

What's Happening in the Pool This Week?: The No. 16 Arizona men's swimming and diving squad head to Austin, Texas for the 2003 NCAA Championships, which will be taking place from the Jamail Swim Center on the campus of defending champion and current No. 5 Texas. Arizona brings 7 swimmers and 2 divers, one as an alternate to the NCAA's. These eight athletes will be participating in a total of 17 individual events as well as all five relays. Senior Jeff Dash, juniors Juan Veloz and Luis Rojas and freshman Lyndon Ferns dictate the pace for the Wildcats by qualifying for three events apiece. Veloz has the greatest chance to win an event, as he is currently the fastest swimmer nationally in the 200y fly, a time that is also a school record. Junior Josh Anderson qualified with a fourth-place finish at the NCAA Zone E Diving Championships on the 1-meter platform two weeks ago. Senior captain Scott Koenig also made the NCAA roster as the first alternate to the divers with a stellar performance on the 10-meter platform. Arizona's 2003 NCAA roster breaks down by class with two seniors, five juniors, zero sophomores and two freshmen. The 'Cats are looking to finish in the top-ten at the NCAA Championships for the sixth consecutive year. Last year, Arizona brought 13 athletes to the competition and came away with seventh place by scoring 242 points. Returning from last year's NCAA squad are Dash, Veloz, Anderson, and juniors Greg Owen and Eric la Fleur. The Wildcats are also looking to place in the top-ten for the 11th time in the last 14 years.

The Wildcats are coming off a fifth-place finish at the Pac-10 Championships (392.5 pts). Stanford won it's 22nd straight Pac-10 title by garnering 879 points. This weekend's NCAA Championship competition begins on Thursday and runs until Saturday with preliminaries at 10 am MST, the finals follow in the evening at 6 pm MST.

Arizona's Official NCAA Roster:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Event (s)</u>
Simon Burnett	100 and 200y freestyle
Jeff Dash	200y IM, 100 and 200y fly
Eric la Fleur	50 and 100y freestyle
Greg Owen	200y breast
Lyndon Ferns	50 and 100y free, 100y fly
Juan Veloz	200y fly, 200 and 400y IM
Luis Rojas	50 and 100y free, 100y fly
Josh Anderson	Diving
Scott Koenig	Diving (Alternate)

'Cats in the Polls: The Wildcat men closed out the 2002-03 regular season as the sixteenth-ranked squad in the country, three spots higher than they had been in the previous poll. In fact, Arizona, fresh off their only dual meet victory in the regular season, was the only team to ascend more than one spot in the poll, which is indicative of Arizona's burgeoning momentum as they enter the NCAA Championships.

The latest CSCAA poll, released on 2/27/03, was nearly identical to the previous published rankings. In fact, the only movement in the top-ten was the switching of Florida and Southern Cal. While Arizona's men do not have a stellar dual meet record, it's not for lack of a quality opponent. During the regular season, the Wildcats faced seven top 25 squads, including four of the top five teams. All in all, Arizona compiled a 1-6 record against these top 25 teams, including defeats to Stanford, Auburn and California.

Stanford remained in the top spot with 198 total points, but Auburn is not close behind with 193. The coaches allotted seven first-place votes to the Cardinal and the other two to the Tigers. Rounding out the top five are California, whom Arizona nearly defeated in January, Michigan and Texas, yet another Wildcat opponent.

Arizona's Postseason Media Guide Online: The 2003 Arizona men's swimming post-season media guide will be posted online on the sidebar of the main men's swimming and diving page in the next week, as a supplement to this release. This year's guide features in-depth biographies of all 8 Arizona swimmers and divers set to compete in the NCAA's as well as an index of the fastest times recorded throughout the 2002-03 season in each and every event.

Last Dip in the Water: In the last three weeks, the Arizona swimmers competed only once and they placed fifth in the Pac-10 Championships by scoring a respectable 392.5 pts. On the other hand, the Arizona divers competed in both the Pac-10's and the Zone E Diving Championships over the course of three weeks. The Wildcats divers qualified three divers for this weekend's NCAA Championships after their performance in the Zone E's. Juniors Claire Febvay and Daniela Bemme waited to their last dives to qualify in the platform event while junior Josh Anderson earned his NCAA eligibility with a fourth-place mark in the 1-meter. The following are more detailed recaps of both the Pac-10's and Zone E's.

