

LAMORINDA SPORTS

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Another successful OMPA meet led by Orinda Country Club's 23rd consecutive victory



Photos Kendall Haynes

Chrystina Hansen congratulating her daughter Madison

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Coming into the meet having won the OMPA the last 22 years, Head Coach Steve Haufler did not concern himself with the pressure of keeping the streak going "though it did come from members of the OCC."

It was a successful season coming into the OMPA for Haufler: "We won the Park Pool relay and the Bottoms Up meet and the mini-meets as well so I felt good about what we've done so far, and our kids seem to really rise to the occasion for the big meets and the OMPA is the biggest one of all."

Our swimmers get a little extra energy to perform well on their relay teams because they're not swimming for themselves, they're swimming for the team.

This is a big deal for the community, having all nine teams together, spending the weekend competing, having fun. There's a lot of camaraderie amongst the teams and coaches and that makes for a great atmosphere."

MEADOW SWIM & TENNIS

Won the Orinda Chamber of Commerce Perpetual Award for finishing in second.

For Meadow Head Coach Kyle Peterson, the season was more than about winning.

"It's all about building character and finding depth within each age group. You can't do well at the OMPA meet without depth. We really came together as a coaching staff and there is a real trickle-down that affects the 15-18 age group, which creates a lot of good role models, and with good role models, you have fast swimming.

Finn McManus had surgery this year and has been an excellent leader, and Tali Stryker has had a number of really impressive swims even after breaking a finger a week and a half ago. They're both great leaders and were passionate in their coaching."

Assistant coach Amanda Ferguson, who began as a swimmer for Meadow, spoke of how

OMPA is more than just a swim meet: "This is the epitome of athletics where we put away all the differences. This is the highlight of the summer and it's the sport where boys and girls swim together. I believe that it fosters a lot of positive sportsmanship and life lessons."

Tali Stryker, who will be playing water polo at UCLA next year, won the girl's Outstanding Swimmer award for achieving the highest point total as a result of swimming the individual events.

Joseph Goett won the Outstanding Swimmer award for the boys.

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Won the Orinda Rotary Club Perpetual for finishing in third. After thirty-one years at Sleepy Hollow, Head Coach Matt Ehrenberger is not at all jaded. "The meet has always been an extravagant event with all of the energy, the tents, and the team areas, and it makes it easy for the kids to swim fast."

What's changed is the summers are now about a lot more things than rec swimming and the kids are more busy, but OMPA remains a great event where everyone wants to do well. The team spirit is unbelievable and that has never changed.

It's been a good year for Sleepy Hollow and our kids did a good job, and this is the meet which we all point to. What stands out is how hard our kids have worked and how they kept getting better each week.

We've had great junior coaches to lead our kids and a great staff of older guys. The leadership comes from the parents, the coaches, the junior coaches, and the kids as well. We're graduating nine seniors and most of them started with us from five to nine years of age."

MORAGA COUNTRY CLUB

Won the Ellwood Douglas/Doc Webster Memorial Plaque as the Most Improved Team.

Head Coach Matt Armanini is another coach with decades of experience and has an appreciation for how the



Orinda Country Club coaching staff from left: Olivia Harris, Head Coach Steve Haufler, Morgan Leishman, Ashlyn Fiorilli, Matt Estrada

OMPA has adjusted:

"The sport has gotten more competitive, and the meet is as spirited as it ever was and the parent groups and community has brought it to another level. The league has adapted to that growth really well, like expanding the finalists from eight to ten, giving more incentive for people to swim.

Our team has gotten way better, and our talent has been more dispersed throughout the team rather than being concentrated in one age group. We only have one graduating senior in Hazel Krozek, who is also an Eagle Scout, and has done a really good job in being a role model for the kids and coaching swimming.

OMPA is the only time that each of the nine teams has their whole team together. It's more competitive but it just makes the atmosphere that much more fun because most of the swimmers know each other. Everyone's here for a bigger reason which is just the culture that's been long established and consistent throughout the years."

MORAGA RANCH

Head Coach Mark Cavallero took a different approach with his team this summer.

"We had a great season, and we really tried to stress a "summer of fun" to make the sport exciting for the kids. I've noticed that we're competing a lot with water polo, and they work nicely together so to keep our kids engaged we've found ways to make it fun. We balanced the fun with the learning and the technical aspects of the sport.

