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## Australia looks to future with Games squad

FINA Communication Department

James Magnusson may be the World 100m freestyle champion and the public face of Australian Swimming, but he still walked away from the country's National Championships yesterday without a single title. Despite the result Australian Swimming officials, and indeed Magnusson himself, are upbeat about the team's performance ahead of this year's Commonwealth Games and Pan Pacs.

"I just got stuck in the mindset of chasing the world record again, and it brought me unstuck," Magnusson said after losing the 100m to 19-year-old physics student, Cameron McEvoy.

"I botched my start and I botched my turn, and they're pretty simple areas to get right. So I think I self destructed. But I'm not worried, there's plenty of time to get it right."

Magnusson only just scraped into the 50m event for Glasgow, finishing in a tie for third behind former world record holder, Eamon Sullivan, and having to survive a sudden-death swim off.

Australia will take a squad of 59 to Glasgow, headed by Magnusson and fellow world champions, Cate Campbell and Christian Sprenger.



Christian Sprenger (AUS)

Magnusson wasn't the only swimmer struggling in Brisbane, although fellow World Champion Campbell still managed to win both the 50m and 100m freestyle.

"I'm obviously not in my peak condition yet, but I'm hoping all the hard work I've been putting in pre-trials will pay dividends at the Commonwealth Games," she said.

Christian Sprenger was the swimmer of the meet, surprising himself in taking out the 50m, 100m and 200m breaststroke treble.

It's forced him to rethink his strategy for the future, after previously deciding to drop the 200m to concentrate on the shorter races.

"I'm still weighing up the options for the 200m, but it's all looking very good," he said.

"I can only keep getting better, I'm a strong athlete, and even though I'm 28 I still think there's a lot of gains to be made."

The squad is bookended nicely by a mix of experience and fresh-faced enthusiasm, with 28-year-old sprinter Sullivan and 26-year-old IM specialist Alicia Coutts at one end, and a whole raft of teenagers at the other.

Heading the youngsters is 19-year-old McEvoy, and 17-year-olds Mack Horton and Remy Fairweather, who set junior world records in the 1500m freestyle and 400m freestyle respectively.

And although Australians in the past have been keen to predict possible medal tallies, freshly minted head coach Jacco Verhaeren is having none of it.

"We are working with people, we are not working with medal tallies," he said at the end of the trials.

"Although we know people are looking at medal tallies, we're working with people who want to maximise their performance."

But don't be fooled – Australia still desperately wants to finish at the top of the Commonwealth Games medal table.

*(courtesy of Ross Solly, Diving Australia media officer)*

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