



**North Shore Amateur Swimming Club Inc**

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## **RECORDS TUMBLE FOR KIWI SWIMMERS AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

6th April 2006

New Zealand swimmers broke six national records and will challenge for medals after a successful opening day of the Fina world short course championships in China today.

Commonwealth Games medalist Hannah McLean broke her own New Zealand record twice today, qualifying second fastest for tomorrow's final of the 100m backstroke in Shanghai.

Sprinter Zoe Baker broke her national mark twice today to be fifth fastest for the final of the 50m breaststroke.

The women's 4x200m freestyle relay also blitzed the national record twice to finish fifth in the final, one of the highest placings ever for a New Zealand relay team at the world short course championships.

Lauren Boyle, Alison Fitch, Helen Norfolk and Melissa Ingram slashed eight seconds from the record to qualify sixth in 7:59.39 in the morning heats. The quartet then lowered this by a further four seconds in the final, finishing behind the powerhouses of Australia, China, USA and Italy and ahead of Sweden, Russia and Spain.

McLean, Baker and Liz Coster will compete in finals tomorrow, with McLean second fastest and Coster fifth in the 100m backstroke and Baker close to the medal winning form of four years ago.

McLean and Coster were paired beside each other in the second semifinal of the 100m backstroke, with the pace set by German Janine Pietsch. She broke the championship record to clock 58.31s and drag the Kiwis through. McLean produced a strong second half to finish only half a second behind the winner and further reduce her national record from the morning heat, to go under the 59 second barrier for the first time with her 58.86.

Coster will also be delighted with her swim, cracking the one minute barrier with a 59.46, taking 1.5 seconds off her personal best in her two swims today.

Baker lowered her New Zealand record set in the morning, qualifying fourth for tomorrow's final of the 50m breaststroke. She edged Australians Jade Edmiston, the world long course champion, and Brooke Hansen at the turn but was pipped on the run home. Edmiston led the qualifiers on 30.23 with Baker only 4/10ths of a second behind and with an opportunity to push for a medal in

the final. She won a bronze medal in this event four years ago and is closing in on those record times.

Christchurch swimmer Annabelle Carey, 17, who set a national age group record in the heats, finished 15<sup>th</sup> in the semifinals in 32.23s to gain more invaluable experience for the future.

Burmester, a bronze medalist in the long course version of the 100m butterfly in Melbourne, lowered his personal best to 52.32s but found it difficult to wind up his big and powerful frame in the short course format.

While Brazil's Kaio Almeida was well clear of the semifinal field in 51.10s, second place and Burmester in 12<sup>th</sup> was separated by just 3/10ths of a second.

Norfolk was competitive through the butterfly and backstroke legs of the grueling 400m individual medley, turning fifth at the 200m mark. She dropped back in the breaststroke and finished strongly in the freestyle leg to be eighth, clocking 4.40.62 which is outside her national record.

She showed her fighting spirits to return to the pool just 15 minutes later for the 4x200m freestyle relay.

The Melbourne bronze medalists were the sixth fastest in the morning heats in 7:59.39 just behind the Australians, going under the eight minute barrier for the first time.

The 18-year-old Boyle gave the Kiwis a strong start in the final, leading at the 100m and handing over in a close fifth. Atlanta Olympian Fitch produced one of the great swims of her career with a 1:57.81 to hold fifth while Norfolk produced a gutsy 1:58.05 in the third leg. Backstroker Ingram brought them home in a 2:00.72 for fifth in 7:55.46, a whooping 12 seconds off their own New Zealand record in the two swims today.

New Zealand results, day 1 evening session:

- 50m breaststroke semifinals: Zoe Baker 30.64, 4<sup>th</sup> fastest (NZ record); Annabelle Carey 32.23, 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 100m backstroke semifinals: Hannah McLean 58.86, 2<sup>nd</sup> (NZ record), Liz Coster 59.48, 5<sup>th</sup>.
- 100m butterfly semifinals: Moss Burmester 52.32, 12<sup>th</sup>
- 400m individual medley final: Helen Norfolk 4:40.62, 8<sup>th</sup>
- 4x200m freestyle relay: Australia 7:46.96, 1; China 7:47.07, 2; USA 7:49.16, 3; Italy 7:50.39, 4; New Zealand 7:55.45, 5 NZ Record (L Boyle 1:58.88, A Fitch 1:57.81, H Norfolk 1:58.05, M Ingram 2:00.72)