

CHAPTER 56

Muir swimming after the Richards era

Another 'purple patch' for Muir swimming bloomed in the mid-nineteen-eighties. At the **1984** EP championships Muir's U/14 swimmers were particularly successful; Michael Carter and Stephen Canter were selected for EP Schools. At the EP Schools Relay Gala at the Newton Park pool Muir finished second behind Grey, but the Muir boys turned the tables on a powerful Grey team at the Kingswood gala. The U/14 boys made a clean sweep of their division at this event, and won all six of the events once again at the annual Grey Gala. The Muir Inter-House gala was the highlight, with each race being keenly contested. Four records were broken, all by the U/14 boys; it was clear that this age group were on a swimming mission.

Muir won the Kingswood Gala in **1985**, defeating the very strong Grey and St Andrew's teams. Selections for the EP teams in the 1984-5 season were M Carter, D Carter, X Demay, D Canter, H Slack and K van Tonder; the latter broke the 1968 record in the U/16 100 metres Breaststroke set by Kevin Galloway. An occasion of singular significance in **1986** was the **Clift Cup being won by Muir for the first time in at least twenty years**. This U/16 team were represented by H Slack, K van Tonder, M Carter and D Canter. Slack was in the EP Schools team for the SA Schools Swimming Championships, while M Carter, D Carter, D Canter and X Demay represented EP at inter-provincial galas. In the 1986-7 season, H Slack represented the EP Schools team while K van Tonder was selected for the EP Senior side. Hilton Slack represented EP Schools yet again in 1988 and 1989, breaking one of Springbok Kevin Richards's school records in 1989. Since the move to the Vanes Estate campus in January 1987 swimmers did without the advantage of the public 50 metre pool being within easy



reach of the school, and swimming tended in the case of many boys to 'play second fiddle' to water polo. A new 25 metre pool was taken into use in 1990, a development that could only be of benefit to aquatic sports at Muir College.

1st swimming team 1989 (above)

**Standing L to R: R. Botten, J. van Rooyen, G. Baker, W. Dickson, J. Houghton, P. Frew
Seated L to R: P. McCarthy, H. Slack, Mr K.M. Watson, A. Wynne, C. Bischoff**



The new pool, situated next to the gym hall complex

In **1992**, a time when swimming and water polo fixtures still clashed and most boys gave preference to 'polo, A Bakker was selected for the EP Schools swimming team. Fortunately this clash was set to be resolved the following year. In **1994** Martin-John Lambert was Victor Ludorum at the EP trials and was selected as captain of the Provincial team that participated in the National Championships in Cape Town, where he won bronze in one of the U/14 events. Joining him in the Provincial team later on to compete against Transvaal and Border were Mark Pearce and Daven Raepsaet. At senior level, three Muir swimmers, I Smith, C Jooste and S Bray gained EP colours. This was no mean feat during a period when priority was still being given to water polo. Season after season the first water polo teams were winning all three trophies in the EP league. More EP selections were achieved in the years leading up to the new millennium.

A highlight of the **2000** season was Dane Leo's representing South Africa in Sydney, Australia, at the Pacific School Games in April, and the EP U/16A team in Durban. Five swimmers excelled at the SA Junior Open nationals in March: Lawson, Raepsaet, Eckley, Leo and Smith finished 3rd overall on points out of 23 clubs. A new swimming star in the making was **Philip Kuhn**, who in **2001** broke the EP record in the U/14 200 metre Freestyle, and was crowned Victor Ludorum at the High Schools Swimming Championships. He went on to claim 2 gold medals at the SA Prestige Gala held in Bloemfontein. Kuhn, crowned the U/14 EP Champion of the year in 2001, broke the 400 metre Freestyle record by 5 seconds at the Junior National Championships. His compatriot Dale Leo was selected to represent the Eastern Cape team at the SA Games in Pretoria.



Philip Kuhn

Swimmers of quality kept 'surfacing' at Muir: in **2003** Jason Camons reached 3 finals in the South African Championships held in Bloemfontein, receiving ribbons for the 200 and 400 metre Freestyle events and the 200 metre Individual Medley. He was certainly a stand-out swimmer in **2004**; in the EP High School Championships he came first in the U/16 100 and 200 metre Freestyle and represented EP at the High Schools gala in Cape Town. In the Redhouse River Mile he was placed 7th overall. In nine galas, including the EP Championships and club galas he received 3 gold, 12 silver and 21 bronze medals. **2005** saw Ryan Hatting and Calvin Gillmer being selected for EP in the Summer Games in the 4th term of 2004, and Ryan again being selected in October 2005. Jason Camons, chosen for EP at the National High Schools Championships in Durban in March 2005, came first in the 50 and 100 metre Freestyle races and the 200 metre Freestyle for boys U/16 – a great result indeed. D Meyer represented SA Schools in **2008**, and in **2009** three provincial swimmers, Nizaam Kafaar and the Basson twins, Alaric and Alard, were also selected for the EP and SA swimming teams. At the same time, however, Muir swimming's focus was turning increasingly to 'B' League and 'Top 8' competitions.