



Well it's hard to believe that the Deaflympics are already over, but the overall experience has been nothing short of incredible. I travelled for 40 hours with the Australian team to Samsun, a small city beside the Black Sea in Turkey. In total, there were 3,148 deaf athletes from 97 different countries competing across 21 different sports. My most memorable moment was the exhilarating experience of walking at the Opening Ceremony with 30,000 people cheering you on enthusiastically. It was overwhelming, and I felt very proud wearing the green and gold representing Australia.

I qualified to compete in Turkey in 5 events; 50, 100 and 200m Breaststroke and two Mixed Relays (4 x 100m Freestyle & Medley Relays). On the first day of the swimming competition, I raced in the Relays and we came 12th. After the relays I swam in the 50m Breaststroke and while I did not swim a personal best, I was still grateful to have the opportunity to compete.

On the second day of competition, I became extremely ill and was sent to the hospital. Over the four days that I was sick, I had to withdraw from two events – the 200m Breaststroke and the Medley Relay. I set myself one last goal, and that was to compete in my favorite event regardless of my circumstances and to give it my best shot. I recovered in time to compete, however unfortunately I lost my balance on the starting block for a millisecond and was automatically disqualified. While I was disappointed at the results, I am grateful that I had the opportunity to compete, and make a ton of lifetime new friends from various countries.

Overall, it has been once in a lifetime experience (aside from the sickness!) and it really does put things in perspective how life doesn't always go according to plan. I am now back into training and preparing for next event - the World Deaf Swimming Championships in 2019 in South Africa (this is still to be confirmed). As for the next Deaflympics in 2021, the hosting country will be confirmed at the end of the year (both Dubai and Los Angeles have put forward bids). Thank-you all for your support and I look forward to continuing my training at Surrey Park. On a last note, please join me in welcoming another member of the Deaflympics swimming team to Surrey Park – Monique Beckwith. Over in Turkey, she swam exceptionally well and made two finals coming 8th and 7th respectively in 200m and 400m Freestyle events.

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