

Local swimmers university bound

Nine WEST club members moving on

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A bumper crop of swimmers from the WEST club are moving on to university programs on both sides of the border.

Headed for scholarships in the U.S. are Santino Viselli (Wingate University in N.C.), Gillian Morris, Patrick McRae and Cameron McRae (all Notre Dame College in Ohio), Matthew Laschuk and Jimmy Lee (Wayne State in Michigan).

Daniel Rode (Waterloo), Jeramie Jacques Windsor and Zack DeWolfe (McMaster) are staying on Canadian soil.

"I'm scared about next year," WEST coach Andrei Semenov said. "Who will replace these swimmers?"

Normally, WEST waves good-bye to one or two university bound members a year.

"The club is six years old now and this is actually the first group to leave," said Semenov.

Laschuk joined when he was 11-years-old and now he's earned a place at the Olympic trials and a full-ride scholarship from Wayne State.

"It'll be nice to see what the American swimming system can offer me," the 17-year-old Academie Ste. Cecile student said. "I don't want to get ahead of myself, but I'd definitely like to give (the Olympic trials) a shot in four years."

Improved performance

Lee broke out of a prolonged slump to reach this year's Olympic trials and his performances there have him "inspired to see what I really can do."

With his times rubbing elbows with national standards, the 17-year-old Riverside student calls 2008 "my comeback year."



MAKING A SPLASH: Jimmy Lee practices at the University of Windsor pool. He's heading to Wayne State this fall.

Star photo: Jason Kryk

Semenov thinks Laschuk and Lee can establish themselves as pivotal members of Wayne State's team in the future.

Morris was pro-active in gaining the attention

of Notre Dame College, a small liberal arts school located just outside Cleveland.

Coaches were interested in the McRae brothers when she inquired about opportunities on the women's team.

That led to a partial scholarship on a full-time campus that felt comfortable for the Marquette Christian Academy student.

Small school

"I felt it was somewhere where I would be used as a team member," the 17-year-old said. "The whole small school attitude was appealing to me."

While concerned about filling the pool next year, Semenov is happy to see this group moving on.

"They're nice kids and I know they have bright futures ahead of them," he said.

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