

Hello,

My name is Chet Dobson. I swim for the Blue Ash YMCA in Cincinnati Ohio, and this is my 11th and final nationals, which makes this my final session.

This night is very bittersweet for me, and I can assume also for many other seniors. On one hand, many of us are finishing out great YMCA swimming careers and truly setting an example to those around us. On the other hand, this may be our last time together with many of our teammates, coaches, and friends from other teams. And that is what I want to focus on tonight: relationships.

First of all, our coaches invest so much time in us; getting up even earlier than we do, coming to every practice, even when they don't want to. And it's not for the pay either...they genuinely enjoy being around us and watching us improve.

Next, our teammates are like brothers and sisters to us. They see us at our best, and also our worst. They are often our fiercest competition but also our best friends. They push us to our best in practice, in meets, and in life.

Also, we are so supported by our parents, volunteers, the officials, and the YMCA. None of this week would be possible without their time and sacrifice. We are all incredibly thankful for all that you have done for us, for this meet, and for this sport.

Finally, many of us have a relationship with the Lord. While it may not always be obvious, it certainly has an impact on how we interact with those around us. I have noticed a clear difference between YMCA meets and other swim meets, and I think it is primarily due to the Christian values of the YMCA. Certainly we are not perfect, but when many of the coaches, parents, and athletes strive for selflessness, love, and humility, there is a noticeable change in culture for the better.

Please bow your heads in prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you so much for this meet and all the time and effort that goes into making it possible. Thank you for blessing us with such a great week already, and may you continue to bless us during this last session and on our travels home. Please help us remember how supported we really are, to embrace our values, and to enjoy our time here together.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