Anderson, who finished fourth on Thursday in the 1-meter, qualified as the last out of seven divers to make the cut. On Saturday, Anderson posted his best mark of the weekend en route to a third-place finish in the platform (472.20 pts). Teammate Koenig dictated the pace for the Wildcats in the platform with his second-place score of 477.20 pts.

Despite dropping one place in the standings on Saturday, several Wildcats recorded notable performances. Junior [Greg Owen](#) led the way with a fourth-place finish in the 200y breast when he touched the wall in 1:59.37, a time which qualified as an NCAA "B" consideration standard.

The Wildcats had two swimmers place in the championship final of the 100y free. Junior [Eric la Fleur](#) dictated the pace with a seventh place finish (44.03), freshman Lyndon Ferns followed one spot behind when he registered a time of 44.05.

The 'Cats 400y free relay quartet also posted an impressive fashion on Saturday. Ferns opened the race, he was followed by la Fleur, fellow freshman Simon Burnett and then in the anchor leg, junior transfer Luis Rojas. Arizona's four swimmers swam to a third-place mark in a time of 2:55.26.

For Arizona, Burnett dictated the pace for his squad with his performance in the 200y free. He finished third when he touched the wall in 1:36.14, which was also good enough for an NCAA "A" qualifying standard.

In other action, Rojas hinted in his Pac-10 debut of his immense talent with his impressive effort in the 100y fly. He secured his place at the NCAA Championships later in March when he swam the race in 47.34, a third place finish.

Other notables for the Wildcats included junior Nate Stevens clocking an NCAA "B" consideration time in the 100y back (58.45). Junior [Greg Owen](#) also placed 12th in the 100y back when he finished in 55.97.

Arizona had three men place in the Top 20 in Thursday night's 50y free final. Junior [Eric la Fleur](#) dictated the pace with a 14th place finish (20.44), one spot behind was junior transfer Luis Rojas (20.47), and freshman Lyndon Ferns rounded out the trio when he completed the race in a time of 20.54.

Burnett at the British Championships: While the majority of the Wildcat men stayed in Tucson last week both to train for their meet this weekend and to observe their female counterparts, freshman Simon Burnett was in Sheffield, England to participate in the 2003 British Swimming Championships. Burnett, a spring semester enrollee, performed at a level that easily validated his cross Atlantic sojourn. He set personal bests on long courses measured in meters in both the 100 and 200y free. In Thursday's Session 4, Burnett touched the wall in the 200m free in a PB time of 1:51.51, good enough for third-place. Later, in Saturday's Session 8, Simon continued his stellar effort with a 50.53 in the 100m free, en route to a third-place mark.

The British Swimming Championships are a way for swimmers to qualify for the X Fina World Championships in Barcelona, Spain, later in March. If Burnett qualifies he will join Arizona head coach Frank Busch, who has been selected to coach the women's qualifies as an assistant.

Last Time at the NCAA's: The Wildcats finished seventh by scoring 242 points at the 2002 NCAA Championships, which was the 11th time Arizona has finished in the top ten in the last 14 years. Arizona alumnus Roland Schoeman claimed the only individual title in the 50y free, but numerous swimmers earned an All-America nomination.

Senior Jeff Dash earned All-America first-team in both the 200y fly and 400y medley relay. Junior Eric la Fleur led the way among the returning Wildcats by garnering All-American status in three different events; the 100y and the 200 and 400y freestyle relays. Junior Josh Anderson was named an honorable mention All-American in both the 1-meter springboard and the 10-meter platform.

Also in 2002, Arizona diving coach Michelle Mitchell-Rocha was named the Pac-10 Diving Coach of the Year for the third consecutive year. The aforementioned Schoeman, in winning the 50y free, continued Arizona's streak of having an individual champion for eight out of the past ten years.

Recapping the Women's NCAA's: Despite the fact that Arizona did not finish in the top-five at the NCAA Championships for the first time since 1997, the Wildcat women proved themselves to be one of the deepest and most-talented squads at the meet, even though they were probably the youngest team that participated. The 'Cats finished in ninth with a total of 209 points, only six behind eighth-place finisher California.

