

A&M swimmer describes L.A. Olympic trials

By KAREN GILES
Reporter

He trained four hours a day, six days a week for one race, and in less than 60 seconds, it was over.

"It's every swimmer's dream to go to the Olympics, and mine was for '84," Chris O'Neil, a member of the Texas A&M swim team said, as he placed his glass of orange juice on the coffee table next to the past three issues of *Swimmer's World* magazine, *Life* magazine's special Olympic edition, and a brochure featuring the newest designs in racing suits.

More than 500 swimmers competed to make their dream come true this summer at the U.S. Olympic Trials held at the Indiana University Natatorium.

"It was the most intense meet I'd ever been to in my life," O'Neil said. "You can stand behind the blocks and actually feel the electricity. Even the director of the meet said the U.S. Olympic trials are more intense than the Olympics, since 50 guys are competing for only two spots in each race, and the U.S. team probably has the best swimmers in the world."

O'Neil, a stocky bleached blonde, looking more like a body-builder than the typical long, lean swimmer, said he's participated in various swim meets where he's been under a lot of pressure, "but nothing like this."

O'Neil's roommate, Rick Parker, also a Texas A&M swimmer, said that O'Neil began to get restless about two weeks prior to the trials. "He'd toss and turn a lot," Parker said. "He seemed like he was in a sort of a daze. I guess he was concentrating. I know the race was on his mind."

O'Neil confirmed Parkers' observation. He said he'd lie awake at night, staring at the walls, trying to keep his mind off the race. This must have been hard to do, since his bedroom wallpapering consists of two U.S. Swimming Long Course

Championship posters, an '83 Sports Festival poster, a couple of "girlie" posters (they're wearing swim suits), and a 20 gallon fish tank.

"I guess the restlessness is all a part of the preparation," he said, flexing his bare feet. "Every swimmer prepares himself for his race differently. Some, like me, tell jokes, I guess to relieve the pressure, and others sit quietly with their head rested between their hands, sort of meditating. But about an hour before I went up to the blocks, I felt my mouth go dry."

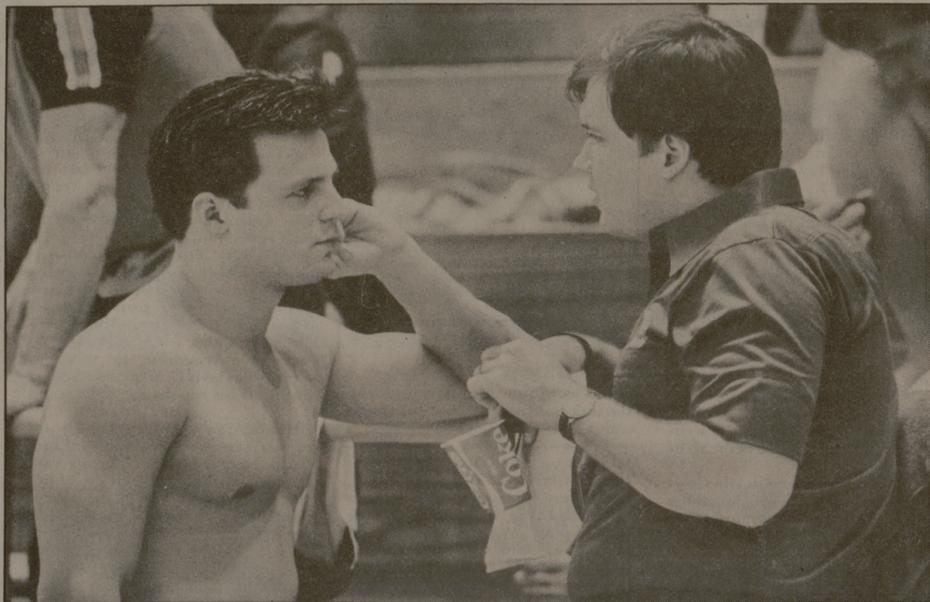
O'Neil said he intermittently splashed water into his mouth from the pool, and paced around trying to keep himself calm and his mind on the up-coming race.

