



# The Blazer Newsletter

## KANSAS CITY BLAZERS SWIM TEAM

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



Eternal Loyalty

Passion Education

Discipline Dedication

Commitment Leadership

Excellence

June 2009 Edition

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### 2008-2009 Season Remaining Volunteer Opportunities

Below is a list of volunteer opportunities that are available to help fulfill any outstanding volunteer hours not yet completed for this swim season. Take advantage of these today!

- Shawnee Mission Triathlon – July 12 (contact [jeff.branton@ticketsolutions.com](mailto:jeff.branton@ticketsolutions.com) to volunteer)
- Division 1 – July 31 – Aug 2 Watch for sign ups on the website.
- Special offer for D1's only: Volunteers for Hospitality, Concessions, Set-up and Clean-up will be given DOUBLE HOURS.

### Inside This Edition

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### New Officials Coordinator Needed

Brad Bond will be stepping down at the end of the summer in order to assume two new positions. Brad has recently been appointed to the Missouri Valley Swimming Board of Directors as Vice-Chair and has also been appointed to the KC Blazer Board of Directors as Vice-Chair. The Kansas City Blazers would like thank Brad for his continued valuable contributions to our sport and to our organization!

With Brad accepting these new positions, the Kansas City Blazers is in need of a new Officials Coordinator. While you may think that this task could be to daunting; with the great response of our officials, addition of the radios, the increased number of referees, and the addition of another trainer, this job has become much easier to perform. The position has actually become more of a team effort than an individual job with the primary duties being email requests/reminders and clinic scheduling.

Please know that this position is for any level of official OR even a parent that IS NOT an official. Do not feel that you need to be a referee to do this job. It was a sheer coincidence that Brad became a referee the same year he took the position over. So if you are a non-official parent that thinks this would be good at this position for you to look into taking over, please do not hesitate to contact Brad Bond for more information. You can e-mail Brad at [bdrbond1@aol.com](mailto:bdrbond1@aol.com) for more information. Brad will also be at the Columbia meet at MU this coming weekend (June 19-21) if you'd like to discuss the position with him in person.

A Speedo Sponsored Team



## Welcome Aboard New Coaches!

### New Blue Valley North Head Site Coach

The Kansas City Blazers are excited to announce that this fall Marjorie Sherard will be joining the KCB staff as the new Head Site Coach for the Blue Valley North location. Marjorie has been affiliated with the Blazers since 1979 when she began swimming with the Blazers (yes, Pete was her coach!). Marjorie coached part time with the Blazers in the mid 1990s when her family first lived in the KC area. Since 2006, she has been a parent to two Blazer swimmers and have coached part time at the SMN site with Henry Morrow.

In addition to her time with the Blazers, she has coached in southern California for 5 years, along with several summer teams in the KC area throughout the years, including her current position at Homestead Country Club in Prairie Village. Besides coaching, Marjorie has been a teacher at Notre Dame de Sion (lower school) for the past 7 years. Coaching combines her love of swimming with teaching. The Kansas City Blazers are excited to have Marjorie coming back home to the Blazers in a full time capacity this fall.

### New Elite Assistant Coach

The Kansas City Blazers would also like to welcome Maggie Kroemer to the KCB staff. She will be a new Elite Assistant Coach for the west side, and we are very excited to bring her aboard. She is originally from Milwaukee, where she swam for the Schroeder YMCA swim team. Maggie also swam at Valparaiso University. While at Valparaiso, she earned academic all conference honors and was a 6 time Mid Continent Conference finalist.

Prior to coaching at the Blazers, she was the graduate assistant coach at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. While at UTPB, she helped coach her swimmers to 31 new school records and 5 swimmers to NCAA Division II B cuts. She has also coached for both the Schroeder YMCA Swim Team and Nicolet High School in Milwaukee, WI.

Maggie received her BS in education from Valparaiso in 2005, and her MS in kinesiology with an emphasis in exercise physiology from UTPB in 2009.

**Welcome aboard Marjorie and Maggie!**

## USA Junior National Team – Update on Shannon Vreeland

Shannon Vreeland earned a spot as a member of the 2009 National Junior Team by her performance at the summer US Open and August Junior Nationals in 2008.

