

Eight from Express perform well at JEI

Eight swimmers from Eastern Express, including Brittany Iacouzze, Kristiana Kalibat, Samantha Kietlinski, Meghan Leddy, Kathleen Morrison, Evelyn Yuen, Josh Chen, and Sean Mackenzie, recently competed at the 13th annual Janet Evans Invitational.

The JEI is the fifth and final stop of the five-meet Grand Prix circuit, a set of national meets held at various locations across the United States that provides swimmers an opportunity to compete against top competition. This year, 11 different Olympians competed at the JEI, including individual Olympic medalists Natalie Coughlin, Gary Hall Jr., Larsen Jensen and Allison Wagner. In addition, three-fourths of South Africa's men's world record 400 meter freestyle relay team, and 18 members of the Chinese national team competed at the event.

The meet was held last month at the McDonald's Swim Stadium on the University of Southern California campus; the facility was the site of the 1984 Olympic swimming competition. The event is named after Janet Evans, a four-time Olympic gold medalist and former USC assistant coach. One of the world's greatest female Olympic swimmers, Evans still holds two distance freestyle world records in the 800 meter and 1500 meter freestyle.

At the meet, Eastern Express swimmers achieved multiple individual best times. The squad's performance was led by Leddy who placed second in the 400 meter individual medley with a time of 4:51.16 following a very strong freestyle finish. Importantly, Leddy's top finish earned her a spot on the USA National Junior team.

In the fall, Leddy will travel to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs for a week long training camp

with the rest of the Junior National Team, and then compete in the Junior Pan Pacific Games to be held in Maui, Hawaii in January. In other events at the meet, Leddy placed fifth in the 200 back, sixth in the 1500 free, and 13th in the 100 back. Leddy's time in the 1500 free represents a new national cut, which qualifies her to compete in this event at the USA Swimming National Championships. Leddy has already qualified to compete in both the 200 back and the 400 IM at the next Olympic Trials, which will be held in July, 2008 in Omaha, Nebraska.

Iacouzze also provided impressive results, capturing multiple Top 16 finishes at the meet. In the distance freestyle events, Iacouzze placed 12th in the 400 free, and 13th in the 800 free. Furthermore, in the 400 IM, Iacouzze placed 16th and broke the five minute barrier with a personal best time of 4:59.90.

Mackenzie delivered strong performances in the 800 free and the 1500 free. Mackenzie's inspired swim in the 1500 free clocked at 17:16.18 represented a personal best by nearly 25 seconds, and earned Mackenzie his first sectional cut.

Other notable results against national and international level competition including several personal bests were turned in by Kalibat (100 and 200 back; 200 IM), Kietlinski (100 fly; 100, 200 and 400 free; 200 and 400m IM), Morrison (800 and 1500 free; 400 IM), Yuen (50 free; 100 and 200 breast), and Chen (100 and 200 fly; 200 IM).

Eastern Express is directed by head coach Brent Matheson, and practices at The College of New Jersey and Princeton University. More information regarding Eastern Express can be obtained from their website at www.ExpressSwimming.com.

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