

## Texas dominates Big 12 swimming

BY MATT LAGESSE  
The Battalion

The No. 1 University of Texas men's swimming and diving team's dominance was never in question Thursday night at the Big 12 men's swimming and diving Championships in the Rec Center Natatorium.

Standing room on the winners' podium was seemingly reserved for Longhorn swimmers as they eclipsed their own Big 12 mark of first-day points, which was set by last year's squad with 318 points.

At the close of the first day of competition No. 18 University of Nebraska finished in a distant second behind UT with 185 points followed by Iowa State University with 174 points, and in fourth place, No. 15 Texas A&M, who closed out the night with 152 points. The University of Kansas and the University of Missouri had 89 and 82 points.

Texas A&M men's swimming coach Mel Nash said that despite a tough start, the Aggies showed some resiliency during the finals as the 200 yard freestyle relay team captured second place finishing just

five hundredths of a second behind first place UT.

"We had a little bit of a tough start this morning," Nash said. "Point wise, I think that we will only get stronger."

A&M's individual highlight was by sophomore Riley Janes who finished third in the 50-yard freestyle at 20.04. The time earned him a consolation bid to the NCAA tournament.

Nash also said that with each day of competition the young swimmers that predominate the Aggie team will become more accustomed to the atmosphere.

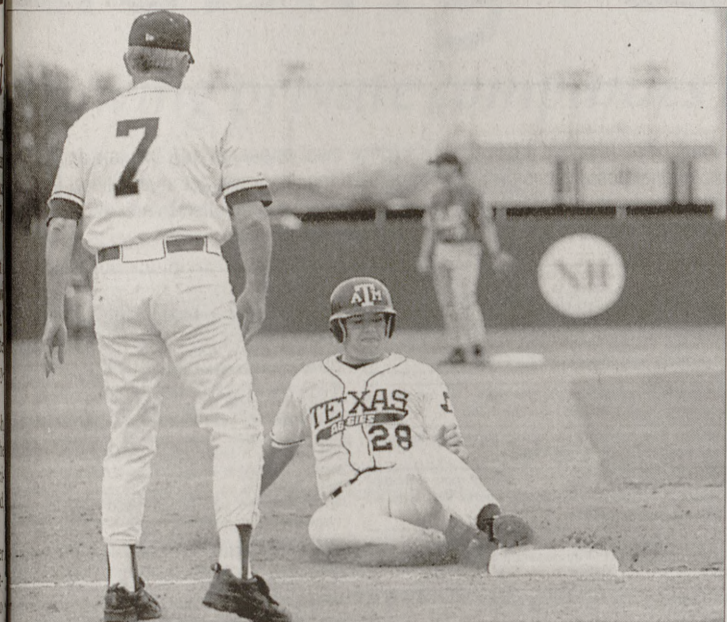
"We had a few places where we wanted to get better," Nash said. "I think that the freshmen and sophomores will get a little bit better with each session."

In spite of an impressive showing by many of the young Aggie swimmers, the night belonged to UT as four Longhorns received automatic bids to the NCAA's.

The Longhorns widened the point margin early, capturing four of the top five spots in the men's 500-yard freestyle. Leading the way for UT was junior Scott Goldblatt who clinched an automatic NCAA birth with a 4:20.42 time.



PATRIC SCHNEIDER/THE BATTALION  
Texas A&M freshman **Brett Ruoff** swims the 200-yard individual medley in the Big 12 Swimming and Diving Championships.



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

K&M junior first baseman **Jeff Freeman** slides into third base during the Aggies' 20-4 win over Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

## Baseball faces Baylor

BY DOUG SHILLING  
The Battalion

one hits really good pitching. There has been some improvement and encouragement to build on."

A&M junior right fielder Daylan Holt said the important part is the team is starting to build confidence.

"Going out there and getting more than one hit an inning," Holt said, "makes you feel good, and it gets the pitchers relaxed and helps build their confidence. It goes both ways. Our hitting is coming around. I know it hasn't been the greatest pitching, but it's still the same."

The Aggies are definitely taking a step up in competition, as they will face a Baylor team that is as hot as any team in the nation.

The Bears are coming off of a series win against Oklahoma State University last weekend in Waco, and a come from behind, 5-2 win over Rice University in Houston.

Baylor scored four runs in the top

See BAYLOR on Page 10.

The Texas A&M baseball team will test its newfound offensive production this weekend as it takes on the fifth-ranked Baylor University Bears in a three-game series.

In its four-game winning streak, A&M finally broke out of its offensive slump.

During the streak, A&M has posted 57 runs against the pitching of Kansas State University and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson said although the pitching A&M has faced has not been the best, it has given the team a good start.

"It feels good," Johnson said. "While we haven't seen the best of pitching, we faced some of that same type of pitching before and haven't hit it. So it's not like all of a sudden it has dropped off."

"I'm certainly not going to say we can hit really good pitching, because no

## Men's tennis team heads home to take on Gators

BY AL LAZARUS  
The Battalion

The 18th-ranked Texas A&M men's tennis team started its spring season three weeks ago. Since then, the Aggies have been on the road, squaring off against three of the nation's top-15 teams.

Now, they get one at home.

A&M (2-3) will take on fourth-ranked University of Florida (6-1) Sunday at 1 p.m. at the Varsity Tennis Center.

"We have a long stretch here at home now, and it's like a brand new season for us," junior Cody Hubbell said. "It's such a relief to be able to play here on our home court, sleep in our own beds and have our own fans cheering for us."

The Aggies have made great strides since facing their

first highly-ranked opponent, No. 10 Illinois. A&M lost to the Fighting Illini, 6-1, but went on to flirt with upsets in its next two matches against No. 3 Duke and No. 15 TCU. The Aggies lost both of those matches, 4-3.

Senior Juan Aramburo said the Aggies look at their matches against higher-ranked opponents as opportunities to prove they belong among the nation's elite.

"We may not be ranked as high as some of them, but we know we can play with any team in the country," Aramburo said.

In the latest edition of the WingspanBank.com Collegiate Tennis Rankings, A&M junior All-American Shuon Madden jumped five spots to No. 8, the highest-ever ranking held by an Aggie.

Madden will face-off against seventh-ranked Florida junior Jeff Morrison, who is the defending NCAA singles champion. The Gators also boast the nation's No.

16 player, senior Justin O'Neal.

In doubles play, A&M's All-American duo of Madden and junior Dumitru Caradima jumped 16 spots to No. 12 in the latest rankings.

The Aggies' schedule will not soften after their match with the Gators Sunday. By the end of March, A&M will have played three more of the nation's top-10 teams — Baylor, Louisiana State and Pepperdine.

"Our schedule over the next four weeks is extremely tough," A&M coach Tim Cass said. "So I want our guys to realize that every match is important, but there's always tomorrow too. We can't put too much pressure on ourselves any one day."

"What we want is for us to play with a real belief in ourselves and with incredible energy. We have the talent where if we can do that, I think this team will accomplish quite a bit."

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