



JP BEATO/The Battalion

The Texas A&M men's swimming and diving team prepares to host the Big 12 Men's Swimming and Diving Championships this weekend at the Student Recreation Center Natatorium.

## Aggies prepare to host Big 12 Championships

BY MATT LAGESSE  
The Battalion

For some swimmers, a season filled with preparation will come down to a single race as they compete in the Big 12 Men's Swimming and Diving Championship at the Student Recreation Center Natatorium.

Heading up the field of competition is the No. 1 ranked University of Texas who has yet to receive a blemish to its record, going 10-0 during the season.

The 15th-ranked Aggies are also projected to finish strong as they dropped only two meets during the season. Rounding out the field competition is Iowa State University, the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri, and the University of Nebraska.

A&M men's swimming coach Mel Nash said that although UT is expect-

ed to win the title, there is still some uncertainty on who will vie for the second and third spots.

"UT is far and away the favorite, on paper they should take the title hands down," Nash said. "As well as we are swimming with the guys we redshirted I think that we are looking for a battle for third place with ISU."

According to Nash, the key to capturing the second or third spot may be contingent on how well the relay teams perform.

"Our relays are always a major part on how we do," Nash said. "We have really good well balanced depth but they must come together as a group."

Nash also said that many of the swimmers use the Big 12 Championship as an evaluation tool as they prepare to compete in the NCAA championships later in the year.

"There are two different groups,"

said Nash, "For some people this is the peak meet of their year, while on the other hand we have some guys who are using this to get to the NCAA's."

The preparation process for the championship has almost become routine for A&M, namely because the Aggies have hosted the event three of the last four seasons. Despite this fact, Nash said that planning for the championship involves the collaboration of a number of vital people and elements.

"Fortunately for me we have a great sports staff," Nash said, "There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into it ahead of time."

"Because we have hosted it before it kind of runs on cruise control so it's not like we are starting from scratch."

Both swimming and diving preliminaries are scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. Thursday and run through 6 p.m. Finals begin at 7 p.m.

## Strawberry entering drug rehab

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — For the third time in 10 years, Darryl Strawberry is taking a side trip to a treatment center, hoping he can get help for the cocaine problem that ended his season before it ever began.

The New York Yankees slugger disclosed his plans Wednesday, two days after commissioner Bud Selig suspended him for one year.

"By the time you read this statement, I will have checked myself into a drug rehabilitation clinic, where I intend to be for the foreseeable future," Strawberry said in a release faxed to the team's spring training office by his agent.

"My goal is to take control of my drug addiction once and for all, and I believe this step is required in order to do so," Strawberry said.

It was his first comment since the penalty, the third drug-related suspension of Strawberry's career. Selig did not make any provision for the troubled star to return early for good behavior.

The statement, sent by agent Eric Grossman, did not detail where Strawberry is having treatment.

A baseball source, speaking on the condition he not be identified, said the center is in Florida but not in the Tampa area.

Strawberry thanked his teammates,

manager Joe Torre, owner George Steinbrenner, the entire Yankees organization and his doctors for support and "a bedrock of love, understanding and hope beyond which I could have never imagined."

"I also want to say to the fans everywhere, many of whom I certainly understand are disappointed and perhaps even angry at me. I will work everyday of my life to restore the belief you have had in me," he said.

Steinbrenner has been one of Strawberry's biggest backers. Asked if he wanted to comment, Steinbrenner said no.

In 1990, Strawberry entered the Smithers Center in New York for alcohol rehabilitation. And in 1994, he spent 28 days at the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, Calif., for treatment of a substance abuse problem.

Strawberry's latest suspension has been the talk all week at Yankees' camp.

Early in the morning, on his first day at a spring training instructor, former Yankees captain Don Mattingly spoke of Strawberry's problems.

"Once I get past the general feelings at first — how could he do it? why did he do it? — you think about the person," Mattingly said. "Darryl is a great person."

David Cone, perhaps the Yankees player closest to Strawberry, voiced the same feeling on Tuesday.

"I'm extremely depressed," the pitcher said. "It's tough watching close friends stumble again. Because he's suspended and won't be a Yankee this year

doesn't affect our friendship. I'm sure everybody in here feels the same."

While they hope he can come back next year, his teammates know there's a chance the eight-time All-Star — who turns 38 in two weeks — might be done in baseball.

"I just don't know at his age," first baseman Tino Martinez said. "I think this was going to be his last year anyway. I think it would be hard to miss the whole year and come back."

