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Set for the starting gun

Gabriel Zarate

Northern News Services

Friday, August 14, 2009

SOMBA K'E/YELLOWKNIFE - It's now down to what they can do in the pool for the Canada Summer Games NWT swim team.



TJ Marshman, seen during the NWT Swimming Championships in January, will be one of 21 swimmers heading to the Canada Summer Games, which begin tomorrow. - NNSL file photo

The group of 21 swimmers were at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton from July 26 to 31 for the final camp before heading to Charlottetown for the games. Head coach Ian Legaree said this was the climax of the current training cycle for the swimmers.

"We usually build them up through a three to five-week cycle and the games are at the highest level," he said. "We got them focused on training in the pool, as well as working on their mental preparation and how to approach a race."

The swimmers were in the pool each morning from 6 to 9 a.m., followed by weight training sessions in the afternoon and team bonding exercises after later in the day. Legaree said from what he's seen, everyone is looking in good form.

"I think Stephen Giovanetto is probably our strongest swimmer," he said. "He just came back from the Age Group National Championships in Montreal and has some experience on the national stage. If he can manage the stress, he could do very well. Lisa Giovanetto also had a really good camp, as did Cassie Mooney."

Instead of mapping out a mass team strategy for performances, Legaree said he had all the swimmers write out how they felt they would do at the games.

"I wanted to see if there were any apprehensions or where the trouble was, if any," he said. "We have a few days to work on it and get them ready for the competition."

Noah Colford is entered in five swims, as well as five relays. He said he's feeling the nerves as the event approaches, but that's a good thing.

"I'm feeling the pressure about going on the national stage for the first time," he said. "I like the pressure, though. I swim better when I'm pressured."

Getting on the medal podium is the ultimate goal, but Colford said he's looking for a couple of other important results.

"I'm looking to get personal bests and hitting my national times," he said.

"My strongest events are probably the 200-metre freestyle and the 50-metre backstroke."

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If Colford hits a national time, he would then be eligible for the age group nationals.

As for preparation, Legaree said it's all down to the swimmers now.

"We're trying to build as much confidence as we can in them," he said. "We want them to think about a swim 1,000 times before getting on the starting block. If they can do that, everything will be fine."

