

JUMPING INTO FRESH WATER

Freshman Kelly Bolton in the fast lane to stardom



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Freshman Kelly Bolton is opening eyes around the country.

By KATIE MISH
Staff writer

When Kelly Bolton gets into the pool, she already has an idea of exactly who her biggest competition is—herself.

Bolton, a freshman psychology major from Houston Nimitz High School, competes in the 50-meter freestyle, 100 freestyle and 100 fly for the Texas A&M Swim Team, a team that has consistently been a contender in the last few years.

Bolton started swimming at age nine and began year-round competing at the age of 13. She did not always know that she wanted to be a competitive swimmer.

"I started swimming at first because a friend did that lived across the street," she said.

Bolton said she credits a coach she had in the early years of her competition, Coach Eddy, with getting her started in the competitive realm of swimming. It was this coach who started the training that brought her to the point where she is now.

Bolton said her father also was a big influence on her swimming. Her dad was a full-scholarship athlete, and she wanted to follow in his footsteps.

"I wanted to be just like him," Bolton said. As far as team role models go, Bolton looks to a Texas A&M swimmer from the past, Julie Bates, who, though now graduated, still trains with the team.

"Julie's really fast," Bolton said. "She's good motivation for me." Bolton said she came to Texas A&M for some of the same reasons many students choose this university. She had an older sister at Texas A&M, and she really liked the traditions. But it was not just the atmosphere that brought her to Aggieland.

"I was really impressed with the team and coaches here," Bolton said.

Bolton sees a lot of differences between this team and others she has been on. She said the Texas A&M Swim Team has provided more supportive environment than those in the past, and she and her teammates are a tight-knit group, in and out of the water.

"Since I've been here, the team has been amazing," she said. "In the middle of a hard set, people completely out of breath will stop and say 'good job.' I've never had that before."

The training schedule Bolton and the swim team follows is tough and time-consuming. They do weights weekly, practice for a few hours each weekday and practice on Saturday mornings as well. This is about as normal of a week as the swim team gets.

"A normal week? What's normal?" Bolton said. Bolton's teammate, sophomore Tracy Evans, said Bolton definitely has contributed to the team.

"She is very powerful," Evans said. "If I was swimming against her, I'd think she was very intimidating."

Monica Stroman, another teammate of Bolton's, said that the freshman is in control when she swims.

"She's so composed before she races," Stroman said. "She's so focused."

Stroman said after Bolton swims, even if she feels she has not had a good swim, Bolton will not lose her composure.

"She internalizes to make herself a better swimmer," Stroman said.

Bolton is just starting her swimming career at Texas A&M, and her contributions to the team are just beginning. She is one to watch.

Rockets fall to Nets in overtime

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — The Houston Rockets were distracted, dismayed and on edge. Surprisingly, they still managed to play a competitive game.

On a day of swirling trade rumors involving a proposed deal that would send Damon Stoudamire to the Rockets, the New Jersey Nets made matters worse for Houston as Jayson Williams had 25 points and 19 rebounds Wednesday night in a 117-112 overtime victory.

"It was like a morgue in here tonight," Charles Barkley said. "It's been a crazy day for the team, the team is kind of in shock. It's a tough situation right now. One of the most difficult situations I've ever had to play in."

He said it was something that could not be put aside.

"They are miserable," Kevin Willis said of the team. "I hate to see that because I give my all, I'm very dedicated, I'm a fighter and a team player and I enjoy this group of guys. Hopefully I'll continue to."

The overtime loss brought a disappointing finish to a day most of the Rockets would rather forget.

Rumors ran rampant that the Rockets were ready to pull the trigger on a trade that would have sent Willis, Mario Elie and another player — Matt Maloney, Brent Price or Emanuel Davis — to the Raptors for Stoudamire, Walt Williams and Zan Tabak.

"No question it was very difficult to come out and play," Maloney said. "This has been a long day for a lot of us, there has been a lot of anticipation."

Duncan, Purdue lead Spurs to win

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Will Perdue tied his career-high with 19 points and had 14 rebounds, leading the San Antonio Spurs past the Atlanta Hawks 90-76 Wednesday night.

The Spurs scored on their first five possessions for a 10-0 lead. Tim Duncan had 23 points and David Robinson 12 as San Antonio won for the 18th time in 21 games.

Eldridge Recasner had 16 points for the Hawks, who shot only 35.1 percent. Steve Smith added 13 points, but shot 4-for-12. Duncan scored 11 points in the first quarter as the Spurs took a 27-12 lead. Atlanta hit on only 11 of 37 shots in the first half and trailed 50-30 at the break.