The two-time World Series champion hoped Strawberry would be the main designated hitter this season at a salary of \$750,000. He is a career .250 hitter with 335 home runs and 1,100 RBIs.

Last week, it was revealed Strawberry had failed a cocaine test in January. A day later, baseball ordered him off the practice field.

Strawberry has not been at camp since that morning.

While banned from the majors and affiliated minor league teams, Strawberry could play for a club in an independent league. He did that in 1996 with the St. Paul Saints of the Northern League.

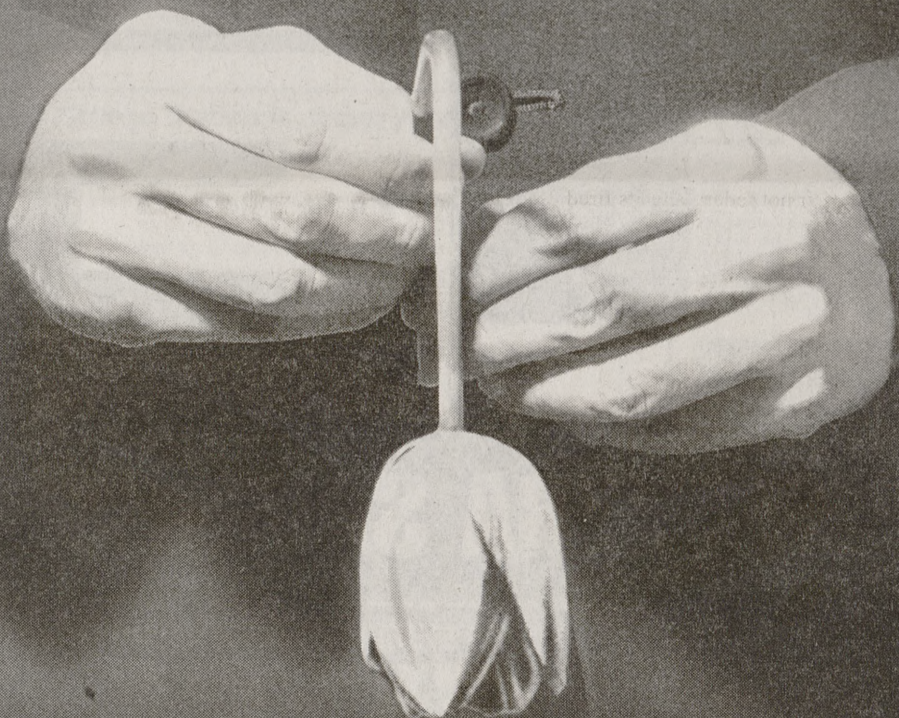
The Newark Bears, owned by former Yankees catcher Rick Cerone, and the Atlantic City Surf of the Atlantic League want him. So do the New Jersey Jackals of the Northern League.

The Solano Steelheads in Vacaville, Calif., a team in the independent Western Baseball League, also offered Strawberry a contract.

# A MIKE NICHOLS FILM WHAT PLANET ARE YOU FROM?

To save his planet,  
an alien must  
find a woman  
on Earth  
to have his baby.

There's just  
one  
problem.




Garry SHANDLING Annette BENING Greg KINNEAR Ben KINGSLEY Linda FIORENTINO and John GOODMAN

COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENTS  
A BRAD GREY/BERNIE BRILLSTEIN PRODUCTION  
"WHAT PLANET ARE YOU FROM?"  
MUSIC BY CARTER BURWELL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BRAD GREY AND BERNIE BRILLSTEIN  
STORY BY GARRY SHANDLING & MICHAEL LEESON  
SCREENPLAY BY GARRY SHANDLING & MICHAEL LEESON AND ED SOLOMON AND PETER TOLAN  
PRODUCED BY MIKE NICHOLS, GARRY SHANDLING AND NEIL MACHLIS  
DIRECTED BY MIKE NICHOLS  
COLUMBIA PICTURES  
www.sony.com/whatplanet  
COMING SOON

**WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GET A FREE LUNCH?!**

Stop by our table outside Rudder Fountain  
Monday and Tuesday, March 6 & 7  
to sign up for tickets to the  
Women's Week Awards Luncheon  
Featuring Miss Jennifer Harris  
Flight Director, Mars Pathfinder Operations



**STUDENT LIFE** **WOMENSWEEK.TAMU.EDU**  
GENDER ISSUES EDUCATION SERVICES  
979.845.1107, GIES@TAMU.EDU