

Aggies take on Big 12 foes UT hosts swimming and diving championships

By JEREMY BROWN
The Battalion

The Texas A&M women's swimming and diving team will compete in the 2001 Big 12 women's swimming and diving championships in Austin today through Saturday with the goal of swimming season-best times and possibly qualifying some swimmers for the NCAA Championships.

A&M women's swimming coach Steve Bultman said that A&M can finish as high as second, but, with the level of competition this year, the Aggies will really have to step up to do it.

"All you can really do is take care of yourself," Bultman said. "We can swim unbelievable lifetime-best times, and, if somebody else swims faster than that, there is nothing much you can do about it."

In last year's Big 12 championships, A&M finished second — the highest finish ever by an A&M team in a conference swimming meet. However, the only Aggie to win an event was junior Clara Ho in the 200-yard butterfly.

The Aggies lost three swimmers this year to season-ending injuries, including junior Kelly Bolton, one of A&M's top swimmers last year. Because of these injuries and several illnesses, A&M did not fare as well as Bultman would have liked this season.

"The girls haven't put their heads down," Bultman said. "We have gotten up and just done the best we can with the people that we have."

"If we had everybody, I would feel pretty good that we would repeat our second place."

A&M is 7-4 in dual-meet competition and 1-1 in the Big 12. The unranked Aggie swimmers have struggled against teams ranked in the top 25 with losses to No. 11 Southern Methodist University and No. 24 University of Kentucky.

The University of Texas Longhorns won last year's meet by a record margin of 179 points. The Longhorns won 16 of the 21 events to claim their second consecutive conference title. Texas went on to place ninth at the NCAAs.

With the return of Colleen Lane and the addition of three Australian Olympic swimmers, No. 9 Texas will be the overwhelming favorite to win the Big 12 again.

Lane won or was on the winning relay in seven events in last year's Big 12 championships. She recorded the fastest times in the Big 12 this year in three events — the 50-yard freestyle, the 100-yard freestyle and the 200-yard freestyle.

The Longhorns' midseason additions from Australia are Helen Denman, Jacinta

Van Lint and Rachel Harris.

The Longhorns are 4-3 in dual meets, but all three losses were to teams in the top 10.

Texas is the only ranked team competing in the meet, but it is not the only team that A&M must worry about.

The University of Nebraska Cornhuskers are 7-3 and have already beat A&M 152-147. Nebraska has a conference record of 4-0 but has not faced Texas. The Cornhuskers finished third in last year's Big 12 championship.

A&M has already handed the University of Kansas a dual-meet loss, but Kansas was able to beat A&M at the Big 12 relays, which they hosted during the fall. Kansas finished second by beating A&M in the last relay to break a tie.

Despite its second-place finish at the relays, Kansas has not done as well against the Big 12 in dual meets. The team has an 0-4 conference record and is 3-5 overall.



FILE PHOTO/The Battalion
The Texas A&M women's swimming and diving team will travel to Austin to take on the rest of the Big 12 conference at the 2001 swimming and diving championships at the University of Texas.

Bultman said the University of Missouri and Iowa State University have the best teams they have ever had. Both schools are 6-4 in dual meets. Missouri is 2-1 in the Big 12 and Iowa State is 1-2.

The Big 12 championship will be scored using the same format as the NCAAs. The top 16 places in each event score points.

The championships will be broadcast nationally from Austin by Fox Sports Net. The preliminary meet races will begin 11 a.m. each day and the finals will start 7 p.m. There will be no charge to watch prelims but the finals will cost \$4 for adults and \$2 for children.

A&M golf team opens spring season with Hawaii tournament

By KEVIN ESPENLAUB
The Battalion

The Texas A&M men's golf team will travel to the beautiful islands of Hawaii to compete in the 11th annual Taylor Made Waikaloa Intercollegiate Invitational Golf Tournament today through Saturday at the Waikaloa Kings and Beach Golf Courses.

The tournament, which will start the Aggies' spring season, will feature 23 teams from around the country. Each team will play one

round of 18 holes per day to total a 54-hole tournament competition. The course is a par-72 and is 6,594 yards.

This will be one of the toughest fields of the season for the Aggie men, as the Waikaloa tournament will host seven of the nation's top 20 golf teams, including No. 3 Georgia Tech, No. 5 University of Southern California, No. 8 Brigham Young University, No. 16 (tie) San Diego State University, No. 16 (tie) University of Texas, No. 18

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— Bob Ellis
A&M men's golf coach

Oklahoma University and No. 19 Texas Christian University.

The Aggies hope to repeat the success they accomplished at last year's Waikaloa Tournament when they finished 10th in the field of 24 teams and upended three top 25 teams.

They hope for another solid performance this year to bolster their chances of advancing into the regional tournament on May 17-19.

The Aggies will need to pull to-

gether solid performances against district competitors to keep that hope alive.

Although the Aggies struggled through the fall tournaments, the coaches were pleased with the team's improvement in its last tournament.

In the third annual Henry Grifflitt's Baylor University Invitational Tournament on Nov. 6-7, the team finished eighth out of 17 teams, its best showing of the season.

"[That was] a pretty important tournament for us because of our position in the conference," Aggie men's golf coach Bob Ellis said after the Baylor tournament. "We dug ourselves into a hole early in the season and needed to perform well here."

Following the Waikaloa Tournament this weekend, the Aggies will prepare for their March 12-13 trip to Lafayette, La., where they will compete in the Louisiana Classic Tournament.

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