

Sports

SECTION **B**

Thursday, March 28, 2002

THE BATTALION

Eight Aggies in Georgia for NCAA finals

A&M hoping for top 20 finish in championship

By Troy Miller

THE BATTALION

The No. 15 Texas A&M men's swimming and diving team will be sending seven swimmers, four relays and one diver to the University of Georgia to compete in this weekend's NCAA Championships.

"Coming in we've been ranked 19th most of the year," said A&M head coach Mel Nash. "So I think if we can finish in the top 20, that would be the big goal."

Leading the way for A&M are the relay swimmers, which have the potential to score most of the Aggies' points.

In both the 200- and 400-yard freestyle relays, the Aggies rank No. 8. In the 200-yard medley, they rank seventh and in the 400-yard medley

relay they are No. 12.

Both freestyle relays are looking to jump into the top five while the 200-yard medley relay is looking to bring home the gold. They trail the leader, the University of Minnesota, by only .64 of a second. This race will be a battle because the top eight are within one second of each other.

"[Relays] have always been our strength," Nash said. "We qualified four of the five relays with people on them unshaved. That's encouraging because we still have people who can come in and drop some time and hopefully put some relays in the top eight."

On the individual front, senior Patrick Kennedy will be leading A&M in the pool. Kennedy qualified in the No. 24 spot in the 200-yard freestyle

and the No. 20 spot in the 200-yard backstroke. In the freestyle, Kennedy swam a time of 1:37.22 at the Big 12 Championships, breaking the Texas A&M record.

"So I think if we can finish in the top 20, that would be the big goal."

— Mel Nash
A&M swimming coach

"He has just looked so good all year and is already breaking the school record in the 200- (freestyle)," Nash said. "He really has raised his performance to

another level."

Also competing for the Aggies is sophomore Matt Rose. Rose is currently No. 20 in the 50-yard freestyle, No. 15 in the 100-yard freestyle and No. 25 in the 100-yard backstroke.

Sophomore Scott Mueller will compete in the 400-yard individual medley, in which he is the reigning Big 12 champion, and the 500-yard freestyle. Mueller's school record time of 3:51.11 in the medley is 27th in the nation.

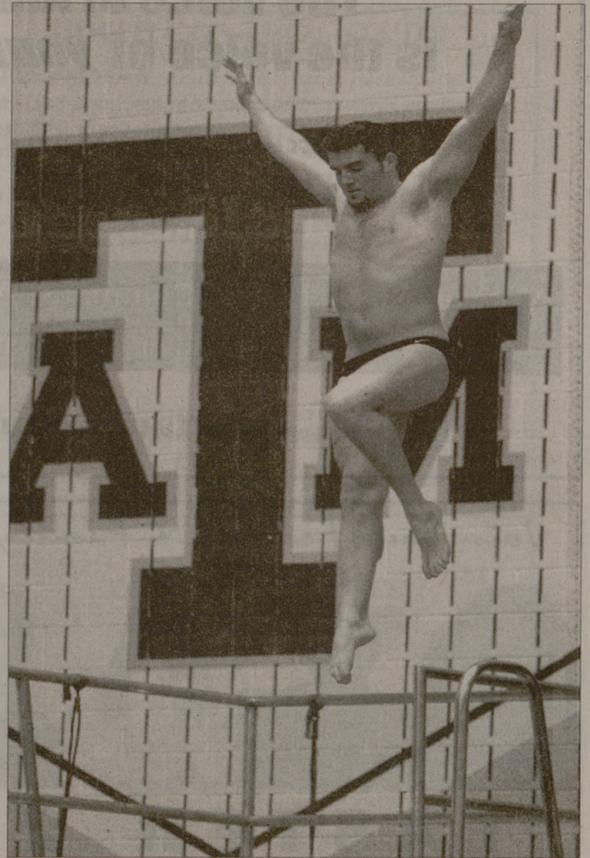
Freshman Alfredo Jacobo will also represent the Aggies. Jacobo is currently No. 22 in the 100-yard breaststroke and No. 37 in the 200-yard breaststroke.

Senior All-American Nik Tate and freshmen Robbie Taylor and Dan Blanchard will lend a hand on the relay teams.

Senior diver Jesse Even will compete in the 1-meter, 3-meter and platform diving competitions. Even placed fourth in the Zone D Championships to qualify for the NCAA Championships.

One glaring omission from the team is Senior Riley Janes, who was dismissed from the team for undisclosed reasons. Janes was set to compete in both medley relays and the 100-yard backstroke. Janes had the fifth-best time in the nation in the 100-yard backstroke and recently won his first Big 12 championship in the backstroke over rival Tommy Hannan of the University of Texas.

"We don't have Riley Janes," Nash said. "That has an impact on the team because he is a great swimmer. It needs to be addressed that we will be with-



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

A&M senior diver Jesse Even, shown here competing against Auburn, will compete in the 1-meter, 3-meter and platform diving competitions.

out him, but he was dismissed from the team." Saturday at the Gabrielsen Natatorium in Athens, Georgia. Preliminaries start at 11 a.m., and finals are set for 7 p.m. each day.

Rose set to renew rivalry with Crocker

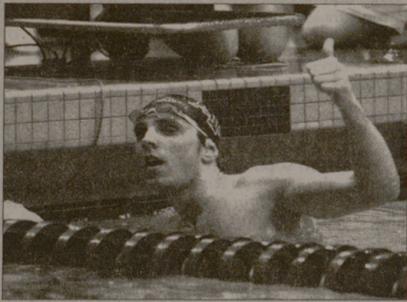
By Troy Miller

THE BATTALION

The word "rivalry" means only one thing to students at Texas A&M: the University of Texas Longhorns. Whether it is football, basketball, baseball or any other sporting event, games and matches with Texas bring out the most heated battles.

In men's swimming and diving, the rivalry has been lopsided. The two-time defending National Champion Longhorns have won 23 straight dual meets with A&M dating back to 1979. On an individual level, the edge has been apparent over the past years — until now.

Aggie sophomore Matt Rose has been out-standing this season, leading the Aggie sprinters.



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

A&M sophomore Matt Rose will continue his budding rivalry with UT sophomore Ian Crocker in Georgia.

See **Rivalry** on page 2B

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