

Midwest Regional Swim Meet *Magic*

The Minnesota Youth Athletic Services was organized in 1991 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the delivery of youth sports services to young athletes, coaches and parents. The MYAS is Minnesota's largest multi-sport organization focused solely on youth athletics with more than 150,000 kids participating in our programs annually. Known more for basketball and baseball programs, the MYAS also runs events in volleyball, golf, wrestling and swimming.

The inaugural Midwest Regional Swim Meet took place in 1995. The 2007 meet, held at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center, boasted almost 900 swimmers from seven states. This event has become an annual tradition for clubs from all over the Midwest, including the 2007 team champion Ankeny Aqua Hawks.

The 2007 Midwest Regional was exceptional in many ways. Records were broken, large crowds packed the Aquatic Center all weekend long, and many storylines were developed. Perhaps the most amazing story of all came from a little girl from Ankeny, Iowa.

The Westercamp family has been racking up swimming records across the nation for years. Elle Westercamp is currently the Midwest Regional record holder in two events, and little sister Xan was poised to make a strong run in her events as well. Unfortunately a scooter accident the week before the meet left Xan with a buckle fracture in her right arm and any participation at all looked extremely bleak. After multiple visits to the doctor's office, Xan was given an option to swim at the meet she had been looking forward to for so long. She was pulled from her individual events but allowed to swim in her relays, provided she could handle the pain.

On Saturday, March 31, 2007, the Ankeny Aqua Hawks 8U relay team consisting of Camilla Cox, Cassie Frazier, Xan Westercamp and Lindsey Settle overcame their first hurdle by winning the 8U Girls Medley Relay. "This team had families grappling with heart wrenching decisions and in each case, the individual sacrificed for the team. After this first incredible victory, a pattern began to emerge that started giving voice to the team spirit and integrity of the Ankeny family," said coach Cathy Westercamp.

Day two of the meet meant bigger challenges for the Ankeny team. Emotions ran high as the successes of Saturday began to blur with the new goals of Sunday. In particular, the little girls of the 8U relay team were wondering how their injured star would respond after a day in the pool with her broken arm. During a team meeting, each girl was asked to rise to the challenge – to swim the best they ever had, and they were all on board. Settle, Voss and Frazier all set personal records in the relay that day and set the stage for their teammate to "gut it out" one last time. Xan Westercamp not only caught Team Illinois, but out-touched them at the wall to take the gold. "These little girls gave 110% and it was beautiful. The most important thing was that they were all racing for each other and not for themselves," said Cathy Westercamp.

The Ankeny Aqua Hawks' performance at the 2007 Midwest Regional Swim Meet exemplifies what youth sports are all about. These kids individually wanted to win, but more importantly they were there to support each other and perform as a team. Ankeny won this meet by overcoming obstacles and feeding off of the incredible support that they received. They were able to rally around each other and each team member became stronger as a result.

The Minnesota Youth Athletic Services is proud to have been a part of this incredible performance and congratulates these amazing young athletes.