

Young Olympian swam against world's best

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

After feeding kangaroos at a wildlife reservation, taking a dip in the warm South Pacific and earning two 7th place standings in the Australian Youth Olympic Festival, 14-year-old Victoria Myers returned home to Essex last month.

She spent 16 days at the event, spending her first week in training and a second at the University of Sydney's Olympic Village, swimming competitively in five races against some of the best young swimmers in the world.

Her time of 1:15:43 in the 100 metre breaststroke and 2:44:16 in the 200 metre breaststroke earned the future Olympic hopeful an impressive 7th place standing among top junior swimmers.

Although the competitive youngster says she was a little bit off her best time in

the events, her stay in the land down under was still quite a memorable one.

"I was able to swim in the finals for Canada which was really cool," said Myers, one of the team's youngest athletes.

She said she enjoyed meeting swimmers from all parts of the world and was interested to see their different styles and training methods.

"With a lot of the athletes, we got along really well because we had a lot in common," she said. "You would think we wouldn't because we're from so many different places but because we're all athletes, we have a lot of stuff in common."

The sociable swimmer also bonded well with members of Team Canada.

"We got to know each other really well because we trained and lived with each other for two weeks," she

said. "Almost every night we had people in finals, which was really awesome."

Myers knew some of the athletes recruited to the team already from previous meets.

Since the age of 10, she 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.

From that early age, Myers has been setting her sights on the highest goal for any amateur athlete – the Olympics.

She said that having witnessed the medal ceremonies and flag raisings in



Team Canada swimmers Lindsay Seeman of Newmarket, left, and Victoria Myers of Essex take a minute to pose for a photo during the Australian Youth Olympic Festival two weeks ago. Myers placed 7th in the world in both the 100 and 200 metre breaststroke events.

Australia just makes her even more want to "get the real experience."

When China hosts the 2008 games, Myers will be

15.

For now, she's setting her sights on the Canadian national competition in Victoria, B.C. next month.

She hopes to shave some time off her personal bests in the 100 and 200 metre breaststrokes in the meantime.

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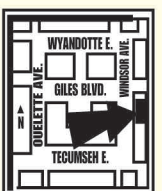
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