

Cashing in on non-revenue sports

by Lydia Berzsenyi

Here's a bit of Aggie Trivia for you, dear readers. Can you name at least six of the eight women's sports played at Texas A&M University? Too hard? O.K. How about this one: What is the only A&M sports team to have ever won a National championship? Or this one: What sports, besides football, basketball

and baseball does A&M have to offer?

Stumped? Well, perhaps you are a sports buff or a trivia know-it-all and can answer these questions without batting an eye, but it would be a pretty safe bet to say that most of you don't know much about the non-revenue sports at A&M.

There are 13 sports at A&M that have teams participating in games and tournaments through the National Collegiate Athletic Association, each with its own story of success, and each with its own problems. These sports may not be publicized as well as the revenue sports, but they, too,

are an important part of the sports spectrum at A&M.

Mel Nash has coached both the men's and women's swim teams at A&M for the last eight years, and during that period he has built an impressive record.

Nash was named SWC Men's Coach of the Year last

year, and SWC Women's Coach of the Year this year. In the eight years he has been at A&M, Nash has not only helped both of his teams win conference and national victories, but has also coached several award winning individuals.

Although there was not a

single All-American swimmer in the 20 years before Nash arrived on the Aggie scene, 15 swimmers have attained Honorable Mention or All-American ranking in the past three years.

Currently, one student who has already fulfilled his years of eligibility is still working out with the team to train for the 1988 Olympics.

The swim teams participate in 10 to 18 swim meets each year, as well as NCAA and SWC championships. Both teams have won impressive victories in the SWC. The men's team has placed both fourth and fifth in past years, and the women's team has placed third for two years, both times within one point of second place. In NCAA championships, the men have placed 21st and the women have placed 11th.

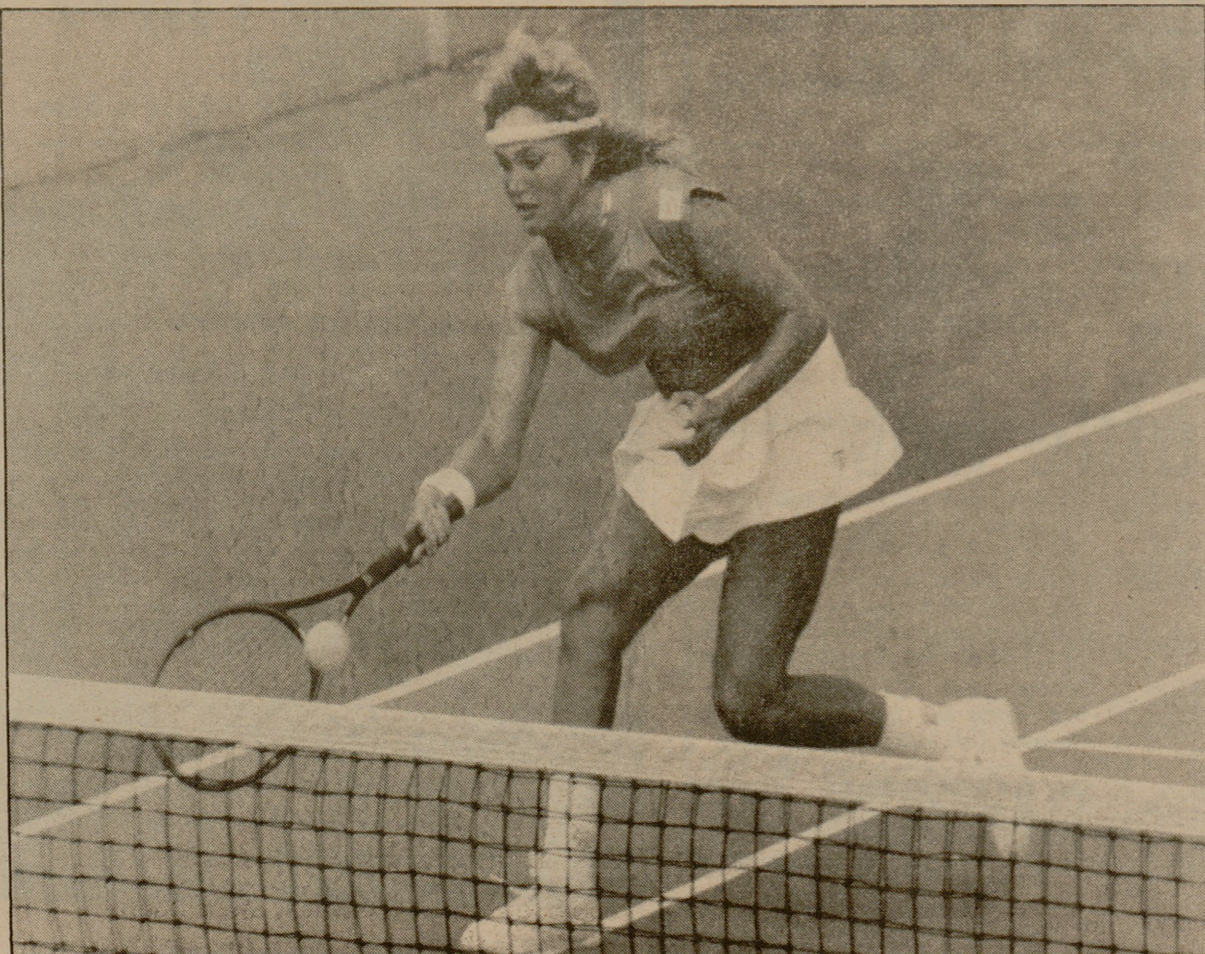
Nash says that one reason the teams have not placed higher is that there are three diving events in meets, and A&M's lack of diving facilities places the Aggie teams at a definite disadvantage in the overall scoring.

Lack of proper facilities is a disadvantage not only with regard to diving, but also with regard to recruiting and overall competition potential. The A&M pools are 55 years old, and although there has recently been talk of a huge new natatorium, the swimmers are forced to practice in old inadequate facilities.

Nash says that although the present facilities may have been adequate for the 10,000 students who attended A&M in the 1960s, they are hardly sufficient for today's student population, not to mention the swimming teams. Nash says that his teams have plenty of potential, but would need decent facilities to place themselves consistently in the top 10 or 20 in the nation.

Compared with other schools with which the team competes, Nash says A&M's program is one of the best. He says the Athletic Department is very supportive, both financially and otherwise, and that despite the lack of top-notch swimming facilities, A&M has some of the best training facilities around.

The women's softball team has also earned quite a bit of



Last year the women's tennis team placed first in the SWC and 15th in the nation.