



**North Shore Amateur Swimming Club Inc**

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## **KENT EYES OLYMPIC FINAL IN BEIJING**



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Twenty-nine year old veteran Dean Kent is aiming to finish his Olympic career in style after his qualifying performance at the Absolute Insurance Trials in Waitakere City today.

While he could not improve on his qualifying performance in last night's heats, Kent is thirsting for his third straight Olympics and believes he can produce a career best to qualify for the finals for the first time.

He easily won his 10<sup>th</sup> straight 200m individual title at the West Wave Aquatic Centre today to bring the total to six individuals who have qualified in eight events and the women's 4x200m freestyle relay.

While Kent showed he is still a force at age 29, three rising young guns all produced eye-catching displays, each of them within arm's reach from Olympic glory.

Seventeen-year-old Aucklander Orinoco Faamausili-Banse, Hayley Palmer (North Shore) 18 and Kurt Bassett (Laser Mt Eden, Auckland), 17 came within a blink of qualifying but showed they will be real forces in the sport going forward.

Faamausili-Banse wrote himself into the record books and signalled his rise at the top of the sport when he held out sprint stars Mark Herring and Cameron Gibson to win the 50m freestyle.

He clocked 22.51 to equal the New Zealand record set by Herring in last night's heats and only 16/100ths of a second away from the qualifying time for Beijing.

"I wanted to come and get a PB at the very least. I am really pleased with that. After the heat I had to go away and think about things and how to go faster. That was a really good swim," Faamausili-Banse said.

Palmer added the 100m freestyle title to the national short course honours over the same distance, clocking a personal best 55.30s and an agonising 6/100ths of a second from the Beijing mark.

However the teenager has set herself lofty goals for the future.

"The world record got beaten by a lot last week and that's where I want to be," Palmer said.

"That swim today is no indication of how fast I want to be. My attitude, my training has changed. I want to be among the best freestylers in the world and I will do what it takes to get there."

Bassett came with real expectation after missing qualification by only 1/100ths of a second in the 200m backstroke in last night's heats.

That ended in the blink of an eye when he jumped the gun and was disqualified, which enabled North Shore's John Zulch to claim the title from clubmate Cameron Stanley.

Bassett, currently on scholarship at Indiana University, was philosophical.

"I was so close last night. I got a bit tense and nervous and broke. That's disappointing. But I've got a lot to look forward to. In four years time I will be a lot faster."

Kent said he was greatly looking forward to Beijing.

"I believe I can go under the two minute mark and if I can achieve that then perhaps I can get through to the final in Beijing," Kent said. "I have made the finals in two world championships and it would be great to do it in the Olympics.

"I don't really have a concern about backing up in the morning finals and it's been good to have that chance to swim under that format here."

The remaining title today went to Katie Bone (North Shore) in the 200m breaststroke.

The championships finish tomorrow.