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Inserts for Thur., Aug 15, 2013

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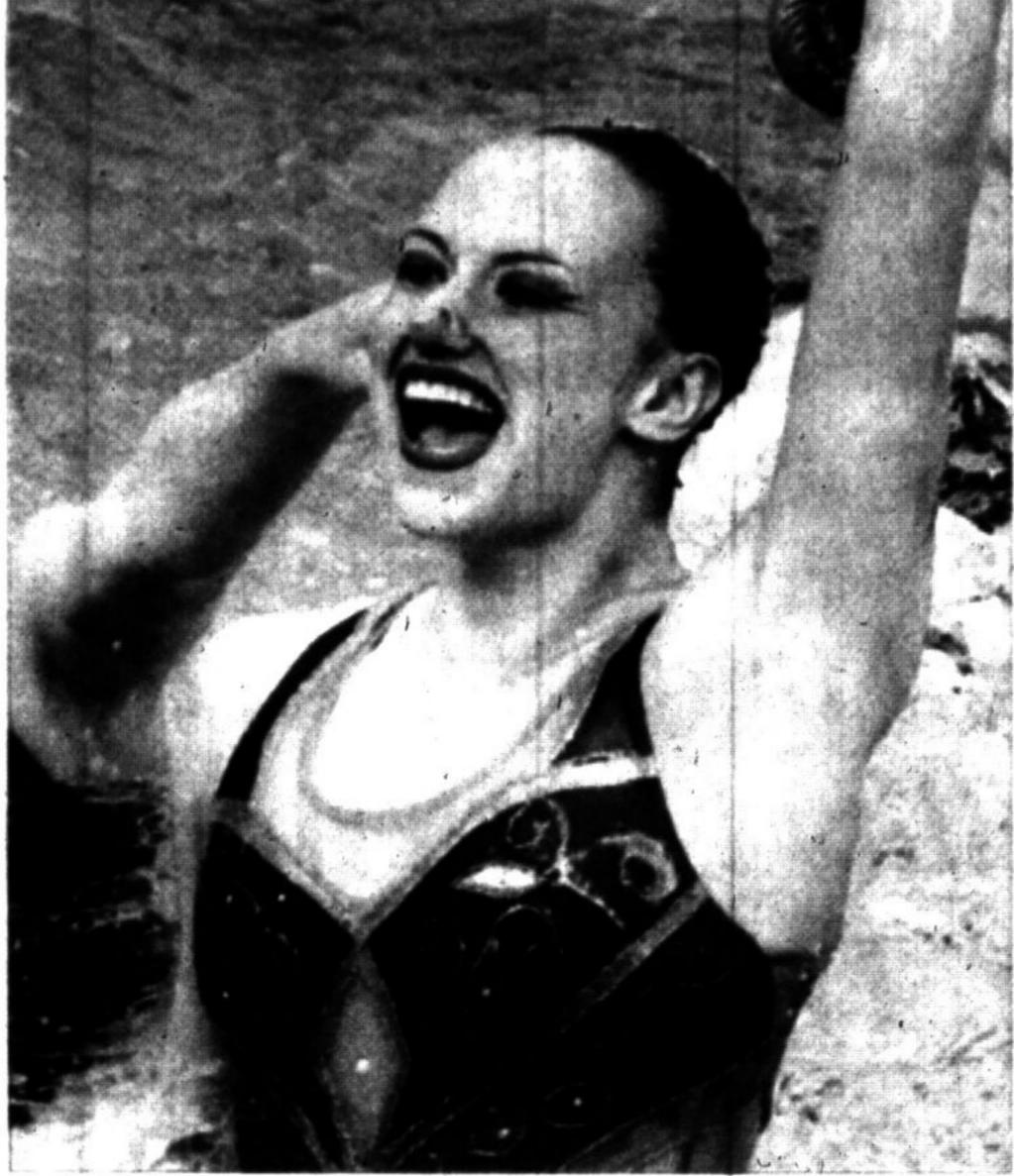
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Gormley's Dylan Harding had her dream come true when she was named to the national junior synchro team. She's competing in Puerto Rico this week.



## Searching for gold in San Juan

**SPORTS** 

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA mhayakawa@yrmg.com

Dylan Harding had a vision.

Pictured in the 16-year-old Gormley resident's mind was to be one of 12 members performing precise acrobatic manoeuvres in the swimming pool with 11 other team members representing Canada's junior national synchronized swim team.

Harding's dream blossomed into fruition after Synchro Canada announced she had made the final cut this summer.

"It sure feels pretty good," said Harding, who will enter Grade 11 at Newmarket High School next month. "To be on this team has been my goal for a while."

In fact, it began two years ago when Harding was a member of the 13-15 national team during that time frame. Having concluded her eligibility after last year, the next step for her was to try out for the junior national team.

Training out of the Granite Synchro Club, Harding's journey towards making the junior national team began in April when she went to Quebec City for the first stage of trials.

Harding noted the top 25 competitors from that group were eligible to take the second step.

After being named to that select group, Harding remained in Quebec City for the second stage of auditions that also took place that same month.

From that process, the top 16 performers were chosen to go to Calgary for a one-week camp earlier this summer where the final team would be identified.

Preparing for the final selection camp, Harding said she worked out with her Granite Club coaches to be ready for the big moment.

Entering the final camp, Harding felt confident she could make the final cut.

What also might have helped Harding was her past experience in being on the 13-15 national team which had competitors of her age that were highly skilled.

"The only difference this time was that I was competing against older competitors and the routines were a bit harder," she said.

In being on the junior national team in just her first year of being eligible. Harding attributed her success to several people.

They include her Granite Synchro Club coaches and family members such as her older sister Shelby, a former synchronized swimmer who introduced her to the sport when she was just in Grade 3.

"I have a great support system," she said. Harding and her teammates were in Calgary preparing to compete at the 2013 UANA Pan American Synchronized Swimming Championships in San Juan this week.

"Our goal is to be at the top of the podium," she said.

