## The Battalion Sports

June 24, 1982 Page 11

## saiPlans for the future

## A&M swimming coach Nash believes squad can gain national prominence

or's note: This is the second ch Mel Nash of the Texas M swim team discusses his ming and coaching career. ash says he expects the Aggie gram to progress each year, the expresses hope that the am can break into the national op 20 lineup soon.

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by Frank L. Christlieb

Sports Editor
lis Indiana teammates used tall him "Psycho." And even w, Mel Nash understands just appropriate that tag was ing his college swimming

Nash, the Aggie swimming ch, has spent 19 years swiming and diving, and has moked his way into the high hool and college record books me after time. But after shing his college career with Indiana Hoosiers in 1976, 27-year-old Nash has found his desire for competition

known throughout college ming circles as an intent petitor who devoted a great of time to mental prepara-for his races, Nash de-oped the "Psycho" nickname, ich became his trademark. still regards that preparation significant contributor to his

mming success In an attempt to bring prom-ence to the Texas A&M swimting program, Nash has put to ork many of the skills and trategies he's learned over the ears. Under the guidance of his ther, Mel Nash Sr., and 24ar Indiana coach James "Doc"

Counsilman, the Aggie coach found transition from college swimming into college coaching

a smooth experience. But before taking a post as an Indiana assistant coach in 1977, Nash completed a high school and college career that had its fortes and its diminished strains, its victories and its failures, its exciting moments and its dis-

Nash, however, says he has no regrets, complaints or second thoughts about his swimming

coach Mel Nash's junior year at Indiana, he did some serious soulsearching about his career and his future.

days. When the Hoosiers lost to the USC Trojans by a single point in the NCAA champion-ships during his sophomore year in 1974, Nash said, disappointment set in quickly for him and his teammates.

"That was just another 2-by-4 in the face — it was another depressing experience," said Nash, who had withstood a previous setback when he missed qual-ifying for the 1972 Olympics by

two-hundredths of a second.
"There were seven different items that we sent to the NCAA 'You're very talented, you're as rules infractions at the meet. They had disqualified our relay ly performing in a mediocre way

team, and my father had films at this point.' showing the relay that we obviously did not false start on, so period, I re we sent those films off to the

NCAA Rules Committee. "That was nearly 10 years go, and we do not have the films back to this day — it was pretty wild," Nash said. "That's when I realized that you have to win by so much that there's no doubt involved.

"Don't play games, because even in swimming, something as cut and dried as who touches the touchpad first can be worked ound by the politics.

On the 22-hour road trip to Florida during Texas A&M swimming

Texas A&M swimming

Texas A&M swimming the national meet, and by his junior year at Indiana, Nash thought his swimming career might be near its end.

The Hoosiers took a trip to Florida for a three-week training camp during Nash's junior season. But on the 22-hour road trip, while his teammates were relaxing and thinking about the next three weeks, Nash did some serious soul-searching about his career and his future.

"During 22 hours, you do a lot of thinking," Nash said. "I went to the back of the van and sat for eight hours straight. It was my sleep period, and I didn't sleep.

don't know if you've ever really sat down for eight hours and actually looked inside your-self and done a little self-therapy. I looked at what I'd done over my swimming and school career. I told myself:

in that eight-hour I reversed the entire negative flow of everything that had been going on," Nash said. And Nash didn't waste any

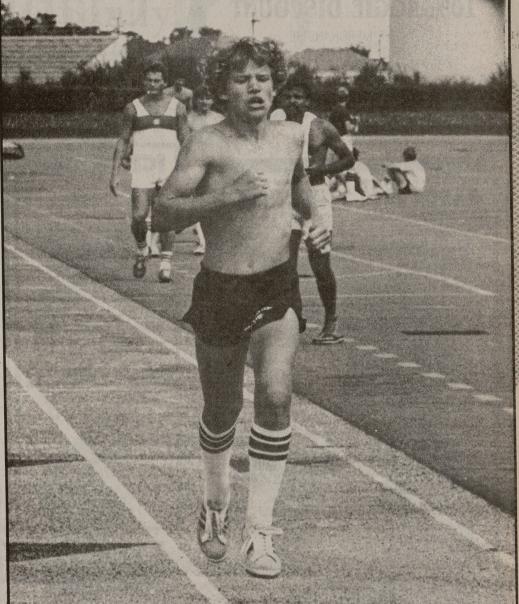
time when he and his teammates reached the training camp. "At the time, John Nabor of USC was the big backstroker in

the nation," he said. "Every single stroke I took down there, I was saying, out loud, 'Get Nabor, Beat Nabor.' They thought I was going a little bit over the edge over the edge.
"That was all I thought about

for the next three months, but I didn't beat Nabor at the NCAA meet. That was the perfect end of the success story. But I got third in the 100 backstroke at the NCAAs, and got fourth in the 50-meter freestyle that year, and I got seventh in the 200meter backstroke. I was high point man for Indiana in that meet, and that made my come-

Nash wanted to compete in the 1976 Olympic trials, but upon advice from the Hoosiers' Counsilman, he didn't. After seeing that Nash had injured his back while lifting a refrigerator, and after having seen Nash gain about 15 pounds, the Indiana coach advised his former swimmer to forget about the 1976

When it came time for the 1980 Olympic games, however, Nash's back had healed, he had lost 15 pounds and he had taken three seconds off his time on the 50-meter backstroke sprint. In the trials, he finished fifth, and missed the team by 16 one-See NASH page 13



staff photo by John Ryan

The end of the race

Chris Stegent from Houston crosses the finish line ahead of Longview's Ron Johnson in the Senior 800-yard dash, which took place during the Track Day

sponsored by the All-Sports Camp at Texas A&M. The three-week camp, in which 185 boys and girls are participating, will last through next week.



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