



## **BADGER SWIM CLUB • 119 ROCKLAND AVENUE • LARCHMONT, N.Y. 10538**

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### Media Release

The Badgers are not in Wisconsin, the Badgers of this story are in New York, Larchmont, to be exact, and are very different from the widely known mascot utilized by the University of Wisconsin.

Most people identify Badgers with the black and white faced, feisty, long-clawed digger, who is a tenacious fighter when cornered. These Badgers are of the aquatic variety and are ferocious too, but in the water. They can be found training or racing in a pool near you.

The Badger Swim Club is heading into its' 32<sup>nd</sup> year under coach John Collins and is still going strong. During his tenure, Collins has trained five Olympians, including a trio of Gold Medallists, numerous American and World record holders, and literally hundreds of champions, from open water swimming to Masters, age group to elite, both locally, and internationally. Six Badgers have gone on to win individual NCAA titles. Badger has established a worldwide reputation for taking young grass roots talent to the top.

Surprisingly, despite all that history, Collins believes his present squad is more talented and power laden than any Badger team during the last twenty years. Why? Collins cites eight reasons to be optimistic about the Badger's 2003 season:

1. Kim Kelly – Sixteen-year-old Ursuline senior from Mount Vernon is an Olympic Trials qualifier and Nationals finalist. Kim is a member of USA Swimmings National Junior Team and will be representing the US in the Olympic Youth Festival in Sydney, Australia, January 10 – 14, 2003. One of the country's hottest middle distance freestylers ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in the world in the 1500 meter freestyle.
2. Bridget O'Connor- Sixteen-year-old from Scarsdale, a junior at Scarsdale High School. Last years New York High School State Champion in the butterfly. Also an Olympic Trials qualifier and a bonus finalist at last summer's Nationals. Bridget is representing the USA in the Cayman Islands in a 5K open water swim on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

3. Paola Duguet – A fifteen-year-old sophomore at the Hackley School, from Bronxville. A National Qualifier and member of Badgers 9<sup>th</sup> place 800-meter freestyle relay team at the Ft Lauderdale National Championships in August. Versatile, and improving, Duguet has speed and stamina.
4. Whitney Sprague – Fifteen-year-old Bronxville sophomore, who figures to make quite a splash this year. Another strong prospect from the Badger freestyles factory. Whitney is a National qualifier in three events and is the fourth member of that world-ranked 800-meter freestyle relay team.

Collins thinks that his high school aged girls team is the strongest in the country and with good reason. Along with the aforementioned Kelly, Duguet, O'Connor and Sprague, add the likes of Rebecca Grove, Kyle Walotsky, Tory Nelson, Kerby Lewis, Marilee Kiernan, Ellen Gray and Valerie Hsia and you have a star-studded cast of Section I all-stars.

5. Paul Weir – Seventeen-year-old Scarsdale High School senior from Mamaroneck who had a breakout year last short course season, winning every thing in sight. State High School Champion in the 500-yard freestyle and a National qualifier in the mile. Weir has the potential and talent to be a great collegiate swimmer as his best years lay ahead. Should have a great upcoming season, as short course swimming is his forte!
6. & 7. Norman Scott, fifteen-year-old "rocket" from Elmsford, a sophomore at Hackley, and Ryan Emmanuel, fifteen-year-old sophomore from Bronxville. Two of the hottest fifteen-year-old boys in the Nation, are both capable of winning any meet they enter in almost any event. This year will prove if they can "step up" and compete successfully with the "big boys."

Reason number 8:

Jenny Thompson, America's winningest female Olympian with eight Gold medals. At 29, and in her second year of medical school at Colombia, Thompson is swimming again after a brief respite after the Sydney Olympics, and has joined the Badger team in her quest for 2004. Thompson is on the US World Championship Team which will compete in Barcelona, summer of 2003.

Eight outstanding reasons to be excited about Badger's upcoming season. Collins even has a dark horse hope named Cristina Teuscher, who is back training for an open water swim on October 27<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco Bay. Collins still thinks that the twenty-four year-old has the stuff to make the US Team in Athens should she chose to go back to serious training.

Badger's season opens with dual meets on November 2<sup>nd</sup> versus arch area rival Long Island Aquatic Club and November 3<sup>rd</sup> versus Bernals Gator Swim Club (from Boston). Both meets will be held long course at the Apex at Lehman College. The Dominican National Team will also be present at both meets. Start times, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30 P.M., November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2:30 P.M.