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Huge turnout for Lafayette Swim Conference Championship

By Jon Kingdon



Taylor White, Rancho Colorados Wahoos Photo
Gint Federas

The 7th Annual Lafayette Swim Conference Championship was held the weekend of July 28-29 at Acalanes High School. Bearing the moniker "Adventures on the Seven Seas," the meet had over 1,000 swimmers ranging in age from 4 to 18. The participating clubs, LMYA (164), Oakwood (99), Pleasant Hill (136), Rancho Colorados (218), Springbrook (251) and Sun Valley (139) came together to attempt to qualify for the county championships.

Coming into the meet, 140 of the swimmers had qualified for the county meet in 260 events. After the meet, 103 more swimmers qualified for 120 more events.

Springbrook (5,495) amassed the most points in the meet followed by Rancho Colorado (4,241) with LMYA (3,210.5) finishing in third. Over the two-day affair, there were 13 meet records broken.

Two swimmers with LMYA epitomized the quality of the participants in this annual event:

Dan Goodson, who swam in the 13-14 group and will be a sophomore next year at Acalanes, led the way for LMYA as the high point scorer in his group with 72 points, something he won before as a 12-year-old. Goodson has qualified for the county meet in the individual medley, the butterfly, freestyle, freestyle relay and the medley relay. Swimmers can only compete in two of the individual races at the county meet so Goodson is going to have a decision to make.

Such performances don't just happen, according to Goodson: "I began swimming when I was four and I just kept improving my times. It's the joy of winning. After a win, I just can't stop smiling. I practice two hours a day over the summer and will soon be joining the Aqua Bears team."

LMYA head coach Corey Dolley appreciates the talent and character that Goodson epitomizes: "As a junior coach on the team, he is a good leader with the kids. He has the talent and potential to do well on the Acalanes swim and water polo teams. He has a key element that enables him to be such a good swimmer - he enjoys it."

Another member of the LMYA team that performed well was 11-year-old Kate Kostolansky who goes to school at St. Perpetua. Kostolansky qualified for the county tournament in the individual medley, backstroke and freestyle. For Kostolansky, it's a family effort: "I began swimming when I was 5 and I get a lot of help from my parents. My mom will swim with me and my father is always driving me to practice."

Dolley also sings the praises of Kostolansky: "Kate is an awesome person. She is super happy and always cheers on her teammates. She has a great desire to keep getting better and cares about every single race."

The tournament represents the term "friendly competition." Springbrook's head coach Ray Meadows appreciates the spirit of the meet: "For the most part, the competing swimmers go to school and play other sports together. You see them wishing each other the best of luck prior to the race and congratulating each other after the race."

Meadows highlighted two of his swimmers: Sadie Suppiger and Hailey Hilsabeck. Racing with the 9- to 10-year-old girls, Suppiger was first in the 50-yard free style, 200-yard medley relay, 50-yard back stroke, 100-yard individual medley and the 200-yard free relay, winning the high point award in her group.

In the 11 to 12-year-old group, Hilsabeck won the 50-yard breast stroke, 100-yard individual medley, 50-yard fly and the 200-yard free style relay and won the high point award for her group.

Says Meadows: "Both girls are talented with a great work ethic. They are mature and real leaders in the group."

Meet directors Aly McAlister and Laura Gunderson took on the task of coordinating 84 races, 1,000 swimmers and 3,000 overall entries. Says McAlister: "It's like putting on a six-ring circus. We had 386 volunteers, both parents and non-parents."

According to Gunderson: "The fans are really spirited. There are people here who don't have kids in the race but just enjoy the races. We are a nonprofit group and raise the money to put this on with the advertising in and sale of our programs and the sale of our T-shirts. All of this covers the rental of the Acalanes pool and their racing technology and various items like the tables and tents."

The races were run with a military precision. The meet utilized fly-over starts (where the race is begun prior to the previous swimmers getting out of the pool) because as McAlister puts it: "We wanted to get out of here before midnight."

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[back](#)

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