



Tuesday, July 29, 2003

Swimmer makes first step toward Olympics

By *Flori Meeks*, CAS '88 OU Special Writer

There was a time when swimmer Chris Sullivan didn't let himself think about the possibility of competing in the Olympics. The Oakland University computer engineering major hoped focusing on small victories in his sport would lead to bigger things.

But Sullivan has a different perspective since he received first-level qualification for the Olympics in mid-July. Sullivan, a junior from Rockford, Mich., met the required standard for the 50-meter freestyle event with a time of 23.08 during preliminary tryouts in Long Island.

"It's a big step up from what I've been doing," said Sullivan, who is sixth in the nation in the 50-yard freestyle event. "It's not a national thing; it's a world thing now. I hadn't really thought about it before, but I have a chance of being a representative of the United States. This is probably the most important thing I've done so far."

Sullivan's coaches at Oakland were confident of his abilities long before this accomplishment. Of the American swimmers in the top six for the 50 free, only Anthony Ervin, an Olympic gold medallist from Cal-Berkeley, has a faster time.

"In the 50 free, the world record is 19.1 seconds," said OU Assistant Swim Coach Jon Teal. Chris' personal best is 19.6 seconds, "which doesn't sound like much, but every little thing he's doing in training now counts toward reaching (his goals). With more experience at national and international events, we think he has a shot (at the Olympics)."

Sullivan had an opportunity to gain national experience in March when he and three of his teammates competed in the NCAA Men's Swimming and Diving Championships at the University of Texas in Austin.

The OU swimmers finished with 17 points to place 27th in the country, the highest ever for the Golden Grizzlies. Sullivan competed with Eric Lynn of Plymouth; Scott Dickens of Ancaster, Ontario; Sean Broadbent of Windsor, Ontario; and Doug Drazin of West Bloomfield.

For the remainder of the summer, Sullivan intends to focus on his intense training schedule: two hours of swimming each morning Monday through Saturday and another two and a half hours of swimming and weight training on weeknights.

His schedule will be similar this fall, with a few adjustments for classes and the fall swim team schedule. Sullivan says he tries to give his all to his coaches. Their support and advice has come to mean a great deal to him.

"They're very knowledgeable, and they all have lots of experience," he said. "I know I have a lot to learn from them."

Look for this story and others in the fall issue of the School of Engineering and Computer Science newsletter, In Focus. For more information on OU's **School of Engineering & Computer Science**, visit their Web site. For more information on OU's swimming programs, check out the **OU Athletics** Web site.

SUMMARY

OU swimmer Chris Sullivan passed his first test toward becoming an Olympic competitor when he received first-level qualification during preliminary tryouts in mid-July. Sullivan had a time of 23.08 in the 50-meter freestyle event. Sullivan had an opportunity to gain national experience in March when he and three of his teammates competed in the NCAA Men's Swimming and Diving Championships at the University of Texas in Austin.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Tuesday, July 29, 2003
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Tuesday, July 29, 2003
Article Start Date: Monday, January 12, 2004