

SUBWAY

Profiles

When you're swimming your head's underwater, you're not talking to anyone, you're just within your own thoughts. It's just you and your mind.

Home Town:
Chicago

Degree:
Health and
Fitness
Management

VICKI MUNSON

Clad in a skintight one-piece swimsuit, waiting on the edge of a pool looking into the cool, clear water, there's nothing to hide... not even nerves. Munson said she still gets "so nervous" before a swim meet and that mid-race, without fail, her legs feel like they're going to fall off. And that's after almost a decade of swimming competitively.

DIVING IN

At 11 years old, an age that Munson admits is older than the average swimmer, she began swimming through her Chicago neighborhood's summer league, not because she had any interest in learning the difference between a backstroke and a heat-stroke, but because her friends were participating.

Munson went wherever the competitive tide took her, and that was a location where there actually is a tide: Florida.

"I thought Florida sounded really cool," said the former University of Tampa undergrad, where she swam on scholarship. It was cool, weather wise, but the mental and physical stress of swimming competitively soon got to her.

BIG MOVE

When Munson's family relocated from Chicago to Houston, she saw it as an opportunity to transfer universities and transfer more of her time to academics. Last fall Munson enrolled at Texas State, still wanting to swim competitively but on her own terms. Her whole swimming career had been "extremely competitive," she said. The tide had

changed when she found and joined the Texas State Swim Club on her own—the "perfect balance" of relaxation and competitiveness. Texas State no longer has a collegiate swim team, a fact that Munson, health and fitness management senior, attributes to how little money the sport brings in and how much money it costs to participate.

TURNING THE TIDE

As Southwest Texas State University in the 1990's, Munson said there was a "real" swim team, whose member and team records are immortalized on a board, and have since been broken by the 30 member, co-ed Texas State Swim Club. Post-season Munson said the Texas State Swim Club broke seven of these title records, including one for men's relay, three for relay and three individual records she broke.

Since joining the Texas State Swim Club, Munson said she has noticed the difference between club and collegiate swimmers: "They're there because they want to be." She added that many of the university's club members are former high school varsity athletes or participated in similar summer leagues that she did as a child.

| By Jordan Gass-Poore | Photo Eric Morales |