



North Shore Amateur Swimming Club Inc

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SNYDERS BREAKS 11 YEAR OLD NEW ZEALAND RECORD AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS



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New Zealand swimmers have grabbed a qualifying spot for the Beijing Olympics and smashed three national records in an outstanding opening day of heats at the 12th FINA World Championships in Melbourne today.

With a record 1200 swimmers in action in pool competition, the opening session of heats took a mammoth five hours at the Rod Laver Arena, more than double a usual session of heats.

The Kiwi contingent held their nerve under the pressure with the women's 4x100m freestyle relay team recording the 12th fastest time, with the top 12 teams from Melbourne qualifying directly for the Beijing Olympics.

Backstroke ace Hannah McLean showed her freestyle capabilities to record a New Zealand record for the 100m freestyle of 55.27s as the lead-off swimmer in the relay.

Veteran Helen Norfolk showed her decision to concentrate on freestyle was well founded when she broke a long standing national record in the heats of the 400m today.

Her North Shore clubmate Glenn Snyders broke an 11-year-old national record to just miss out on a spot in the semi-finals in the 100m breaststroke.

No New Zealanders made it through to the first night of semi-final and final action but there was plenty to cheer about in a strong performance. "That was a very very good first day for us.

Three national records and now to get a team already qualified for Beijing is excellent," head coach Jan Cameron said.

"It will definitely give a confidence boost to the entire team. It's a good step one and now we can look forward to bigger and better things as the meet moves forward."

Cameron was thrilled for young breastroker Snyders. "Glenn has come on so strongly in the last six months. He's just 19 and I think he has an outstanding future. That was a good record to nail and of course his improvement has real significance for the development of our men's medley relay team.

"Helen Norfolk really dug deep today and swam well. You know she made a couple of mistakes and I think she can go quicker yet. And the relay team looked strong. Last time we got disqualified at Barcelona when we had a time inside the top 12 for the Athens Olympics so this is nice to have in the bag. The 100m freestyle time has been there to take for a while now and it's a good boost for Hannah as she looks for her key swim in the 100m backstroke tomorrow."

Norfolk clocked 4:11.98 in the ninth and final heat of the 400m freestyle to cut a second off the 1992 mark set by Philippa Langrell at the Barcelona Olympics. The 25-year-old, who has been New Zealand's main medley exponent in recent years, has moved her focus to freestyle over the last year to good effect. She opened with a 1:01 for her first 100m and then held strong with 63 second laps to take nearly two seconds off her previous best. This moved her from a world ranking of 45 coming into the meet to 17th.

Snyders made a huge jump in his international rankings when he chopped more than half a second off Paul Kent's 1996 New Zealand record in the 100m breaststroke. After a reasonably conservative first 50m in 29.36, Snyders came on strongly to clock 1:01.91, which was nearly 4/10ths inside the old record and only 2/10ths from qualifying for the semi-finals. The 19 year old, who was ranked well outside the top 50 last year, has moved to 19th and is further indication of his rapid rise on the international stage.

The Kiwis drew the hot heat in the women's freestyle relay but had a white hot start with McLean second after the lead-off swim, clocking 55.27s, well inside the previous mark of 55.99 set by team mate Alison Fitch five years ago. Fitch matched her old time with the advantage of the flying start to keep up the momentum as the second swimmer with US-based Lauren Boyle clocking 55.68 and Norfolk anchoring the effort with a 55.62.

Their time of 3:43.56 was a fraction outside the New Zealand record they set at the Melbourne Commonwealth Games but a remarkable achievement to muscle out a swimming powerhouse like Japan who finished 13th overall.

North Shore butterfly exponent Corney Swanepoel was just outside his best to finish 20th overall in the heats of the 50m butterfly in 24.20. This was 16/100ths of a second from a qualifying spot in the semi-finals.

The Commonwealth Games 200m champion Moss Burmester recorded a personal best 24.55 in the same event to bring his ranking down to 33rd.

North Shore's Melissa Ingram swam to her entry time in the 400m freestyle clocking 4:20.05 which was the 25th fastest, dropping her ranking from 58 coming into the championship.

Both Robert Voss (North Shore) and Michael Jack (West Auckland Aquatics) improved their world rankings in the 400m freestyle. With both outside the world's top 50 going into the meet, the pair went under the four minute mark and on their personal bests with Voss improving his world ranking to 34th and Jack 42nd.

An inexperienced Men's 4x100m freestyle relay team did not advance but their time of 3:21.73 was nearly a second inside their qualifying mark and only 2/10ths of a second outside the New Zealand record at the Barcelona Olympics.

Results, day 1 heats (time and overall placing):
Men 400m freestyle: Robert Voss 3:57.55, 34; Michael Jack 3:59.94, 42.
Men 50m butterfly: Corney Swanepoel 24.20, 20; Moss Burmester 24.55, 33
Women 400m freestyle: Helen Norfolk 4:11.98, 17 (NZ Record); Melissa Ingram 4:20.05, 25.
Men 100m breaststroke: Glenn Snyders 1:01.91, 19 (NZ Record); Dean Kent 1:04.51, 54.
Women 4x100m freestyle relay: New Zealand 3:43.56, 12 (Hannah McLean 55.27 NZ Record, Alison Fitch 55.99, Lauren Boyle 55.68, Helen Norfolk 55.62)
Men 4x100m freestyle relay: New Zealand 3:21.73, 16 (Cameron Gibson 50.29, Robert Voss 50.43, Mark Herring 50.43, Michael Jack 50.58).

NZ	Schedule	for	Monday	26	March
Women	100m Backstroke		Hannah	McLean, Liz	Coster
Men	200m Freestyle		Michael	Jack, Andrew	McMillan
Women	100m	Breaststroke		Annabelle	Carey
Men	100m Backstroke		Cameron	Gibson	