

Aquatians plan water show

By Carol Thomas

Battalion Reporter

Eyes and noses red, gasping for breath, the Texas A&M Aquatians' hours of practice under the booming voice of coach Marti Nix indicate that synchronized swimming is much more than just playing around in the water.

"You're too far apart! Get closer together!" her voice echoes over the blaring music of "Cabaret" at the indoor pool on campus.

Somehow, the tiring swimmers hear her and correct the problem. But soon another crops up. They swim on, trying to perfect their performance.

"I told you," Nixon bellows, "you don't have time to sneeze, blink your eyes or think: just do it." But the blonde, blue-eyed deeply tanned coach smiles at the girls in the pool, and later applauds them when they perform especially well.

At this practice, the 11-

member club is rehearsing especially hard for the annual Aquatian Extravaganza, scheduled for tonight, Friday and Saturday night at 8. Tickets for the performance at the indoor pool are available from Aquatian members in the MSC or at the door.

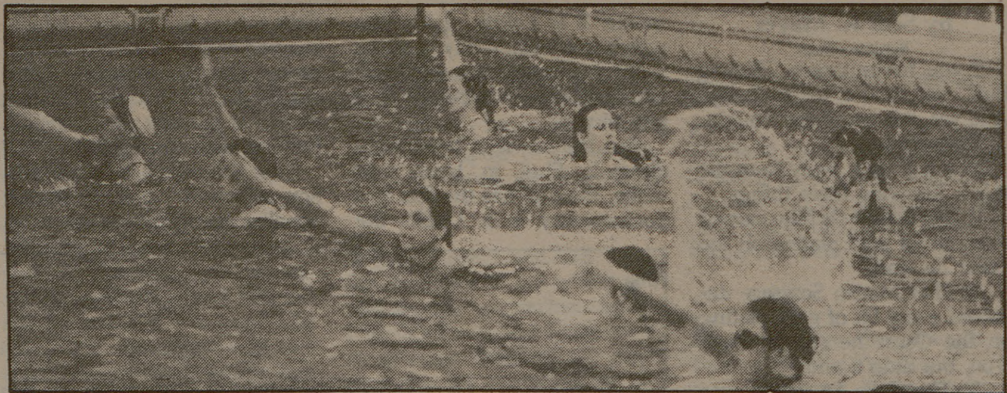
All practices require a physically-demanding workout, comparable to that of straight swimming.

"Synchronized swimming is more controlled, artistic, stylistic than straight swimming," Nix said.

Before even practicing the actual synchronized swimming, the swimmers do flexibility stretches out of the pool. Then they swim a mere 300-800 yards as a warm-up, stopping every hundred yards or so to stretch more.

Synchronized swimming consists of three basic movements: sculling, stroking and figures, each with several variations.

"Sculling is moving the body



Aquatian swimmers practice maneuvers and polish up on some stunts in preparation

for a water show they will host tonight through Saturday at the indoor pool.

Photo by Greg Gammon

through the water with a figure-eight motion of the hands," Nix said.

Stroking refers to arm movement, but is very different from straight swimming.

"You have to make movements very big and slow so the

audience can see them," Nix said. "The arms are very stylized."

Figures refer to the gymnastic stunts done in the water, such as tumbling and somersaults, she said.

One club member, Cheryl Stuart, who swam competitively in high school, said she enjoys the sport as much as straight swimming.

"In synchronized swimming you get to use music and a lot of expression," Stuart said. "And you're out there to perform whether it's for a show or in front of a judge."

The Aquatians began in 1976 as a synchronized swimming class. The 20-member class became so interested in the sport, they decided to form a club and put on a water-show that spring.

"The emphasis was on aquatic art, which is not as highly organized as synchronized swimming," Nix said.

Right now, there are no men in the club. Nix believes this is

because men think the club is only for women.

"I would love to have men on the team," Nix said. "Any man who is a pretty good swimmer would be able to do it."

"In aquatic art they do lifting and complement the females in the water," she said. The male swimmer performs a role similar to a male dancer on a stage.

"Their emphasis is to be strong and masculine in the water," Nix said.

For now, a group of swimmers within the Aquatians would like to compete. However, because they have not been sanctioned by the Athletic Council, their competition has been limited to an occasional meet with the University of Texas.

"We hope to be sanctioned in the future so that we will be able to compete with other teams in the United States on the national level," Nix said. "We have the potential of becoming a very competitive team."

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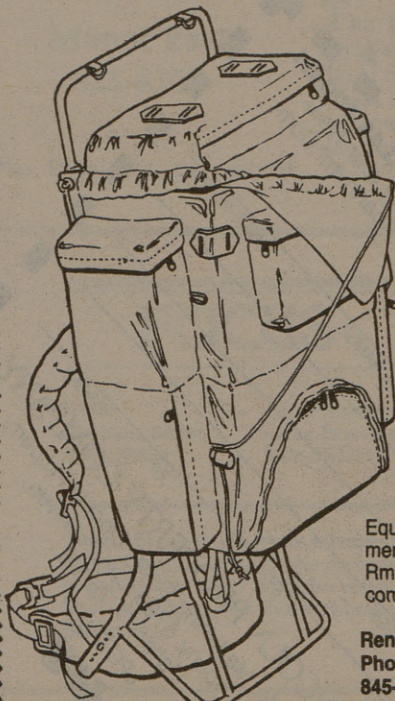
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