

# A&M 4x100 relay team captures national title

## Ags finish season with success at NAAs

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

BLOOMINGTON, IND — The Texas A&M 400-meter relay team brought home its first national crown since 1988 at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in Bloomington, Ind., this weekend.

The team comprised of Michael Price, Toya Jones, Bill Fobbs and Danny McCray captured the title with a season best and Haught Track Complex record time of 38.80. The foursome is undefeated this season and their winning time was the fourth-fastest in school history and the fastest by an A&M foursome since the other national champion relay in 1988 (38.71).

"I'm really proud of what this group of guys accomplished this year," A&M Head Coach Ted Nelson said. "Winning the national crown in the 4x100 is a real plus for the

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**Ted Nelson**  
A&M head track coach

Texas A&M track program and the entire A&M athletic department, there's only one of these in the nation and Texas A&M has it."

In 1970 and 1979, Nelson said the Aggies were undefeated throughout the season only to have their winning streaks snapped at the NCAA Championships.

"The secret to the whole thing

was that we were able to run the same group in the same order throughout the year," Nelson said. "They really got comfortable with each other and kept gaining confidence. You develop a lot of camaraderie when you have that much continuity."

In other races, senior Ryan Thierault earned All-America honors with an 11th-place finish in the decathlon Thursday.

Thierault scored a season-best 7,412 points over the two-day event. Sophomore Kendall Madden placed 14th with a two-day score of 7,070.

"Ryan had his typical not-spectacular first-day, but really came on today," Nelson said. "He really had good performances in the hurdles and the discus, and he PRed in the pole vault. I'm proud of the way he battled today."

### RELAY SEASON IN REVIEW

College Station Relays, March 15 — 39.95 (1st)	(Price, Jones, Fobbs, McCray)
Baylor/Dr. Pepper, March 22 — 39.57 (1st)	(Price, Jones, Fobbs, McCray)
A&M-UT Dual, March 29 — 40.02 (1st)	(Price, Jones, Fobbs, McCray)
Texas Relays, April 5 — 39.04 (1st)	(Price, Jones, Fobbs, McCray)
U. Texas 5-Way, April 19 — 39.58 (1st)	(Price, McKinney, Fobbs, McCray)
Penn Relay Carnival, April 26 — 38.92 (1st)	(Price, Jones, Fobbs, McCray)
Big 12 Championships, May 18 — 39.30 (1st)	(Price, Jones, Fobbs, McCray)



PHOTOGRAPH: Tim Moog

Michael Price, a member of the A&M 4x100-meter relay team, practices starting out of the blocks earlier this season.

# The Mailman delivers to tie up series, 2-2

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — This time, the Mailman delivered on Sunday.

With the direction of the NBA Finals hanging in the balance, Karl Malone shook the history of playoff foul line failures, and made the two greatest free throws of his life.

The shots gave Utah a three-point lead with 17 seconds left, and the Jazz went on to beat the Chicago Bulls 78-73 Sunday night to even the finals at two games apiece. "I said earlier that I wished I could be that situation," Malone said. "I just wanted everything out and concentrated."

Series will resume here Wednesday night with the Jazz looking to become the first team ever to take a 3-2 lead over Chicago in the final round. As it is, they are the first team since Portland in 1992 to be tied with the Bulls after four games.

And their latest victory might just convince them that they have a legitimate chance, even though they'll need to win at least one game in Chicago.

It was the second-lowest scoring game in NBA Finals history, and the Jazz won it in

part by holding the Bulls without a point over the final two minutes and scoring the game's last nine points. Michael Jordan had a chance to tie it with six seconds left, but he missed an off-balance 3-pointer that would have made it 76-76.

Malone rebounded the miss and fed the ball out, and Bryon Russell went in for an uncontested slam that put an exclamation point on Utah's stirring victory.

Malone ran over and hugged coach Jerry Sloan for several seconds in an emotional display of the vindication Malone obviously felt after making his final two foul shots.

It was just a week earlier that Malone went to the line in the closing seconds of Game 1 with a chance to break a tie game and put Utah in position for an upset.

