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OLYMPICS | U.S. SWIM TRIALS

Crete swims his best to finish 40th



Crete

It was a little less than a month ago that Ryan Crete of the Sarasota Family YMCA Sharks program earned his cutoff time for the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Swimming Trials' 400-meter freestyle event.

The 20-year-old Crete, a University of Florida junior and former Herald-Tribune Boys Swimmer of the Year from Riverview High School, qualified for the competition in 3:59.15.

Crete was seeded 55th out of 74 entries at the sold-out 14,000-seat Qwest Center Omaha in Omaha, Neb., on Sunday.

Crete produced the swim of his career in the pool built by Sarasota-based Myrtha Pools U.S.A. as he finished second in his heat in a lifetime best performance of 3:57.84 that placed him 40th overall during the preliminaries.

Crete was out-touched at the wall by heat winner James Robertson of the Texas

Longhorn Aquatic Swim Team, who placed 30th in 3:56.93.

"I'm very happy with it," Crete said several hours later as he and his Sharks teammates prepared to watch the evening's finals. "I went out pretty fast with it and I brought it home in the final two 100s after being a little soft in the second 100."

American record-holder Peter Vanderkaay, a 24-year-old from Club Wolverine in Michigan and teammate of Michael Phelps, finished first in Crete's event in 3:48.06.

The top 2 finishers in each Trials event automatically make the U.S. Olympic Swimming Team for the 2008 Summer Games in Beijing.

Those who finish third through sixth place will be eligible to become part of the various relay teams for the competition in China.

Crete previously has competed in big-time meets, but none compared to Sunday's experience that didn't leave him much time to be nervous.

"It's hard to be nervous," said Crete, who wore a newly designed Speedo LVR suit for the first time. "After you warm up like you always do, they (officials) take you downstairs to a ready room 15 minutes before your race. Then, they bring you back upstairs in order of your lane assignments, parade you onto the deck to the blocks and then you're ready to go at it.

"What an experience, especially in front of all those people. Now, I'm going to keep training and be ready for the mile (on Saturday). This is the fastest pool I've been in. I like it a lot."

Sharks Corinne Showalter and Ashlee Linn will make their Trials debuts today when they compete in the 400-meter freestyle and 100-backstroke, respectively.

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