

Seminole diver Seguin finally lands in the NCAA championship meet

By David Lee Simmons

Democrat staff writer

Benoit Seguin was coming out of the water after one of his 11 dives during the Canadian indoor nationals in Winnipeg last week, and his Florida State coach, Gary Cole, wasn't too impressed.

"That wasn't bad," Cole told his pupil. "So-so."

Seguin just stared back and said, "I'm saving it for the NAAs."

After another strong performance in his native Canada, Seguin is off to Indianapolis for his first — and last — NCAA appearance. He is traveling along with the 800-meter freestyle-relay team as the only representatives for FSU's men's team, and

he hopes to make it count. After three tries and three bare misses at getting a shot at the NCAA, Seguin finally made it this year after qualifying at the NCAA's Zone B meet in Chapel Hill, N.C.

One of 33 divers in Indianapolis, Seguin will have to place in the top 16 to become the first All-American diver at FSU since Olympic gold medalist Phil Boggs did it in 1971. While Boggs was an All-American in both the 1-meter and 3-meter diving events in 1970-71 (as well as in the 3-meter in '69), Seguin qualified only for the 1-meter.

One event is fine with Seguin, though. He's been so close so many times, he feels lucky to be in at all.

"I've been waiting a long time for the NAAs," Seguin said, with his soft French-

Seguin has dealt with frustration since his freshman year, when he missed the NCAA cut by a fraction; "one-half a point on any dive would've sent him," Cole said.

Grade problems, spurred by the English-language barrier, and a shoulder injury his junior year have gotten in the way, but this year there have been no barriers, no injuries. Everything has been smooth, and Seguin has responded.

"First, Ben came in this season in the best shape I have ever seen him," Cole said. "Throughout the season, he's maintained 5- to 7-percent body fat, and that's great. We decided to go back to the dives we knew he could do well, and he's done great."

In the 48 total diving events this season

— combining the 1- and 3-meter events he's entered in each dual meet — Seguin won all but one, compared to only two last season while hindered by a shoulder injury. He broke Boggs' 1-meter record of 360.90 points along the way.

As he has done the previous three years, Seguin returned to Canada at the end of the dual-meet season to participate in the nationals, where Canadians who leave for other countries are not met with a red-carpet treatment. It is an attitude that has soured Seguin's hopes of trying out for the Olympic team despite finishing fifth in the 1-meter and sixth in the 3-meter last week.

Seminole dives 18th

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Benoit Seguin of Florida State finished 18th in 1-meter diving at the NCAA Division 1 Swimming and Diving Championships with a total of 447.40 points.

Seguin, a senior, missed making All-American by eight points.



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Canadian accent. "Yes, I wanted to do well for the (Canadian) nationals, but I want to do better at the NAAs. Each time I failed, I thought, 'Next year, next.' But this time, there is no next year. This year is the year."