"When they called my name to step up to the starting block, it felt like my heart was in my throat," he said. "But you know it's funny, at that moment, I couldn't wait to swim because it was the best I'd ever felt."

He said the race went by fast—exactly 55.51 seconds. When he touched the wall, he immediately looked up at the digital time clock through his fogged goggles. Unfortunately, he was two-tenths of a second off the top eight qualifying times for the finals, but was ranked 12th in the nation.

"At first I was disappointed, all that work blown by two-tenths, but after I stopped moping, I realized I'd bettered my time, and moved up in the rankings. Most of all, I remember what a relief it was to have it over with. It really was like a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders."

Rather than watch the top eight finalists from his race, battle it out on the final night of the trials, he chose to eat out with his parents. His coach, Mel Nash, stopped him and advised him to stay and watch. "I told Mel it would hurt, but he said I needed to watch. I really didn't want to stay. The last thing I wanted to see, at that point, was the eight guys



Chris O'Neil confers with Texas A&M head swimming coach Mel Nash.

Photo by DEAN SAITO

that beat me compete for the two available spots on the Olympic team, but I stayed. I was very impressed with their swimming, and I even got to see Pablo Morales break the world record with a 53.38. My old friend Matt Gribble came in second, and David Cowell is the alternate for the team."

O'Neil said he was glad he stayed that night, since only two years earlier he had raced against Gribble at U.S. Swimming Nationals in the lane next to him, and "got to see a lot of white water" come from his feet.

The trials began Monday, June 23, but for O'Neil training started years earlier.

After completing basic training at the age of four, O'Neil progressed to a summer league team at seven, and finally at fourteen, he swam for the Huntsville Swimming Association in Alabama under coach Fran Norris.

He had planned on following his brother to Auburn, but was offered

a scholarship at Texas A&M, and says he feels like he made the best decision.

"The academic and the athletic programs at A&M are excellent," O'Neil said. "I went on a lot of recruiting trips, and A&M's programs were definitely the best supported. I've never seen an athletic dorm that compares to Cain, and the training table (board plan) there is excellent."

O'Neil said the U.S. team is expected to do very well in Los Angeles. "West Germany, Canada and a few South Americans will be their big competition, but it's too bad every country won't compete," O'Neil said a little disappointedly.

He said he sometimes considers dropping from the competition, especially after losing at the trials. "I know it sounds corny, but when I really get down about my swimming, I read this poem on my wall," O'Neil said, as he unhooked the framed motivator.

It's no wonder it inspires him. It

reads:
If you think you are beaten, you are.

If you think you dare not, you don't.

If you like to win, but think you can't, it's almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost. For out in the world we find Success begins with a fellows will; It's all in the state of mind.

Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man; but soon or late the man who wins is the one who thinks he can.

For O'Neil, the rest of the summer consists of "gunning for Senior Nationals" in Ft. Lauderdale Aug. 15-18, then back to school for the fall session.

"Even though I lost, I'm really glad I went," O'Neil said contentedly, after reading over the poem. "It's something I can tell my grandkids. But I'll be honest with you, I'd love to be in L.A. right now."

Olympics showcase baseball

United Press International

LOS ANGELES — The pitch, first delivered by U.S. Olympic baseball coach Rod Dedeaux nearly a half-century ago, arrives in Dodger Stadium July 31.

Dedeaux, USC's coach for the past four decades, has spent the better part of his 69 years attempting to get Olympic officials to proclaim baseball a full medal sport in the Summer Games.

Though baseball will only be a demonstration event during the Games and the powerhouse Cuban team joined the Soviet-led boycott, Dedeaux is confident a gold medal will be awarded when the world's best convene four years from now in Seoul, South Korea.

Baseball has been a demonstration in the Olympics before — featured in St. Louis in 1904, in Stockholm in 1912, in Berlin in 1936, in Helsinki in 1952, in Melbourne in 1956 and in Tokyo in 1964.

"Baseball is called a demonstration sport but it's not a demonstration," Dedeaux said. "This is for real. It's a regular tournament. This is the first time baseball will actually be contested in the Olympics."

