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## Swimmers prepare for tough meet

BY JASON LINCOLN  
 The Battalion

With the season winding down for Texas A&M swimming, the men and women's teams are preparing for a strong ending to carry them through the Big 12 Championships and into the NCAA tournament. The start of the final stretch begins Friday in Austin where they will face some of the toughest dual-meet competition in the programs history in the form of three swimming powerhouses, University of Texas, Miami and Arizona.

The Longhorns and Wildcats are the pinnacle of the sport with top-ten rankings that are going to make the Aggies perform their best in an already successful season.

The A&M men's team is ranked 13th in the nation following an important win over 19th ranked Louisiana State and Kentucky to improve their dual-meet record to 4-0. The win over LSU marked the first time since 1993 that the visiting team has won the Tigers and Aggies rivalry.

"The LSU dual-meet was a very big win for us," junior Keven Kehlenbach said. "It's good for us going into this meet, and we all have really high hopes. We'd like to beat Arizona and perform our season bests."

Nineteenth-ranked Louisiana State is just a small dose of the talent the men's team will face this weekend in Austin.

With the dual-meet format, all competitors in an event will face off at the same time, instead of one school against another, and then tally times against each of the three other schools.

This will provide competition in each race that promises to feature top ten talent. Texas is ranked second and Arizona is fifth with Miami sitting back in 23rd.

"We're really happy to be involved in a meet like this," A&M men's assistant coach Jay Holmes said. "It's going to be exciting — every team there has great strengths in one way or another. The team is really looking forward to going over there and racing Texas. We think we can be competitive with them. Our guys are really excited for it."

Each of the men's teams have their own strengths that will stand out. The Longhorns lowest finish in the NCAA tournament since



Freshman swimmer **Riley Jones** celebrates after a win at the World Cup in December. Jones is the rest of the Aggie swimmers are competing in Austin this weekend.

1980 is fourth and Austin has been home to some of swimming's finest athletes and competitors.

Miami is a diving powerhouse with a strong swimming background that makes it a well rounded, up-and-coming team. Arizona is strong all over but tend to be dominant in freestyle events.

As far as the Aggies stand, this meet will not only prove to be a good starting point into the countdown toward the Big 12 Championships and the NCAA tournament, but will have big influence on their way up to a top ten ranking. Texas A&M's strengths will come from the sprints and relays where they hope to provide their best times.

Pan-American team members Jerod Kappler and Devin Howard will provide the seasoned leadership for the team while trying to establish their place against their toughest dual-meet

competition. And freshman Riley Jones expects the individual performances to be the focus of the season. The competition is fierce, Wagner said, "but the more we compete the more human they become."

"This will be the toughest dual-meet my time coaching at A&M."

Miami will provide the best match-up for the Aggies, but the whole meet should be a competition that will show A&M what they have to do to be competitive in the Big 12 Championships and NCAA tournament.

## Track and Field gearing up for OU Classic

BY MATT WEBER  
 The Battalion

The number four was a theme of sorts for the Texas A&M Track and Field teams last weekend at the Houston Indoor Invitational at the University of Houston.

The teams captured four first-place finishes as both the men's and women's team finished fourth in the team standings. In addition, four Aggies finished in the top seven in the men's 3,000-meter steeplechase, and four Aggie women placed in the top five in the weight throw.

Four will be the Aggies' magic number again this weekend when they travel to Norman, Okla., for the OU Classic, where they will face four Big 12 opponents: Oklahoma State University, Baylor University, the University of Texas and host, University of Oklahoma.

In addition, the Aggies will face the University of Texas-El Paso and Texas Christian University.

Track and Field Coach Ted Nelson said this weekend's competition will offer A&M a chance to test its skills against conference opponents.

"It will be good to see how we do against some of the other Big 12 teams that will be there," Nelson said. "It should be a strong field."

Despite their fourth-place finish, the Aggies dominated in several events last weekend. Sophomore Meshell Trotter took first place in the women's weight throw with a heave of 53 ft. 3 1/2 in. Teammates Terra Taylor, Kelli Schrader and Meghan Koonce were right behind her, finishing in third, fourth and fifth places, respectively.

On the men's side, A&M put up big numbers in the



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION

Junior **Chimika Carter** competes in the 60-meter hurdles. The Aggies are preparing for the OU Classic steeplechase with juniors Scott Lengfeld finishing in third and fourth place and sophomores Chuck Cusimano and Bryan Oubre coming in sixth and seventh in the race.

The Aggie women also got first-place points from senior Detrich Clariett in the triple jump, while sophomores Kris Allen and Mike Hummel added victories in the 60-meter high hurdles and one-mile run for the men.

Johnson said he is hoping for another big weekend from the Aggies.

"I'm looking for us to have a strong showing this weekend," he said. "I'm anxious to see how we compete."

## Rangers II Crabtree to extend

ARLINGTON, Texas — Reliever Tim Crabtree, the Rangers' best middle reliever, has earned \$1.7 million, two-year contract Thursday.

The righthanded pitcher, one of three remaining eligible players who were under \$1 million apart in negotiations with the team.

Crabtree's two-year contract through the 2000 season provides for a total \$1.695 million, including a \$100,000 signing bonus, and earmarking \$500,000 for 1999 and \$925,000 for 2000, along with a \$50,000 buyout club option for 2001 is worth \$1.3 million.

That option would increase to \$1.4 million if Crabtree appears in 130 games the next two years. He can also earn \$50,000 bonuses in 2000 — \$25,000 for 65 and 70 games.

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