

Men's swimming and diving head towards crunch time

Naftanel turns injury-plagued freshman year into successful sophomore year

By COURTNEY LYONS
THE BATTALION

On the heels of a turbulent freshman year, Texas A&M diver Mark Naftanel has had to put a lot behind him to prepare for this season.

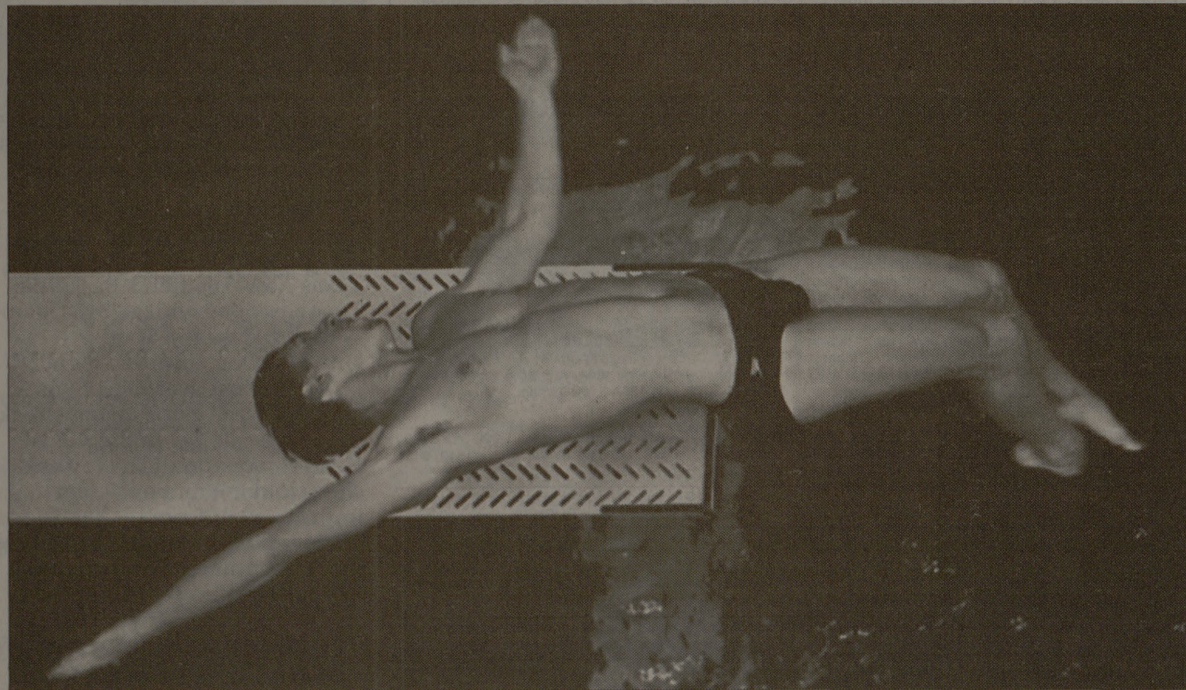
After hitting his head on the diving board in November of last season, the sophomore spent the off-season strengthening both his body and his mind.

A&M Head Diving Coach Kevin Wright said the new strength-training program Naftanel has been working with has helped him prepare better for the season.

"This has been a year of growth for him," Wright said. "He is staying within his own realm of comfort in meets."

Despite the scare of hitting his head, Naftanel was able to come back to win the Southwest Conference 10-meter championship last February by over 115 points, becoming the first Aggie diver to win a conference title in 50 years.

At the NCAA Zone meet in Arkansas, he again hit the diving



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Sophomore **Mark Naftanel** performs an inward one and a half with a two and a half twist dive against Tennessee Jan. 16 at the Student Recreation Center. Naftanel won the event.

board and was taken to the hospital. Add that to an injury which left his foot in a cast, and one may wonder why he returned to the pool at all.

However, Wright said Naftanel enjoys being a part of the team and loves the sport too much to not compete.

"His desire (to compete) outweighs any fears he might have," Wright said.

During the off-season, the Aggie divers began training with a new weight program, enabling Naftanel to perform a new list of dives with a higher degree of difficulty than those he performed

last year.

Last week in a dual meet with Tennessee, Naftanel went head-to-head on the one-meter springboard with 1994 World Champion Evan Stewart — and won.

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By COURTNEY LYONS
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M University has not been known, in recent times, for its prowess in the pool. The Texas A&M Men's Swimming and Diving Teams, however, are beginning to turn some heads at both the conference and national levels.

The Aggies have improved this season over last year's efforts, and are now ranked 18th in the nation. The Aggies have had a challenging season so far, competing against four of last year's top-10 teams.

A&M Men's Head Swimming Coach Mel Nash said swimming against top-level programs makes the Aggies stronger.

"These dual meets against strong programs raise our competition level," Nash said.

The Aggies have come on strong this season, beating Kansas on the road, and setting a new record in the freestyle relay at the U.S. Open at the beginning of December, where A&M beat the powerhouse University of Southern California in head-to-head competition.

Senior backstroke Robb Pantano said dual meets with top teams have given the Aggies competitive experience against some of the fastest swimmers in the nation.

"We have learned not to back down, not to be intimidated," Pantano said.

