

TRENT

Trentswimming.com

PO Box 124, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 6Y5

President's Message

- Robert Brown

Happy New Year everyone!

With several meets coming up, it makes sense to overview what a meet is about. Swim meets are organized by clubs for many different reasons from performance to fundraising.

Likewise we attend meets for different objectives; training opportunities, team competitions and/or for individual performances. Our coaching staff can provide insight as why we are attending any individual meet.

Fundamentally, swimming is about racing and meets provide the opportunity to race. The objective is to swim fast for each and every event and personal best times (PBs) are the obvious measure. A novice swimmer will see PB's at most meets, while it is quite normal for older swimmers not to get a PB in an event, or even an entire meet.

Meets are about learning and improving how to race, swimmers are learning to compete. Ultimately a swimmer learns something each time they stand on the blocks; race technique, competition, emotions and many other life skills.

Another side of meets are the parent responsible and team meets. For the former the parent is responsible for getting the swimmer to the meet on time, accommodations, food, sleeping, behaviour and everything else related to the meet.

A team meet helps to foster the team environment. In this case, we have chaperones that take on the responsibility for the swimmer's transportation, food, bedtime, behaviour and the normal ups and down you encounter with a large group of kids.

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Coaches' Corner

- Sean Dwyer

Welcome to a new year and the championship part of the Short Course season. We have some exciting meets on the horizon. We have Ontario Cup and the Jesse Coward Winterlude meet in the very near future. A few weeks later we have the Huronia Region Short Course Championships. This year they will be run as preliminaries and finals for 13 and over. After that we have the second Development meet of the season, which is being run by the Lindsay Swim Team. For those that do not qualify for Junior Provincials, we have the BDO Challenge hosted by Owen Sound in Guelph. This meet is prelims and finals for 13 and over. Junior Provincials follow in Nepean and finally Spring Short Course Nationals in Toronto. This year, Spring Nationals will serve as a qualifier for the World Student Games and for Canada Games. Our swimmers are looking very good in the pool both in respect to technique and speed. We are all looking forward to some fast championship swimming!

I also wanted to briefly share some of the details with the club on the Ontario Tour team that Cynthia and I attended in December. Last summer Cynthia Pammatt performed well enough in the long course season to be named to the Swim Ontario Tour Team to compete at the Paul Bergen International swim meet. In fact she was ranked high enough that I was selected to be one of three coaches named to the Team Ontario coaching staff. The other coaches were Alan Swanston of Newmarket (coach of Lindsay Seemann – 2008 Olympic Team) and Bill O'Toole of COBRA (has coached swimmers to previous Olympics). Both of these gentlemen have been coaching for close to thirty years.

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Presidents Message Continued...

Swimming is special with an entire range of swimmers can be at the same meet. Males, females of all ages and ability, train and race together.

You may think of swimming as an individual sport, but there is also a team component. Points are awarded to each swim team for their swimmers' placing. It is a measure of the team's strength on the total points collected. A team needs a full slate of swimmers in every age category doing well in many events to be successful. Relays are awarded the most points and are always an exciting as a fundamental element of the team competition.

Speaking of team meets, there is a wonderful opportunity to help out the team. I think everyone has seen Kathryn's email seeking chaperones. I can tell you from personal experience it is quite an undertaking. Similar to raising kids, it will exhaust and frustrate you, but you will love it. It is immensely rewarding whether the swimmers ever realize what you have done for them. However, you have to be fast – chaperone spots fill up quickly.

If you are not in a position to chaperone, here is a quick overview of the etiquette.

- Review the code of conduct with your swimmers prior to putting them on the bus. They should have fun at the meet, but chaperones should not have to stand in the hallway all night. Read the riot act to them, whatever it takes.
- Be on time for departure and arrival. There is nothing worse than having to wait 40 minutes at 2:00A.M. after an entire weekend chaperoning.
- Swimmers wear the team colours – sent them with the proper suit and cap colours. We are a Team!
- Read the information from the chaperones and understand what meals are looked after and which are not. On deck food will not be supplied and other meals may be your responsibility. Ensure that they have adequate funds to purchase their meals and ensure they understand what is appropriate to order. If your child has special or fussy eating habits, send them with their own food.

