

2017 NJ Short Course Eastern Zone Report

Submitted by: Sandra Franc

The New Jersey All-Star Zone team traveled to Webster, NY for the 2017 Eastern Zone Short Course Championships. 89 New Jersey athletes competed in this 3 day Age Group championship. Many athletes saw not only best times, but NJ records and Eastern Zone records. The NJ Zone team finished 3rd place overall as a team short by only 25 points behind PVS. It was a very fun but competitive battle between the 2 LSC's all throughout the weekend as they flip flopped place 2 and 3rd each day and session. This is the strongest showing NJ has seen in a number of years. There were 7 of the 11 LSCs that participated in the meet. Though there were less teams participating than usual, NJ placed higher than usual against teams that did participate in the most recent meets. This meet was officially the last of the short course All-Star zone meets as the meet will be an invitational meet with individual teams from any of the 11 LSC's being able to compete separately. There will not be scoring or events based on LSC but by individual team instead.

In addition, the 11-12 placed First overall in team standings for their age group. For placing top in their age division each swimmer was presented a commemorative 2017 Eastern Zone Age Group Championship pin.

New Jersey played up the historical Last All-Star meet by having psych themes that represented the honor of being chosen as an "All-Star". Coach Kip Hein had a banner made where there were 89 stars, one for each swimmer to post their events and a "New Jersey" in the center for any swimmer from NJ to print their name once they qualified for finals (top 10). This banner was prominently hung above the NJ team bench as an incentive for swimmers to stand proud of their accomplishments for simply making the team and also representing their home LSC at finals. Other LSC that participated in this meet were; Adirondack, Allegheny Mountain, Connecticut, Potomac Valley, Metropolitan, and Niagara. Maine a very small team usually participated but was not present, nor was Maryland who has not participated in at least 5 years. Middle Atlantic, a usual top 3 team, declined to participate as well. Virginia who will be hosting the summer Long Course Eastern Zone meet declined to participate as well.

It is my opinion that to go to individual with team and athlete representation is the wrong direction to take for this meet. The "All-Star" LSC competition makes this meet especially significant to up and coming Age Group athletes. It encourages team comradery as well as higher level of competition. There are many smaller teams from within our LSC as well as other LSC's that will simply not be able to participate as the meet goes forward as an invitational. This would be a disadvantage to those athletes who would have benefitted at the meet as is has run by being able to attend with the LSC chosen coaches and team managers. Once again, only the swimmers from the larger clubs will be benefit from the new structure and a lot of swimmers from the smaller clubs will not benefit from the team feel and support at a higher level meet which is proven to encourage faster swimming. New Jersey is also looking into the possibility to attending a LSC meet that may be offered similar to the past Eastern Zone short course meets. More info to come in the upcoming months.