There's just a feeling with OMPA with all of the teams coming together and that is what is keeping kids coming to rec swimming. It's the most fun swim meet around and it's the best run swim meet around. The experience of OMPA is amazing and the kids look forward to it from day one of the season. It's really great that all these kids have crossovers through water polo, going to school, and other sports so they all know each other and it's fun to see their

friends and compete against each other.

Our 15-18 medley girls relay was comprised of three of our seniors (Delaney Joyce, Sophie Lederle, Sammie Lederle, and junior Sammy Frazier) who are very good friends and swam in their final relay together and that to me is a big highlight, to see them have that experience and success together."

MORAGA VALLEY

Head Coach Trevor Rose has welcomed changes that have come in the team's programs:

"Things have improved in a lot of ways. Coaching is more involved in the training and is much more detailed now. The pools are faster and there is more access, and the kids are more into it. Working with the kids has been a blessing."

We've had great leadership in every age group, led by Connor Megan in 7-8's, Cody Delaney in 9-10's up to Allison Sagara with the 15-18's.

The highlights for our team this season have just been getting everyone back together as we've been under construction at our club for a long time, so, it's been great to have a full team effort and a full summer, and our kids have done a great job here at the meet."

ORINDA PARK POOL

Won Dan

Siri/Mike Anjedani Honorary plate for being the most improved team without relays.

Assistant Coach Aidan Vollmar, currently swimming for the University of Pacific, spoke highly about the team's summer program.

"It's been a monumental season for Orinda Park Pool. Our staff has come together as a senior and assistant staff to devise rules and make sure that each age group can develop in a way where we were able to see meaningful progress from month to month. At an event like the OMPA, we look at the percentage of drops and from the start of the meet, we've only seen a couple of our kids that haven't dropped time, and it all starts with how well our staff has been doing this year.

This meet is really something special and it has to be the best rec swim meet in the country, from a spirit and numbers perspective. I began as a swimmer and this is my 17th OMPA, and I think that's just a testament to how special this meet is.

As coaches, we try to inform our kids about taking advantage of this opportunity, let them know how special this is and teaching them how to take advantage of the opportunity despite the pressure that might come with the meet. As for our graduating swimmers, it's letting them know that we are proud of them and that the whole team was behind them at this super special event."

CAMPOLINDO CABANA

Won the Heidary Sportsmanship Trophy for demonstrating superlative sportsmanship throughout the season.

Head Coach Tatiana Gessling is another coach who began with OMPA as a swimmer.

"The energy at OMPA is always really exciting; I feel like the bleachers get more and more decorated each year and the kids get faster and faster. The best part of this meet is seeing who steps up and shines in a way that maybe we aren't expecting them to.

We've had a good season with great swimming weather all summer long, even with the really hot days. We've had a lot of good times along with a lot of small accomplishments like

more breathers, getting dives down, and our kids feeling more confident.

Our seniors that have been coaches have been a really big part of our team and have enjoyed being part of the 15-18 team, many of whom started as Mini-Marlins themselves, and it has been fun to watch them grow up."

MIRAMONTE
In what could have been an incredibly trying time for Miramonte - having a coach leave during the season - is instead another example of how special the OMPA league is.

Oceana Tan, a Miramonte parent, explained "Some of the other teams had coaches that volunteered to help us." Weina Xie, another Miramonte parent, shared that sentiment: "It was so far, so good. Despite the fact that we did not have a head coach, the kids came together anyway. All of the parents in Moraga really worked together and pointed to this last big event to see that our swimmers did their best."

EAST BAY SEA SERPENTS

The Sea Serpents, who are affiliated with the Special Olympics of Northern California, have been coming to OMPA every year since 2012.

"The East Bay Sea Serpents once again joined us on Saturday with their largest participation ever, with twenty-five participants which is incredible, and we are really excited that they continue to join us and be part of this amazing community," Ashley Brush said.

Brian Wentzel, the Sea Serpents Director, shared how much his team looks forward to coming to OMPA. "It's really a special event for them, especially being in this kind of unified environment where they get to swim with this crowd of spectators and all the energy is really a unique opportunity to swim. The support they get is over the top and they just love coming here and receiving their medals."

With the conclusion of the meet, Ashley Brush had advice to the next meet directors: "Get all of your work done ahead of time so you can sit back and enjoy the process."



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