

Simon Fraser Leads the Field

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The Huntsville Natatorium in Huntsville, Ala., will be the site of the 1979 NAIA Swimming and Diving Championships marking the second time in NAIA Swimming and Diving history that the Championships have been held in the South.

The excellent facilities and the increase of interest in NAIA swimming and diving should produce another onslaught of records. The top ten teams will remain similar to last year's finish, with some shuffling of third through 10th positions.

Leading the field will once again be the Canadians of Simon Fraser University, coached by Paul Savage. Simon Fraser will be looking for an unprecedented eighth straight national title and close to a decade of dominance in the NAIA Swimming scene. Eventhough Eau Claire of Wisconsin has an excellent team with another fine recruiting year, it will not have enough to overtake the champions.

Returning for the Paul Savage coached Simon Fraser team are a host of NAIA All-Americans, led by national champions: Kelly Franks in the 500 free and 1650 free; Victor Batchelor, first in the 200 IM, 200 freestyle and 200 backstroke; and Mark Hahto, winner of the

100 and 200 butterfly events. Others include Robert Barton, Derrick Hamilton, Nick Borelly, Cam Green and Aaron Kennedy. The only loss is Rob Gundison, champion in the 400 IM. In addition to last year's team are: freshman Stu Ballantyne, who will give strength to the 50 and 100 freestyle events; Ross Manning, a distance and mid-distance swimmer; sophomore transfer IM'ers Chris Erickson and Shawn Hurly; and returning junior D'Arcy Hamilton, who won both backstroke events at Southwest in 1977.

The team in best position to challenge the Canadians is the Tom Prior coached team of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Last year Eau Claire finished second with 214 well distributed points. the Wisconsin team was led by sophomore James Harmon, who won the 50 and 100 freestyle sprint events. He will not be returning this season as his academic major required him to transfer. Eau Claire does return a nucleus of top national performers in: sprinter Lief Helling; divers Jim Brannan, second on one meter and eighth on the three meter; Gary Brewer, 6th on the three meter; Nate Nevid in the IM events; Hans Perlich, backstroke; and Hal Boentje, breaststroke. Coach Prior had an excellent year recruiting swimmers in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois and will have the depth to maintain his second place position.

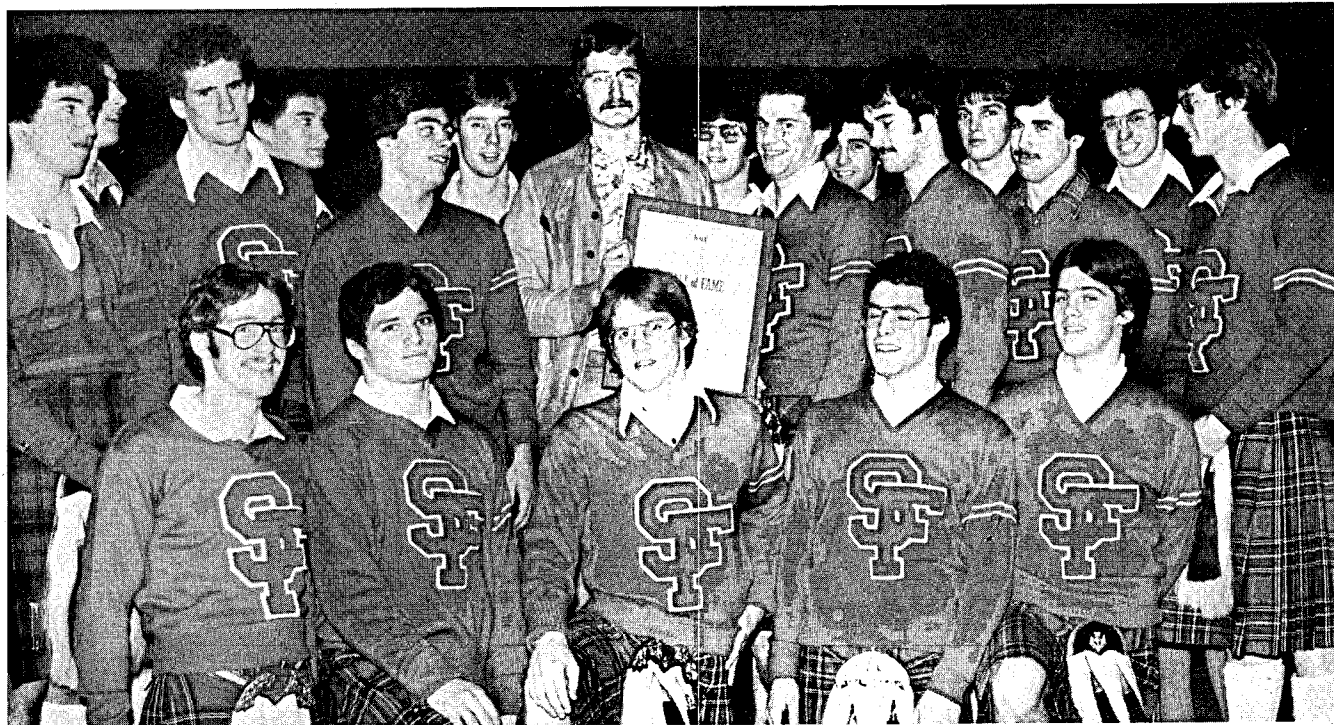
The third place battle will be between Drury College and Fairmont. Drury finished fourth last year while Fairmont was tied for sixth with Bemidji. Third place team Central Washington will struggle to stay in the top eight this season as it lost national champion Craig Weishaar in the 200 breaststroke event,

Eric Tracy, 1977 50 free champion, and junior Craig Benson, who was second in the 500 free and 1650 free last year. Returning for Central Washington will be: All-Americans Russ Ferguson, 100 breast champion in 1977; Roger Coburn, second in the 200 fly in 1977-78; Scott Shake, fifth in the 200 back; and Mike Walstead. Coach Bob Greyson did not have the year of quality recruiting he has had in the past.

