

Peel Biography: ALEXANDER

Alexander welcomes return

By JEFF PASQUALE
Special

There's been a great furor recently regarding the decision of former synchronized swimming stars Sylvie Frechette and Peggy and Vicki Vilagos to come out of retirement.

But the way Mississauga's Lisa Alexander sees it, anything that will help Canada win an Olympic gold medal is welcome.

Alexander, currently the top synchro swimmer in the nation, is almost assured a spot on the Canadian synchro team for the 1996 Olympics.

Unlike past Olympics, only the eight-member team event will be



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contested at the Games.

The Canadian Championships are being held at Etobicoke

Olympium from May 6-15, and will also serve as the first step on the road to the Olympic team. The top 35 swimmers will be invited to an Olympic trials camp immediately following the nationals.

Must prove themselves

"Just because those girls are coming out of retirement doesn't mean they'll automatically have a spot on the team," said Alexander, who will be representing Canada at the Pan Am Games in March in Argentina, competing in both the single and duet event.

"They're going to have to prove, like everyone else, that they're in top notch physical condition and

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of former synchro stars

deserve a spot on the team."

More philosophically, Alexander doesn't have any problem with their return.

"You can't tell people when to retire from sports, from competing. If they're good enough, then more power to them."

Alexander also doesn't think it would be a problem bringing together several top stars to compete in team events.

"The first thing any of us ever swam in was the team event," said

Alexander. "It's the staple of our sport and it shouldn't be a problem putting together a strong team."

At the World Aquatic Championships held in the summer, Canada finished second in the team event to the United States. Japan and Russia were close behind.

"It used to be that Canada and the U.S. were head and shoulders above everybody else, then came Japan on another level and then

came all the other countries. Now there is real parity in the sport and at any given event and country can take home the gold," said Alexander.

"If the addition of Sylvie and the Vilagos twins helps Canada win the gold medal, then I'm all for it."

Alexander's partner at the Pan Ams for the duet competition will be Erin Woodley, who lives in Etobicoke but attends Erindale Secondary School.