

Swimmer among Alberta's best

Stephen Giovanetto cracks top 25 rankings for his age group

by James McCarthy
Northern News Services

Stephen Giovanetto is officially a major player on the Alberta swimming scene.

The 16-year-old member of the Polar Bear Swim Club has managed to make Swim Alberta's top 25 ranking in his age category. Giovanetto said he was pleasantly surprised when he was informed of the honour by head coach Jane Mooney.

"I've trained really hard and I guess it's starting to pay off," he said.

Giovanetto was ranked based on his average times in his top events, which are then measured up against the current world record times recognized by FINA, the world's governing body for swimming. Points are given based on those times and Giovanetto scored high enough to make the list. Giovanetto said he didn't even know his times would be good enough to be recognized.

"To be honest, I didn't even know there was a list," he said. "I didn't think about it, but knowing I'm there will certainly help with my motivation now." The motivation was already there, he said, but he plans to really get going on his new routine, which includes more time in the water.

More training

"Right now, I'm swimming six times a week, but I'm planning on doing eight times a week now," he said. "I'm also going to get in some weight training as well."

Mooney said having Gio-



Stephen Giovanetto, left, seen during the 2009 Canada Summer Games in Charlottetown as he dives into the water, and below in a breaststroke, has made Swim Alberta's top 25 rankings in the 16-year-old category.

vanetto's feat shows the club is on the right track with its training regimen.

"One of our goals is to get 10 per cent of our swimmers having an Alberta A (level) time," she said. "The swimmers perceive themselves to be not as good as they think, but this shows with right training, they can do what Stephen has done."

Mooney also said Giovanetto has opened the door to future stars from the club.

"We haven't had someone like this since Jeremy Jaud,"

she said. "We have a lot of good swimmers coming, lurking in the shadows, and it's only a matter of time."

With his new ranking, Giovanetto said it's nice to finally be one of the "guys" to catch at competitions and hopes to send a message at the Alberta Senior Championships in Medicine Hat, beginning on Jan. 27.

"I'm looking to medal in a couple of events, the 50 and 100-metre backstroke," he said. "It won't change me, though. I know I will become a target at some events now."



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