

Wednesday April 6th 2005

Imagine standing behind the blocks right before your heat and seeing waves, not just ripples, but waves in your lane, and knowing that in moments you will be swimming in that water. Then you look across your lane and see your teammates ready to cheer for you. And behind you your coach calls out last minute advice. In the stands you see your mom waving at you and she blows you a kiss (you hope no one saw that). You breathe in the crisp ocean air. You see the Gate Guys doing, well you never really know what the Gate Guys are doing. The whistle blows and you step up on the blocks. This is YMCA Nationals.

We had great swims last night. I moved up one spot in the 200 IM (6th) Payton had an amazing 50 free. She is the 2005 National Champion! Our medley relay was really exciting. I had the fastest backstroke split of any of the girls in prelims, consoles, or finals. Everyone on the relay split great times. Unfortunately, we got DQed. There is no Dairy Queen down here, but a St. Barts smoothie will do ☺

I am really proud of Alyssa, an eighth grader on our team. She swam the 100 fly time trial and requalified for next year. Her hard work has really paid off.

Tonight Payton and I are seeded 1 and 3 for the 100 fly. We are gonna "Make it Happen" in the words of the Gate Guys. After tonight we are halfway done!

Chiefs on the Warpath!

Your swimming friend,

Elena Luisa Ramirez

Champaign County Aqua Chiefs (Illinois)