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## **Two YMCA Swimmers Headed to National Meet in Atlanta**

**JOLIET, ILLINOIS, Monday, July 25, 2011** – Dedication, discipline and determination are paying off for two members of the Joliet Y Jets Swim Team. Sophia Galounis and Savannah Rubocki, both from Joliet, have qualified for the National YMCA Long Course Swimming Championships, held July 25-29 at the Georgia Institute of Technology Aquatics Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The YMCA National meet involves over 1,200 participants from YMCAs nationwide. This will be the first summer the meet will be held at Georgia Tech, the location of the 1996 Olympic swimming events.

Galounis, who will be a senior at Mt. Assisi Academy in Lemont, qualified in the 100 backstroke and 50 backstroke. Rubocki, who will be a freshman at Joliet Catholic Academy, qualified in the 200 freestyle. Both girls qualified earlier this month at the Illinois Swimming Senior Championships and it will be their first national meet experience.

"The girls and their teammates have put in great effort this summer and have made a lot of sacrifices to see these improvements," says Head Coach Dave Hedden. Besides practicing twice a day throughout the summer, each week the kids wake up at the crack of dawn on Wednesdays and Fridays to take a YMCA bus out to Ottawa in order to practice in a 50 meter pool. "That's been the regimen each summer ever since Inwood closed down their 50 meter pool, but the kids do a lot of team bonding on the bus rides," Hedden says. "They've practically lived on that bus this summer" he adds, "as we've taken the bus to several meets, done a combined practice with another team and taken a trip up to Warren Dunes State Park in Michigan for a full day of training on the dunes." Those types of trips are added in to break up what can be a grinding schedule for the advanced swimmers on the team.

It all pays off when goals, such as making YMCA Nationals, are met, especially when it has been years in the making. Rubocki has been swimming competitively since she was five, and comes from a family of swimmers. Her brother, Alex, swims with the JETS, and her father and her uncle, Jeff and John Rubocki, were nationally ranked swimmers on the JETS in the 1980s. Galounis has also swam since she was young, age 8, and thoroughly has her family hooked on the sport. "It was a great pleasure to see Sophia and Savannah make their cuts," Coach Hedden says. "Rewards for hard work are rarely immediate, but that's what builds the type of character that will allow these kids to conquer any challenge they come across."

The girls' teammates and coaches were able to give them a rousing send-off this week. You can follow their results and find complete information about the team at [www.jetsyswimteam.org](http://www.jetsyswimteam.org). The Joliet Y Jets Swim Team program focuses on character development and the shares the four core values that the YMCA espouses—caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The JETS will hold their Fall Swim Clinic the week of September 12. The clinic will be held at both the Galowich and Smith Family YMCAs and is open to all swimmers ages 6-18 wishing to try out for the team.

**the Y**

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,687 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. For more information about the Y, please visit [www.jolietymca.org](http://www.jolietymca.org).

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