

HEATHER MAKES HISTORY And goes for an encore!

Heather Roffey made swim history for the Cayman Islands in North Carolina Thursday June 10th, when she swam the 800 meter Freestyle event in a time fast enough to earn her a trip to the Athens '04 Olympics in August.

Heather is Cayman's first ever female Olympic swim qualifier. She took a whopping three seconds off her lifetime best time to finish in 9:01.41, bettering the FINA 'B' Olympic qualifying time of 9:02.79

Heather called her mother, Annie Mae Roffey, with the big news, while still dripping wet. Meanwhile word spread rapidly around the Cayman swimming community, as the 'real time' results were published at the host club web-site: www.justswimmac.org/ultraswim .

Cayman residents are delighted for Heather and her family, with the swim community knowing how hard she has worked over the years, being particularly overjoyed.

The 800 metre race was the first event of the four-day Grand Prix Ultra Swim Meet. Competing for Cayman, Heather traveled to Charlotte with the Bolles School of Jacksonville, FL and coach Poppell, who is understandably ecstatic at Heather's accomplishment.

Definitely swimming well, Heather cranked out another personal best Saturday morning, earning her a second Olympic qualifying time in the 200metre Butterfly, an event long considered one of her best. Her time of 2:17.70 also earned her a spot in the 'A' finals of the evening competition.

Cayman Assistant Coach Dominic Ross, on vacation, showed up in support.

The Grand Prix Meets are a series of meets, designed to give swimmers final opportunities to qualify for the Olympics or get in a couple of high quality championship level races before the U.S. Olympic trials mid-July. Competition is fast and serious.

Heather is Cayman's third swimmer to qualify for Athens. National Coach David Kelsheimer is in California with Shaune Fraser and Andrew Mackay, Cayman's other qualified Olympians, at another Grand Prix meet, the Janet Evans Invitational. Many other international Olympic team members and hopefuls, including the already legendary Ian Thorpe and Australian team are there. More news of all their swims will follow next week, or are available at www.socalswim.org

Laurice Fraser, President of CIASA, commented : "Heather's determination to succeed internationally in the sport of Swimming could be seen from the first time I saw her compete at the Carifta Games four years ago. Prior to this she was already doing very well at the many overseas meets our young swimmers must take to enable them to compete in 50 metre pools. The strong support she has received from her family and friends that whilst pursuing her dream has been significant, unwavering, and always very positive. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her parents Annie Mae & Alan Roffey and other members of her family. I am thrilled to know that Heather has qualified to join the Cayman Olympic Swim Team and as the first female ever in the history of the Cayman Islands to do so. It's also very encouraging to know that her development started at our modest 25 metre Lions Pool and facilities, which we have fast outgrown but have a strong vision of developing in the very near future. I'm also very happy and privileged to share these moments in our short swimming history and hope that the entire Cayman community share in the pride felt by our Association and Members as a result of delivering three qualifying swimmers to represent our sport at the Olympic Games being held in August in Athens 2004."

Cayman Coach Kelsheimer commented from Long Beach. "I could not be happier for Heather. I am truly impressed with her relaxed and positive outlook and toughness that was clear from the age of 8 yrs. old. Heather has shown a maturity and resilience that has allowed her to ride through some truly high-highs and low-lows. This roller coaster is not over for her and I know she has a lot left in the tank. Jeff Poppell, Head coach of Bolles has been very helpful during the 2 school years that Heather has been away. I truly appreciate his openness and communication. I hope her next school coach at the University of South Carolina will be as easy to work with."

Swimming now has the largest representation of any Olympic sport in the Cayman Islands! In 2000, after turning down a chance to go with wild cards, we made the promise that Cayman's swimmers can and would qualify as true competitors, not mere participants. I am very proud of our entire team and look forward to seeing them continue to do Cayman proud."