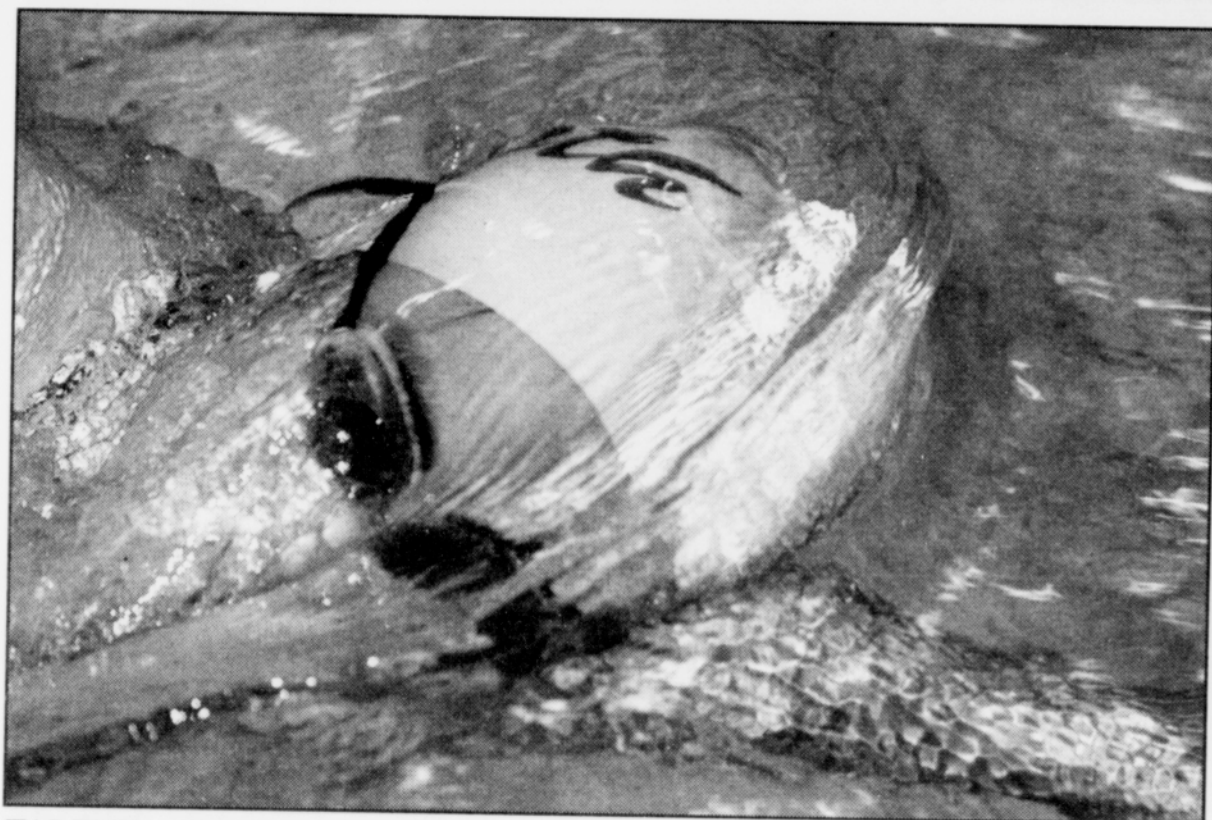


Setting a New Standard – Aly Viles “Dominates” in the High School Pool

Not enough girls for a basketball team leads to record-setting swimming career for Tribal youth



TALENT – Siletz Tribal youth Aly Viles is one of the best high school swimmers in the state of Oregon. Aly won a state championship as a freshman and won two state championships in record-breaking times as a sophomore.



Good Student – Despite the fact that Aly Viles is nearly a world-class swimmer with an eye on the Olympics, it doesn't mean she's not focused on school and work. Aly has a nearly perfect grade point average and works evenings for Chef Rob Pounding at the Blackfish Café in Lincoln City.

By Brent Merrill

Most little girls are still playing role games with their friends at the age of 9. Siletz Tribal youth Aly Viles isn't like most young women.

In fact, Aly is like other exceptional young Siletz Tribal members excelling in life and in their chosen pursuits – like Greg Poe; world champion rap artist; like Tygem Butler, world-class hero who saved a girl's life; and base-stealing, home run-hitting, touchdown-scoring machine Tristan Metcalf – talented and proven by mainstream standards.

Further, Aly has stood out as exceptional by winning swimming events since she was a child and developing a confidence that only comes with the combination of family support and high achievements at a young age. When she smiles, it's a confident smile. You can tell she knows why she's there and she knows what to do.

Aly, who has been swimming as a member of the Lincoln City Swim Club since she was 9 years old, put herself on Oregon's athletic map when she won a state title in the 100-meter butterfly at the Oregon State 4A/3A/2A/1A High School Swimming Championships at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham in February 2008. She was a freshman.

She led her Taft High School swim team to sixth place overall by also finishing second in the 200 individual medley with a time of 2:11.30 and third in the 200 medley relay (with seniors Melissa Arntt and Mariah Gaul and junior Amanda Moorman) in a time of 2:01.80. Aly and her relay mates completed the 2008 state championships with a fourth-place finish in the 400-meter freestyle medley.

