

On Tuesday, the Wellington Sailfish traveled to Valley Center for a dual meet against last year's League Champions. Valley Center Swim Club boasts a handful of high school State finalists as well as talented year-round swimmers of all ages. This heat sheet seemed to be filled with more District and Championship qualified swimmers than the previous meets' combined, and the final scores reflected it.

That said, one group of Wellington swimmers dominated their division. The 13-14 boys scored 55 points to Valley's 23. A very important factor in that score was their relay finishes. Relays are a great opportunity to rack up points. In individual events, five points go to first place, three to second place, and one to third place. However, a first place relay earns seven points, whereas the second place finisher receives only two and third receives none. The team of Chance Hamel, Derick Kotchavar, Dakota Lynnes, and Quinn McCue won both the 200 Free and 200 Medley Relays. Aidan Young, Timothy Tracy, Matt Pryce, and Seth Brown brought home second-place points in the 200 Medley Relay and a third place ribbon for the 200 Free Relay (Young and Pryce swam up an age group because there were not enough 11-12 boys to make a relay team).

In individual events, Chance Hamel led the 13-14 boys, capturing first places in the 50 Free, 100 Free, and 200 IM. Dakota Lynnes and Derick Kotchavar joined Hamel to sweep the sprint freestyles with Lynnes edging Kotchavar for second by 0.82 seconds in the 50 and Kotchavar edging Lynnes for second by 0.89 seconds in the 100. Lynnes picked up second in the 200 IM behind Hamel, closing the night without losing to a Valley Center swimmer. Kotchavar beat his seed time by three seconds to earn second place in the 100 Back. Quinn McCue also had a spectacular meet. After finishing fourth behind teammates in the 50 Free, McCue seized the blue ribbon by twenty seconds in the 100 Fly and went on to place second in the 500 Free. To round out the night, Seth Brown and Timothy Tracy captured thirds in the 200 Free and 100 Back, respectively.

While many swimmers made noticeable improvements in technique, speed, and endurance this week, these gains were difficult to quantify. Valley Center is the only 50 Yard pool in the Great Plains Swim League, making it considerably longer than the Wellington pool, slightly shorter than a 50 Meter pool, and totally confusing. Swimmers' best meter times were converted mathematically to create close but imperfect seed times. As a result, drops and adds are not necessarily accurate, and they will not transfer to other swim meets this season.

Despite the troublesome pool design, swimmers can still qualify for postseason meets using the short course yard (SCY) time standard, and one new swimmer took advantage of that opportunity. Nash Oswald was seeded in the slowest heat of all his races because he did not have a seed time, but he did not need to see his opponents to beat them. Oswald placed first in the 50 Back and 50 Breast and second in the 50 Free, qualifying for Districts in all three events. The nine year-old from Conway Springs joined the Wellington Swim Team just last Wednesday. Like Jordan Thompson from Argonia who is also Districts-qualified, he was so successful in his hometown swim league that his coach suggested he join a USA Swimming sanctioned league. The upside for Wellington of being a USA Swimming team is that swimmers can compete at postseason meets and take their sport to the next level. The downside is that maintaining that

