

A&M men in Austin for Short Course

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

After jumping to No. 15 in the nation after a second place finish to the defending NCAA champion Texas Longhorns at the Big 12 Championships, the Texas A&M men's swimming team is headed to the home pool of the Longhorns to compete in the American Short Course Championships. The meet is a warm up for the upcoming NCAA Championships in Athens, Ga.

So far, only senior Riley Janes, No. 6 in the 100-yard backstroke, and the 200-yard medley relay team have automatically qualified for the NCAA meet.

Many other Aggies are close to qualifying and hope to use this weekend to post times good enough to automatically qualify for the NCAA field.

"We have some guys that we're pretty sure made it at the conference meet," said assistant head coach Jay Holmes. "They're still going to go to this meet and try to go a little faster to make sure that they get picked up for NCAAs."

Many Aggies have already posted individual high NCAA consideration times this season. Resting since the Big 12 Championships, the Aggies are

looking to swim seasonal and lifetime bests this weekend in Austin and creep over the edge into the NCAA Championships.

"I could easily see [freshman Alfredo Jacobo] going over there and going faster," Holmes said.

Jacobo is currently No. 19 in the 100-yard breaststroke

mark of 43.64. Rose is currently No. 12 in the nation with a mark of 43.71.

Rose is also No. 17 in the 50-yard freestyle, which he lost to Crocker at the Big 12 Championships by .03. His best time of 19.96 is .22 behind the NCAA automatic qualifying time.

Senior Patrick Kennedy is ranked in the top 50 in four separate events. Kennedy is No. 25 in the 200-yard freestyle, No. 30 in the 100-yard backstroke, No. 31 in the 200-yard back and No. 49 in the 500-yard freestyle.

Other Aggies looking for NCAA qualifying times are sophomore Scott Mueller, No. 21 in the 200-yard individual medley, and Janes, who despite already qualifying in the 100-yard back, is looking to qualify in the 100-yard free and 50-yard free as well.

The Aggie relay teams will not see much action this weekend as all four are figured to qualify for NCAAs.

"Most of those relays are going to be fine where they are," Holmes said.

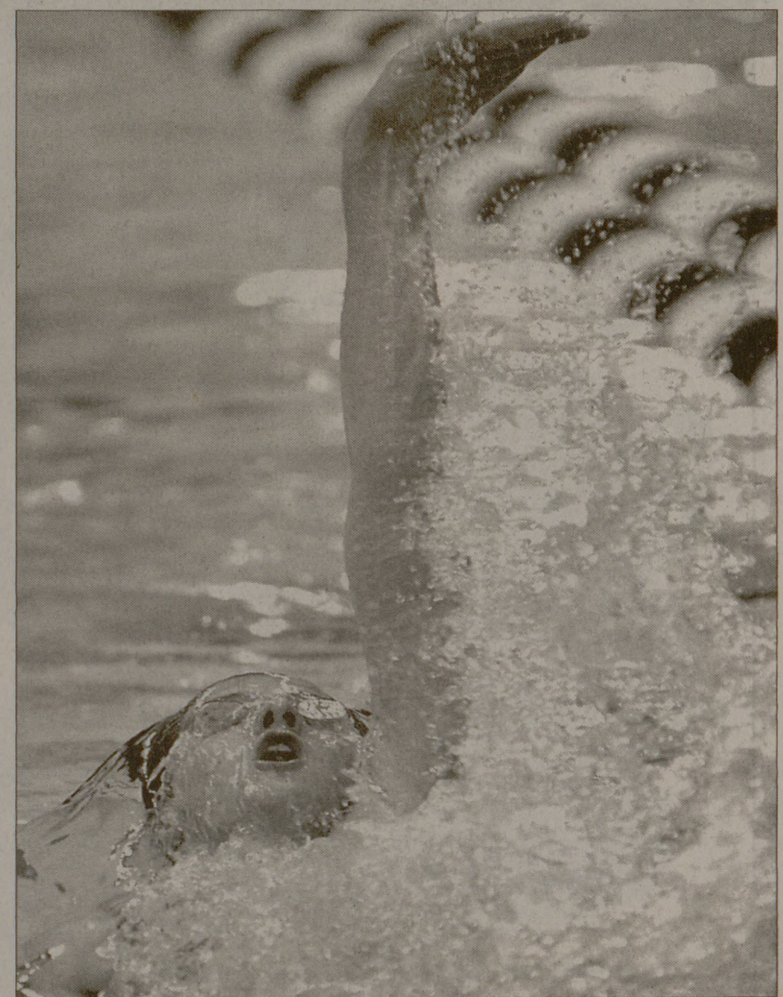
There will be six events each day Thursday through Saturday with preliminaries starting at 9 a.m. and finals beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Lee and Joe Jamail Texas Swimming Center in Austin.