But after Pippen walked over and told him "The Mailman doesn't deliver on Sunday," Malone missed both shots and Jordan won the game on a buzzer-beating 21-footer.

The circumstances weren't exactly the same this time — Utah led by one and the fans were quiet rather than screaming — but Pippen tried to do what he could to make history repeat itself.

With Malone stepping to the line to take the first shot, Pippen tried to walk over and say something but had his path blocked by Utah's Jeff Hornacek.



Pippen went into rebounding position and yelled "Karl!, Karl!" at Malone, but the MVP didn't respond.

He bounced in the first one and made the second to make it 76-73, and the Bulls, who had no timeouts left, inbounded the ball.

The ball went to Jordan, of course, outside the 3-point line. He dribbled right, left his feet and tried to square himself in the air, and the 23-footer looked good while it was in the air.

But it bounced in and out, Malone rebounded and Russell was soon going in for the finisher.

"He missed those shots, but how many times have you seen him make them?" Utah coach Jerry Sloan said. "You've got a 50 percent chance he'll miss it. You have to have a little bit of luck."

Malone ended up with 23 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, but he might not have been the MVP of this game despite his two late free throws and eight fourth-quarter points.

That distinction would belong to John Stockton, who made big play after big play over the final 2 1/2 minutes to lead Utah back from a five-point deficit.

"I always felt that we had a chance," Sloan said. "John made some sensational plays, and Karl made the big free throws."

Things looked bleak for the Jazz after Jordan went in for an uncontested fast-break dunk with 2:38 left to make it 71-66.

But Stockton calmly made downturn, waited for a screen at the 3-point line and hit a 25-footer that re-energized the Jazz. Jordan scored on a 16-footer and Hornacek missed a runner, giving the ball back to Chicago.

Everyone knew where it was going, including Stockton. And when Jordan ended up with the ball at the top of the key, Stockton sneaked in and stripped it.

Stockton had a two-step head start, but Jordan caught him by the time he reached the basket and seemed to make a great block. But the officials called a foul and Stockton made one of two to pull Utah within three.

Pippen then missed a corner jumper, Stockton was fouled and made both with 1:03 left to make the deficit one.

Then came one of the greatest plays ever made in crunch time of an NBA Finals game. Stockton rebounded a missed jumper by Jordan and fired a baseball pass all the way downcourt to Malone, who had kept running after trying to block Jordan's shot. The 80-foot pass caught Malone in stride and he converted the layup that put Utah ahead to stay, 74-73.

"At first, I hollered, 'Oh, No!,'" Sloan said. "It was a great pass and Karl was able to finish."

"That was a great pass. It looked like we

# Student-athletes kept on their toes with services

BY MATT MITCHELL  
THE BATTALION

For the last 20 years, there has been an academic revolution in college athletics.

One day the students needed only attend practices and were assured that their classes would work out for themselves.

For the modern collegiate athlete, a balance must be struck between academics and athletics. If not, they often face consequences from the people who once dismissed the classroom as a good place to catch a nap between practices — the coaches.

"Our players have to keep things in priority," A&M Baseball Head Coach Mark Johnson said. "No. 1 is grades, No. 2 is baseball, No. 3 is social life. We're totally committed to them getting their degree."

