

# Making a Splash in Beijing

By Emily Schultheis

**K**im Vandenberg and Peter Varellas were teammates on the swim team at Moraga Tennis and Swim Club when they were in elementary school. Now, years later, they're teammates again--on the United States Olympic team.

Representing their country in the Olympics is the dream of many young athletes. For Vandenberg and Varellas, both 2002 Campolindo grads, it will soon be a reality.

Both will be part of the United States Olympic team – Vandenberg for swimming, and Varellas for waterpolo – in Beijing this month.

Vandenberg started swimming at MTSC when she was eight years old. She swam recreationally for four years, and according to her dad, Rick Vandenberg, won trophies both through the Orinda-Moraga Pool Association and the county swim meet.

At age twelve, Vandenberg began swimming year-round with Orinda Aquatics, and continued to swim – and win awards – throughout her time at Campolindo. She graduated in 2002, and went on to swim at UCLA.

And after an impressive career both at Campolindo and UCLA, Vandenberg placed fifth in the 200-meter freestyle event at the Olympic Trials. She didn't make the team in her first event, butterfly, but made it as a member of the womens' 4x200 meter freestyle relay team.

Her dad said he's excited to see her swim as a part of the US Olympic team. "It's encouraging as a parent to see your child achieve his or her goals," he said.

For Varellas, swimming at MTSC was just a warm-up for his real passion – waterpolo. He began playing when he started high school at Campolindo, and by the end of his sophomore year, he "kind of knew that's what I wanted to do," he said.

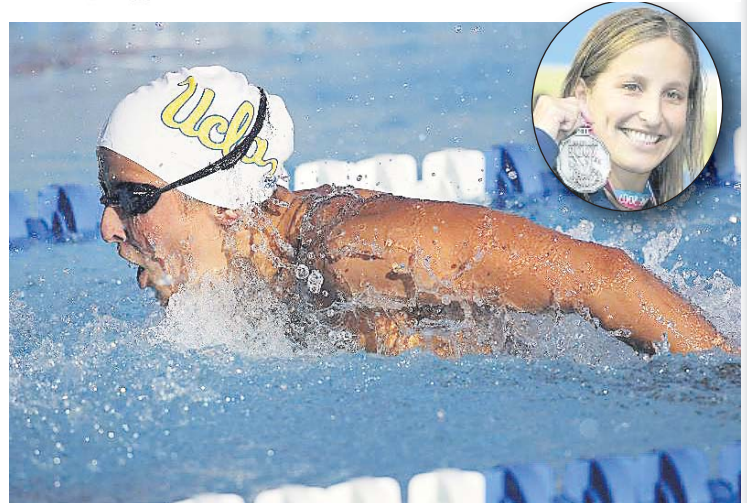
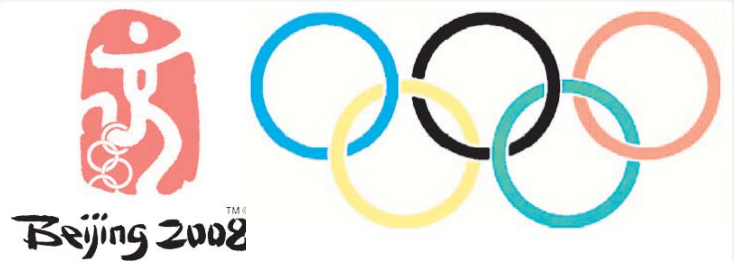
After graduating from Campolindo in 2002, he went on to play waterpolo at Stanford for four years. During his senior year at Stanford, he started playing for the U.S. National team, and has been a part of the team since.

When he graduated from Stanford, he traveled to Europe to play for a professional team in Italy during his months off from the U.S. national team. He just finished his second year with that team.

Varellas' mom, Robyn, said it's still a bit unreal to know that her son is going to the Olympics. "I think it will really hit us when we stand there and see him march out at the first game with the team," she said. "We are so proud and so appreciative of all the support our friends, family, his coaches, and the community have given him."

Varellas is excited to represent the United States in the Olympics, but said making it is only the first step – now, he and his team have to prove themselves in Beijing.

"Making it was a goal of mine, but the true goal for the team has yet to be accomplished," he said.



Kim Vandenberg

Photo provided



Peter Varellas

Photo Robert Johnson