

## Aggie swim coach manufactures winners

By Chris Whitley  
Of The Battalion Staff

The most prominent feature of Mel Nash's office is the row of certificates lining the walls heralding the All-American swimmers that he has coached at Texas A&M.

There are thirty of them. But the Aggie swim team has not always enjoyed such success.

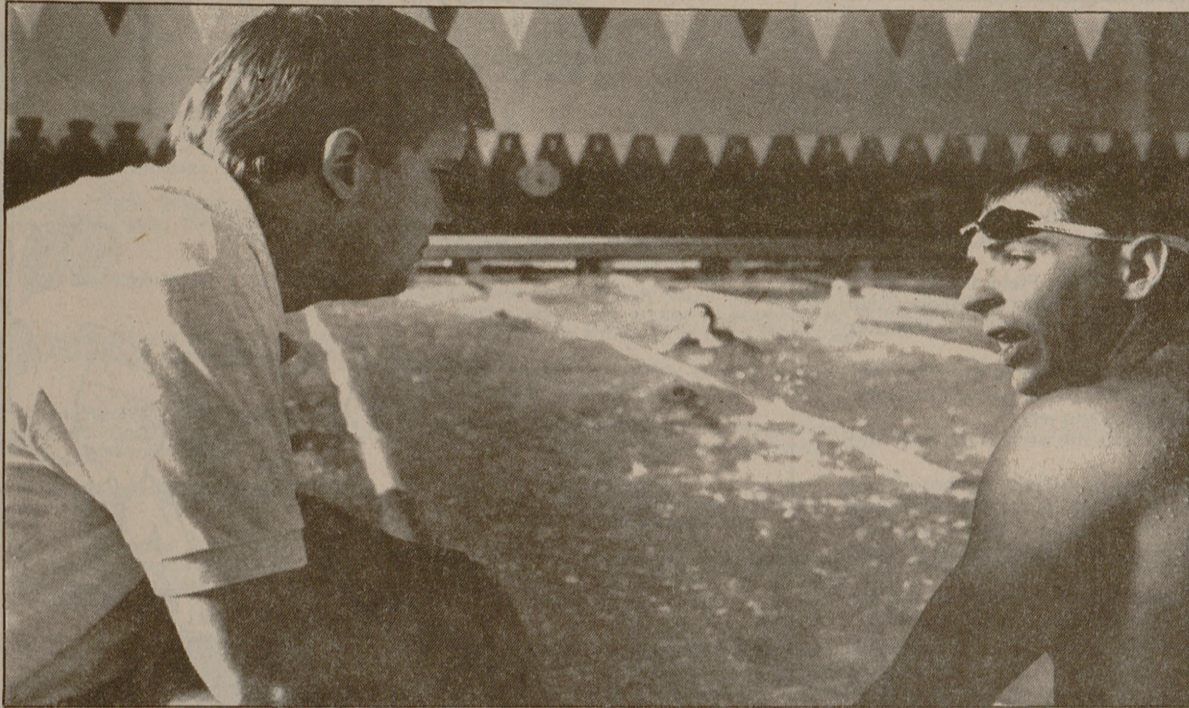
"Before 1983, there hadn't been an NCAA All-American (from A&M) since '59," said Nash, now in his twelfth season at the helm of the Aggie swimming program.

This year he has put together another nationally acclaimed team.

The men's team finished the dual meet season with a 6-2 record, which includes a loss last weekend to Texas, defending NCAA champions and currently the top ranked team in the country.

**"I went to Indiana for five years, but I'd been here for eleven, so I was more Aggie than Hoosier."**

— Mel Nash,  
Aggie swimming coach



RICHARD S. JAMES/The Battalion

Texas A&M swimming team coach Mel Nash discusses swimming style with Aggie swimmer Steve Kitzman, while the team tunes up for the upcoming conference swim meet. Nash's charges are 6-2 in dual meets this season and are ranked 17th in the nation, despite losing to the top-ranked Texas Longhorns last week.

ing for the NCAA Championships in Indianapolis.

