

## Making their own waves



photograph by Lisa Ventre

Seventy-five swimmers from as far away as Nigeria came to UC in May to participate in the largest Paralympic meet hosted in the U.S., the 6th Annual [Greater Toledo Aquatic Club Disability Open](#). Seventeen members of the U.S. Paralympic team competed in the event and served as mentors for 26 swimmers under age 18 also competing at their own levels, like Anna Amend, 10, and Jessica Rogers, 12, pictured here from the left.

"We provide the first stepping stones to world-class swimming for them," says Keith Kennedy, Bus '97, [US National Paralympic](#) coach, GTAC head coach and former swim team captain for the Bearcats. "When I look at these kids, I just see kids. I don't see disability. They are really appreciative of that."

The swimmers are taught to compete against themselves rather than each other, he says. "They're racing against the clock, trying to achieve their personal best."

They weren't the only ones. Among the professional athletes in attendance, one world record, 12 American records and five Pan Am records were set at the meet.

Those who wish to witness such record-breaking competition for themselves should pencil in next year's meet, already scheduled for May 15-16, 2010, at UC's Aquatic Center.

"This event showcases not only the campus, but how nice the people at UC really are," Kennedy says.

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<http://www.magazine.uc.edu/1009/infocus2.htm>