

Dear Journal,

Today was day 2 of our National Championship. I was swimming the 200-yard freestyle today. I dropped 2 seconds in the morning and went a 1:44. I came in 11<sup>th</sup> place. I do not think that I would have been able to unless it was for my coaches, family and teammates who are down here with me. They were able to turn my bad thoughts into good energy that I used for my 200 free. The 200 free was also personal. I wanted to drop time because of the time I added from the day before. I made it into the Consolation finals and swam it again at night to come in 11<sup>th</sup> place overall. In prelims, Ruth swam 2 events, just missing consolation finals in each. It may have mattered a lot to Ruth, but she was able to make it seem as though they were just each another swim. I really admire Ruth for that because she doesn't let a lot of things get to her, and when things do get to her, she's able to hide them so they won't affect a lot of other people. Today, our friend from the Dover YMCA swam in the 200 yard breaststroke. We all wanted her to do well. We cheered for her to win her heat and do well. That's another thing that I really like about YMCA Nationals. Teams that you see throughout the season all cheer you on while you swim. Because of the YMCA program, I know swimmers from all up and down the east coast. I see these swimmers again here, in sunny Fort Lauderdale, and they cheer for me and I cheer for them too. The bonds made between teams and swimmers, especially in the YMCA program, are amazing. Because of these bonds and immense amounts of team spirit, I really love the YMCA program and thankful for all that it has done for me.

-Eric Dunn

Brandywine Delaware

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