Senior Todd Bartee could qualify in the breaststroke and the individual medley.

Two freshmen also have a shot. Robert Fleming, who has only been swimming for three years, has already qualified for the 1992 U.S. Olympic Trials and Don Haddow was on the 1988 Canadian Olympic team.

Overall, Nash hopes that seven to nine of his swimmers make the NAAs, but he said there are about 15 that have a shot.

Nash harvested a big recruiting class last year that upped the number of swimmers on the men's team to 21.

Recruitment boomed at A&M when Nash turned down an opportunity to coach at his alma mater, Indiana.

James "Doc" Councilman, one of the dean's of collegiate swim coaches, retired last year and Nash, who was part of an NCAA title-winning team under Councilman a Indiana, was offered the job.

"They just figured I would go, you know, everybody always goes back to their alma mater if they get the job," Nash said. "But I wanted to stay here. My heart was here."

"I mean, I went to Indiana for five years, but I'd been here for eleven, so I was more Aggie than I was Hoosier."

Nash said within 48 hours of his decision to stay, he received three commitments from swimmers his staff had been recruiting.

It would seem that with the stability of coaching and the success along with it, grabbing top-notch prospects would be fairly easy. However, the A&M swimming program suffers from one major setback, its pool.

P. L. Downs Natatorium, built in 1932, is described by Nash and others as "the worst facility in the country."

It seats roughly 450 people compared to Texas' 2,000-seat natatorium. The Longhorns' pool is almost twice as large as Downs.

However, a new natatorium for Texas A&M is in the planning

stages. Nash hopes to have it ready for the 1993 season.

Besides being outdated, Downs is only 10 feet deep. NCAA regulations say that diving pools must be at least 12 feet deep. Therefore, A&M's diving program is nonexistent.

"The kids that we have diving right now do very, very simple dives," Nash said. "They really just compete to get the points that are there. There's no way they could beat anybody. They're swimmers faking diving."

Since diving is a part of every meet, A&M concedes vital points in each meet. Last year, the men's and women's teams had a combined record of 8-7. If the diving points were not counted, their record would have been 13-2.

"We start every dual meet down 32-6, and we're 6-2," Nash said. "That's been difficult for us, but the kids have done a great job of working around it and through it and have kept a good attitude."

An example of their perseverance was this year's match against #12 ranked SMU.

The Aggies overcame a 26-point diving deficit to beat the Ponies, 122-121. Nash compared it to spotting Texas' football team two touchdowns and coming back to win.

As the team gears up for the SWC meet which starts March 7, expectations are running high for the Aggies, but even Nash is quick to point out that no one will touch the Longhorns.

"It maybe hard for people to understand that going into the meet, you'd have to almost have a van of one team wreck on the way to the pool to change the outcome," Nash said.

Yet Nash remains confident. He has seen the swim program develop from pretender into national contender, and a new natatorium seems to be in the future.

Nash might need to make room in his office for more certificates.

The Aggies are ranked 17th, and have been as high as 15th. However, as Nash states, the bulk of the season is yet to come.

"As much as the dual meets are important, the whole season, in swimming mentality, depends on your conference championship meet and your NCAA championship meet."

The Aggies will head to the Southwest Conference Championship in Austin loaded with talent. Leading the team is Steve Lutz, the defending SWC champion in the 400 meter individual medley.

"He's done a great job for us all year," Nash said about Lutz. "He's given us some sure points in all of our dual meets."

Lutz, along with several other Aggie swimmers, has a shot at qualify-

## Sunday's matchup between No. 1 and No. 2 set

# Unbeaten Razorbacks gobble up Cougars 81-74

HOUSTON (AP) — The No. 2 Arkansas Razorbacks minded the table manners coach Nolan Richardson set out for them and now they're ready for the main course.

