



Champs making a splash

Big names in for MS swim

By MIKE GANDON

WOLLONGONG elite triathlete Ben Allen and champion swimmer Robert Hurley will join more than 150 swimmers at Wollongong's first 24-hour Mega Swim this weekend to raise funds for people living with multiple sclerosis.

Allen, who has just returned from a gruelling three week altitude training stint at Falls Creek, will swim with the University of Wollongong Recreation and Aquatic Centre (URAC) team while Hurley will join his Wests Illawarra Aquatic Club and McKeon's Swim School colleagues at the event.

It will be the first time such a swim has been held in the Illawarra. Teams with up to 15 members will swim laps over 24 hours at the URAC pool with points awarded for every 500m completed.

Allen, 26, who is aiming for a

medal at the 2012 London Olympics is a strong supporter of the 24-hour Mega Swim.

"We have a close friend of the family who has MS and we are hoping to raise a lot of money on the day to help people like her who are living with MS," he said.

"It will be a fun event. People with MS go through a lot harder situations than I do every day."

At Falls Creek, Allen trained for more than six hours a day with other elite athletes.

Early next month he will compete in the Oceanic Championships at Wellington in New Zealand and also hopes for a start at the World Series triathlon in Sydney on April 10 before heading for Europe.

For the past two years Allen has been racing in Europe with the French triathlon team. Besaneon.

Hurley is back in training after the disappointment of having to

withdraw from the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games because of illness and will be swimming in the national championships in six weeks with the aim of qualifying for the world titles in China in July.

Hurley has thrown his support behind the 24-hour Mega Swim and said people could either swim or donate money towards a team as part of the fundraising.

"From what I've heard MS can hit you quickly whether you are a young person or an older person," Hurley said.

"It degenerates quality of life pretty quickly. So it's a good cause to be raising money for and supporting.

"I encourage everyone to get to the pool to have a swim or just to watch and encourage other swimmers."

Visit www.megaswim.com



Good cause: Champion swimmer Robert Hurley will join more than 150 swimmers at Wollongong's first 24-hour Mega Swim this weekend.