

Imagine waking up early in the morning and being ecstatic to hop onto the board and dive. No one on my team could contain their excitement and no one could wait to dive in the beautiful sunshine of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. We quickly became accustomed to diving three times a day. We worked hard at practice, but the excitement of diving outside in Florida evolved working into fun.

### **Day 1**

The men's one-meter event initiated the excitement for the competition that week. After watching the boys do so well (The one meter champion was my teammate!) I had less anxiety and new confidence our girls would succeed as well. That night was the opening ceremony. My team and I represented Rocky Run YMCA by wearing red Hawaiian shirts. This was nothing compared to the crazy outfits spotted from different YMCA's across the country. You name it, someone probably wore it. Guys were dressed as girls, girls were dressed as Ninja Turtles; creativity minimally puts it.

### **Day 2**

Today was the women's three meter event. To be completely honest, it wasn't my favorite event but I think I surprised myself by throwing dives I doubted I could still do. It felt good to watch two of my fellow teammates make "All-American" status on three meter. I admired a lot of the girls who performed back 2 1/2's, reverse 2 1/2's, double twisting 1 1/2's, etc. The meet was a lot of fun and unlike big high school meets, this meet was a lot more vocal. When anyone smacked off of three-meter, we all felt it and clapped in moral respect. When someone from a different team nailed a dive, "ooohs" and "ahhhs" could be heard from opposing divers. The cheering definitely created all of our energy.

### **Day 3**

This competition is flying by. I can't believe there are only two events left to go. Today, I splurged at the swim shops held right behind the meet. In PA, there is absolutely no where you can go and find phenomenal suits at a discounted rate. I decided to take full advantage of this opportunity. Back to diving, today was the men's three meter event. Amazing only begins to describe the diving today. The boys were inspiring, many of them performing very difficult dives in the pike position. Brendon Detweiler's inward twisting 1 1/2 definitely was my favorite dive of the afternoon. After the boy's event, we all had practice for the one meter event on Thursday. During this, the guys on my team were very daring and mastered up the guts to try dives off of platform. After practice, I was lucky enough to meet Mary Ellen Clark. She was very inspiring, and installed new confidence in me that later on came in handy for Thursday's one-meter event.

### **Day 4**

Although my team and I were dissatisfied it was our last full day in Fort Lauderdale, the enthusiasm at the pool carried out throughout the day. The last diving event was the women's one-meter event. I could tell most of my team mates were getting slightly nervous, because it was apparent we were all concentrating more and weren't as loud and rambunctious as the other events. This is what our coaches call "getting in the zone." My adrenaline overpowered me for certain dives, and others I stayed calm and performed them the way I would in practice. A sophomore from my team, Erin Saunders, won the women's one-meter competition. During finals, everyone was cheering and the energy was to it's capacity. Everyone was having fun, especially the divers. Any diver can make an impact on another diver, and Erin proved this theory. Erin completely missed a dive, and instead of doing the normal (getting angry and declining in the meet) she did the complete opposite. She came out of the water smiling and laughing, brushing that last dive off and focusing on the next. Because she was able to do that, she was able to win the meet. It was the ultimate prodigy.

### **Summary of Nationals:**

This was the best diving experience I could have asked for and I think any diver can really learn a lot from this competition. Our team had two national champions, nine divers with "All-

American" status, and ten divers that did their best. We worked hard, but simultaneously had fun doing it. It's really a fun meet, and an excellent opportunity to connect with your coaches, teammates, and parents. Our team is a lot stronger after leaving Fort Lauderdale, and in the future our unity will hopefully demonstrate how any team should be.

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