

# Swimmers take nationals

*Pair wins title using different approach to sport*

BY DEBBIE BALL

Staff Writer

They are both Cal Poly students that brought the university recognition for excellence in swimming — but they different in many ways.

Seniors Brian Wilkerson and Kim Foster have swam their last laps representing the Cal Poly swim team, but not without claiming national titles and entering their names in the university's recordbook.

Wilkerson, who has swam on the team since his freshman year, defended his 200 backstroke NCAA Division II title clocking a school record of 1:53.20. This is an honor the electronics major has captured three years in a row. He also earned All-American laurels on the 11th-place 400 medley relay team (3:13.08) and finished fourth in the 100 backstroke (52.15) at the competition held in Orlando.

Foster, a rookie to the Cal Poly team, finished the national meet with five All-America honors and as the second highest individual scorer. The journalism major's events included the 200 and 400 individual medley (2:09.62 and 4:34.27), with second place finishes in both. She finished fifth and sixth respectively in the 100 and 200 backstroke (1:00.37 and 2:10.78) and participated in the 9th-place 800 relay (7:48.92). All of these times set new Cal Poly records.

Of course all of this is already attainable through examination of the records books, but how

they were able to excel in their chosen sport is now the question to be answered.

Starting with Wilkerson, his success seems to be a bit of an accident.

He said he began paddling around the pool when he was about five, but never set out expecting to capture national titles.

He said he joined the Fremont High School swim team in northern California, and became a backstroker because nobody else wanted the job.

Upon completion of his senior year, Wilkerson said he was contacted by the Cal Poly swim coach, and decided that the San Luis Obispo campus was the place he belonged. Once again he fulfilled the backstroker role due to a lack of other volunteers.

Wilkerson's basic attitude towards swimming is to not get uptight.

"I try not to think about it too much," he commented. "Some people get screwed up if they get too psyched up. You have to relax."

He said that he personally likes to concentrate on one or two big meets each season where he "lays it all on the line." This may

account for the reason that the backstroker only sets new school records at national competitions.

Wilkerson was also awarded the Cal Poly athlete of the year award for the 1983-84 school year.

He said he happily received the award mainly because it gave the swim team some of the recognition it deserves.

"It always seems we're last on the list for everything," he said. "We are really kind of neglected."

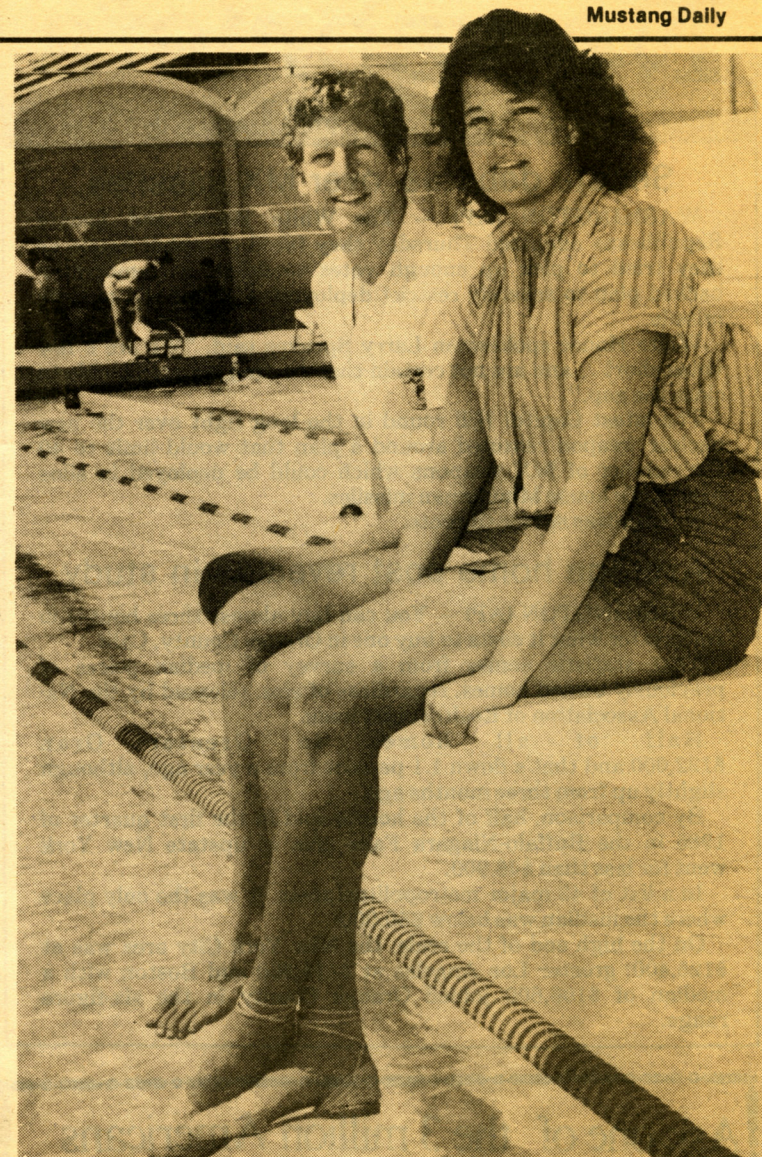
Wilkerson offers the example of having to pay money out of their own pockets in order to attend the national competition. He said they also have to buy their own uniforms, and during his sophomore year was even threatened with the end of the Cal Poly swim program.

