

Thursday, March 25, 1999

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A&M men's swimming coach Mel Nash

aid.

The Aggies will look to use the relays to

boost A&M into position for breaking into the

top ten. Relay points will count double for the

Aggies, leaving the individuals in a more re-

axed position to achieve their goals.

"We always try and build from a team

standpoint, and if we can finish with these [re-

lay teams], we'll be in a good position," Nash

aid. "There is nobody carrying our relays.

Overall they are very well-balanced."

The Aggie swim team will be led by 1999

pan-American Team members and NCAA

Championships veterans Jerrod Kappler and

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and 100-yard freestyle going into the meet,

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Aggies prepare for NCAA championship

Men's Swimming and Diving Team hopes to break into the top-ten for first time

BY JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

With three top five-seeded relay teams and eight individuals multi-qualified for the NCAA Men's Swimming and Diving Championships, Texas A&M University is poised to improve on 1998's school-record finish of 16th and break into the nation's top ten.

The meet will be held Thursday March 25 through March 27 at Indiana University-



NAFTANEL

After a third-place finish in the Big 12, team members said they have the talent to get the job done, with eight swimmers qualified in 17 individual events and four re-

ces and scholarships. "We're in a really good place to score more points and finish higher than in any other sea-

duct an interna- A&M men's swimming coach Mel Nash said. "We always try and build from a team

standpoint, and if we can finish with these [re-

lay teams], we'll be in a good position," Nash said. "There is nobody carrying our relays.

Overall they are very well-balanced." The Aggie swim team will be led by 1999

pan-American Team members and NCAA Championships veterans Jerrod Kappler and

and tickets to Devin Howard. Kappler is ranked fifth in both the 50-yard

and 100-yard freestyle going into the meet,

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ter accounts.

while Howard qualified in the 200-yard and 400-yard individual medley and the 200-yard freestyle.

The team also will look to build on the experience of last year's championship team, which included six of this year's eight quali-

fiers, including Michael Colligan, David Morrow, Alfred Mansour, Keven Kehlenbach, Kappler and Howard.

"The men look real good in the water and seem very focused," Nash said. "They don't seem overly nervous because they've been there before."

National Team diver Mark Naftanel will try to best his 1998 third-place finish off the platform in his third and final NCAA Championships.

Added to this squad of veterans are freshmen Riley Janes and Nik Tate. Janes enters the meet ranked tops in the nation in the 100-yard backstroke by over a half-second with a time of 46.75 seconds.

Conference champion University of Texas is the favorite going into the meet, with all five of their relay teams ranked in the nation's top five and with 13 individuals qualified. The Aggies also will look to overtake Big 12 rival University of Nebraska in the championships after a narrow loss in the conference meet.

"We're not a school that has to swim in a weak conference," sophomore David Morrow said. "With teams like Texas and Nebraska as our regular-season competition, we know that we have what it takes."

"We didn't have as good of a conference team as Nebraska, but we definitely have a stronger NCAA Championship team."

The Aggies enter the championships ranked 12th in the Speedo America's College Swimming Coaches Association Poll.

Championship Bound

A&M individual qualifiers for the 1999 NCAA Men's Swimming and Diving Championships:

NAME	EVENT	TIME
Devin Howard	200 medley	1:50.30
	400 medley	3:54.15
	200 fly	1:46.15
Jerrod Kappler	50 free	:19.71
	100 free	:43.54
Michael Colligan	50 free	:19.82
	100 free	:44.73
David Morrow	50 free	:19.93
	200 free	1:39.00
	100 free	:43.97
Alfred Mansour	50 free	:20.34
	100 free	:44.61
Nik Tate	100 breast	:55.78
Riley Janes	100 back	:46.75
	200 back	1:46.51
	100 free	:44.86
Keven Kehlenbach	100 free	:44.72

NASCAR returns to Texas Motor Speedway

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — They have tried and tried again. This time, Texas Motor Speedway appears finally ready to host a Winston Cup race with attention focused on what happens on the track instead of on the track itself.

When NASCAR returns to the superspeedway this weekend for the 1999 season, drivers should be pleased to see a 1 1/2-mile track that has been remodeled to their liking with wider turns and smoother transitions into and out of straightaways.

"This is like a new speedway," Sterling Marlin said following two days of testing earlier this month. "If we can get good groove worked into the track, we're going to have some real good racing here."

There were high hopes for the gargantuan \$130 million facility when it opened with the Interstate Batteries 500 in 1997, only to have drivers complain all week about tight turns with rough exits.

Speedway officials said drivers were overreacting to

a track that was difficult, not dangerous. Then a wreck on the first turn of the first lap set the tone for a crash-filled, caution-slowed race won by Jeff Burton.

More than \$517,000 was spent touching up the track, but drivers were not convinced the changes had made a difference when they arrived for last year's Texas 500. Then up sprang another, more bizarre problem: a wet track on a perfectly sunny afternoon.

