

A POOL FOR CARMEL HIGH

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Finally, Jake Rianda and Casey Delay got to dive into a real pool. Carmel High's new pool substantially larger than 'inadequate' old one. The two Carmel High School seniors and swim team co-captains spent the first three years of their high school aquatics careers in a 60-year-old, 4-foot-deep pool. But during their first events in Friday's season-opening meet against Monterey High School, Rianda, Delay and their teammates finally had a real, home pool -- and a big crowd of cheering parents and fans to help them break it in.

Though there remains work to be done on the new 16-lane pool with diving depth, the students couldn't have been happier. "It's amazing. I didn't think it was going to happen for my senior year," Delay said. "I wish it could have come sooner," Rianda said. "But at least it's here now. In the future, we will be able to build our program because of this pool, so we can compete with (schools like) Bellarmine and Gunn."

Their coaches, who have guided the Padres swim program for more than a decade, were equally enthusiastic. "It's a gem," girls head coach Diana Whitesides said. "All kinds of girls have come out who wouldn't have come out for sports. It has had all the expected effects." "This is our flagship," boys swim coach Conrad Kohrs said. "All aboard the flagship. We've been looking forward to this forever. Now there's a home for Carmel-based swimmers."

The pool was purchased and donated to the school by Mike and Dia Rianda, parents of Jake and his younger brother, Travis -- also a Carmel High swimmer. The Riandas bought it for about \$425,000 from the Indiana Sports Corp., which used it for the 2004 FINA World Swimming Championships, and donated it to the school district.

"It makes a huge difference," Mike Rianda said. "This is the most people we've had at a meet."

In addition to \$3.4 million in school district bond funds and the Riandas' donation, the Friends of Carmel Aquatics raised about \$230,000 to help pay for the pool. According to longtime coach and FOCA founding member Ed

Sigourney, the organization hopes to raise about \$170,000 more to help buy diving boards, scoreboards and lane markers.

Information on FOCA's efforts are available on its Web site at www.carmelpool.org.

A grand opening and dedication for the pool will be held April 27, before a meet against league rival Pacific Grove. The pool will be named in honor of legendary swim coach Bob Walthour.