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Orinda Aquatics Host Junior Olympics at Soda Center

By Karl Buscheck



Photos Gint Federas

Orinda Aquatics had so many athletes competing in the Junior Olympics Meet that co-head coach/founder Ron Heidary was stumped when asked to highlight his star swimmers.

"We have a very good group of 11/12 (year old)'s and 13/14's," explained Ron Heidary, who founded the club along with his twin brother and fellow head coach Don back in 1995. "I wouldn't say I could pick one out, but our 11/12's and 13/14's were strong and very competitive in the meet."

Over 1,200 swimmers were in attendance for the Junior Olympics, including more than 100 from Orinda Aquatics, which hosted the event from July 7 to July 11 at the Soda Aquatic Center in Moraga.

"What we're proud of is that we do

a good job of it," R. Heidary said. "Our parents work so hard and we want to be the best meet host in Pacific Swimming and I think we're at least one of the best if not the best."

Pacific Swimming is the third-largest of USA Swimming's 59 regional associations, consisting of more than 120 clubs and 16,000 swimmers from across Northern California.

"We provide a great atmosphere for the swimmers and the coaches and the facility is one of the best in the Bay Area," Ron Heidary said. "I think it's a tremendous opportunity, not only for our kids to compete but all the kids in Pacific Swimming. So, we are very proud to do it and we feel good about what we've done."

Like his brother, Don views the Soda

Center as the ideal setting for one of the premier meets of the summer schedule.

"I think the most important thing was to try and provide a venue for so many young kids to compete at a high level," Don Heidary said. "And I think we did a good job of that."

According to Ron Heidary, the Acalanes Union High School District and the Soda Center leadership deserves plenty of credit for making the Junior Olympics such a success.

"Honestly, the reason we can do it is because the district and the aquatic director are very accommodating and they help us facilitate this meet," Ron Heidary said. "We bid on it for next year and at this point we're planning on hosting it."



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