

Devotions before Wednesday Finals

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We are gathered here tonight to celebrate the accomplishments of some of the finest athletes our sport has to offer. As swimmers we all understand the concepts of hard work, perseverance, and determination. These three ideas unite every one of the athletes competing this week at YMCA Long Course Summer Nationals.

These three concepts of hard work, perseverance, and determination can be found throughout numerous athletes in many different sports. However, the recent events in other prominent sports such as bicycling, baseball, basketball and football have damaged these sports reputations. Cycling's most prestigious event has been tainted by steroids. Tonight one of baseball's most hallowed records may fall but its authenticity will be questioned. Basketball is being scrutinized for the betting of an official ... and one of football's most prominent stars is being indicted for dog fighting.

But swimming seems to be athletics in its purest form ... participating for the joy of competition and the satisfaction of striving for personal goals ... without being paid for it. Maybe it's the countless, boring laps or the intense mental discipline and work ethic it takes to wake up at 5:15 for morning practice. Whatever the reason is, swimmers have proven throughout history to be the most disciplined, humble, and hard working athletes of any sport. Very rarely do you hear any negative news surrounding an athlete or coach involved in the sport of swimming. I believe YMCA swimming takes this one step further. I am proud to be a YMCA swimmer which has helped to build the sport in the right direction through their core values of Honesty, Responsibility, Caring and Respect.

With one final word I would like to thank all YMCA coaches, parents, and officials for instilling all of the swimmers competing this week with core values and continuing to uphold our sports upstanding reputation. I especially would like to thank my parents and my coaches for all of their love and support. With that I would like to wish all of the competitors good luck this evening and throughout the rest of the week.

Now I will ask that you please remove your hats, bow your heads, and in Tri-Hampton team tradition, please, join hands as we pray.

Dear Lord, Thank You for allowing us the opportunity to compete at this extraordinary meet. We pray that you will bless us with the ability to swim our personal best and compete to our utmost ability. We ask of You to bless us with your wonderful gifts and be with us throughout the rest of the week. Please keep us safe as we travel home at the conclusion of this meet.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.