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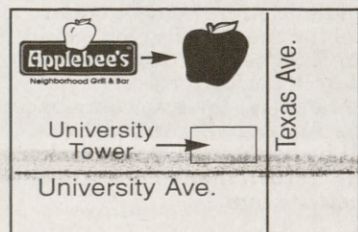
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Student Rec Center set to open Aug. 2

□ The \$36.4 million complex will provide jobs and recreation for A&M students.

Staff and Wire Reports

On Aug. 26, Texas A&M students will finally get to see what all the hype - and the extra \$50 on their fee statements - is all about.

On the Saturday before fall classes begin, the Student Recreation Center will open its doors for the first time.

"What we've planned to do is give the keys to the building to the student body president (Toby Boeing), who will then dedicate the building to the students," Assistant Director of Recreational Sports Judy Reising said. "This will start at 6 p.m., and the students will pretty much have the run of the place until about 2 a.m."

Construction began on the center in 1994, but the opening has been delayed several times because of various problems. The \$36.4 million building takes up 286,000 square feet on A&M's West Campus and is adjacent to Olsen Field.

The \$50-per-semester fee entitles A&M students the use of nearly everything in the complex from 6 a.m. to midnight on weekdays and from 10 a.m. to midnight on weekends.

"Use of lockers, along with

the exercise classes will cost additional," Reising said. "However on Monday through Saturday, we will offer one free exercise class for students who don't have the time or money to make the other classes."

One of the most prominent features of the center is the natatorium, which will be the new home for the Texas A&M Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Teams.

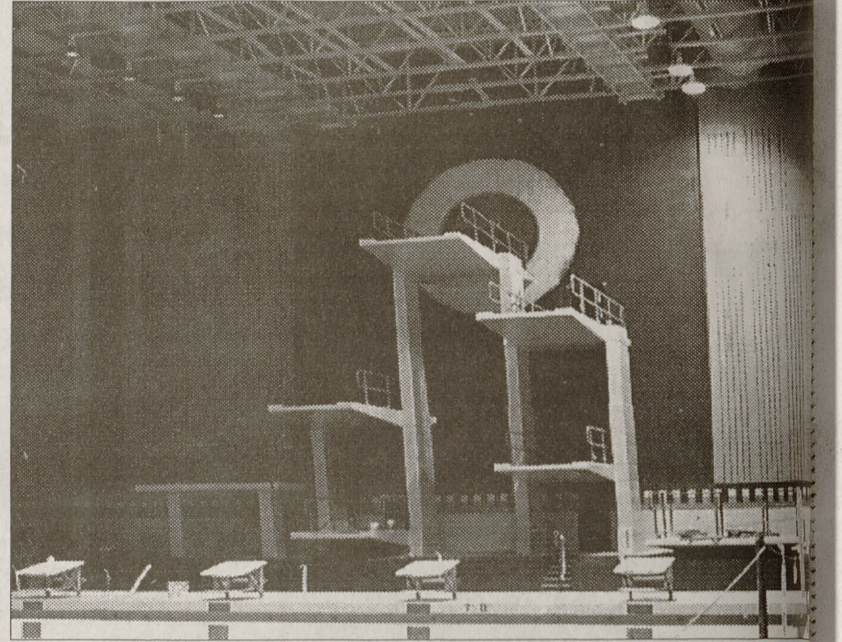
The natatorium is comprised of a 50-meter, eight-lane competition pool, a 17-foot deep diving pool with 1-, 3-, 5-, 7 and 1 1/2- and 10-meter platforms. The natatorium has 1,300 seats and room for up to 1,200 additional temporary seats.

The Student Recreational Center will host the 1996 Big 12 Swimming and Diving Championships. Reising said the athletic department is in the process of courting several other tournaments for the natatorium.

The center will offer something for everyone, regardless of what sport they enjoy.

On the third floor of the facility is a 1/4-mile, four-lane track for walking and jogging. At the front of the facility, the track passes next to an observational window that overlooks Olsen Field.

A&M's first permanent rock-climbing wall is located inside the center and allows students to climb four stories with the help of handholds and



The nearly-completed natatorium at the Student Recreational Center will host the 1996 Big 12 Swimming and Diving Championships.

footholds. Students must pass a skills test before attempting to climb.

For more conventional sporting areas, there are eight multipurpose gyms for basketball, volleyball, soccer and badminton, along with 12 racquetball courts.

In the outside activity area, there are four sand volleyball courts and several basketball courts, all with fiberglass backboards.

Currently, all intramural games are held in the Read Building and G. Rollie White Coliseum. Reising said the plan is to move 'A' and 'B' intramural leagues to the new facility while 'C' and 'D' will remain at Read and G. Rollie White.

"We feel this will encourage more people to join intramurals to have a chance to play in the new building and encourage people to play in a higher bracket," Reising said.

The center also houses one 50-seat and one 150-seat classroom on the second floor. It has four 2,000-square-foot activity rooms and a large special events room with a seating capacity for a 430-person banquet.

Fully-equipped locker rooms are available on the first floor, along with staff offices for coaches, lifeguards and pool personnel.

For those into lighter activity, the first floor houses several games areas with video

games, board games and tennis. A snack area will be as well as a retail store for clothing and sports equipment.

Perhaps the most impressive part of the new center is the 14,000-square-foot fitness room. The room features machine weights and cardio equipment.

A very special feature of the locker rooms is what Reising called the family changing area.

"This is helpful especially for graduate students' families," Reising said. "If a father brings his daughter to swim, he can help change her in this room instead of having to take her to the men's locker room, which can be used by caretakers for people with disabilities."

Not only does the center provide students with a variety of opportunities for intramural activity, but it also provides them with opportunities for working on campus.

The Recreational Sports Department currently has applications for more than 200 jobs at the center. The jobs include lifeguards, pool attendants, equipment department, equipment room attendants and leaders.

Trip leaders working in conjunction with the TAMU Study Abroad Center will offer a variety of clinics, workshops and trips that vary in length and destination.

Information on all of the jobs can be obtained by calling the Rec Sports Department at 845-7826.



A 42-foot tall rock climbing wall is part of the new Student Recreational Center.

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