

2020 Hancock Prospecting WA Swimming Championships Preview

With the end of January approaching quickly, you can't help but feel the excitement as the 2020 Hancock Prospecting WA Swimming Championships are ready to take place. With many elite swimmers from across the State and Australia preparing for a massive 2020, which will hopefully include the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, this weekend's Meet carries more weight than usual.

After the recent change to the Olympic selection process, including moving the Olympic and Paralympic Selection Meet to June. The 2020 Hancock Prospecting WA Swimming Championships will provide many coaches with the opportunity to test their athletes to determine what moves need to be made leading into Trials and beyond.

Some of the key athletes to watch –

Brianna Throssell – UWA-West Coast, c: Michael Palfery

Swimming WA ambassador and World Record Holder, Brianna Throssell will have a heavy weekend of racing including the 100m and 200m Freestyle. Throssell, who played a pivotal part in Australia's World Record effort in the 4x200m Freestyle Relay at the 2019 FINA World Championships will be raring to go leading into a potential second Olympic berth. The Australian's will once again go into Tokyo as the red-hot favourites in the 4x100m and 4x200m Freestyle Relays, and given Throssell's form over past seasons, spectators may get an early view of an Olympic Gold Medallist in action. Also of note, Throssell has entered into the Women's 200m Butterfly, an event she swam in at the past 2016 Rio Olympics. Throssell's lifetime best would have seen her claim Gold at the 2019 FINA World Championships.



Ben Popham – Arena, c: Simon Redmond

One of Australia's best Para Swimmers will take to the water in many events throughout the Championships. Popham had a huge 2019, medalling at the IPC World Para Swimming Championships in London. Popham is set to race in his favoured 100m distance as he opens his campaign for 2020, a year full of possibility.

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Grant Irvine and Nicholas Brown – UWA-West Coast, c: Michael Palfery

Newly formed training partners and long-time competitors, Irvine and Brown will open their 2020 campaign competing side-by-side at this weekend’s Championship. Irvine, a 2016 Olympian will be aiming to start 2020 with a bang, as he zones in on the upcoming Olympics. Irvine, who swam strongly throughout 2019, is yet to swim close to his best times this season whereas Brown, who has been on the cusp of qualifying for the Australian team for a couple of seasons, looks to be in fantastic form and should see an epic showdown between the two. Both swimmers will compete in the 100m and 200m Butterfly, with the longer distance being their stronger event.

Holly Barratt – Rockingham, c: Will Scott

Fresh off a very successful international campaign at the recent International Swimming League (ISL) Grand Final in Las Vegas, Barratt is flying at the moment. Barratt has entered a range of events throughout the Championships, including the 50m and 100m Backstroke and 50m Butterfly which has seen her achieve success at swimings highest level. Additionally, Barratt has entered the 100m Freestyle which she has seen a major improvement over recent years, and with six relay spots up for grabs for this years Olympic Team, it will be worth keeping an eye on Barratt and her team as they approach Olympic Trials.



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MLC Aquatic – Nick Veliades

Melbourne based team, MLC Aquatic have sent a team spoilt with immense talent to compete in the upcoming Championships. Led by coach Veliades, swimmers such as David Schlicht, Noah Millard, and Gabriella Peiniger are all set to compete. Schlicht and Peiniger have won multiple Australian Championships and will not only thoroughly test WA’s best but also start their journey on the #roadtotokyo.

Kiah Melverton and Alice Stuart – TSS Aquatic, c: Chris Nesbit

Both Melverton and Stuart are currently in Perth for a training camp and will compete in the 2020 Hancock Prospecting WA Swimming Championships. Melverton is one of Australia’s most accomplished distance swimmers consistently winning medals on the international stage, Melverton has entered in her pet event the 800m Freestyle and should be a dominant display of talent and hard work. Stuart, who is predominantly a Butterflyer, will race local talent, Brianna Throssell in what should be some very exciting racing.



Blair Evans – UWA-West Coast, c: Will Scott

Two-time Olympian and Swimming WA superstar, Evans is aiming for her third Olympic Games. After fighting endless injuries, Evans has pushed through immense adversity and will race the 200m and 400m Individual Medley at this weekend’s Meet. It will be a great contest between Evans, local talents and the Australian Short Course Champion, Gabriella Peiniger.

Joshua Edwards-Smith – UWA-West Coast, c: Michael Shaw

One of Australia’s brightest up and comers, Edwards-Smith had a huge 2019 where he qualified for the Australian Junior Team and broke multiple Australian records, formerly held by Swimming Australia’s darling, Mitch Larkin. Edwards-Smith will compete throughout this weekend’s Competition and will provide excellent viewing as he goes head-to-head with Zac Incerti as well as seeing the youngster’s progression in the 200m Backstroke, which he is a dark-horse for Olympic selection.

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Ashton Brinkworth – UWA-West Coast, c: Michael Palfery

Brinkworth has managed to go from strength to strength and is now mixing it with the best sprint Freestylers in Australia. Brinkworth has entered the 50m, 100m and 200m Freestyle at this weekend’s Championships and will be very hard to beat. With six spots up for grabs on the Men’s Freestyle relay teams, you can’t help but feel optimistic about Brinkworth’s chances.

Jeremy McClure – South Shore, c: Chris Twomey

McClure has achieved almost everything there is to achieve in Swimming and is back for more. McClure has entered this weekend’s Meet and is set to compete in the 100m Freestyle and 100m Backstroke, both of which he competed in at the 2019 IPC World Para Swimming Championships. McClure is currently preparing to qualify for his 5th Paralympics, an incredible feat considering his first Paralympics were in 2004 when Joshua Edwards-Smith was only 1 year old.



Zac Incerti – UWA-West Coast, c: Michael Palfery

2018 Commonwealth Games team member, Incerti, is one of Australia’s best sprint backstrokers. Due to an unfortunate run with injuries, 2019 didn’t quite go to plan for the Broome local, however,

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he looks to be back with a vengeance. Incerti has entered the 100m and 200m Freestyle and the 100m Backstroke where he will showdown with his teammates, Ashton Brinkworth and Joshua Edwards-Smith.

Ben Roberts – Breakers, c: Bud McAllister

WA's distance king, Ben Roberts is one to watch throughout this weekend and leading into Olympic Trials. Roberts, who suffered an unfortunate loss at last years National Championships has been working harder than ever to rectify his loss and push forward to Australian Olympic Qualification. With several distance stars throughout Australia starting to develop, it will be incredibly interesting to see what Roberts can produce this weekend, in particular in his 1500m Freestyle.

George Harley – Breakers, c: Bud McAllister

One of the most talented breaststrokers in Australia, Harley has time and time again been able to produce magical efforts in the 200m Breaststroke. Harley has entered this weekend's Championships and will take to the water as the heavy favourite in the 100m and 200m Breaststroke. Unfortunately for Harley, two of the top three fastest Breaststrokers in the world represent Australia, however, that won't stop the Breakers star as he ramps up for a potential Olympic berth.



With all this action and much more, there is absolutely no reason to miss any action at the 2020 Hancock Prospecting WA Swimming Championships. The Meet will take place at HBF Stadium, beginning on Friday, 17 January and conclude on Sunday, 19 January with finals sessions starting at 6 pm. Tickets available at the door.

Let the games begin!

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