

# Swimmers ranked among the best

By NORMAN CANNADA

Success is important to every athlete. It's a good feeling for one to know that they are doing well in their sport. The feeling can be even better if they're ranked among the best.

Four UNC swimmers know what that feeling is like. The four—Sue Walsh, Gayle Hegel, Sue Scott and Eric Ericson—are all world ranked in their events. Ericson is currently ranked 16th in the 100-meter backstroke, while Hegel is the ninth-rated swimmer in the 200-meter individual medley. Walsh and Scott are fourth and fifth respectively in the 50-meter freestyle. Walsh is ranked fifth in the world in the 100-meter backstroke and 13th in the 200-meter backstroke.

The rankings are compiled each year by *Swimming World* a magazine that Walsh calls "the *Sports Illustrated* of swimming." The ratings are based on the times a swimmer sets in a year.

Swimming is an unusual sport in that many of the top performers in the world are at the high school and college age. This is especially true for women.

"With the girls, I think they tend to burn out quicker," Hegel said. "They start to date more and have other interests. It's more macho for men to keep swimming after college."

Hegel, Ericson and Scott all traveled with a team representing the United States in a European tour last month. Hegel, a junior, said the hardest thing that she had to accept

an event. That was in 1978 when she was the top swimmer in the 100-meter backstroke.

"I think it's just starting to hit me now," Walsh said. "But, in a way it gives me incentive to be number one again. It's something I know I can do."

Walsh has been ranked among the world's top swimmers since she was 16 years old. She said that the ratings caused a lot of headaches with college recruiters.

"I got a lot of offers. They seemed to be calling all the time. It was pretty aggravating."

With a world ranking in three events, one might think that the 1984 Olympics would be foremost in Walsh's mind right now, but that isn't the case at all.

"The rankings are just a list of names unless you swim in the Olympics and finish in the top three or so," Walsh said. "But, I try not to think about the Olympics. That's two years away. My interest might change."

Unlike Walsh and Hegel, Ericson was ranked this past year for the first time.

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Sue Walsh  
... world ranked

## ON SPORTS

was that she was older than most of the other swimmers.

"I think I'm getting old as far as a swimmer goes," she said. "In a way I'm slowly starting to burn out."

Hegel remembers her first world ranking in 1979.

"It didn't dawn on me as anything big, but a lot of people started coming up to me and telling me how good I was. It is kind of nice to see my name up there."

Walsh is the only current UNC swimmer to have ever been ranked first in the world in

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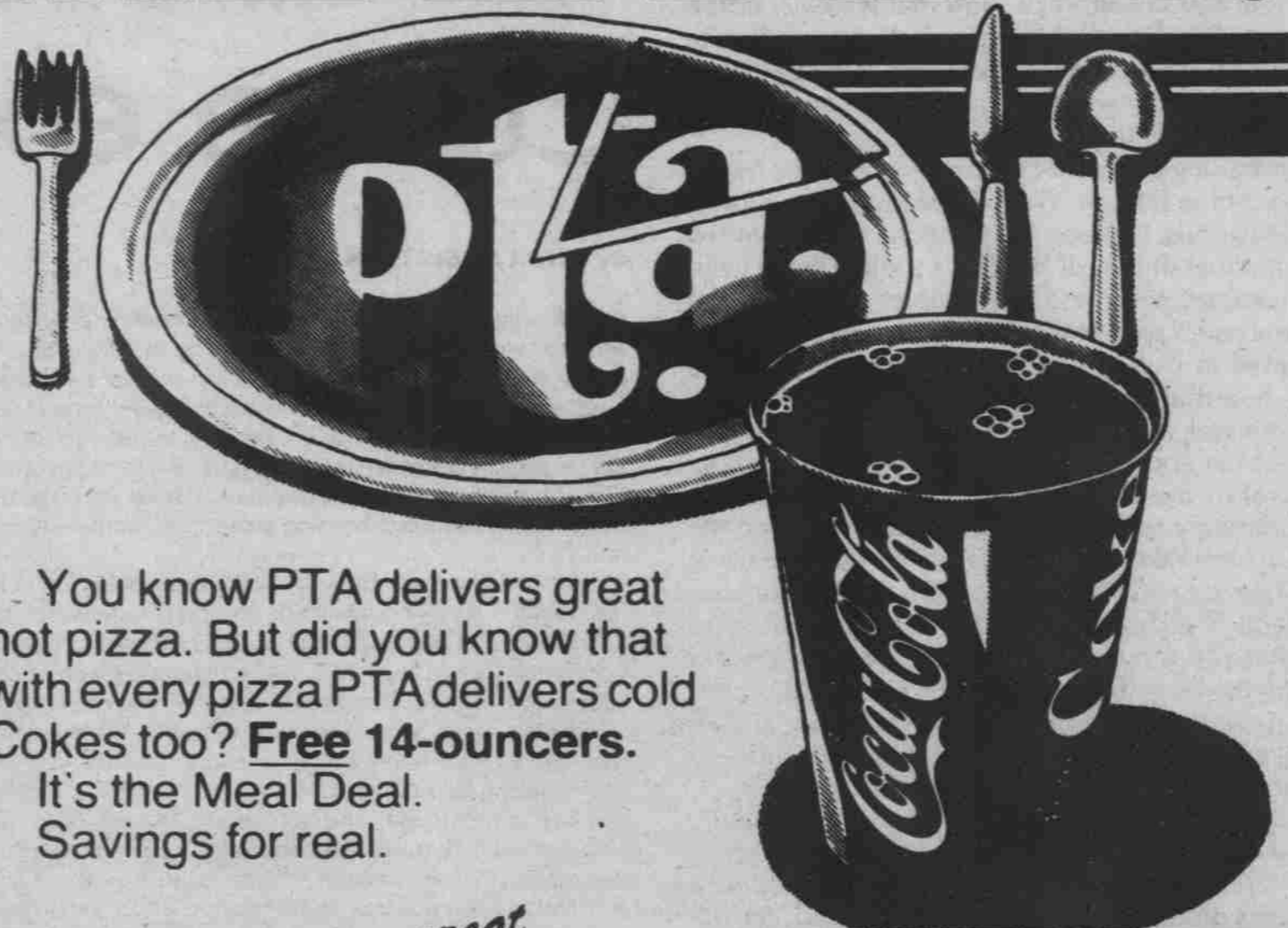
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