If you happen to be at a team meet keep in mind that the chaperones have no freedom. They cannot leave the pool or the hotel without taking a posse of kids. Likewise, the coaches are typically on deck for the entire day. There are often errands to run, such as shuttling a sick swimmer back to hotel or picking up the next meal, or just getting a real coffee.

So please offer your assistance, or bring them a coffee. Whether they drink it or not they will appreciate it. (It is also a tradition that the coaches receive a coffee.)

Be a member-at-large!

Coaches Comments continued...

For Cynthia, the club, and me this was a great opportunity. Not only would I be working with two coaches who have coached Olympians, I would also be working directly with and observing some of Ontario's best up and coming swimmers seventeen and under. Cynthia also would be getting coaching feedback on her technique and racing strategies from two world-class coaches. The benefit to the club, as a result of this learning experience, is that both Cynthia and I would bring new information back to the club.

This is all good in theory, but how did it work in reality?

As it turns out both coaches really like to share their ideas, thoughts, philosophies and everything else. In the twelve hours of flight time that I spent sitting beside Bill, we probably spent about 6-8 hours discussing his program. The topics included sprint training, strength training, training underwater fly kick, training kick, training anaerobic capacity and training for middle distance.

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Coaches Comments continued...

We also covered some administration subjects and spent some time on the structure of his club. In the five days that I roomed with Alan, Alan and I discussed training sets for middle distance and distance training, pace work, anaerobic sets. He also showed me some videos of Lindsay's training and skill work while at the Olympic camp in Singapore. We discussed working with parents, working with different age groups, club structure, dryland training and the skills/characteristics that a Canadian coach would need to take their swimmers to a level to be able to really compete with the rest of the swimming world. Our downtime between sessions and in the evening was mostly spent sitting in the hotel lobby or in one of the rooms discussing training/coaching, the national program, their early years as head coaches and their experiences swimming at the national level.

As far as coaching went, each coach was assigned six swimmers to work with on the first day of the meet. The groups of swimmers would then rotate to a different coach each day, so that by the end of the meet each coach had worked with all eighteen swimmers. For the coaches there was the challenge of giving useful feedback and race strategies to swimmers that we had never worked with before. It meant that we were pushed to adapt quickly. It also meant that we got to observe some different, but high level stroke technique and racing strategies in all four strokes. For the swimmers, they had to adapt to different coaches, with different ideas (in some cases). They got some feedback not only on technique, but also on some new things that they could try in training. An added bonus was that Germany and France brought their Youth National Teams to the meet to compete, so in a meet of 300 swimmers I had the chance to observe top swimmers display their technique, racing strategies, and in some cases weaknesses from four countries and how a product of our competitive program stood up to them!

Both Cynthia and I returned home quite excited to share what we have learned with the other coaches and swimmers. I have already started to try out/implement some of the things that I have picked up. After all is said and done, I feel that I got more education from this tour team than most of the coaching conferences that I've been to over the past ten years. My only thought is that I would like even more of our swimmers to get named to these teams. I see the talent on our team and I know that we can have more named to those teams.

Mark your Calendar

Jan 17-18 – Ontario Cup

Jan 17-18 – Winterlude

Jan 20 – Board Meeting

Jan 31-Feb 1 – Huronia Regional Short Course Championships

Feb 8th – Development Meet #2

Feb 26th – Mar 1 – Junior Provincials

Mar 11-14 – Spring Nationals

March 16-22 – March Break

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Swimmers of the Month

Senior

Jasmin Gow – Jasmin put together a pretty awesome December. At the Lisa Flood Classic in Pickering she qualified for Junior and Senior Provincials in the 50, 100 and 400 free. While doing so she also posted 100% best times! Throughout the month of December Jasmin maintained perfect attendance and had a number of very good practices. Way to go Jasmin!

