Aggies dominate SMU at swim meet

By Marcus White
THE BATTALION

The No. 16 Texas A&M men's swimming and diving team trounced the Southern Methodist University Mustangs 141.5-96.5 Thurday night at the Student Recreation Center Natatorium. The Aggies have taken three consecutive meets from the Mustangs in what has become one of the NCAA's best swimming and diving rivalries.

The Aggies dominated the SMU swimmers and divers, capturing top honors in 11 of the meet's 13 events.

In a meet that was over before it began, the Aggies performed strongly across the board. A&M Head Coach Mel Nash was extremely pleased with the way his team has performed with the start of the championship season just around the corner.

"To have the number of lifetime and season best times that we had tonight is really gratifying," Nash said.

Especially impressive this season has been the Aggie underclassmen, who were among the top finishers in each of the night's events.

Freshman Scott Newmann was among several Aggie swimmers to have a career night in the pool. Newmann took first place in the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 1:39.22.

"I've never been able to perform like that during the season," Newmann said of his career-setting performance. "It really shows the upperclassmen and the nation what we're capable of."

In what many thought would be a rebuilding year, A&M has performed beyond everyone's expectations, something Nash credits to the maturation of his freshmen.

"In order to be the team that we've become, the freshmen have had to become sophomores quickly," Nash said after Thursday's meet. "We've really seen the freshmen step up across the board."

Led by Junior Matt Rose, the Aggie upperclassmen also impressed against the Mustangs. The meet showcased the talents of Rose and SMU's Jonathon Newton, both of whom are among the nation's top sprinters.

The two first faced off in the 50-yard freesyle, an event in which both swimmers are ranked in the top 15 in the country. Newton took first in the event, posting a remarkable NCAA qualifying 19.98 that is the fifth best time recorded during the dual meet season.

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>
> — Mel Nash
> A&M Head Coach

Rose edged out Newton by 2 hundredths of a second in the 100-yard freestyle, posting a season-best NCAA provisional qualifying time of 44.38. Rose would earn his third provisional qualifying time of the night as a member of the 400-yard freestyle relay team that finished in 2:58.92.

After the meet, Rose was proud of the way his team had prepared for the championship season.

"We had a really good team performance with the freshmen and sophomores really stepping up," Rose said. "We've put the work in, and we're looking really good going into conference (championship)."

The Aggie divers also improved on several season and career marks. Freshman Christian Picard produced a whopping score of 342 in 1-meter diving, qualifying for the zone championships by more than 50 points. Picard's score also marked his personal best and A&M's second highest ever. Junior Adam Morgan surpassed his career mark and qualified for the zone championships with a score of 314.85. Next up for the Aggies is the Big 12 Championship in Austin on Feb. 19-22.

Softball team prepares for Arizona trip

By Pete Burks
THE BATTALION

For the average college student, the first weekend of February is unlikely to be particularly long or grueling. Don't tell that to the Texas A&M softball team.

The No. 24 Aggies (3-0) will be heading to the Valley of the Sun in Phoenix, Ariz. to play in the Fiesta Bowl Softball Tournament, an event known for attracting some of the nation's top teams. It is a 17-team tournament, which includes ten teams ranked in the top 25 nationally. The Aggies will have to endure a demanding schedule that includes five games in three days, including three key games against top 15 opponents.

If the Aggie softball team is supposed to be intimidated, someone obviously forgot to inform Head Coach Jo Evans. Evans said that playing second-ranked Arizona in the first tournament game will give A&M a good gauge of where the team really stands.

"We are very excited to be playing a perennial power, like Arizona," Evans said. "We just have to go out and play relaxed with the attitude that we have nothing to lose."

In addition, the Aggies already have three games under their belts which should help this weekend, as some of the teams they are facing have yet to play. A&M should go into this weekend with a lot of confidence as the pitchers have allowed just one earned run this season, and the offense is filled with a combination of speed and power.

Arizona Head Coach Mike Candrea said he was not surprised by the Aggies' hot start and that he anticipates a challenging weekend.

"I expect to get some stiff competition from the A&M squad," Candrea said. "This game will be a great way for our younger girls to gain experience because at this point in the season, every weekend is a test for us."

After playing Arizona, it doesn't get any easier for the Aggies. The night cap of the Friday doubleheader will be No. 10 Cal State Fullerton (2-1), which has an all-time record of 18-5 against A&M and recently upset No. 1 UCLA. Even with these accolades Head Coach Michelle Gromacki knows the Aggies are not to be taken lightly since "A&M beat us a couple of times last year. They are a team that battles (innings) one through seven. They are a good club that can really hit the ball."

Saturday will not be a bed of roses either, as A&M will have to prepare for No. 15 Fresno State and Utah. Neither team has played yet this season.

The Aggies round out the weekend by tussling with a veteran Mississippi State (1-0) squad.

The busy weekend could provide early momentum to an A&M team that made it to the round of 16 in the NCAA tournament last season.

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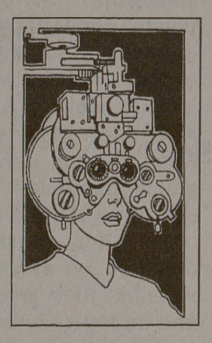

Feb. 11	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.
Feb. 19	Wednesday	11:00 a.m.
April 14	Monday	4:00 p.m.
April 22	Tuesday	11:00 a.m.
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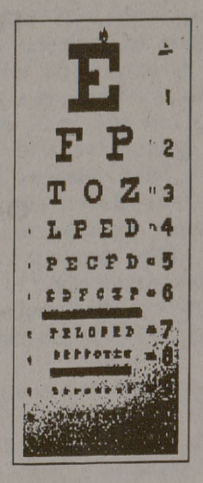

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