"This will be the greatest single event to promote the sport of baseball."

Eight nations will take part in the round-robin tournament July 31-Aug. 7. Doubleheaders are scheduled each day.

Dedeaux, the winningest coach in college baseball history with 1,284 victories and 11 national championships in 43 years, said pitching could be the strength of his team.

Of the 16 pitchers in camp before a round of cuts were made June 18, eight were chosen in the first round of the major league's free-agent draft and all 16 went in the first three rounds.

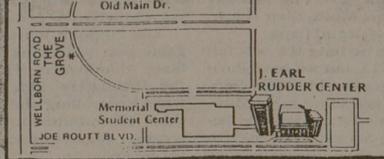
"Of course, I'm sorry Cuba won't be in the tournament," Dedeaux said. "But it's still going to be a good field and will still do a lot in furthering the sport of baseball."

A turnout of more than 400,000 fans is expected at Dodger Stadium.

The Grove is now offering a pass for each summer session and one for the entire summer. The session pass will admit you to all movies in either session for only \$10.00 (that's \$22.50 worth of films for just \$10.00, or 56% savings). The season pass will admit you to all the movies, all summer long for only \$15.00 (that's \$45.00 worth of films for only \$15.00, or 67% savings). Passes will be sold during registration and at the MSC Box Office. For more information call the Student Programs Office at 845-1515.

Movie begins 8:45 p.m.
Gate opens 8:00 p.m.
A&M student with I.D. \$.75
Non-students \$1.50
Children (7-12) \$1.00
Children (6 and under) FREE
Session Pass (admission for one session at 56% savings) \$10.00
Season Pass (admission for the summer at 67% savings) \$15.00

The Grove
MSC Summer Film Series



All children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult. No one under the age of 17 will be admitted to an R-rated film unless accompanied by a parent or an adult guardian. In inclement weather, films will be shown in Rudder Tower. Call 845-1515 or 845-4511 for the room number.

July 15
Fantastic Planet
This widely acclaimed film combines animation, philosophical theories and surrealism into the story of a planet where two races have evolved and compete. 1973, 72 minutes, PG.

July 16
Reds
This gripping film stars Warren Beatty as a reporter who sensationalizes the Russian revolution and pushes for the Socialist cause in the United States. Diane Keaton, Jack Nicholson, Maureen Stapleton. 1981, 199 minutes, PG.

July 17
That's Entertainment
A compilation of MGM's golden years when musicals ruled the box office, featuring Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, Gene Kelly, and many more. 1974, 131 minutes, G.

July 18
How to Marry a Millionaire
Marilyn Monroe, Lauren Bacall and Betty Grable decide the road to happiness is hooking a man with bucks to spare. 1953, 96 minutes.

July 19
The Exorcist
Emotional film based on the 1949 case in which a Jesuit priest expelled a demon from a 14-year-old child. Linda Blair, Ellen Burstyn, lots of green pea soup. 1973, 121 minutes, R.

July 20 & 21
Star Trek II—The Wrath of Khan
The crew of the *Enterprise* runs into their old nemesis Khan from the earth's past. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, Ricardo Montalban. 1982, 113 minutes, PG.

July 22
American Pop
Ralph Bakshi, director of "Fritz the Cat" and "The Lord of the Rings" directs this journey through four generations of American music. 1980, 97 minutes, R.

July 23
West Side Story
Story of racial tensions as a white boy falls in love with a Puerto Rican girl. A modern-day *Romeo and Juliet* with an incredible score by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim. Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Rita Moreno. 1961, 152 minutes.

July 24
Breaking Away
An offbeat comedy about the rivalry between high school graduates and the snooty college kids that builds to a climax for the university bicycle race. Dennis Christopher, Dennis Quaid. 1979, 99 minutes, PG.

July 25
National Lampoon's Animal House
War breaks out on campus between the pseudo-sophisticate Omegas and the misfit Delta. John Belushi, Tim Matheson, Donald Sutherland. 1978, 93 minutes, R.

