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# Swimmer rides wave to Summer Olympics

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA  
Staff Writer

It was only a brief moment in his life — 51.346 seconds to be exact. But 22-year-old Garret Pulle made the most of that precious time.

The Markham resident fulfilled a life-long dream when he earned a berth on the Canadian national men's swim team that hopes to be a splash hit at the Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Pulle attained his goal at the recent 2000 Maritime Life Olympic trials in Montreal when he earned a qualifying time in the 100-metre freestyle that placed him along side Rick Say, Robbie Taylor and Kyle Smerdon on the men's relay team.

"It's been my dream and I'm living it right now," said Pulle from his Markham residence after returning from the trials in Montreal.

Elated with the opportunity to compete at his first-ever Olympics, Pulle said much of his success wouldn't have been possible were it not for a lesson that he learned prior to the trials. And that was to make the most out of whatever opportunity came his way.

"For 14 years I've dreamed of going to the Olympics and it all came down to a 50-second race. If you don't do it in that race it doesn't happen. It's a pinnacle race."

"What I've found is that there's lots of people who were capable and had the talent and were able to make the team. The toughest part was to do it (make the team) on that particular day."

"There's lots of preparation involved. But I felt the hardest part was to keep my composure and to do it that day."

"Most of the people who were expected to do it (make the Olympic team) that day did it and I did it. I trained a long time and it hits you that you have to do it that particular moment. It's the ultimate high."

Known for his past performances on the World Cup circuit in the butterfly, Pulle said he wasn't disappointed in not making the Olympic team in what's been his specialty. Taking an approach that it's not wise to concentrate all of his efforts on one event, Pulle had a backup plan in mind which ultimately paid off.

"At the start of the year I wanted to make the 100m butterfly," he acknowledged. "But as the year went by I wasn't feeling my 100m butterfly stroke. I was proud that I made a decision a couple of months ago not to put all of my eggs in one basket. Instead of seeing that it would be a challenge to make the team and instead of giving up, there was an open spot in the 100m free so I worked extra hard on the free and it took the pressure off of me."

"To recognize that and see it and go into the trials early enough I could make a difference in training. It all came together. I found an alternate route to get my goal."

Entering the trials, Pulle had a good feeling that he could make the team.

"My major goal was to stay relaxed and not think of it as an Olympic trial situation. I didn't look at who was swimming against me in the next lane."

While the Olympics are still two months away, Pulle concedes the Canadian team will have a challenge on its hands in its quest to earn a medal. But Pulle takes the approach that the team has the potential to seize the moment at hand.



GARRET PULLE

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