

Drake makes U.S. Trials in 100 fly

Written by Jim Ecker

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Kelsey Drake has reached another major milestone in her remarkable swimming career.

Drake turned in an impressive performance at the Iowa state swimming long course championships in Iowa City Saturday and has qualified for the U.S. Olympic Trials in the 100 meter butterfly.

Drake was timed in 1:01.17 in the preliminaries of the 100-meter butterfly Saturday morning to meet the qualifying time for the U.S. Trials of 1:01.19, making the standard by 2-hundredths of a second. She placed second in the finals of the 100 fly Saturday night.

The U.S. Olympic Trials will be held in Omaha next June in preparation for the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, next August.

Drake, entering her junior year at Linn-Mar High School, is one of the youngest swimmers to qualify for the Olympic Trials.

"It's an amazing accomplishment," said Brian Ruffles, her coach with the Linn-Mar Swim Club. "It's something that she's wanted ever since she was 12 years old. It's a huge accomplishment in her career."

Drake finished her race in the 100 fly in the preliminaries Saturday and looked at the scoreboard at the University of Iowa pool and saw she had reached her goal.

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"She was ecstatic," said Ruffles. "Her face just lit up.

"I was at the other end of the pool. By the time she made it back to me she was crying. It was a pretty special moment."

Drake won state titles in the 100 fly and the 200 individual medley at the Iowa high school meet last year in Marshalltown.

Ninety-one swimmers have qualified for the U.S. Olympic Trials in the 100 butterfly. Only 25 of those 91 swimmers are in the 18-and-under age group. The rest are college-age swimmers, according to Ruffles.

"I'm really proud of her," he said. "She has put in a lot of work. She earned it, that's for sure."

Only two swimmers from the U.S. will participate in the 100 butterfly at the Olympics.