July 26
Still of the Night
A psychiatrist's ordered life is disrupted when he meets and falls in love with a woman who may be the murderer of one of his patients. Meryl Streep, Roy Scheider. 1982, 91 minutes, PG.

July 27 & 28
Eyes Without a Face
In order to get her attention, a janitor offers a newswoman eyewitness information concerning a murder. William Hurt, Sigourney Weaver, Christopher Plummer. 1981, 102 minutes, R.

July 29
The Last Unicorn
Animated tale concerning love, loss and life's limitations. 1982, 88 minutes, G.

July 30
Ordinary People
A sensitive, realistic film that deals with a family's reaction to the loss of one of its members. Timothy Hutton, Mary Tyler Moore, Donald Sutherland, Robert Redford's directorial debut. 1980, 124 minutes, R.

July 31
Singin' in the Rain
Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, and Donald O'Connor frolic through the changover from silents to talkies in Hollywood. Considered by many the musical-comedy of all time. 1952, 101 minutes.

August 1
*M*A*S*H*
Medical unit M*A*S*H 4077th deals with the sadness and horror of the Korean "conlict" through outrageous practical jokes and black humor. Elliot Gould, Donald Sutherland. 1970, 116 minutes, R.

August 2
Midnight Express
The true story of William Hayes, who was held and tortured in a Turkish prison for a minor offense. Brad Davis, Randy Quaid. 1978, 120 minutes, R.

August 3 & 4
Mr. Mom
Michael Keaton and Terri Garr star in this fresh, funny look at the familiar role reversal comedy. You've seen the premise on T.V. before, but it has never been this funny. 1983, 95 minutes, PG.

August 5
Peter Pan
Walt Disney fantasy affirms Peter's belief that childhood dreams will never die as long as you have your imagination. 1950, 77 minutes, G.

August 6
The Great Gatsby
The feel of the Jazz Age is captured perfectly in this adaptation of the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel. Robert Redford, Mia Farrow. 1974, 146 minutes, PG.

August 7
Gun With Dick and Jane
A young couple supports their overextended lifestyle by taking up armed robbery in this witty satire. Jane Fonda, George Segal. 1977, 95 minutes, PG.

August 8
Young Frankenstein
A comic parody masterpiece by Mel Brooks. Gene Wilder, Madeline Kahn, Terri Garr. 1975, 105 minutes, PG.

August 9
The War of the Worlds
H.G. Wells' chilling book about the invasion by the Martians is updated to include the menace of the atomic bomb. Gene Barry, Ann Robinson. 1953, 85 minutes.

August 10 & 11
Missing
A journalist's wife and father search for him in the political chaos of a troubled South American country. Jack Lemmon, Sissy Spacek. 1982, 122 minutes, PG.

August 12
The Point
A simple tale that successfully attacks a complex issue: prejudice. A classic. 1971, 75 minutes, G.

August 13
My Fair Lady
On a bet, Professor Henry Higgins attempts to turn a cockney flower girl into cultured English gentility. Audrey Hepburn, Rex Harrison. 1964, 170 minutes, G.

August 14
Harold and Maude
A wealthy death-obsessed teenager falls in love with a lively octogenarian in this joyous black comedy. Ruth Gordon, Bud Cort. 1971, 92 minutes, PG.

August 15
9 to 5
Three abused secretaries find a simple solution to their problem: dispose of the boss, or at least keep him indisposed until he's a bit more amenable to their suggestions. Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton. 1980, 110 minutes, PG.

August 16
A Boy and His Dog
A tale of survival on post-apocalyptic earth. 2024. Don Johnson, Susanne Benton. 1975, 91 minutes, R.

MSC Summer Dinner Theatre

MSC Summer Dinner Theatre proudly announces the exciting theatrical menu for this summer. These two plays are perfect offerings suitable for the entire family. The season opens with the romantic comedy *Bell, Book and Candle* by John van Druten, running from July 5-8 (Thursday-Sunday matinee). You also won't want to miss *Towards Zero* by Agatha Christie, a whodunit guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your seat! *Towards Zero* runs August 1-4 (Wednesday-Saturday). Season tickets and group rates available at the MSC Box Office, 845-1234.