

## Sports & Recreation

# Next stop: the Westerns

### Swimmers reach for qualifying times at swim meet

by **Natalie Dunlop**  
Northern News Services

Swimmers had another chance to qualify for the Western Canada Summer Games at the BHP Billiton Kimberlite Classic swim meet last weekend.

The meet was the last local event of the season for the Polar Bear Swim Club. Ten of the 100 participants were from Hay River.

"We've got lots of great swimmers going," said Ian Legaree, head coach of the Polar Bear Swim Club.

#### Top competitors

Legaree will bring the Northwest Territories' top

eight male and eight female swimmers to compete at the Western Canada Summer Games. Only four male swimmers are qualified to date, but there is no shortage of female swimmers to choose from.

"That may change after the Kamloops meet," said Legaree, who said swimmers will have another shot to improve their event times.

Jenny Aitken, however, is definitely slated to compete.

Aitken is the club's fastest swimmer for her age group.

She reached a "milestone" last weekend when she broke the 10-minute mark for an 800-metre freestyle.

"That puts her about eighth

in the province of Alberta for 14-year olds," said Legaree.

Aitken swam the event at 9:57:27.

"It just felt really good technique-wise," said Aitken.

And Aitken isn't worried about how the club will perform at the Westerns.

"I think we're going to do really well," said Aitken.

#### Work to be done

Despite a personal record swim, there is still work to be done, and Aitken is already thinking ahead.

"I'm going to be working on long distance racing and backstroke," she said.

"I would like to get my 'A'

time in the 200 backstroke," she said.

Swimmers are categorized in events based on time. Different times define categories based on the swimmers' age group.

"I'd like to take off time in as many swims as I can," she said.

The meet was also a chance for swimmers to reach personal bests.

Legaree said it didn't matter whether junior swimmers dropped 50 seconds off their times or a senior swimmer dropped one second.

"That's just as significant depending where they're at," he said.



Natalie Dunlop/NSIS photo

**Clair Littlefair, 8, competed at the Polar Bear Swim Club swim meet May 11-13 at the Ruth Inch Memorial Pool in Yellowknife.**