Sophomore Emily Mason's performance at the NCAA's cemented her as a swimmer of world-class ability. In an extraordinary leap from her ninth place finish in the 400y IM at last year's NCAA's, Mason broke two school records and finished as the runner-up in both the 400y IM and 200y fly. In the 400y IM, the Phoenix, Ariz. native obliterated her own school record by nearly five seconds en route to a second-place finish in 4:07.07. In the meet's final day, Saturday, Mason destroyed Erin Vogt's school record in the 200y fly by two seconds, she clocked in at a blistering 1:54.25.

Even though she did not garner an individual victory, Mason not only offered a glimpse of her unbelievable talent, but she garnered points that proved essential to Arizona's ascension from 14th to ninth after the first day.

Elsewhere, senior Beth Botsford closed out her college career much as she had started it; with domination. Botsford, the 2000 NCAA Champion in the 100y back, earned All-America first team status by finishing 3rd in the 100y back and 4th in the 200y back with times of 53.21 and 1:54.17, respectively. The Timonium, Md. native also broke a school record with her lead off swim of 52.91 in the 400y medley relay.

Of the 12 athletes that competed at the NCAA's, eight earned an All-America first-team selection including four of the five Wildcat freshmen. Botsford led the way by being selected as an All-American in four different events, followed by Mason and junior Jessica Wagner, who each received three selections. The Wildcat freshmen quartet of

Lisa Pursley, Jenna Gresdal, Marshi Smith and Katie Willis also earned nominations in their NCAA Championships debut. Pursley accrued two first-team selections while the other three received one apiece. Junior diver Claire Febvay, en route to an All-American first team selection, nearly broke the school record with her score of 420.20 pts on the platform, good enough for sixth overall.

In the end, Arizona's women earned All-American first-team in a whopping 18 events and honorable mention All-America in eight others.

Auburn won its second straight NCAA Championships from their own James E. Martin Aquatics Center by totaling 536 points, the highest single team point total in nearly a decade. Second was Georgia with 376 points and Pac-10 rival Southern California followed in third with a score of 284 points. Southern Methodist (281 pts) and Florida (277 pts) rounded out the top-five.

Do Your Best...Literally: As the Wildcat women piled up victories and ascended up the rankings as the season progressed, a total of 11 individual bests were achieved by six different swimmers. Freshmen Jenna Gresdal and Marshi Smith led Arizona with three new personal bests, sophomore Jessica Hayes was close behind with two new standards. Gresdal bettered her previous apogee in the 50, 100 and 200y free; Smith did the same in the 100y and 200y free as well as the 200y back. Jessica Hayes broke her 100y free PB at the 2002 Texas Invitational and the 200y free benchmark time at the Pac-10 Championships. Sophomore Emily Mason and freshman Lisa Pursley both improved their standards in the 100y fly and senior Julie Manitt rounded out the group by swimming her best time ever in the 200y back at the Pac-10's.

Coach Busch's Latest Accomplishment: Arizona's head coach [Frank Busch](#) has been selected to help coach the United States team at the 200X Fina World Swimming Championships in Barcelona, Spain. This year's championships will take place from July 13-27. Busch will serve as an assistant coach for the women's squad. Busch, who was honored as the NCAA Coach of the Year in 1993, last coached at the World Championships in 1998. In his career, he has made numerous coaching appearances at the international level, six at the World Championships alone.

Busch is no stranger to other international competition. In fact, Busch helmed the 1997 Pan-Pacific Games squad, and he has also been named the 1998 US Olympic Committee National Coach of the Year, among many other honors.

"It's a very prestigious honor. Outside of the Olympics, the World Championships are the most important event in the sport," said Busch.

Coaches for the World Championships are chosen by vote by the athletes who are slated to participate in the games.

International Competitors: Joining Busch at the World Championships is a multitude of Arizona swimmers. Current Arizona swimmer, junior [Juan Veloz](#), a champion at the

2002 Central American Games, will be swimming for Mexico. Sophomore [Emily Mason](#), who earned valuable international experience at the 2002 Pan-Pacific Games, will represent the United States.

Elsewhere, senior [Beth Botsford](#) will participate in the forthcoming Pan-American Games.

Arizona alumna, and former NCAA and Olympic Champion, Amanda Beard also intends to swim for the United States in Barcelona. Beard has been training with the Wildcats for the Championships for the balance of the year.

