

Local swimmer headed to Australian Youth Olympic Festival

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

At 13, Essex resident and avid swimmer Victoria Myers has competed against women twice her age – and beaten them.

During Swimming Canada's Senior National tournament in Montreal last July, Myers finished 14th overall in the 200-metre breaststroke.

Three months later, her time of 2:38.5 has earned her a spot on the Youth Canadian National Swim Team that will be travelling to Australia in January.

The Australian Youth Olympic Festival is taking place January 17-21 in Sydney.

The event is meant to prepare the 2,200 junior athletes for a future in the Olympics.

Myers, a Grade 9 student at Assumption High School in Windsor, discov-



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ered she made the team while doing homework.

She received a call from a friend and fellow swimmer who broke the news to an ecstatic Myers.

"I was screaming I was so excited," Myers said. "My mom and dad came in to see what was wrong."

Since the age of 10, Myers has been swimming competitively. She began at the Essex Recreation Complex and soon after joined the Windsor Aquatic Club. A year and a half in, she was selected to swim in her first national competition.

After that, she began swimming regularly in tournaments of all sizes, from small invitationals to junior and senior provincial competitions.

While most girls her age are spending time socializing, Myers says she has to make some sacrifices.

"I can't go out on Friday

nights because I have to get up on Saturday mornings at five in the morning," she said matter-of-factly. "And after swimming I do homework. But I love it. I guess if I didn't like to do it, I wouldn't."

Myers will be heading to Australia January 6 accompanied by Team Canada's 16 other swimmers, along with coaches and chaperones.

She's already travelled across Canada to compete, and says Australia is her "dream place to go."

Myers will arrive in the country three days after she turns 14, making her the youngest member of the national team.

She said she isn't bothered by this fact, and is practising 16 hours a week at the University of Windsor pool to prepare herself.

"I'm not really nervous about it," Myers said.

"I've been the youngest person at competitions before."

In January, Myers will be competing in as many as five events. She considers her best swim to be the 200-metre breaststroke.

"I have a good reaction time on the dive," Myers said. "I'm better at distance than sprinting because I have good endurance."

Myers said her ultimate goal is to make the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China.

But for now, she will spend her time practising six days a week, focusing on different aspects of swimming such as turns, dives, distance and sprinting.

"She's easy to support because she's so driven," said Myers' mom Carol. "She definitely gives all she's got all the time."



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Saturday night the boys faced the Tecumseh Eagles for the second time in a week.

Tecumseh came out strong with all the pressure in our end. Fortunately goalie Alex Rawlins was on top of his game making two big glove saves in the first five minutes.

Awstin Pettit picked up the pace with some good passing plays and forechecking but Tecumseh converted a 2 on 1 into their first goal halfway through the first period and scored again to

make it 2-0 by the end of the first period.

In the second period Essex killed off two powerplays because of their good positioning. Shortly after they were rewarded for going to the net. Andrew Wellwood banged home a deflected point shot with assists going to Skylar Janisse and Alex Merryfield. Essex continued to get more shots on net throughout the rest of the game. Brad Smith did well to clear our zone several times and set up the tying goal from behind

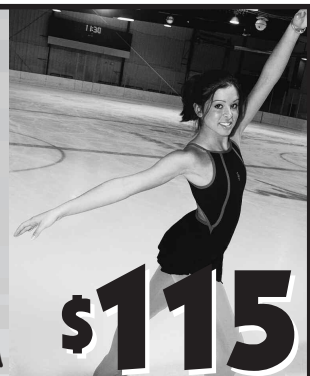
Tecumseh's net. Smith to Awstin Pettit to Matt McGuire in front who finished it with a nice back hander.

Some key plays were made by Jeff Battersby with his backchecking, Josh Clemente who found a way to throw his body around when he lost his stick and, of course, Alex Rawlins who was called upon several times and displayed great rebound control. Final score was 2-2.

Keep working hard and going to the net boys. Great job.

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