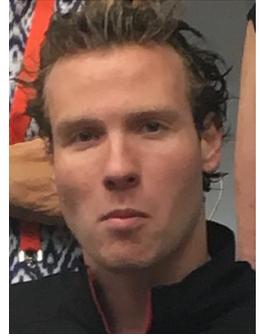


Alex Strasser, 2016 Long Course YMCA Nationals Devotion

Good morning, and welcome to the fourth day of competition here at the 2016 YMCA Long Course Nationals. My name is Alex Strasser. I'm a senior from the Greensboro Community YMCA in North Carolina and it's a great honor to humbly address my fellow swimmers this morning.



So has anyone ever heard a speech written entirely in verse? I thought about doing prose but decided nothing could be worse.

The Y is so unique, distinct and diverse that we need a similar speech before tomorrow when we finally disperse.

We are all blessed to be here at this competition, as the culmination of hours and hours of athletic repetitions.

Today we've woken up, in anticipation of our event, eager to seek a reward for the training we've spent.

Some of us slip on brand-new suits with the hope that one day we'll be college recruits.

But before we complete that arduous ascent, we must make sure that in our races we never relent.

With our ruthless determination that can never be bent, and our 6-pack abs, hard as cement...

We'll all do the most to set a personal best, and our team will be there to take care of the rest.

Because that's what the YMCA is really all about; a team to carry us through any hint of doubt.

The Y is truly a family unlike any other; you can look far and wide but you'll never find another.

That's why I'm grateful to be a part of Y swimming, even as my era as a high school athlete is dimming.

This team has given me so much to remember throughout all my years as a Y member.

And for that, I'd like to say thank you, to Coach Brad, Coach Sara to GCY and to the rest of the YMCA family. And good luck to all the athletes competing today. Thank you.

-Alex