Wildcat Swimmers Nationally: Major swimming websites post a list of the best times accrued nationally in virtually every event, which analyze what teams and individuals have dominated the scene that particular season. Similarly, every year many Arizona swimmers and divers populate this list, and this year is no exception. Leading the way for the Wildcat men is junior [Juan Veloz](#). Veloz's swim at the Texas Invitational in December in the 200y fly of 1:42.78 ranks first among any other time posted this season. The All-American Junior has also posted the 16th best time in the 400y IM (3:53.04). Elsewhere, senior [Jeff Dash](#) and junior Luis Rojas both find themselves in the top 75 times in the 100y fly. Dash sits in the 27th position (49.04) while Rojas currently occupies the 39th slot (49.26). Lastly, junior [Eric la Fleur's](#) performance in the 100y free at the Texas Invitational accrued him a slot on the list of best times. la Fleur touched the wall in 44.21, good enough for 13th overall.

Senior Beth Bostford leads a multitude of swimmers for the women's squad on this prestigious index. Botsford currently stands fourth in the 200y back (1:54.67) and she ranks second only to National Swimmer of the Year Natalie Coughlin in the 100y back with her time of 53.21. However, Botsford's prowess is not limited to only the backstroke, as evidenced by her 17th best time in the 100y fly and her 41st rank in the 200y fly with times of 53.94 and 2:00.10, respectively. Joining Botsford on the list of best times in the 200y fly is junior [Emily Mason](#) who occupies the 14th position (1:57.85). Mason also ranks 27th in the 200y IM (2:01.48) and 13th in the 400y IM (4:14.17). In the end though, Mason's best placement comes in the 500y freestyle. Her time of 4:39.07 ranks her third only to the aforementioned Natalie Coughlin and SMU star Flavia Rigamonti.

All-Time Wildcat Greats: USA Swimming recently released an updated list of both the Top 15 performers and Top 15 performances ever registered on yards courses. Not surprisingly, current Arizona swimmers, as well as numerous alumni, appear quite frequently on both lists. All in all, of the Top 15 all time, Arizona women have sixth of the best performances and 12 of the best performers. Topping the list for the Wildcat women is alumna Christy Ahmann-Leighton who ranks as the fifth best performer ever in the 100y fly. Ahmann-Leighton's record setting swim came at the 1992 NCAA Championships in Austin, Texas, when she touched the wall in 51.75. Dotting the index among current Wildcats are senior [Beth Botsford](#) and sophomore [Emily Mason](#). Botsford ranks as the sixth best all time performer in the 200y back with her swim at the 2001

Texas Invitational (1:53.76) and 12th in the 100y back when she touched the wall in 53.25 at the 2002 Texas Invitational. Wildcat Women like alumna [Sarah Tolar](#), Olympic Champion Amanda Beard, Trina Jackson, among others are included in this prestigious register.

The same level of prowess on a historical level is exhibited by the Arizona men's swimmers as well. On the current index, the Wildcat men have lodged 13 of the Top performances and ten of the best performers all time. Topping the list are Arizona alumnus [Roland Schoeman](#) and Chad Carvin, who are both former NCAA Champions. Schoeman's championship winning swim at the 2002 NCAA's ranks as the third fastest ever (19.06). Schoeman also currently occupies three slots on the Top 15 for the 50y free. Similar to Schoeman, alumni Chad Carvin's swim of 4:11.59 at the 1994 NCAA Championships in Minneapolis, Minn. is good enough for second all time. In total, the Wildcats occupy 5 slots on this prestigious list, with Carvin owning three spots and former NCAA Champions Ryk Neethling and Mariusz Podkoscieiny each taking up one slot.

Arizona Media Information: For any information regarding either of the Arizona Swimming and Diving Teams, contact Elliot Magruder in the Arizona Media Relations Office at (480) 227-4311. Starting Thursday, a release accompanied by complete results of the 2003 men's NCAA Championships will be posted online at the official Arizona athletic website immediately following completion of the day's proceedings. Furthermore, those interested in obtaining full copies of releases or statistics may do so at www.arizonaathletics.com. For those interested in receiving each Arizona release via e-mail, contact Elliot Magruder at bosox@email.arizona.edu, upon addition to the e-mail list, one would receive each and every publication dispatched regarding Wildcat swimming upon its initial release

Wildcats on the Web: For any of the latest news, notes or results on not only the swimming and diving squads, but also the 17 other collegiate sports offered at the University of Arizona, log on to the official athletic website at <http://www.arizonaathletics.com>