

Local swimmer Paige McLean accepts scholarship at Saint Francis

The first time Paige McLean had a swimming lesson, there was a lot of kicking and screaming, and not in a good way.

That's according to her parents Cathy and Terry McLean.

They say she wasn't overjoyed with the idea of putting her face in the water.

Thanks to the patience of George Jacobson at his swim school, she finally came around and the rest, as they say is history.

McLean has swum for Jacobson, also head coach of the Vaughan Aquatic Club, for the past eight years and competed at Canadian Junior Nationals, Eastern Canadian Championships and Ontario Provincials numerous times. As she completes Grade 12 and finishes her final season with Vaughan Aquatic, she leaves the club currently holding 17 records. She also recently finished competing for St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Bolton, winning two gold medals at Region of Peel Secondary School Athletic Association (ROPSSAA), followed by two fourth-place finishes at the finals of the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) championships. It's now time for her next challenge.

After countless hours of training (in excess of 12 hours per week), her commitment to her goals and dedication to the sport of swimming have paid off.

Having contact with several Division One schools south of the border, McLean chose her favourite five and began the task of touring the universities.

It was a great experience, getting to meet and stay with the swim teams, seeing the campuses and attending class. From larger schools, like Seton Hall and Youngstown State, to picturesque Saint Francis University and Marist to the exciting St Francis College in New York City. Each of them offered her something different, both academically and athletically.

In the end, she accepted an athletic and academic scholarship to Saint Francis University (near Pittsburgh). The Red Flash, as they are known, are the four-time defending North East Conference (NEC) Swimming Champions.

McLean is looking forward to the challenge ahead.

"I'm going down there to get a great education and to help them continue to be the best swim program in the Conference," she said.

"My eventual goal is to compete at the NCAAs."

McLean would like to thank her family and friends for all their support and guidance, her team and coaches at the Vaughan Aquatic Club, and the entire faculty at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Bolton.

"I am really looking forward to this next step in my journey and excited about the challenges ahead," she said.



Paige McLean and George Jacobson