

Walking on thin a

Texas A&M Track and Field Teams to compete in

By MICHAEL FERGUSON
Staff writer

In the rarefied air of Reno, Nev., the lack of oxygen can be somewhat troublesome to those accustomed to sea-level elevation. To a distance runner who depends on every last breath of air, it can make life absolutely unbearable.

Consequently, this weekend when the Texas A&M Track and Field Teams travel to Reno to compete in the Bill Cosby Invitational, they will be at less-than-full strength. Coach Ted Nelson alluded to this fact.

"It's not very advantageous to our distance runners," Nelson said. "We won't be taking any of them up there. We're trying for good times and the elevation makes it difficult."

However, if there is a silver lining to the elevation experienced in this weekend's meet, as well as next weekend in Colorado Springs, it is that higher elevation typically leads to faster sprint times and higher or longer jumps.

"Our sprinters love it," Nelson said. "We should have some really fast times."

With predetermined qualification times set for nationals, these benchmarks will be more attainable than ever these next two weekends. This weighs heavily on the crew of sprinters, including junior Toya Jones.

"Hopefully, we'll all get some good times and qualify for nationals," Jones said. "Once we go to Reno and Colorado, we should be all right."

In addition to the sprinters, the jumpers and vaulters should also benefit from the thin air in Nevada. Sophomore pole vaulter Jon Nance mentioned a previous experience at the track in Reno.

"I vaulted there once in high school, and that's where I first got my PR (provisional)," Nance said. "So hopefully I can keep going up."

Although the Aggies are traveling with a somewhat reduced squad, they should still compete quite effectively.

"There won't be a lot of big teams up there," Nelson said. "We'll be as big of a team as anybody up there."

Regardless, the Aggies will still face tough competition. Representatives from UCLA, the University of Texas, and other talented athletes guaranteed to push their limits. However, with the caliber of athletes combined with the elevation, expect to fall and more Aggies should qualify for Indoor Championships.



Junior Toya Jones and the rest of the Sprint put up some good times at the Bill Cosby

Swimming and Diving teams in action Friday, Sat

By AARON MEIER
Staff writer

For four seniors of the Texas A&M Swimming and Diving teams, this Saturday's meet against the Rice Owls at 1 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center Natatorium marks the last dual meet of their collegiate career.

Swimmers Stacie Karnes and Jerrod Kappler, diver Jodi Janssen and undergraduate assistant Coach Dannee Mastagni will be honored at the meet for their contributions to the aquatic program.

However, it is back to business for the teams as they take to the water against Rice soon thereafter.

Susan Wolffe, assistant women's coach, said swimming against former Southwest Conference opponent Rice should be a challenge.

"Rice always swims well this time of year," Wolffe said. "Considering it is two weeks out from our conference meet, both teams should swim well."

Even though Wolffe said she expects the women to defeat the Rice squad, not every victory is guaranteed. Last year, Rice defeated the Aggies.

"It just depends on which team is more ready," she said.

Despite high confidence, the competition in several events will be tough. Freshman sprinter Kelly Bolton will face Rice's Cory Teague, who holds the Rice school record

in the 50-yard freestyle. Bolton, however, has posted the third fastest time in the Big 12 this year for the 50-freestyle.

"She has done exceptionally well for a freshman," Wolffe said. "A lot of times they got to swim with the big dogs, but she has come through in every meet she has swam in."

With Janssen and Karnes being the only two seniors on the team, Wolffe said the team displays a unity some older teams do not possess.

"Our team really doesn't think of each other as freshmen, sophomores. We are just one team and that helps," said Wolffe, who is coaching her third year at A&M.

The Aggies still have not solidified the backstroke leg of their medley relay team for the championship. Four women are currently vying for the spot. Wolffe said Tammy Lee, Kathy Barris, Steph Torrens and Andrea Bahlo are all in contention for the slot.

"I expect we probably will not know until the actual day of the relay at conference," she said.

The men will not only face Rice on Saturday, but will compete against the ninth ranked SMU Mustangs on Friday in Dallas.

Men's Swimming Coach Mel Nash said he likes the back-to-back meets because it prepares the men for the three-day-long Big 12 Championships.

"It is another case of learning how

to respond the next day's competition," Nash said. The quality SMU shows especially in a 100-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle Championships.

"Once you start to build around somebody like a nice lynch-pin to the team," Nash said.

Although the Rice team is nationally ranked, Nash said he will give a good meet to the team they've had in the past years," Nash said.

With the conference approaching, the Rice team last chances the effects of the swimmers and to see what mind-frame they might conference meet.

"We will use that to help secondary events on conference finalizing the conference is on the conference Nash said.

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