



North Shore Amateur Swimming Club Inc

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## MAGNIFICENT MCLEAN GRABS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL

8th April 2006

North Shore swimmer Hannah McLean claimed New Zealand's first medal at the Fina world short course swimming championships in China last night.

The 24-year-old smashed Anna Simcic's 14-year-old New Zealand record to win the bronze medal in the women's 200m backstroke in Shanghai.

This matches the performance of clubmate Melissa Ingram in the same event two years ago.

McLean's performance was just the fifth individual medal ever won by a New Zealand swimmer and sparked another strong night for the Kiwis. New Zealand swimmers competed in three finals on the third session and claimed a further three national records to bring the tally to 13 finals and 12 records in the first three days, which significantly exceeds any previous Kiwi team with two days still remaining.

McLean backed this up with a New Zealand record in the backstroke leg to ignite the women's 4x100m medley relay team to a meritorious sixth place as they established a new national relay record.

Earlier in her backstroke final, McLean was fourth after 50m, third at the midway point and held off the challenge from Italy's Alessa Filippi who pushed passed Ingram over the final 50m. American Margaret Hoelzer led from the start to claim gold ahead of Australia's Tayliah Zimmer to repeat their performances from the 2004 world championships at Indianapolis.

McLean's time of 2:06.96 broke the record of the great Simcic, whose mark of 2:07.11 broke the world record at the Paris World Cup in 1992.

"Hannah produced a top class performance and was just pipped in the 100m but stepped up today with a brilliant swim to earn that medal," head coach Trevor Nicholls said. "More importantly it was a superb New Zealand record and to have her name erasing a former world record by Anna Simcic puts her in the top class.

"Melissa Ingram also produced a top class swim tonight. She swam more than a second faster to finish fifth tonight than she did to win a bronze two years ago which shows her development and the quality of the field tonight.

"And the relay effort was brilliant. We are developing some real depth now which is exciting for the future."

McLean became the first Kiwi to go under the 59 second barrier for the 100m backstroke, clocking 58.60 nearly half a second under her time in finishing fourth in the 100m backstroke individual final on the previous night.

Wellington 16-year-old Kelly Bentley, in her first major international meet, produced a personal best to ease back to sixth with the experienced Liz Coster and Alison Fitch producing highly competitive efforts in the butterfly and freestyle respectively to hold their sixth position after qualifying in eighth.

They clocked 4:02.75 to take a further four seconds off the record time they set in the morning heats with the final set alight with a stunning world record to the all-powerful Australian team.

Dean Kent finished sixth in his second final of the championships, the 200m individual medley in a strong 1:57.31, which was won in a world record by American Ryan Lochte. Kent, the 27-year-old Commonwealth Games silver medalist at this distance, pushed through from fifth at the half way mark to third at the end of the breaststroke leg but could not hold on to the medal position over the final freestyle leg.

Scott Talbot-Cameron could not improve on his morning swim to miss out on a place in the final of the 50m backstroke.

New Zealand results:

- 50m backstroke semifinals: Scott Talbot-Cameron 25.13, 16<sup>th</sup>
- 200m backstroke final: Margaret Hoelzer (USA) 2:05.29, 1; Tayliah Zimmer (AUS) 2:05.99, 2; Hannah McLean 2:06.96, 3 (NZ record); Melissa Ingram (NZL) 2:07.49, 5.
- 200m individual medley final: Dean Kent 1:57.31, 6.
- Women's 4x100m medley relay: Australia 3:51.84, 1; USA 3:55.65, 2; China 3:55.76, 3; New Zealand 4:02.75, 5 NZ Record (H McLean 58.60-, K Bentley 1:10.65, L Coster 59.69, A Fitch 53.81)