Drury, coached by Jack Steek, is looking for its best season ever. The Panthers have seven returning All-Americans, including the National Championship record setting 400 free relay team of Tom Schaper, Mike Scott, Mike Wagnon and James Yount. All of last year's fourth place team is returning, along with 12 freshmen that includes outstanding Nebraska swimmer, Stew Holm, in the IM events. Drury is definitely a team on the move and will maintain a high finish in the national standings.

Fairmont State of Fairmont, W. Va. has been on the move since Coach Steve Mahoney took over five years ago. Fairmont is led by All-American John Orchard, who has been one of the nation's leading mid-distance and distance freestyler's over the past two years. There are seven returning All-Americans plus the addition of University of Texas transfer John McMahon, a former Southwest Conference Champion who has achieved times in three events that are better than present NAIA records. Also added to the team is freshman NISCA All-American Jay Thorpe, who will swim the sprint free and the breaststroke events.

Remaining in the top six will be the University of Denver, coached by last



Simon Fraser received Hall of Fame award at 1978 NAIA Championships.

year's Coach of the Year, Jim Bain. Denver finished fifth last year and will not be able to move up this year as two top ranked All-Americans, Fred Plotkin and Bill Fenner, have been lost through graduation. Returning will be top national swimmers Greg Fritz, Mark Rients, Jon Hayashida, Mark Evans, Brad Busse and Eric Bragg. Added to the team is JC All-American Ron Gamble, and high school All-American Mark Clairmont.

In sixth place will be **Bemidji State University**, a team that returns several quality national swimmers including Kelly Lewis in the distance events, Steve Boss in the backstroke and IM events, and Ron Borneton, who finished second in 50 Free in 1978. Coach Lee Ahlbrecht recruited two divers and several top freshmen swimmers from Minnesota.

The next four teams in the top ten will be decided among several teams including **Clarion State** of Pennsylvania, with three returning All-American Divers, Tony Perrillo, Mike Zucca and Mike McNulty. Perriello won both the 1 and 3 meter competition in 1978.

Steven's Point has two strong relays returning along with its 100 breaststroke NAIA Champion, Dan Jusse, and fourth place 1650 freestyler, Ken Wurm. Placing 10th last year, the Red Blair team will find it hard to move much higher in

1979.

Westminster College of Pennsylvania returns seniors Bruce Marchionda, Mark Huber, sophomore Jamie Ritter, along with freshman IMer Ed Stohner, 11th last year. Westminster may move up if the free relays can prove to be nationally competitive.

Williamette, of Salem, Ore., finishing last year in 12th place, returns strong sprinters in senior Mike Anderson, and sophomore Randy Randolph. Several top freshmen, including sprinter and IM'er Steve Koga, will add strength to the Jim Brik coached team.

Thirteenth place **Western State College** of Gunnison, Colo., coached by Dick Lemke, has progressively moved up in the standings the past three years. They will be the best team in the history of the institution, led by All-Americans Don Case in the distance events; Dave Gray in the breast; and Tom Codd in the back.

Other teams looking to move up from last season's finish are: **Lewis and Clark College**; **University of California of San Diego**, on the strength of sprinter's Seth Richman and Howard Nelson; and **Austin College** of Austin, Texas, also on the strength of a sprinter Bob Chandler.

Southwest finished 17th last year after being in the top 10 in 1977 hopes to move up on the strength of its

three returning All-Americans: Jim Martin, fourth and seventh in the 1978 1 and 3 meter diving competition; and Joel Roylance and Steve Binder, members of the freestyle relay team; All-American Junior College transfer Frank Bihlman, IM and breaststroke; and several top freshmen from South Dakota, Illinois and Minnesota.

Pacific Lutheran, annually one of the top teams in the nation, will find it difficult to maintain a top 10 position. Several top national swimmers have graduated and the squad is at a low ebb in terms of numbers and personnel. The Pete Kennedy coached team will rely on the abilities of three All-Americans: Bruce Templin, Scot Wakefield and Wayne LaVassor, all seniors.

One other team that will move up from its nineteenth place finish of last year is **University of Wisconsin, Stout**, coached by Bob Smith. Stout returns four All-Americans, led by junior breastroker Steve Bauman. A senior team with experience will provide the strength to move up several positions.

The predictions for the Top Ten at the 1979 NAIA Championships in Huntsville are: Simon Fraser, Eau Claire, Drury, Fairmont, Denver, Bemidji, Central Washington, Pacific Lutheran, Clarion State, and Stevens Point.

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