

Porenta powers way to medal-winning efforts



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton Marlin Swim Club's Jennifer Porenta, 14, made some major waves in international competition recently. She combined skill and endurance to come away with a pair of medals -- winning one gold -- at the prestigious Youth Cup Championships at the Etobicoke Olympium.

She said it, she did it. Milton Marlin Swim Club's Jennifer Porenta was determined to take top honours in her strongest event recently at the international Youth Cup Championships.

"I'm going to break 27 (seconds) and win the cup," assured the local competitor, while preparing for the 50-metre freestyle finals at the Etobicoke Olympium.

The 14-year-old made good on her claim -- finishing first in a personal best and senior national qualifying time of 26.98. She edged chief challengers Jackie Chan of Mississauga and Sarah Gault of Quebec, who tied for second by two-tenths of a second -- which was even closer than her victory in the preliminary round.

When asked how she felt about

qualifying for the nationals, she said "It still seems like a dream. It hasn't really clicked in yet."

Her golden performance highlighted a sensational weekend campaign -- in which she swam to top 10 placings in four events, included the 100m freestyle in which she struck silver with an individual record time of 58.55.

This put her less than half a second behind the winner -- Mississauga's Chan -- who set a new Youth Cup benchmark by clocking in at 58.08.

"I can't believe that I was that close to the record," remarked Porenta. "I'm glad that Jackie got it. She really deserved it."

In truly inspiring fashion, the local teenage swimmer persevered through an extremely grinding

schedule and got better as the competition wore on -- improving on all preliminary efforts in the finals.

She took fourth place in the 200m freestyle and 10th in the 100m backstroke. Her performance highlighted a successful weekend for five Milton Marlins.

Michelle Claessens, 13, stood out with a silver medal in the 100m breaststroke and a fourth-place showing in the 200m breaststroke.

Earning four berths to the finals and consolation finals was 13-year-old Kristen McIlroy. Her top efforts were reserved for the 200m backstroke and 200m freestyle -- in which she finished fourth and fifth respectively. Meanwhile, Rachel Robinson and Yvonne Sliemers also fared well and took top 20 placings in their events.

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