



North Shore Amateur Swimming Club Inc

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TRIPLE MEDAL NIGHT FOR NEW ZEALAND SWIMMERS



20th March 2006

New Zealand swimmers enjoyed a magnificent triple treat on the penultimate night of finals at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne tonight.

Dean Kent bounced back to win silver in the 200m individual medley, Moss Burmester grabbed his second medal, a bronze in the 100m butterfly while Hannah McLean won bronze in a heroic night at the Melbourne Aquatic Centre. This took the New Zealand swimming tally to six medals – a gold, a silver and four bronze medals.

The tally could have been even higher with three fourth placings also tonight to McLean in the 50m backstroke, Corney Swanepoel in the 100m butterfly and the women's 4x100m freestyle relay.

It capped a huge night for McLean who competed in three finals – winning bronze in the 200m backstroke, returning to the pool 30 minutes later for to be pipped for a medal in the 50m backstroke by 2/10ths and then anchored the relay team 20 minutes after for fourth place.

She was only sixth through the halfway mark in the 200m backstroke despite a slick 1:04.85 but was very steady coming home in under 1m08s to snatch third place.

Her 2:12.47 was a personal best and two seconds outside Anna Simcic's New Zealand record.

Melissa Ingram pushed up to fourth place at the 150m mark but could not quite finish as strongly over the final 50m to claim third place in a handy 2:13.09s.

It was an emotional night for Kent who fought back from the disappointment of his fourth placing in the 400m individual medley with an impressive effort in the 200m medley. He jumped to the lead and pushed clear in the backstroke and breaststroke before being edged out in the final 5m by Scotland's Gregor Tait, who did not race the 400m medley. Kent clocked 2:01.08 to break his own New Zealand record.

"I am thrilled. I gave it absolutely everything I had. I wanted to be aggressive out there and I put it all on the line," Kent said. "Obviously it's been an emotional time after the death of my father but it was important for me to keep that emotion under check.

"I think Dad would have been crying out there with that effort."

Burmester used his endurance to power home over the second length to grab third place and was only a touch away from adding another gold.

He set a new personal best of 52.73s, his first time under the 26 second barrier and just 2/10ths away from Swanepoel's New Zealand record.

"I'm really happy. I knew I would be strong in the back end of the race. It was a matter of keeping handy and then giving it absolutely everything," Burmester said. "I had no idea where I was at the finish but it's great to go under 53 seconds.

"This meet gives me a lot of confidence going forward to know I can match it with some of the best in the world. There's a big step up now to the Olympics but I feel I have taken one step and believe I can go further in my swimming career."

Swanepoel, who only qualified for the team as a relay alternate, justified his selection with a strong effort, pipped by Burmester by 3/10ths of a second for a medal.

"It's quite gutting not to get the medal. I thought I had a really strong race. I guess the fact that the medal went to Moss makes it not too disappointing, but it is still disappointing."

Nichola Chellingworth was delighted with yet another personal best, her fourth of the meet, finishing sixth in the 50m freestyle.

"It's been an incredible experience. And to be sixth ranked in a field including world and Olympic champions is fantastic," Chellingworth said.

It was not quite so good for Fitch who was disqualified for jumping the start.

"I knew it had happened. My starts are the worst part so I really wanted to have a good one and took a risk. It's not really how I wanted the result to work but my focus was on the relay."

The relay proved a brave performance after Lauren Boyle achieved another personal best in the lead-off in 56.02 to be fourth before Fitch brought them up to third with a 55.85 with Helen Norfolk edged back to fourth with a 56.17. McLean anchored with a tremendous 55.45 final leg to close within 6/10ths of a second from Canada.

New Zealand finals results:

Men's 100m butterfly: Moss Burmester 52.73 (3rd), Corney Swanepoel 53.14 (4th)

Women's 50m freestyle: Nichola Chellingworth 25.89 (6th), Alison Fitch dq.

Women's 200m backstroke: Hannah McLean 2:12.47 (3rd), Melissa Ingram 2:13.09 (6th).

Men's 100m EAD freestyle: Daniel Sharp 58.42 (7th)

Women's 50m backstroke: Hannah McLean 28.89 (4th) NZ Record

Men's 200m individual medley: Dean Kent 2:01.08 (2nd) NZ Record

Women's 4x100m freestyle relay: New Zealand 3:43.49 (Boyle 56.02, Fitch 55.85, Norfolk 56.17, McLean 55.45) NZ record.