Getting his first start of the season, Perdue scored seven points in the third quarter and helped San Antonio take a 76-46 lead.

The Hawks went on a 22-4 run to start the fourth period and closed to 80-68 with 4:07 to play on a basket by Anthony Miller.

Swan a champion both in the pool and the classroom

By ROBERT HOLLIER
Staff writer

Dedication, focus and determination are qualities athletes must possess to stand out among their peers. Benjamin Swan, a freshman on the Texas A&M Men's Swimming Team, certainly has stood out so far this season.

"I was impressed with him from the start. He was a perfect match for what we needed in our program."

MEL NASH
MEN'S SWIMMING COACH

Originally from Oregon, Swan has been swimming since he was six-years old. From his first competition at the age of seven to becoming a four-time state champion and competing at Texas A&M, Swan has continued to improve and impress.

Mel Nash, head coach for the men's swimming team, said Swan caught his eye the first time he saw him compete.

"I was impressed with him from the start," Nash said. "He was a perfect match for what we needed in our program. Plus he is a pretty doggone fast swimmer."

Sophomore Devin Howard, a teammate of Swan's, said he agreed.

"He is one of the most focused people on the team," Howard said. "He is always the first one in the pool. He's so competitive."

Not only is Swan a tremendously competitive athlete, but he has also excelled as a student.

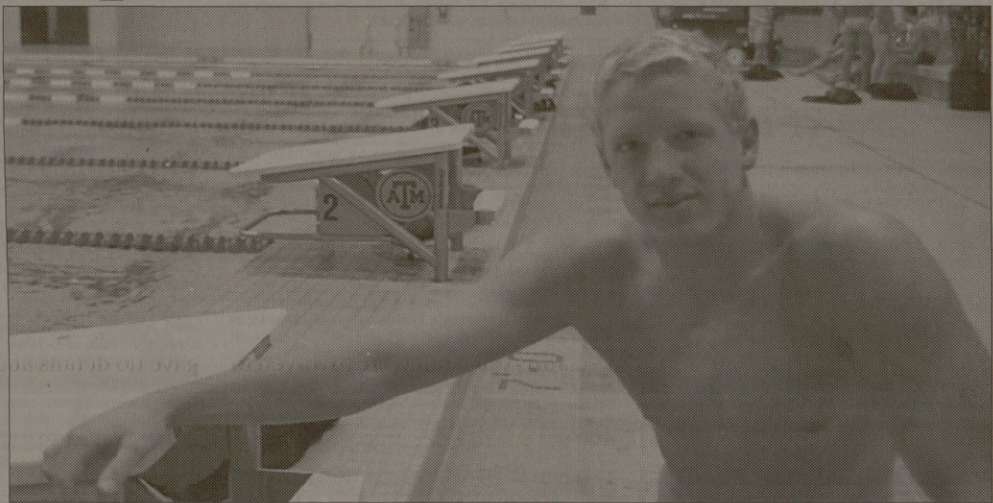
As an engineering major, one of his goals was to have a 3.0 GPR at the end of his first semester. He made a 4.0 instead. Swan said he owes most of his success to his family's influence and support.

"They set great examples for me. They told me I could achieve anything I wanted to achieve," he said.

Swan also said he owes a lot to his coach. "He (Nash) has helped me in every way possible," Swan said. "He pointed out technique problems I didn't know I had."

When asked which event he enjoyed competing in the most, Swan said he favored the 200-meter individual medley.

"Even though I don't think I've had my best effort in the 200 yet, it's still my best and favorite event," Swan said.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Freshman Benjamin Swan has impressed in the water as well as in the classroom this year.

As a four-time state champion for South Albany High School in Oregon, Swan was a highly sought-after recruit.

Swan said he chose to come to Texas A&M because of the friendly people and the great atmosphere.

Even though he felt overwhelmed at first, Swan said he has adjusted well to the

new environment. However, one of the things he misses most about Oregon is the mountains.

"I really enjoy mountain biking and hunting as my other hobbies," he said.

With three more years of competition ahead for him, Swan has a tremendous chance to become one of A&M's best.

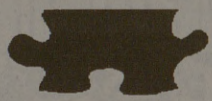
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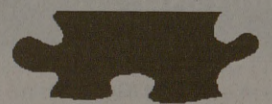
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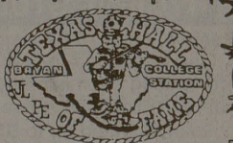
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