Aly, now 16, has continued to excel in the pool and topped her stunning freshman performance by setting two meet records at the 2009 District Championships. She set records in the 200-meter freestyle with a time of 54.20 seconds and the 100 fly with a time of 56.80 seconds. Her performance earned her the top seed in the 2009 state championships.

A week later, Aly (now a varsity sophomore) returned to the same pool in Gresham to lead Taft at the Oregon State 4A/3A/2A/1A Swimming Championships. Aly dominated the annual February event again by winning two state titles – both in state record times. The girls team at Taft again placed sixth in the state meet and Aly scored 22 points (she scored 21 individual points as a freshman) to lead the team.

This year, Aly shattered the record in the 200-meter freestyle with a time of 1:52.27. For perspective, the old mark was 1:56.88. Aly broke the record by more than 4 seconds.

Aly also set the state record in the 100 butterfly with a time of 56.84 seconds, breaking her own state record of 58.15.

According to Lissa Parker, Aly's swimming coach at the Lincoln City Swim Club, the times set in those two races qualified her for National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association All-American consideration. Parker also said that with improvements in times come even more national consideration and even a shot at the U.S. Olympic team down the road.

Again, for the proper perspective on this young Tribal member's achievements, you must consider that Aly's record-setting time in the 100-meter butterfly was one second off Olympic qualifying pace and placed her third overall in the entire state of Oregon among high school swimmers at any level, including, 5A and 6A competitors.

Also at this year's state swimming meet, Aly and fellow Taft swimmers Rebekah Morgan (a senior), Ann Grewe and Amanda Moorman (both juniors) placed fourth in the 400-meter freestyle relay with a time of 4:04.97. The same Taft High School foursome combined for sixth place in the 200-meter medley relay with a time of 2:04.01.

Aly's teammates Rebekah, Ann and Amanda all set personal best times in their relay splits.

Aly is the daughter of Siletz Tribal member Tim Viles and his wife, Tammy.

"At age 9 (in 2002) she showed up for another year of girl's basketball," said Mom Tammy. "Unfortunately, not enough girls signed up and the girls and boys team were combined and she decided to go out for swimming instead. I must admit I wasn't too excited about her decision. She had failed Level 3 swim class twice and I was afraid that swimming competitively may be a struggle."

Mom and the rest of the family quickly learned to have faith in their daughter.

"I couldn't have been more wrong," said Tammy. "After swimming for six short months, she already had state qualifying times in six events. At age 10, she was ranked in the top five in three events for her age group. This is a huge accomplishment. It includes all swimmers in Oregon regardless of club or school size. She has consistently been a top five swimmer through the years."

Tammy said Aly will be honored in December for being in the top five in eight events.

"Aly is the youngest of four children, which I believe gives her the competitive edge that has helped her excel at swimming," said Tammy. "If her older siblings told her she was too young to participate in what they were doing, she was even more determined to keep up and prove them wrong. Usually she succeeded."

Aly impresses her coach with her effort.

"She has always been a pretty positive swimmer and works very hard at what she does," said Lissa Parker. "She is not super competitive in the traditional way, but she does not like to lose."

Parker said Aly's legend is growing in the local area.

"Many folks in the community know from the media that she has talent but few people here really understand how very talented. Her 100-meter butterfly at Senior Sectionals was only a second off an Olympic cut. Aly broke two state records this year," said Parker. "But oftentimes there is little true competition for her in high school swimming."

Parker said Aly has already recorded times good enough this year to qualify her for a USA Swimming Junior and Senior Nationals event later this year and Aly will attend an international swimming meet at the Tualatin Hills pool in Beaverton on Dec. 11-13.

According to Tammy, Aly swam a time of 1:02.66 in the 100 fly at this year's 2009 Western Sectional Meet. Qualifying time for the 2008 Olympic Games was 1:02.47 meaning Aly's times was just .17 seconds off Olympic qualifying standards.

Aly is a dedicated swimmer, according to Mom, who points out that Aly is just as dedicated to living her life. Tammy said Aly swims two hours a day after school and often gets in a practice before school as well.

"Aly has an active life outside of swimming," said Tammy. "She maintains a nearly perfect GPA doing countless hours of homework. She is active in student government at Taft as the junior class president. She is active in church and manages to fit in a couple of Bible studies a week with friends."

Despite the fact that Aly's accomplishments in the pool have led to her receiving recruitment letters from Lewis & Clark College in Oregon; Emory University in Atlanta, Ga.; Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa; and East Coast schools Brown University and Yale, Tammy said Aly isn't sure what role swimming will play in her future.

"She has received countless letters from colleges all over the country wanting her for their swim teams," said Tammy. "At this point, Aly is not certain if she wants to swim competitively in college."

Aly's personal goal of becoming a teacher has her thinking about a career as a teacher.

"Whatever choice Aly makes, I am confident she will continue to succeed and will have the support of her family," said Tammy.

Think about it for just a second – young Aly Viles might be the first Siletz Tribal member ever to participate in the Olympic Games.