-season to save money, the Fire was expected to be a basement-dweller. But Chicago had the best record (12-6-7) in the Eastern Conference and was a favorite to go deep into the playoffs, which begin November 1.

But going deep won't cut it for Bocanegra. He has been burning inside to return to the MLS cup since his rookie season, when the Fire was beaten 1-0 in the final by the Kansas City Wizards.

"You feel like you've worked hard all year," Bocanegra says of the 2000 season, "and it's almost like, *Why go [to the final] if you're going to lose?* It's a bad feeling that sits in your stomach." Attackers beware: Bocanegra is waiting for you. And he's hungry.
— *by Shawn Nichols*

PHOTOGRAPH BY USANKI POLICE



CHELLSIE MEMMEL + CARLOS BOCCNEGRA

1. IN AUGUST CHELLSIE LEAD THE U.S. WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS TO THEIR FIRST WHAT?
2. TRUE OR FALSE MEMMEL FAILED TO QUALIFY FOR THE WORLD'S.
3. HOW DID CHELLSIE END UP MAKING THE U.S. GYMNASTICS TEAM?
4. HOW MANY HOURS A DAY DID CHELLSIE PRACTICE?
5. CHELLSIE WAS THE ONLY U.S. GYMNAST TO DO ALL FOUR EVENTS. TRUE OR FALSE.
6. WHAT TEAM DOES CARLOS PLAY FOR?
7. WHAT COLLEGE WAS CARLOS DRAFTED OUT OF IN 2000?
8. WHAT HONOR DID CARLOS RECEIVE IN 2002?
9. WHAT FOOTBALL POSITIONS DID CARLOS PLAY WHEN HE WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL?
10. CARLOS WON THE MLS CUP HIS ROOKIE SEASON. TRUE OR FALSE.