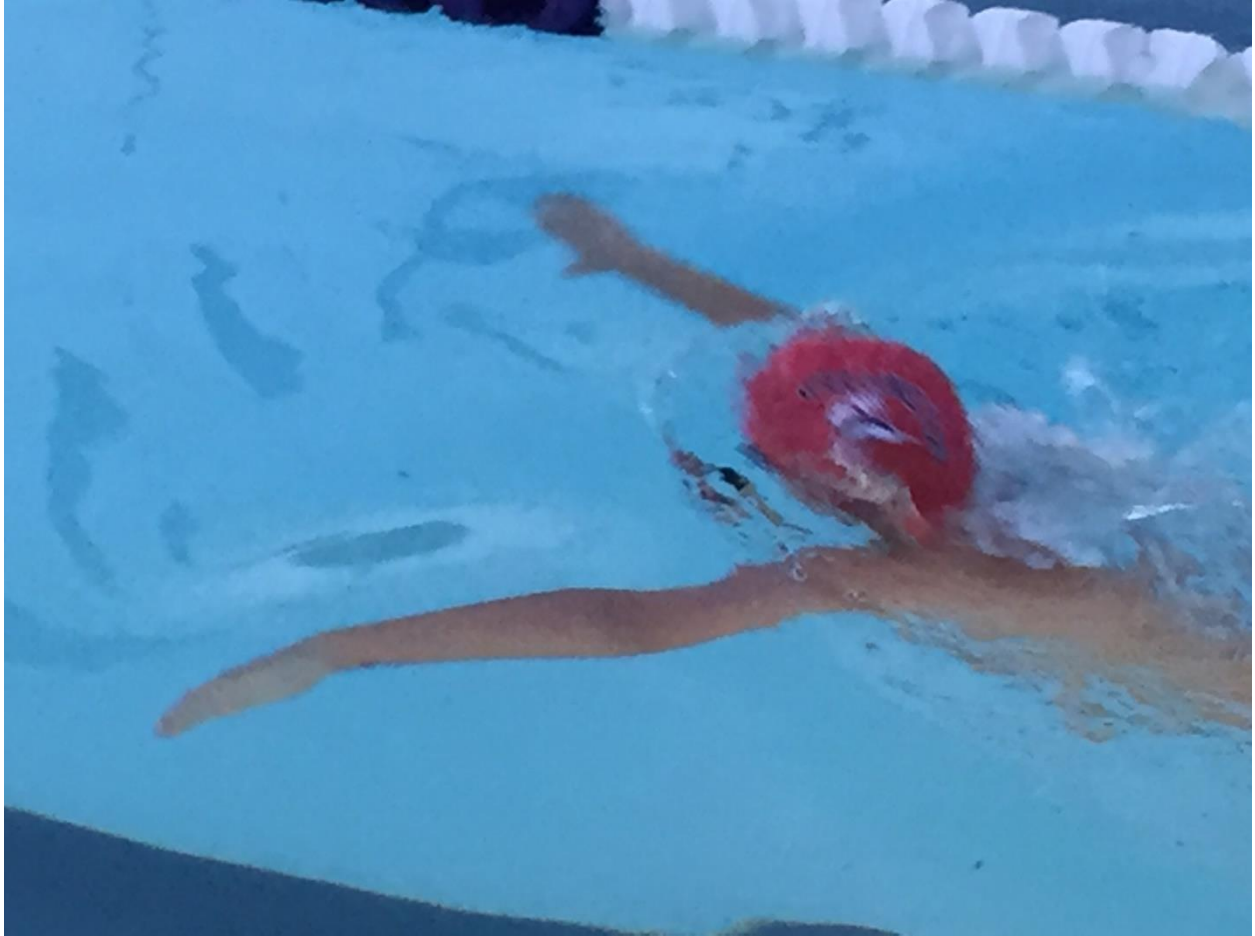
distinction requires a lot of volunteers. Each team has to provide officials who have studied, tested, and trained, sometimes for years, to be certified for their positions. Timers are also essential. Wellington's last two meets of the season are at home, so we will need to provide twenty-four timers each Tuesday. Timing does not require any expertise or certification. Short of diving in and competing yourself, it is the next best way to experience the sport. And let me tell you: clicking a button and recording the time is *so* much easier than racing a 100 Fly.

Other top-placers on Tuesday were:

- **Rose Dickinson** (Third – 13-14 Girls 200 Free)
- **Emberly Gonzalez** (Second – 13-14 Girls 50 Free; Second – 200 IM; Third – 100 Free)
- **Macy Gonzalez** (Second – 11-12 Girls 200 IM)
- **Kailey Klein** (First – 15-18 Girls 100 Breast; Third – 500 Free)
- **Jensen Lynnes** (First – 9-10 Girls 50 Free; First – 50 Back; First – 200 IM)
- **Eliese McComb** (Third – 8 and Under Girls 50 Free; Third – 100 Free)
- **Matt Pryce** (Third – 11-12 Boys 50 Fly)
- **Riley Smith** (Third – 15-18 Girls 100 Breast)
- **Alysa Stewart** (Third – 11-12 Girls 50 Breast)
- **Jordan Thompson** (Third – 15-18 Girls 50 Free)
- **Alexis Tracy** (Second – 13-14 Girls 100 Breast)
- **Aidan Young** (Third – 11-12 Boys 50 Free; Third – 50 Back)
- **Terrell Zani** (Third – 15-18 Boys 100 Back)



Dakota Lynnes (front) and Aidan Young (back) race on the first leg of the 200 Medley Relay.



New Wellington swimmer Nash Oswald achieves a District cut on his way to a first place finish in the 50 Breast.