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## **Whittle, McGowan gain 2nds**

Far Western swimming

By MITCH McLAUGHLIN/Democrat Sports Writer

Matt Whittle and Mallory McGowan of the Woodland Swim Team each took second place in their respective races at the Far Western Long Course Championships this past weekend in Concord.

Whittle, 10, broke a team record in his second-place 50-meter breaststroke performance. He also finished in seventh in the 100 breaststroke.

McGowan, 14, finished second in both the 100 and 200 breaststrokes.

The meet wraps up the long-course regular season for the Woodland Swim Team. Whittle will represent the Sierra Nevada Swimming all-stars at the Western Zones meet next week in Fresno.

"Matt is really excited about going," Woodland coach Bret Williams said. "He qualified sixth in the prelims before he moved up to second in the 50 final. It was a great jump in time for him. Just having him qualify for the final eight out of the all the kids who try to qualify is an accomplishment in itself."

Cameron Peyton, Ariel Stephens, Marisa Hildebrand, Jonathan MacArt and AnnClaire MacArt also competed.

Woodland was among teams from throughout the western U.S., Canada and an all-star team from Mexico.

Stephens, Peyton and McGowan also had qualifying times for the Zones meet but will be using the next week off to regroup for the short-course season which starts Labor Day weekend.

Williams said this year was an improvement from last year after having only two swimmers qualify for the Far Westerns.

However, Woodland was unable to go to those Far Westerns as the Junior Olympics were held the same weekend.

"The JOs (Junior Olympics) are kind of our league championships so it's good to go to them even though we have to choose between those and the Westerns," Williams said.

"The hardest part of the championship meet was the heat wave everybody had to deal with. Too bad they swam in those extreme conditions. I was definitely happy with how well we performed in all of the groups both in Davis and Concord."