



WHALES TALES



Saturday the 31st of January 2026

Saturday Club Races

Welcome to second club race championship of 2026. Today's championship is the 50m and 200m Breaststroke. Good luck to all those participating!! Please arrive as early as possible to help setup.



Last week we had a few swimmers dive in and luckily didn't lose their board shorts! This was a mini celebration held every Saturday closest to Australia day. We all hope you had a great Australia day!

Speedo Sprint

Merrylands has a team of 15 swimmers competing at the Speedo Sprint Series Heats at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre on Sunday.

Our team is competing in 51 individual events at the meet and consists of:

1. Gabriella Assi
2. Daniel Brancatisano
3. Grace Brancatisano
4. Damien Chan
5. Marcus Chan
6. Lara Hannan
7. Patrick Hannan
8. Coralie Havea
9. Anna Johnston
10. Jude Johnston
11. William Johnston
12. Xavier Ou
13. Lily Palise
14. Jay Shrestha
15. Samantha Terry

Good luck to our team at the meet, especially those swimming at their first Speedo Sprint Series!

Merrylands SwimFest

SwimFest is just a few more swims away, all swimmers who can swim, Masters as well, should be competing at SwimFest and representing our club. Make sure you enter if you have not already. Entries close on Saturday 7th February, which is next week, (so it's time to enter this weekend!). Merrylands members can use the special member button for discounted entry fees.

As always SwimFest is not run by a loan Whale but the entire pod, so please step forward and let Sylvia Chan (Meet Director) know you are available. Please do this ASAP!



You can also sign up to help on this form:
<https://forms.microsoft.com>

Squad Reminders

Firstly, this is a reminder everyone who attends club, please remember to mark your absences in the swim school system, if you are not attending squad throughout the week as soon as possible. This helps with preparation and the smooth running of the squad.

Secondly, there will be no training on the Monday, 2nd of February.





Swimmer Spotlight – Ruth Brancatisano



This week we shine the spotlight on a brave and determined young swimmer whose confidence has grown tremendously since starting Learn to Swim.

Q1: Tell us about your swimming journey

A: I started Learn to Swim when I was 2 years old at North Rocks. I was so scared of swimming that I cried and screamed every time. Then I went up a level, and I didn't cry as much. I then completed a level at Parramatta Pools and shortly after trialled for Mini Squads and made it in! Mini Squads scared me at first but now I'm not scared anymore. I'm so

excited to be in Mini Squads because it's more challenging and I feel braver.

Q2: Favourite thing about our Club

A: Friendly people and good culture.

Q3: What is your favourite stroke?

A: Freestyle, because it's easy, fast and fun. My least favourite stroke is Backstroke because I always hit the lane ropes.

Q4: Proud swimming achievements

A:

- Getting into Mini Squads
- At my school swimming carnival, I came first in all strokes!
- When I was a baby, I was proud when I put my head under the water for the first time. I did cry a lot, but I did it, and I remember that moment very well.

Q5: Swimming goals for this year

- A: • To progress to higher level squads like my sister (Grace) and brother (Daniel), I think I can do it this year!
- To break the 33m Breaststroke time, I'm very close, off by just 1 second.

Q6: Something interesting about you

A: I do competitive gymnastics and I'm good at it, my favourites are Beam and Bars.

In Kindergarten I used to be shy, but since Year 2, I'm not shy and I can't stop talking (my teachers love it!). I'm a little scared of heights and on my recent Tasmania trip I couldn't climb a rope tree that my friend wanted me to do, but I hope to do it next time I visit. I also got a hole in my foot from that holiday!

Upcoming Meet Calendar

Check the [website](#) for the full list of upcoming meets, closing dates, programs and qualifying times.

MEET NAME	MEET DATE	ENTRY CLOSING
Campbelltown Masters Meet	Saturday, 31st January 2026	closed
Speedo Sprint Series Heats	Sunday, 1st February 2026	closed
NSW Senior Metropolitan Championships	Friday 13th to Sunday 15th February 2026	Tuesday, 3rd February @ 11:55 PM
Merrylands SwimFest	Saturday, 21st February 2026	Saturday, 7th February @ 5:00 PM
Speedo Sprint Series Finals	Saturday, 28th February 2026	Heat Qualification
Blacktown Masters Meet	Saturday, 28th February 2026	Friday, 20th February @ 12:00 PM
NSW Youth State Age Championships	Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd March 2026	Tuesday, 10th March @ 11:55 PM
MSW 5-8 Year Development Meet	Saturday, 28th March 2026	TBA