Junior

Mary Coughlin – Mary has been progressing quite nicely in her training and racing. She has been doing a very good job of working on her technical skills and in pushing herself harder on the more intense training sets. This seems to have paid off for her at Pickering where she had 80% best times. Mary also maintained perfect attendance for the month of December. Lets keep up the good work and build on it Mary!

AG – 3

Hailley Guthrie - Hailley had a great month in December; she qualified for Junior Provincials in the 100-meter backstroke (1:25.67) at the Lisa Flood Christmas Classic in Pickering. She also took off more than 20 seconds off in her 400 freestyle at the meet in Pickering; she had best times in the two previously mentioned events as well as the 200 freestyle and 100 butterfly. Hailley also had 100% attendance for the month of December; in fact, Hailley has not missed a practice since the season began. Hailley also does an excellent job of applying feedback to improve her stroke mechanics. In addition to working to improve her stroke mechanics and speed, Hailley is continually working to improve her underwater kick and streamlining / speed off walls. Congratulations Hailley and keep up the great work!

AG – 2

Eric Laing - Eric was the only swimmer in his group to maintain 100% attendance for the month of December. Also, at the Lisa Flood Christmas Classic Eric had 100% best times. He took more than 17 seconds off his 400 freestyle and more than 5 seconds off his 100 butterfly. Eric also had best times in the 100 backstroke, 100 breaststroke, 200 IM, and 50 breaststroke. Since the season began Eric's focus has really improved; he is doing a great job at applying feedback to improve his stroke mechanics and speed. Just prior to the New Year Eric was moved up into the AG-3 group and is doing a great job. Congratulations Eric and keep up the great work!

AG - 1

Melissa Beauchamp - Congratulations to Melissa Beauchamp for being swimmer of the month. She works extremely hard in practice setting goals for herself and helping others achieve their own goals. Melissa has shown determination to improve her swimming, especially her freestyle. This has paid off with the completion of her first 400FR at the Lindsay development meet. Her focus and leadership have been improving steadily throughout the season, she is challenging herself in workouts and constantly working towards new goals. I am very excited to see what other swimming Melissa will do this season. Keep up the good work!!!!

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Character Development and Life Skills – USA Swimming

- Sean Dwyer

This season the coaching staff will be implementing some Long Term Athlete Development Strategy material borrowed from USA Swimming. USA Swimming has come up with eight levels related to Character Development and Life Skills. While these levels fit in very well with competitive swimming, the traits/habits/behaviours also lend themselves well to functioning in the world outside of swimming. Each newsletter, we will include two levels. At the very least, this should provide a framework to work from and some interesting insight into the top swimming nation in the world. We have also developed a checklist and if a swimmer wishes, the coaching staff can provide an evaluation on each level.

Level 7

Championship Behavior and Accountability

1. The swimmer demonstrates leadership responsibilities by working with younger swimmers (e.g. talking with them, water work).
2. The swimmer understands the importance of seasonal, yearly and quadrennial planning and the consistency of the plan within each of the cycles.
3. The swimmer will recognize the effects of poor communication.

Work Ethic and Self-Discipline

1. The swimmer takes pride in doing the little things well and goes beyond the call of duty.
2. The swimmer demonstrates self-motivation
3. The swimmer demonstrates an understanding and willingness to participate in drug-testing procedures.

Level 8

Championship Behavior and Accountability

1. The swimmer understands the relationship of seasonal, yearly and quadrennial planning and works with the coach in establishing priorities.
2. The swimmer recognizes the importance of communicating with the media.
3. The swimmer accepts and appreciates the responsibilities and benefits of being an ambassador of swimming by participating in public speaking, interviews, autograph sessions, etc.

Work Ethic and Self-Discipline

1. The swimmer demonstrates consistent, high quality performance in training.
2. The swimmer can manage setbacks so they don't interfere with long-range goals.
3. The swimmer submits to drug testing without refusal.
4. The swimmer will consistently make choices that positively affect training performance.
5. The swimmer will actively participate in antidrug programs (e.g., leading by example, public speaking).