

Colorado Swimmers Set Records at Move United Junior Nationals

Dillon Mezey from the Falfins Swim Team in Colorado Springs and Gracie Oswald from Brighton Bullfrogs Swim Team set seven meet records for their age group and sports class.

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Gracie Oswald – Brighton Bullfrogs Swimmer

“Move United Junior Nationals was so much more than just a swim meet. It was an event that offered opportunities for fellowship, friendship and fun.”

Heidi Heim – Brighton Bullfrogs Coach

“Swimming makes me feel happy... I love the competition”

Dillon Mezey – Falfins Swimmer

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Kelly Wederqueist – Falfins Coach



Photo Courtesy of Mezey Family

271 adaptive athletes from 33 states converged on the Metro Denver area last July for the 2021 Move United Junior Nationals presented by The Hartford. Two Colorado swimmers, Dillon Mezey from the Falfins Swim Team in Colorado Springs and Gracie Oswald from Brighton Bullfrogs Swim Team, excelled in their respective competitions. Between the two of them, seven meet records for their

age group and sports class were set.

Move United, an affiliate of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee and a national leader in sports and recreation for individuals with disabilities, uses the power of sport to empower 100,000 youth and adults with disabilities each year to live to their fullest potential.

Their annual Junior Nationals event is the largest and longest-standing national sport championship event for young athletes with a physical disability, visual and/or intellectual impairment through the age of twenty-two. The weeklong event includes competitions, clinics, education and social opportunities. In July 2021 they came to Westminster/Thornton and will return there for the 2022 event.

“This is truly a one-of-a-kind event and we invite the entire Colorado community to get involved,” said Susan Rossi,

For more information on how to include athletes with disabilities in swimming and in competitions email disability@swimcolorado.org.

Director of Competitions for Move United and a Colorado resident. “Hundreds of volunteers are needed to bring the event to life. Dive into the action as we welcome the nation to our beautiful state.”

In 2021, a total of 120 athletes competed in the swimming competition over both 25-yard and 50-meter courses. Athletes are classified according to their disabilities. Rules for each stroke are based on the World Paralympic Swimming rulebook that is used for international competitions. In each event, swimmers compete in mixed heats, but then times are ranked against athletes in similar age groups and with similar disabilities to identify the final placings.

Dillon Mezey swimming in the 11&U Under S3 classification set meet records in the 50 m backstroke, 100m freestyle, 25 yd butterfly, 25 yd freestyle and 50 yd freestyle competitions. While Gracie Oswald swimming in the 20&U S8 classification set meet records in the 50 m freestyle and 100 m breaststroke competitions.



Photo Courtesy of Oswald Family

“I was so excited to have such a large and well-organized Paralympic organization like Move United come to Colorado where I could compete against other para swimmers. Opportunities like that in our state are somewhat rare. Move United volunteers and staff were welcoming and amazing to work with, and I had a blast cheering the other swimmers on and seeing all the swimmers on the sidelines and being cheered on by them.” Gracie said after the meet.



Photo Courtesy of Heidi Heim

“2021 was the first time we attended Move United Junior Nationals. Gracie swam some great races and set new personal bests at this meet. The atmosphere was fun and conducive for fast swims. It was great to watch Gracie connect with fellow athletes between her races. Move United Junior Nationals was so much more than just a swim meet. It was an event that offered opportunities for fellowship, friendship and fun. They offered educational seminars for parents, coaches and athletes. It was one of the best events that we have attended.” added Gracie’s coach at Brighton Bullfrogs, Heidi Heim.

"Swimming makes me feel happy. I like to swim because it is a fun sport and I get exercise. I love the competition; it is my favorite thing about swimming" said Dillon Mezey recently. Kelly Wederquist, Dillon’s coach at Falfins added “The Move United event was such a fantastic experience. This was the first time we had attended this event. It was an outstanding opportunity for Dillon to compete amongst his peers and we couldn’t be more proud of him and his accomplishments. I have never participated in a meet with more camaraderie between participants and genuine goodwill for all of the athletes involved. We are grateful and anxiously await the event again this year”.

With Junior Nationals returning to Thornton/Westminster in 2022, the hope is that more Colorado athletes will participate. Registration will launch for volunteers in March and athletes in April. Learn more about how to compete in or support Junior Nationals by visiting moveunitedjuniornationals.org.