With a showdown against No. 1 Nevada-Las Vegas awaiting them on Sunday, Todd Day scored 30 points and Lee Mayberry highlighted a 15-0 run that rallied the Razorbacks to an 81-74 victory over Houston Thursday night.

Coach said that Houston is the table setter and Vegas is the meal," center Oliver Miller said. "We had to set the table tonight. All you hear about is Vegas, Vegas, Vegas."

"We had to prove a point in the conference tonight, and now Vegas is the big game." Houston held a 67-63 lead with 7:22 to play but a 15-0 Arkansas run assured the Razorbacks of their 20th consecutive victory.

But Houston went scoreless for 6:48 while Arkansas ran off 15 straight points.

"The table was set for a big, big upset," Richardson said. "Houston played its best game of the year tonight, I thought."

"I was glad our guys were able to come

back. That was quite a game. We proved we could get behind and still come back and win on the road."

Arkansas (23-1, 10-0) will step outside Southwest Conference play on Sunday and host top-ranked and unbeaten UNLV.



Derrick Smith and Alvaro Teheran each scored 20 points for the Cougars and Oliver Miller added 16 for the Razorbacks, who snapped Houston's 18-game winning streak at home.

"We were scared to attack when they were on their run," Day said. "I told Lee we needed

to attack and he hit the big 3-pointer that jumper.

Houston got its first lead of the game, 58-57, with 12:48 to play on a basket by Teheran.

Coach said that Houston is the table setter and Vegas is the meal. We had to set the table tonight. All you hear about is Vegas, Vegas, Vegas."

— Oliver Miller  
Arkansas center

"We had a perfect setting tonight," Houston coach Pat Foster said. "But when they went up 78-76, we made four or five bad plays in a row and they kept their poise and made the play on the offensive end."

## Ags seek second win

By Scott Wudel  
Of The Battalion Staff

The Aggies finally got over the hump.

The Texas A&M basketball team will look for their second consecutive win Saturday night against Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. The game will begin at 7:30.

TCU, 5-4 in the Southwest Conference and 14-6 overall, lost to Southern Methodist University Tuesday.

The Aggies, 6-15 overall, grabbed their first conference win Wednesday night against Texas Tech University, 70-63.

A&M improved its road record to 3-9 for the season. The Aggies ended their nine-game SWC losing streak with the victory.

A&M coach Kermit Davis Jr. said the players looked at films of past games and realized they were a better team than their record showed.

Davis said he likes the way his guards have been playing.

Brooks Thompson has been the most consistent Aggie on the court lately.

Thompson has scored a total of 45 points in A&M's last two games while shooting 19 for 24 from the field.

Lynn Suber has also been a solid contributor in the Aggies' last two contests, averaging 14 points.

Freddie Ricks scored a season-high 12 points against the Raiders.

Davis said the key to the Aggies' first conference victory was rebounding, which had been a problem in their previous close games.

Rashone Lewis and Shedrick Anderson continue to play tough in the middle. Each player is scoring in double figures in the last two games while pulling down a combined 27 rebounds.

TCU's key performers are Michael Strickland and Reggie Smith. The Horned Forgs Mark Moton contributed 16 points in TCU's loss to SMU.

TCU defeated the Aggies Jan. 9 in College Station, 80-72.

The Aggies remain in the conference cellar, one game behind Baylor.

A&M will host SMU next Wednesday in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

## Lady Aggies face Frogs

The Lady Aggies hope to end their three-game losing streak against TCU.

A&M will play the Saturday Lady Frogs in Fort Worth. The game will start at 5:00 p.m.

A&M is 4-6 in SWC play and 9-11 overall. The Lady Frogs are 2-7 in the conference, while holding a 5-15 overall record.

The Lady Aggies lost to Texas Tech, 66-55, Tuesday night.

Sheri Dillard led the team with 16 points.

A&M returns home to face SMU Tuesday night.

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