Track officials insisted everything would be fine on race day and even wore T-shirts that said "Shut Up and Drive!" Drivers didn't like that attitude and continued grumbling about

the track, especially after a huge early wreck took 10 drivers out of contention, including Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt.

The next day, track owner Bruton Smith announced plans to tear up the surface and start over. About \$4 million went into a new drainage system and other track modifications.

"This is like a new speedway."

— Sterling Marlin
NASCAR driver

Strawberry helps Yankees beat Rangers

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. (AP) — Darryl Strawberry knocked in three runs Wednesday, including the go-ahead run in the ninth, to lead the New York Yankees past Texas, 8-6.

Strawberry, a nonroster player battling for a spot on the defending world champions, hit a sacrifice fly in the third inning, a solo home run in the eighth and the RBI single in the ninth.

Ricky Ledee also knocked in three runs, stroking a triple and a home run, his second of the spring.

Ruben Mateo hit his team-leading fourth homer for the Rangers, a two-run shot that tied the game, 6-6, in the eighth. Royce Clayton added a two-run double.

Texas starter Esteban Loaiza left after three innings with a blister on the index finger of his pitching hand. Mike Morgan pitched 4 1/3 innings of relief, surrendering three runs, including Strawberry's homer.

Right hander Dan Kolb (0-1) took the loss — then was sent to the Rangers' minor-league camp — although Strawberry's go-ahead hit came off left hander Eric Gunderson.

The 5-foot-10 junior accompanied coach Jim O'Brien to Ohio State from Boston College two years ago and averaged just over 17 points and four assists for the Buckeyes after sitting out last season.

Point guards take center stage in Final Four

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Ballhandling and running the offense are part of the job. The point guards at the Final Four drive their teams emotionally, too.

Mateen Cleaves guides Michigan State University, Scoonie Penn carries Ohio State University, Khalid El-Amin leads the University of Connecticut, and Duke University dominates with William Avery implementing Mike Krzyzewski's game plan.

"This tournament has as good a four point guards as I have seen in a long time," Michigan State's Tom Izzo said Wednesday during a conference of the coaches bringing teams to Tropicana Field. "They all may do different things, but the common ground for them is they all run their teams and have the respect

of the other players." Cleaves and Penn shared Big Ten player of the year honors. El-Amin does whatever is necessary to help Connecticut win, and Krzyzewski says Avery has improved in his first year as a starter as much as any point guard he's ever had.

"As much as us coaches think we feel on the sidelines, somebody out on the court can feel the pulse of a team and the other team and react instinctively to that feel," Krzyzewski said of the role of the point guard. "If you have a good one, it makes you look great."

None of the leaders among the finalists leads his team in scoring, but there's no question where the Blue Devils, Buckeyes, Huskies and Spartans look for guidance in tight situations.

"Very simply, the people who have the ball in their hands the most time end up controlling the game. That is kind of a simple explanation of why all four of us, I'm sure, are here," Connecticut coach Jim Calhoun said.

"Clearly in our case, Khalid has been our energizer. He was 0-for-12 against Gonzaga and yet down the stretch still was the guy who made the difference ... He makes us go, not only physically but psychologically. He really truly is the guy the kids turn to for energy, for direction, and sometimes for courage."

The 5-foot-10 junior accompanied coach Jim O'Brien to Ohio State from Boston College two years ago and averaged just over 17 points and four assists for the Buckeyes after sitting out last season.

On sale this week at the

MSC Rudder Box Office

MSC OPAS — Les Miserables Thurs - Sun, Mar 25 - 28, 7:30 p.m. and Sat - Sun Mar 27 - 28, 2 p.m.

Delta Xi Nu Sorority — Unity Dancer Fri, Mar 26, 7 p.m.

Stage Center — Picnic Thurs - Sat, Apr 1-3, 8-10, and 15-17, 7:30 p.m.

MSC Film Society — A Bug's Life Fri, Apr 9, 7 and 9:30 p.m.

Freudian Slip — Freudian Slip Sat, Apr 17, 9 p.m.

BVSO — Capricious Espanol Sun, Apr 18, 4 p.m.

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Resurrection Week Events

March 28 - April 1

Sunday - Swing Night
7:00pm @ Armory in Bryan
Swing Lessons (7:00-8:00pm)
Live Music, Snacks & Sodas Provided
Tickets - \$2 at MSC box office, \$3 door

Monday - Is There Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God?
7:00pm @ Rudder Theater (Dr. Walter Bradley)

Tuesday - Breakaway on Campus
7:00 & 9:00pm @ Rudder Auditorium
Gregg Matte & Ross King

Wednesday - Corporate Praise
7:00pm @ Rudder Auditorium
Live Worship with **By The Tree**
Prayers Led by Campus Ministers
Caedmon's Call and Louie Giglio Live via Satellite

Thursday - Crucifixion Drama
12:20 & 2:00 @ Rudder Fountain

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