

Men's squad travels to Austin

Swimming and diving team heads to Big 12 championships

By JEREMY BROWN
The Battalion

With its focus on the NCAA championships in three weeks, the No. 4 Texas A&M men's swimming and diving team will compete in the Big 12 Championships in Austin Thursday through Saturday.

A&M men's swimming coach Mel Nash said the Aggies will be competing to place second in the Big 12 behind the No. 1 Texas Longhorns. However, with nine Aggie swimmers in the midst of training for the NCAAs, A&M's challenge will be even greater.

"With the NCAAs here in our home pool, obviously that is our focus for the year, but I still feel that we're going for second," Nash said.

A&M has never placed higher than third in the Big 12 Championships, finishing third in each of the conference's first three years. Last year, the Aggies finished fourth with 563 points, one point behind the Iowa State Cyclones.

The men's diving events were held during the women's Big 12 championship to give the men more time before the Zone D diving championships on March 9-10 and the points scored then were carried over to this weekend's meet.

Divers Adam Morgan and Jesse Even have already helped A&M make strides toward a second-place finish.

The Aggies are second with 95 points while Texas leads with 107 points. Trailing the Aggies and Longhorns are Nebraska (57), Missouri (57), Iowa State (51) and Kansas (43).

Morgan placed second in the one-meter dive and fourth in both the three-meter and platform dives. Even placed third in all three of the diving events.

The Longhorns took their early lead because of brothers Troy and Justin Dumais.

Troy Dumais won the one- and three-meter dives, while Justin Dumais won platform diving.

The Aggies are 8-1 in dual meets, 2-1 in the Big 12. A&M beat Big 12 opponents Nebraska, 166-127, and Kansas, 139-99. A&M's only loss was to the Longhorns, 238-131.

The Longhorns, who are 7-1 and 1-0 in the Big 12, have not had any problem against ranked teams like A&M. This year, Texas beat No. 6 Auburn, No. 7 Arizona, No. 9 Michigan, No. 12 Georgia and No. 20 Southern Methodist. The Longhorn's only loss was to No. 2 Tennessee, 121-120.

Last year, the Longhorns scored a record 1,007 points in the Big 12 championships by winning 19 of the 21 events, extending their streak to 21 consecutive conference titles. Texas went on to win last year's NCAA championships, its sixth in the last 12 years.

"They have so many horses, you know that you don't have enough horses to score the points that they are going to score," Nash said.

The Longhorns have the top times in the Big 12 in 10 events, while A&M has six top times.



Trent Trabona and the A&M swimming and diving team will head to Austin to compete in the Big 12 championships this weekend.

Nebraska and Iowa State will both challenge A&M for second. Nebraska is 6-4, 3-1 in the Big 12, while Iowa State is 5-2, 2-1 in the Big 12.

"Both of them have a large foreign contingent of athletes that are a little bit older and a little bit more experienced than our guys," Nash said.

The men's Big 12 championship broadcast on Fox Sports South will begin at 8 at 12 p.m. and March 11 at 1 p.m.

The preliminaries will begin at 7 p.m. each day. The final events will begin at 12 p.m. on the final day. The top 16 places in each event scoring will be determined.

Sports in Brief

Nebraska downs Aggies, 97-69

The Texas A&M men's basketball team suffered its third straight loss Wednesday night at the hands of the Nebraska Cornhuskers, 97-69.

Freshman forward Nick Anderson led the Aggies with 19 points.

The Cornhuskers were led by four different players who all had double-figure points.

Senior guard Cookie Belcher scored all 16 of his points in the second half to help the Aggies.

Nebraska Senior center Kimani Ffriend also added 28 points and 12 rebounds for his 10th double-double of the season.

Nebraska's five seniors contributed 74 of the Huskers' 97 points.

Nebraska's cause was aided by 50 of the Huskers' points coming inside the paint.

