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Cyclone swimmers celebrate final home meet of season

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There was a great turn out to Mills' last home meet of the season. (Monika Sabic)

Cyclone fans and athletes felt school spirit at the pool on Saturday, Jan. 31 as the swim team prepared to take on City College of San Francisco (CCSF) and Laney College at their last home meet.

"We have come off of the three-week break so people are starting to get back into the feel of it," head coach Neil Virtue said. "Today there was a lot of improvement from our meet two weeks ago."

At either end of the pool, team members leaned over the edge to cheer on the swimmers. There was no break in the Cyclone cheering.

Sophomore Mara Harwood excelled in the 50-meter fly by achieving an all time best personal time as well as placing on the Mills top-ten swim time.

"It took a while to get going, but I think once we got going everyone put their frustrations aside and really swam hard," Harwood said.

Gaby Amberchan, senior, gave it her all during her last swim meet. Her steady speed allowed her to easily outswim other swimmers, especially in the 500-meter freestyle.

"It's been one of my better seasons," Amberchan said. "I dropped a lot of time in events, the mile in particular, after having a shaky start."

Not only did the team and fans celebrate the victory, they also recognized senior Gaby Amberchan's last Mills swim meet; Mills athletes and fans marked the day "Gaby Day." Amberchan was present with flowers and a hand-made banner in recognition of her commitment to the swim team. Teammates expressed that Amberchan has been an important member to the team by being a spirited and hardworking Cyclone athlete.

"[The] senior part was really gratifying and it's nice to know that you are appreciated," Amberchan said. "It's been a great day".

Being on the swim team has helped Amberchan stay focused and organized throughout her academic career at Mills. She credits Virtue for helping her become a successful swimmer by pushing her to do better.

Virtue appreciated Amberchan's dedication to the team, such as coming to almost every practice and being ready to work hard in the pool. Her ambition to become a better swimmer has been admired by both Virtue and her teammates.

"Words can't describe really the impact that she has not only on the team, but on me as a coach," Virtue said.

Despite having a victorious last home meet, the swim season is not over. The team has yet to compete in the upcoming Liberal Arts Championship at Cowe College in Iowa, Feb. 12-14.

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