

SWIMMING

Perfect 10 as super Stark smashes adversaries

Brent O'Neill

AS THE sporting world jumps from one controversy to the next, an inspirational, against-the-odds story is continuing for 13-year-old Matthew Stark.

Matthew works under former Paralympic coach Brendan Keogh at Genesis

Aquatics and the international scene is where he'll end up if he keeps his progress going.

The Albany Creek State High School student has overcome more obstacles than most would in a lifetime.

Born with mild spastic cerebral palsy, Matthew is re-

fusing to let his disability hold him back in the pool.

At the Queensland Multi-Class Swimming Championships in Brisbane last month, the Albany Creek State High School student finished with an amazing haul of 10 gold medals from as many events.

It was just the first step on

what Matthew hopes will be a long journey to the top of the sport.

"I absolutely love swimming, hopefully I can go to the 2020 Paralympics. I've always had that dream to one day represent my country," Matthew said.

"At the end of the meet I was just so happy with

myself that I did such great times."

Matthew will attend the Australian Age Multi-Class Championships in April.

His wins came in the 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m freestyle; 50m and 100m breaststroke; 50m and 100m backstroke; 50m butterfly and 200m individual medley.



Junior swimmer Matthew Stark. Picture: RUSSELL BROWN