

Olivia laps up gene pool

Swimming pedigree runs in the family

By Paul Haigh

THE swimming pedigree flows through the bloodlines of Olivia Halicek and her family.

Olivia is maintaining the tradition of swimming talent handed down in the “gene pool” from her mother, Wendy, who represented Australia at the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982 and was a finalist in the 100 metres breaststroke.

Olivia’s uncles were also national level swimmers.

Halicek, 19, harbours ambition to also represent Australia.

Olivia now wants to create her own “tidal wave” of achievement.

“I want to qualify at the selection trials for the Beijing Olympics next year,” Halicek said.

Halicek, 19, is coached by Justin Rothwell at the Whitlam Centre, Liverpool.

She followed Rothwell across to Liverpool after he previously coached her at the Bradbury and Macquarie Fields pools.

The coach and swimmer professional relationship is a good fit, according to the lithe swimmer.

“I swim well under Justin’s coaching,” Halicek said.

“He is a very good coach, he communicates well with you as a swimmer.

“Justin creates the right environment for all the swimmers to do well.”

Halicek is in Melbourne this week to swim at the national short course titles where she will swim in the 50 metre freestyle events.

This year, Halicek competed at the national titles in Perth where she finished with silver and bronze medals in the 50 metres and 100 metres freestyle open age races.

Halicek also swims the breaststroke event.

She trains six days a week working on her swim style and technique coupled with three tough gym sessions.

The articulate teenager, who has overcome asthma to excel in her chosen sport, has also embarked on new dimension with her swimming.

“I use the Ventolin if I need it, but over the years the swimming has helped with my asthma,” Halicek said.

“I am doing some coaching with the younger swimmers in the squads.

“Doing the coaching has given me a new perspective and different insight into swimming. To be honest I didn’t see myself doing any coaching before.”

To remove herself mentally from the grind of competition and training, the Olympic aspirant enjoys cooking.

“I did home sciences at school and I like to cook,” Halicek said.

Coach Justin Rothwell believes the best is yet to come for Halicek.

“Olivia has awesome speed off the blocks in her races,” Rothwell said. “With her coaching she is passing on her knowledge and skills for the junior swimmers in the squads.”



Talent pool: Olivia Halicek in her coaching role, left, resting after a swim training session, above, and showing her charges new strokes.

Pictures: Elliott Housego

Brookes chases new contract for 2008

JOSH Brookes, the Bringelly rider competing in the World Supersport Championship, is poised to sign a new contract for 2008.

Brookes signed with the Stiggy Motorsport Honda Team a few months ago, after leaving the Alto

Evolution racing team.

Brookes finished fifth in his first race with his new team at Brno in the Czech Republic in July.

Brookes was then forced to withdraw from the next race at Brands Hatch race in England on August 5

with mechanical trouble.

His Melbourne-based manager, Dieter Kahsnitz, will fly to Britain next week to meet with his charge to negotiate a contact for next year.

“Josh has been training in Britain with a British superbike team doing

motocross,” he said.

“Josh is working very hard, he’s in bed at 9pm because he is tired from all the training. Josh is hell bent on doing his best for the remainder of the season.

“In a couple of weeks we hope to

finalise a new contract for next year.

“We are talking to a couple of the big teams.”

The 24-year-old will next race at Lausitzring in Germany, on Sunday, September 9 in round 13 of this year’s 15-race series.