These wins, coupled with a tough loss in a dual meet against

Louisiana State University have prepared the Aggies for their upcoming competitions in their dual meet with the defending national champions, the University of Texas, the Big 12 Conference meet (which will be held in College Station), and the NCAA Zone competition, for which several Aggies have already qualified.

"Even though we lost the dual meet to LSU, it was our best dual meet ever," Nash said. "The team swam well and improved their times and mental toughness considerably."



Nash

Nash said after the tough meets this season, his team knows they can compete on the national level.

Pantano said if the new members of the team can mentally focus on their races and swim the Big 12 Championships like a normal meet, the team will do well, both in conference and NCAA action.

"We need to get over the 'big meet' feeling, and concentrate on swimming the way we know we can," Pantano said.

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Looks can be deceiving

Junior swimmer Danee Mastagni seems serious on the blocks, but she always has a song running through her head

By SARA DUESING
THE BATTALION

Her hands fidget with her goggles, twisting them over and over again. An intimidating look encompasses her face as she stands before the water, ready to race. The whistle blows, and Danee Mastagni of the Texas A&M Women's Swimming Team appears focused and determined.

"It's funny, my friends in the stands say I look so serious," Mastagni said. "But usually, something ridiculous is running through my mind, like the words to a song."

Though Mastagni may not be the most serious of athletes, she is tough. And her teammates praise her for contributing a light-hearted and pos-

itive attitude to the group.

Sophomore teammate Lauren Buckalo said Mastagni is constantly making someone laugh.

"She is always in a happy mood," Buckalo said. "She is real positive and sincerely wants everyone to do well."

The junior from New Orleans, La., has not only made an impression on her teammates but on her competition as well. Specializing in the breaststroke and individual medley, Mastagni has posted some noteworthy times in races this season.

Against Louisiana State University

last November, Mastagni finished the 200-meter breaststroke with a time of 2:17.54. At the same meet, she posted a 2:07.91 finish in the 200-meter individual medley.

"She is always in a happy mood. She is real positive and sincerely wants to do well."

Lauren Buckalo
Sophomore teammate

Head Women's Swimming Coach Don Wagner said the reasons why Mastagni's teammates chose her to be team captain are obvious. In addition to her experience and success, he said, she is completely supportive of the other swimmers.

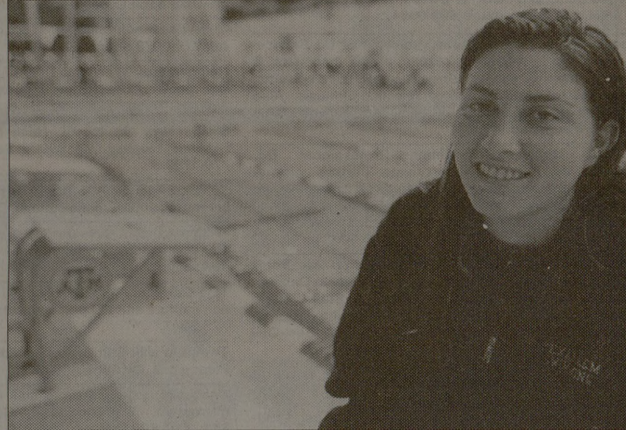
Mastagni, who was a consolation finalist at the Olympic Trials last year, has found some tough competition within her own team in ath-

letes such as Buckalo, but has maintained her positive spirit.

"Lauren has beat her a couple of times, but (Danee) is never one to be upset," Wagner said. "She is always the first to congratulate her."

With ambitions to attend law school, Mastagni said that although she loves swimming, she is sure this is the only time in her life she will participate in such rigorous training. But for now, she is enjoying herself and the rewards that come with such hard work.

"After a really hard workout and you've done this amazing thing in the water, you get this sense of accomplishment," Mastagni said. "(Swimming) has brought me closer to my teammates, too."



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Junior **Danee Mastagni** was a consolation finalist at the Olympic Trials last year.

See **MASTAGNI**, Page 8

The Race and Ethnic Studies Institute and the Music Program (College of Liberal Arts) at Texas A&M University present:

Free Concert

in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

New Arts Six

Thursday, January 23, 1997

7:30 p.m.

Rudder Theater on the Texas A&M Campus

For more information about this program, please contact the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute at 409-845-0966.



"It's a small victory, but this is what the members of New Arts Six do: teach Spirituals, preserve Spirituals, and, most of all, perform Spirituals for adults as well as children." *Dallas Morning News* (Feb. 6, 1994)

New Arts Six was founded in 1986 by six Dallas-based African American women who saw a need to revitalize the musical legacy of African Americans. They will present "A Joyful Noise", a production set at the turn of the century, with six women recounting their joys and sorrows through songs, Spirituals, and poetry.

Partial funding for this program is provided by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Additional support for the program has been provided by the B/CS Eagle, the Texas A&M Department of Multicultural Services, and the Texas A&M Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

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Bring: Scantron 882-E, pencil,
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If you have any questions, contact:
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Intro to Library Full-Text Databases and Electronic Journals

The library offers a variety of databases which include the full-text of many journal articles and reports.

Learn about these time saving databases, as well as techniques to refine your search to return more accurate results. Accessing databases from the library's Web page, the availability of full-text electronic journals, and citing electronic information will also be discussed.

Wednesday, January 22 . . . 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
Monday, January 27 . . . 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 28 . . . 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

All classes will be held in Evans Library, room 204B

For more information, call 862-1060