

Five dual meets, 35-odd practices, and who knows how many meters culminated at League Finals this Friday and Saturday. The epic rematch (competing against every team faced previously plus a few more all at once) is the climax of the summer season, and Wellington swimmers will not want to forget it anytime soon. They will have some help. League Finals provides ample memorabilia that swimmers can carry home to tout their successes.

The most eagerly anticipated prizes are still on the way. Because of the massive field and the importance of this meet, medals are awarded to the top eight individuals and top four relays. Individuals who finish ninth through sixteenth and relays placing fifth through eighth receive ribbons. League medals and ribbons will be distributed at the swim team banquet in August, but the results are already in. These swimmers have earned awards for their spectacular performances in one or more events:

- **Marisa Black** (Sixth – 15-18 Girls 100 Back; Seventh – 100 Free; Ninth – 400 Free)
- **Travis Cody** (Eighth – 9-10 Boys 50 Fly; Fifteenth – 100 Free)
- **Ralphie Cornejo** (Ninth – 5-8 Boys 50 Free)
- **Michael Davis** (Eleventh – 9-10 Boys 50 Fly)
- **Kage Farley** (Twelfth – 9-10 Boys 50 Back)
- **Alec Gonzalez** (Eleventh – 9-10 Boys 50 Breast)
- **Emberly Gonzalez** (Fifth – 13-14 Girls 50 Free; Seventh – 200 IM; Ninth – 100 Free)
- **Macy Gonzalez** (Fourth – 11-12 Girls 200 IM; Seventh – 50 Breast; Ninth – 50 Free)
- **Cat Green** (Fifteenth – 15-18 Girls 400 Free; Sixteenth – 200 Free)
- **Colin Green** (Fifth – 11-12 Boys 50 Breast; Eleventh – 50 Free; Fourteenth – 100 Free)
- **Chance Hamel** (Fourth – 13-14 Boys 100 Free; Fifth – 200 IM; Ninth – 50 Free)
- **Kailey Klein** (Eleventh – 15-18 Girls 100 Breast; Fourteenth – 400 Free)
- **Derick Kotchavar** (Fourteenth – 13-14 Boys 100 Back)
- **Dakota Lynnes** (Thirteenth – 13-14 Boys 100 Free; Sixteenth – 50 Free; Sixteenth – 100 Breast)
- **Jensen Lynnes** (First – 9-10 Girls 50 Free; Third – 100 Free; Fourth – 50 Back)
- **Quinn McCue** (Third – 13-14 Boys 400 Free; Fifth – 100 Fly; Thirteenth – 100 Breast)
- **Maddox Miller** (Fifteenth – 5-8 Boys 50 Back; Sixteenth – 50 Free)
- **Nash Oswald** (First – 9-10 Boys 50 Back; Second – 50 Free; Third – 50 Breast)
- **Matt Pryce** (Eleventh – 11-12 Boys 50 Fly)
- **Hayden Stow** (Fifteenth – 5-8 Boys 100 Free)
- **Jordan Thompson** (Fifteenth – 15-18 Girls 50 Free; Fifteenth – 100 Back; Sixteenth – 100 Free)
- **Mackinze Tracy** (Sixteenth – 15-18 Girls 100 Back)
- **Rogan Wetta** (Sixteenth – 5-8 Boys 100 Free)
- **Maddox Wylie** (Tenth – 9-10 Boys 100 Free)
- **Megan Wylie** (Fifteenth – 13-14 Girls 100 Back)
- **Aidan Young** (Third – 11-12 Boys 50 Back; Seventh – 50 Free; Eleventh – 200 IM)
- **Adrianna Young** (Fifteenth – 15-18 Girls 200 IM)

- **Aurora Young** (Fourteenth – 9-10 Girls 200 IM)
- **Rogan Wetta, Hayden Stow, Ralphie Cornejo, and Maddox Miller** (Fifth – 5-8 Boys 200 Free Relay)
- **Kage Farley, Maddox Wylie, Travis Cody, and Nash Oswald** (Fifth – 9-10 Boys 200 Free Relay)
- **Nash Oswald, Maddox Wylie, Travis Cody, and Kage Farley** (Fifth – 9-10 Boys 200 Medley Relay)
- **Alec Gonzalez, Colin Green, Matt Pryce, and Aidan Young** (Fifth – 11-12 Boys 200 Medley Relay)
- **Colin Green, Alec Gonzalez, Matt Pryce, and Aidan Young** (Seventh – 11-12 Boys 200 Free Relay)
- **Maizy Cornejo, Makenna Wylie, Aurora Young, and Jensen Lynnes** (Eighth – 9-10 Girls 200 Free Relay)
- **Jordan Thompson, Riley Smith, Mackinze Tracy, and Marisa Black** (Eighth – 15-18 Girls 200 Free Relay)

