Devotion—Ethan Chase (Friday night)

Good evening parents, coaches, volunteers, and fellow swimmers. My name is Ethan Chase and I am a senior swimmer for the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina, or TYDE for short. I have been swimming year-round for the past 10 years, and this is my 6th and final YMCA Nationals. In the fall, I will be attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; go Heels.

I would like to dedicate my devotion to what the YMCA has taught me about perseverance and always pushing oneself to the next level, despite inevitable obstacles that are going to be in the way.

We all have worked hard and made sacrifices to get to be at YMCA Nationals, whether it be waking up at 5 AM for morning practice or having to tell friends we cannot hang out because we have practice the next morning. Regardless of these, we all have still had to overcome obstacles that have rolled our way during our respective careers.

A lot of minor setbacks can be poised for major comebacks. A minor setback I have had to deal with recently is being diagnosed with the flu. In fact, I was diagnosed a week ago today, and I was unable to get out of bed and walk downstairs until Tuesday. However, with the support of my teammates and family, I was able to get back up on my feet and am now standing here today. We all have experienced some sort of setback, and together, we have been able to pick one another up and work our way towards our major goals.

I love the quote: “life is 10% what happens to you, and 90% how you react to it.” I believe that everything happens for a reason, and swimming has taught me to make the most out of everything and to be thankful for the many wonderful opportunities I have. Although I may have experienced a lot of setbacks in my swimming career, I still am very blessed to be where I am today and I am thankful for the opportunities the YMCA has given me.

In most cases, swimming gives us another opportunity to achieve a personal best. Even if we fall just short of a cut, there is always the next season or the meet. However, for myself and some of my fellow seniors, there will be no “one more chance” or “one more meet.” After tonight, my competitive swimming career is over and I will officially be a “swammer.”

I definitely will not miss having to eat breakfast in my car every morning or barely being able to walk up the stairs because I am so sore, but I will miss the encouraging breakfast notes from my dad and being able to devour *two*, wonderful home cooked meals every night.

Nonetheless, looking back on my swimming career, I am not going to remember what my best times were or the garbage yardage sets we might have done at practice, but I will remember the amazing memories I shared with teammates, coaches and family. That being said, I would not have been able to make these memories had it not been for support along the way, and being able to persevere through extremely tough times.

As YNATS comes to a close, I would like to thank, and challenge all of you to thank, our volunteers, coaches, and parents who were able to make this meet possible.

I would also like to thank everyone who has helped me throughout my swimming career, for swimming has shaped me into the person I am today. I am grateful to be a part of the YMCA and to be surrounded by amazing people, and I hope that my impact on you all is just as great as how you all have impacted me.

Let us pray

Dear God,

Thank you for blessing us with yet another amazing week at YMCA Nationals. Thank you for watching over us and keeping us safe and healthy while we compete and cheer for our teammates, and please give us one more, amazing finals session. We ask that you continue to watch over us as we travel home from Greensboro, and that we always will have your guidance when we are faced with obstacles that seem too difficult to overcome. For those of us whose swimming careers are over, please help us open the next chapter of our lives and find ways to positively impact those around us. Help us never take swimming for granted, and to be thankful for the many blessings you have bestowed upon us. In your name we pray,

Amen