However, the backstroker made it through the problems—including three coaches in four years, and says he is glad he stayed at Cal Poly.

Tracy Serpa, coach of the the men's and women's swim teams, said her male prep star is the type of person any coach likes to have on a squad.

"He doesn't complain about the hard work," she said, "and he gets along with everyone."

Serpa said Wilkerson has the ability to relieve any stress of others, keeping the swimmers loose.



MARGARET APODACA/Mustang Daily

Swimmers Kim Foster and Brian Wilkerson were both national champions.

She also added that the one remarkable thing about the backstroker's swimming is that it keeps improving—a thing that usually becomes hard with age.

For her efforts, Foster finished second in the junior division and eighth overall in the nation in 1980. She said this normally would have qualified her for the



said he has no plans of continuing in water competition—he hasn't even been in the pool since nationals. He said his immediate goal is to obtain his college degree in electronics—a process that was extended beyond the normal four-year program due to his participation on the swim team.

Foster, however, said she has been actively involved in all sports since she was a child—and swimming has been the most emphasized.

She said that after receiving her driver's license, she daily made the trek from her home in Lompoc into San Luis Obispo to work out with a coach that really pushed her to excel.

She swam at the Division I school for three years, capturing All-American titles in the 200 backstroke and relay races in her freshman and sophomore years.

However, she said she did not enjoy life at the university and opted to return to California as a Cal Poly student.

"It's weird," she explained, "when you're on scholarship it's like a job. Swimming had always been for fun, but then it became something I had to do. But in Division II people are there because they want to be, not because they are getting paid."

She also added that at Cal Poly

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she was allowed to swim a variety of races, not just her specialty, backstroke.

Serpa, commenting on Foster, said she is like a dream come true.

"You can always count on her," Serpa said. "She can swim just about any event anytime."

Foster said that she is learned a lot from swimming.

"First I realized I need to set specific goals," she said. "I now think about where I want to be in five years and how to get it. It also taught me that if you really want something you should go for it."

She said that she is presently working towards a career as a

sports broadcaster—a profession where she could combine her love for sports and college education in journalism.

"Swimming also taught me to budget my time," Foster continued. With work outs twice a day and an extended swimming season, she said it was definitely necessary to setup and follow a schedule that would allow her to study and still get the sleep she needed to compete.

Foster said she has no plans to retire her suit, and was back in the pool just yesterday.

"I think physical fitness is an important part of life," she said, "and I think swimming is the best exercise."