The highest distinction of the meet comes at the very end. Long after most of the spectators have departed, the final tallies come in and the faithful gather around the podium so that swimming's MVPs can be recognized. The top 8 high point winners in each division are awarded with medals and a chance to pose for pictures on the podium. Nash Oswald and Jensen Lynnes earned this distinction. Oswald tied for second in the 9-10 Boys division with twenty-two individual points. Because Oswald had not yet joined Wellington for the only LCM meet of this season, he was in prime position to play the spoiler. In the 50 Back, Oswald catapulted from last seed to Champion, beating the second place finisher by four seconds! The swim was spectacular for more reasons than one, however. Oswald was the only 9-10 boy to achieve that Districts cut on Saturday, and he also captured Jordan Tompkins' team record, which had stood for just under thirteen years. In similar fashion, Oswald leapt from last seed to second place in the 50 Free (once again bettering his Districts seed) and from being tied for last seed in the 50 Breast to third place. Lynnes' twenty points earned her fifth place among 9-10 Girls. With sixty-nine participants, the 9-10 Girls 50 Free was the most competitive race of the meet, but Lynnes came out on top, clinching a best time and thus improving her seed at Missouri Valley Championships and her own team record. Lynnes' 50 Free title and fourth place finish in the 50 Back resulted from tight races in the top heat, but her 100 Free was another story. Like Oswald, Lynnes had to battle her way from a slower heat because of an old seed time, but she succeeded, gaining third place and a bettering her seed for Championships.

Trophies, ribbons, and medals are just the beginning of the loot, however. In heat after exhilarating heat, Sailfish battled for the lead and walked away waving gray 'heat winner' ribbons. These reward the top finisher in each heat since the events are so competitive. For best times, swimmers earned the usual tattoo token as well as a ticket to receive a "Best Time" applique on a League Finals or team t-shirt. Friday's participants would take away something else as well: photos of tents drowning. Following a two hour rain/lightning delay, swimmers returned to find that the white tents that had stretched the entire width of the pool were now all

but completely submerged. Spectators crowded outside the fence to watch firemen and lifeguards haul them out before the meet could resume.

Some rewards are intangible. Marisa Black, Emberly Gonzalez, Chance Hamel, and Aidan Young improved their Districts seeds, setting them up for even more success. Many Sailfish carried away pride at their improvements. Rogan Wetta accomplished the largest cut (1:08.66 seconds in the 100 Free) and the highest total (87.53 seconds). Alara Wilson made the second largest cut (1:05.67 seconds in the 50 Free), but an even better indication of her improvement over the season occurred later in the meet. Wilson was seeded next to teammate Arallai Wartick, and the two swam side-by-side the entire way, finishing just a second apart. Wartick's company pushed Wilson to complete the 100 Free in 3:12.19, just four seconds slower than her first 50 Free. This time, even though she swam twice the distance, she did not have to reach for the lane line once! Heat 3 of the 9-10 Boys 100 Free was especially fun. Sailfish were seeded in lanes six, seven, and eight. In the middle of the trio, Maddox Wylie cut nearly a minute and won the heat. On either side of Wylie, Michael Davis and Jaxson Irej each cut exactly 20.09 seconds. Matt Pryce, Aarilyn Farley, Maddox Miller, and Aidan Young also cut over twenty seconds total.

And then, of course, there were other treasures swimmers took home this weekend, and they were perhaps the best of all: the memories of crowding under tents to share shade with teammates, forging friendships with competitors during the long waits at the clerk of the course, performing in front of cheering extended family, reveling in the sweet taste of personal goals achieved, and enjoying the much more bittersweet ache of muscles testifying that they gave their all. Some Wellington swimmers will compete the next few weekends, but for those whose seasons are done: fantastic job! We can't wait to see you again next year - and please bring a friend or two.