"They're still going to go to this meet and try to go a little faster to make sure that they get picked up for NCAAs."

— Jay Holmes
assistant men's swimming and diving coach

with an A&M record time of 54.73, just .42 seconds behind the NCAA automatic qualifying mark.

Another Aggie looking to qualify this weekend is sophomore Matt Rose. Despite beating rival Ian Crocker of Texas in the 100-yard freestyle at the Big 12 Championships, Rose is still behind the automatic



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

Senior Patrick Kennedy is part of the Aggie men's swimming team that will be competing in the American Short Course Championships in Austin.

Red Sox continue searching for new manager

FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP) — The Boston Red Sox received permission Wednesday to talk with Cleveland bench coach Grady Little in their effort to hire a new manager by the weekend.

That does not mean he is the leading candidate to succeed Joe Kerrigan, who was fired Tuesday by the team's new owners, interim general manager Mike Port said.

Oakland bench coach Ken Macha has been mentioned as a possibility, Boston interim manager Mike Cuddage said he

wants a chance, and Port said individuals are being considered who do not need permission to talk with the Red Sox.

"The process is inching along," Port said.

He said it was unlikely a manager will be named Thursday but he didn't rule out Friday.

"By the weekend would be ideal," he said.

The Red Sox want to conduct a comprehensive but speedy search with their first game looming April 1, just 26 days

after the Indians told Port he could interview the 52-year-old Little.

"We gave a glowing recommendation," Cleveland general manager Mark Shapiro said, "I can't think of anyone who is better qualified for the job than Grady Little."

Starting in 1980, Little managed 16 years in the minors, 10 in the Atlanta system. He became San Diego's bullpen coach in 1996 and bench coach in Boston from 1997 through 1999 and in Cleveland the past two years.

Macha, 51, managed in the Boston system at Double-A Trenton in 1995 and 1996 and at Triple-A Pawtucket in 1997 and 1998. He went to Oakland in 1999. In the Red Sox organization, he had current Boston players Nomar Garciaparra, Jason Varitek, Trot Nixon and Lou Merloni.

"I haven't heard anything. They haven't even called to contact us," Macha said after Oakland's 10-2 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks in Phoenix on Thursday. "I guess it's down to the short list."

Search

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"It's a sign of what this team can be when we get Andy (Slocum) playing," Watkins said. "He has been a contributor, especially in rebounding and defensively. He still struggles a little offensively with the hand, but it's definitely a big plus having him in there."

Tech head coach Bob Knight has had a successful first season at the helm in Lubbock, helping the Red Raiders to their most conference wins since the

1996-1997 season. Just last season, the Red Raiders came into the tournament as the No. 12 seed. Tech enters this year as the No. 5 seed.

With a much improved defense, the Red Raiders have become a formidable opponent and have the league's best assist-to-turnover ratio. Knight said the defense of his team and every other team becomes more significant in the post-season.

"Every defensive play is of paramount importance right now," Knight said. "It's one

loss and you're out, so being difficult to score on is the most important thing in a team's success. It's that way from the first game of the season until the last game of the NCAA Tournament.

"Certainly, there are teams around the country that have the capability to beat any other team around. When two teams like that play each other, it's going to be the team that is the best defensively that wins the game."

The winner of Thursday's contest will play No. 12 Oklahoma State on Friday.

Coach

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this week's Big 12 tournament.

"I'll be sure to thank my team." As announced earlier, the media panel also made Gooden, the league leader in both scoring and rebounding, a unanimous choice as Big 12 player of the year. Texas point guard T.J. Ford drew all but one vote for freshman of the year and Oklahoma's Ebi Ere outpolled Ivan McFarlin of Oklahoma State for Big 12 newcomer of the year.

Williams' decision to stay at Kansas may turn out to be one of the best things ever to happen not only to the Jayhawks, but the profession as well. With a 14-year record of 382-91, he has the third-highest winning percentage of active Division I coaches with at least five years of experience.

"Roy Williams is a great coach," said Oklahoma's Kelvin Sampson. "For his players to be up night after night and withstand every challenge in the league they have this year is really unbelievable. It also says a lot about the kind of kids he's brought into his program."

Iowa State coach Larry Eustachy says there should be no argument as to who is the Jayhawks' most valuable player.

"That team has a special togetherness that I haven't seen since I've been here. And it starts with Roy," Eustachy said. "They work hard."

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