



Senior Jason Stokes, shown here during practice, is one of the four men qualified for nationals. Two relays and two more individuals have a shot at an A cut at the NSISC meet.

## Men aim for A cuts, top times at NSISC

BY LOGAN JACKSON  
Staff Reporter

The men's swimming team is hoping to add to its list of national qualifiers this week.

The Bulldogs are competing in the New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference meet in Cleveland, Miss. The meet, hosted by Delta State University, started yesterday and will continue through Saturday.

"We really want to see every single guy that's rested for this meet to go lifetime bests in at least two of their events," head coach Mark Gole said. "We're also looking at adding guys for our national roster."

Gole said two individuals and two relay teams have a chance to qualify for nationals.

Freshman Brian Tillis is the first of the individuals. He already has a B cut in the 500-yard freestyle, the 1,000-yard freestyle and the 1,650-yard freestyle. Earning an A cut in one of those events would allow him to compete in all three during the national meet. Tillis is seven seconds away from qualifying for nationals in both the 500-yard freestyle and the 1,650-yard freestyle.

Senior Andrew Berdine also is close to adding an A cut. Berdine has B cuts in the 200-yard individual medley and the 400-yard individual medley. He is only three seconds away from earning an A cut in both events.

Two of Truman's relay teams also have a chance to make nationals. The 200-yard medley relay and the 400-yard freestyle relay were close to A-cut times at the fall taper meet on Nov. 21. The medley relay was three seconds away

from making nationals, and the freestyle relay was six seconds away.

Four Bulldogs already are on the national roster. Senior Jason Stokes is the only individual qualifier, earning an A cut in the 50-yard freestyle. The 200-yard freestyle relay, made up of Stokes, juniors Peter McCall and Andrew McCall and freshman Eric Kaestner, have the other A-cut time.

The conference meet always is tough for the Bulldogs. They finished fifth out of seven teams at the conference meet last year, and Missouri University of Science and Technology took first place. This year, the Bulldogs hope to crack into the top three. But Gole said he really isn't worried about what place the team finishes.

"Place is kind of irrelevant," Gole said. "Obviously, we're going to try to score as many points as we can, and if we're able to beat a few teams, that's fine. I want to see the guys who've busted their butts all season long go season bests in this meet. If everyone swims well and we finish fifth, we're going to be happy."

The NSISC boasts some of the top Div. II swimming teams in the country. There are six teams competing this year, with Missouri S&T projected to repeat as conference champions. Gole said the team will do what it can against the tough competition.

"We're swimming against

four of the top 10 from last year, as well as one [team] that was ahead of us," Gole said. "Drury probably won't bring their whole roster, so we have a chance to beat them."

The men's team does have a chance to bring home victories in a few events. The 50-yard freestyle and the 100-yard freestyle, swam by Stokes and Kaestner, have been strong events for the Bulldogs so far this year. The 200-yard freestyle relay also has a good chance of winning. Stokes said the team's short distance events will be very competitive during the meet.

"We have a really good shot in the sprint freestyles, and those are our strong points," Stokes said. "Depending on how well Tillis does, he could win the 1,000-yard freestyle and the mile."

In preparation for the meet, practices haven't been as strenuous. All Bulldog swimmers, with the exception of the four national qualifiers, have been tapering. Sophomore Corey Moon said the team is working on adding more speed before the meet.

"The practices have been a lot shorter since we're resting," Moon said. "We've been doing a lot more fast stuff during practices, and that's where we've put our emphasis."

As of last night, the results of Wednesday's 1000-yard freestyle and 200-yard medley relay were yet to be posted online.

"If everyone swims well and we finish fifth, we're going to be happy."

Mark Gole  
Head Coach

## Eight women have chance for A cuts at NSISC

Women hope to add to nine-person national roster at conference

BY KRISTA CRIDER  
Staff Reporter

The women's swimming team is at the NSISC Championships in Cleveland, Miss., which started yesterday, with enough A cuts to represent almost every race at nationals already. But the main focus for the meet is to get more.

Head coach Mark Gole said this meet is crucial in determining how the team will compete at nationals.

"We will have a very good idea of where we are going to finish up nationally after this meet," Gole said. "If we get every single one of [the A cuts we want], then we are going to be walking away with being able to be a front runner. If we don't, we're looking at a place or two lower."

The Bulldogs are hoping for national qualifying times in the 200-yard medley relay, which will add freshman Krista Tippin to the national roster. They also are hoping for A cuts from senior Jessie Lemaster and sophomore Stephanie Myers in the 1,650-yard freestyle and sophomores Claire Myers in the 400-yard individual medley, Amanda Carnes in the 400-yard individual medley and Carina Pautz in the 400-yard medley relay and possibly junior Danielle Odenthal in the 200-yard breaststroke.

The team also is hoping for an A cut

from senior Jacqui Dempsey — Gole just doesn't know in which race yet.

"I have no idea where we are going to get her [an A cut], but we are going to work on it," Gole said. "She has been faster than the A cut in the 500-yard freestyle and the 200-yard freestyle before a couple years ago, but then due to many injuries we're getting her back, so we have our fingers crossed that her last year she might be able to pull something together."

So far this year, the Bulldogs have qualified nine different swimmers for nationals, some of whom are qualified in more than one event. The swimmers who have qualified will not be tapering for conference, but Lemaster said the meet usually is a good one for better times regardless.

"I think [the team] can do pretty well," Lemaster said. "Half the girls are going to be rested and half aren't, but even the half that aren't rested usually just get really pumped up by the atmosphere and swim really fast, so it's usually a really good meet for everybody."

The conference meet, hosted by Delta State University for the past couple of years, traditionally has been a successful meet for Truman.

The team has won the conference

championship every year since the 2000-01 season and hopes it will be able to continue the dynasty this year with the nationals just ahead.

"[Conference] has always been a very good meet for the team," Gole said. "Our national swimmers will swim very well just with a couple days rest while everyone else with being fully prepared to swim fast will do a significantly better job than they did first semester. It is a lot of fun, and we'll have more parent support than any team that's there. I think that almost puts the team in a little bit of a comfort zone."

Many of the swimmers on the team are hoping for A cuts but are excited about the meet regardless of the pressure. Stephanie Myers said she wants to see how well she can do.

"Obviously, I have a national A cut in mind, but really I just want to go out there and see how fast I can go," she said. "If I get the A cut, that's awesome, but as long as I get my best time I'll be happy."

The swimmers who are tapering have been resting for the past couple of weeks, cutting down on time in the pool and focusing on technique.

"The resting is a big part of it," Lemaster said. "[Gole] spends a lot

"If we get every single one of [the A cuts we want], then we are going to be walking away with being able to be a front runner."

Mark Gole  
Head Coach



The Bulldogs have qualified nine swimmers for nationals so far this season, but they will need more this weekend to have a chance of repeating as national champions.

of time on making sure everyone is getting exactly what they need for the kind of rests they are doing."

When it comes to preparing in other ways, Gole said the team's work ethic throughout the season should be more than enough preparation for these last couple of

meets. He said mental preparation is key in the days leading up to the meet.

"Everybody has done the work," Gole said. "Everybody has worked extremely hard all season long, so it is really a matter of getting the mind ready to be able to do it."

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