A&M-Houston game canceled

The No. 20 Texas A&M softball team's game with the University of Houston Cougars was canceled because of rain Wednesday afternoon.

The Aggies will return to action Friday when the team hosts the Aggie Invitational II at the Aggie Softball Complex.

A&M enters the tournament with a 13-4 mark and riding a six game winning streak.

Other teams participating in the tournament are No. 12 Iowa, Illinois State and Syracuse.

The Aggies will open the tournament against Illinois State at 3:30 p.m. Friday.

Free agents hit road as deadline approach

(AP) — Quarterbacks Ryan Leaf, Doug Flutie and Elvis Grbac became free agents and three-time Super Bowl champion Ken Norton Jr. was released Wednesday as NFL teams sliced their payrolls as a salary cap deadline approached.

"We are preparing for free agency and the draft and this allows these players to catch on with another team," Chargers general manager John Butler said, after getting rid of Leaf and four others.

In other salary-driven moves, the Pittsburgh Steelers released center Dermontti Dawson and the Carolina Panthers released three players who were with George Seifert when he won a Super Bowl with the 49ers in 1995.

They cut cornerback Eric Davis, fullback William Floyd and linebacker Lee Woodall. The moves were not unexpected for the salary-cap strapped Panthers, who also released offensive lineman James Dexter. Carolina needed to trim \$11 million to get under the \$67.4 million cap by Friday's deadline.

"There are only so many slices to the pie," said Miami Dolphins coach Dave Wannstedt. "We're going to lose a couple of key guys. There's no way around that."

The Kansas City Chiefs, who ended last season almost \$30 million over the cap, announced Grbac will become a free agent.

Negotiations had produced one offer from Steiner of a five-year contract averaging \$8 million a year, including a \$20 million signing bonus, the Chiefs said. The quarterback's contract called for a \$10 million bonus if he was still on the roster Friday.

"We have been informed by Elvis Grbac's agent, Jim Steiner, that Elvis wants to pursue the free agent market and would prefer to play somewhere else," Chiefs president Carl Peterson said in a statement.

The Chargers began reshaping the NFL's worst team of 2000 by waiving Leaf, who had been in constant trouble during his three seasons.

Leaf missed all of the 1999 season with a shoulder injury and won the starting job last

summer, but was benched after throwing interceptions and one touchdown in the games. He also started the final six games.

The Bills ended months of speculation by announcing that Rob Johnson will be back next season, making Flutie expendable. Bills had to cut almost \$8 million off the roll and saved \$3 million by cutting Flutie.

Flutie, who went 21-9 as a starter for the Bills, turns 38 in October, another factor in the decision.

Norton spent six years with Dallas, joining the 49ers as a free agent in 1994. He is the only player in NFL history to win consecutive Super Bowls — two with the 49ers, one with the 49ers.

Record-setting running back Corey Dillon will be the most accomplished free agent to hit the market, but the Cincinnati Bengals used the position tag on him, giving them the right to bring him back. Given the sorry state of the Bengals, they're determined not to lose him.

313 S. COLLEGE
846-3343

MARCH MADNESS

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>THIRTY ON THURSDAY</p> <p>30¢ Mixed Drinks \$1 Longnecks</p> <p>from 8:30-10:30</p> <p>Ladies 18 & up FREE 'til 10:30</p> <p>\$1.50 Hurricanes ALL Night</p>	<p>LADIES NIGHT</p> <p>\$1 Mixed Drinks \$1 Longnecks</p> <p>from 8:00-11:00</p> <p>Ladies 18 & up FREE 'til 11:00</p> <p>\$1.50 Hurricanes ALL Night</p>	<p>\$1 Bar Drinks \$1 Longnecks</p> <p>from 8:00-10:00</p> <p>Ladies 18 & up FREE 'til 10:00</p> <p>Ladies 21 & up FREE 'til 11:00</p>

Rodney Carrington coming March 21st

Available for private parties. Call for information: 846-1724

Drink Responsibly. Designate a Driver.