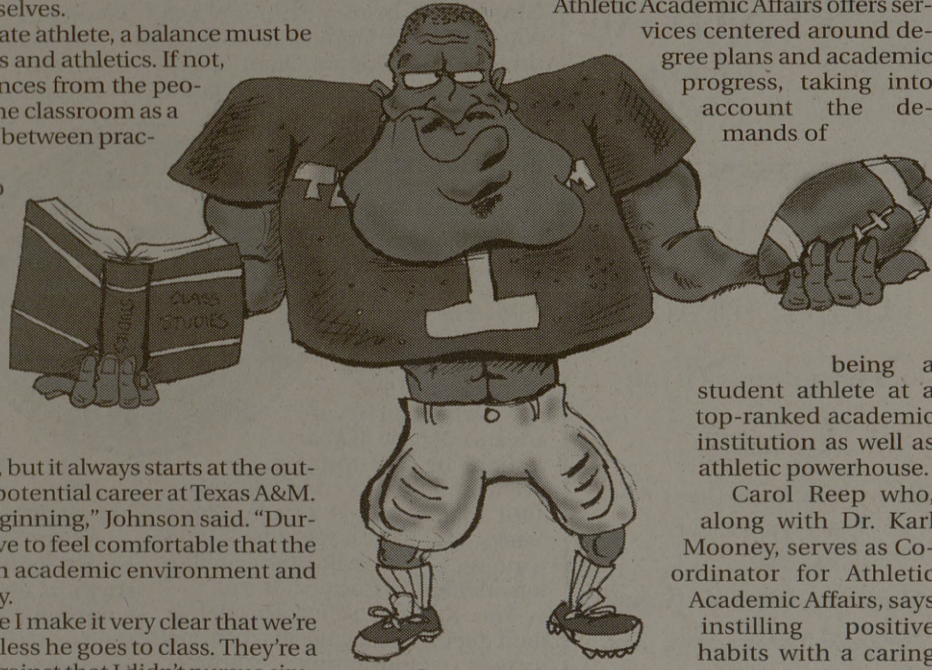
This commitment is being carried out in a number of different ways, but it always starts at the outset of a student-athlete's potential career at Texas A&M. "It starts at the very beginning," Johnson said. "During a recruiting visit, I have to feel comfortable that the parents are looking for an academic environment and not just a baseball factory."

"When I'm in the home I make it very clear that we're going to get along unless he goes to class. They're a lot of guys we've played against that I didn't pursue sim-

ply because I didn't think they were serious about getting a degree."

And the programs are apparently better off for adopting such an approach. Perhaps the most help comes from the Department of Athletic Academic Affairs, conveniently available to athletes from its location in Cain Hall.

Athletic Academic Affairs offers services centered around degree plans and academic progress, taking into account the demands of



GRAPHIC: Brad Graeber

being a student athlete at a top-ranked academic institution as well as athletic powerhouse.

Carol Reep who, along with Dr. Karl Mooney, serves as Coordinator for Athletic Academic Affairs, says instilling positive habits with a caring attitude inspires acad-

emic success, which often carries over onto the playing field.

"I think it's like anything else," Reep said. "Once we become comfortable in our environment, the easier it is to be successful. So if you can get your students to buy into and excel at the best rate they can, they're probably going to achieve at a higher rate in the classroom. Those same things tie together athletically."

In addition to advising, Athletic Academic Affairs oversees the tutorial program as well as the computer lab for athletes in Cain Hall. But it stops short of assuming the role of academic advisors, which they leave to the individual colleges.

"We're not their academic advisors, but we work in close contact with colleges and their academic advisors," said Dr. David Wentling, a supervisor for the department. "We're scholastic supervisors, so primarily what we do is work with the advisors, help the athletes get their classes picked out, and assist them towards getting their degrees."

Because of A&M's deserved reputation as a sports machine, the Aggies undoubtedly attract athletes of superior ability who focus on playing professionally in their chosen sport. The challenge for Dr. Wentling and his associates is convincing such players of the value of a degree.

"Some students come here with that (playing professionally) as a goal and there's nothing wrong with

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**Carol Reep**  
Coordinator for Athletic Academic Affairs

that," Wentling said. "What we try to do is maintain in them the importance of a college education."

"While it may be an immediate goal to play professionally, there's a finite amount of time in which they can do that. But an education lasts forever."

In instilling that ideology in student athletes, the Department for Athletic Academic Affairs has come to be recognized as one of the very finest of its kind in the nation, as the graduation rate of Texas A&M athletes would indicate.

But Wentling stops short in giving his department all the credit, citing good working relationships with coaches and a caring faculty and administration, as major tools in pursuing academic excellence.

"It's a cooperative effort," Wentling said. "We have an outstanding academic support program, and at the same time, we have an outstanding faculty as well as administration that understand some of the things about being a student-athlete at Texas A&M."

The unqualified success of the program bodes well for the future of Texas A&M athletics, and more importantly, the student athletes that are recruited.

"They do a great job," Johnson said. "You can't take enough easy courses to get a degree from Texas A&M. I think it speaks well for everyone involved when you can compete at a high level academically as well as athletically."

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