Shannon traveled to Vancouver, Canada to compete in the 2009 Mel Zajak International Swim Championships May 22-24, 2008. This meet is used by many Pacific Northwest USA swimmers as a tune up for the upcoming World Championship USA Trials in July. The Canadians used it as a tune up for their major summer meets and the World Championship in July in Rome, Italy. This meet measures up to the same type of competition as we have in our USA Grand Prix Meets.

Shannon had a very challenging order of events going three per day. This is a heavy schedule for this level of a meet. Because Shannon is focused on the World Trials, Sectionals, and US Open in July and August, she did not taper or rest for the meet. Shannon represented the USA National Junior team with great pride and performances. The National Junior team won the meet on the scoreboard. The junior team is made up of our top 17 and under girls and 18 and under boys who have not been on the USA National Team (Olympic Team).

Shannon's results were great for this time of year. Her times matched up with her lifetime bests from last August which means good and big things are ahead. Her top results were placing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 400 free relay as a member of the B relay, 12<sup>th</sup> in the 200 im (2:20.24), 14<sup>th</sup> in the 400 im (4:57.42), 17<sup>th</sup> in the 200 back (2:17.58), and 23<sup>rd</sup> in the 200 fly, and 13<sup>th</sup> in the 100 free.

Congratulations to Shannon for representing the USA, Kansas City, and the Blazers. We are all very proud of your accomplishments.

## Blazers... The Next Generation. June 2009 Update

It's been a while since we've had an update on how we are moving toward our quadrennial goals. Remember that Blazers...The Next Generation is a long-term plan to help us reach goals well into the future, but we are quickly approaching "well into the future". The summer is our most important time of year. We have the biggest meets, to be sure, but it is also where we total the sum of our year (September-August) and evaluate the previous year. Here are some goals that we're looking at:

**Blazer Honor Roll** – we had a goal of having 85% of our team, or more, on the Blazer Honor Roll. Forms have been distributed via e-mail and are due very soon. We will be compiling a list (checking it twice) and issuing \$5.00 gift cards to those Blazers who maintained their Honor Roll status for the entire year. This 85% threshold is in line with what we've seen in previous years and what we expect our student/athletes to be striving for. The gift cards are a reward for a job well-done all year. This program also helps us prepare for another goal – having at least five USA Swimming Scholastic All-Americans each year.

**Virtual Club Championships** – At the end of the short course season, we were 13<sup>th</sup> in the country. So far in Long Course, we are up to 11<sup>th</sup>. Times from Beach Bash and the Oz Classic have been submitted, but we have a long way to go and a lot of work to be done before the final point totals are in. We have just over 185,000 points. At the end of last summer, we had about 30,000 more than that. Scores can't go down, they can only go up, but our goal is to be in the top ten each year. We're almost there – every little bit helps. You can check out the current and past VCC rankings and details by putting this address in your browser:  
<http://www.usaswimming.org/USASWeb/Report/ReportHolder.aspx?TabId=901&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en&ItemId=35&id=2594>

**KC Blazers Ultimate Game** – This is a contest that we use to challenge ourselves at the Division I meets during short course and long course seasons. This past March was one of the worst team efforts in recent memory, and we're looking to improve this summer. The Ultimate Game does not affect everyone every year, because only our 13&Over swimmers who are in six or more events may participate. However, since there are more events offered in the summer, and there are bonus swims available, we should have more people in the Ultimate Game than during the short course season. More people does not necessarily mean more success. Our main goal is to have more people dropping time than adding time in their best 6 events at the Division I meet. If you read the April newsletter, you know this was not the case in March. If you are an eligible contestant this summer, then prepare yourself – the game is on. If you are not old enough yet, be aware that the game will be upon you when the time is right!

## Blazer Ladies at the KSHSAA Championship!

The Kansas Girls High School Swimming season culminated with the state championships in Topeka, KS during May 22 – 23, 2008. There was a great line up of competition there from all over the Sunflower state. Thirty Blazer girls represented their high schools in the individual events comprising 25% of the 224 entries!

The competition was fierce, the racing was fast (with four new state records set) and, naturally, the Blazer girls looked very good during this championship meet! Good sportsmanship was on clear display both days with plenty of hugs and high fives as the girls reconnected with their Blazer team mates after 10 weeks of competing against one another.

The Blazer girls competing were: Kelsey Bakalar (BVN), Kara Bartnett (BVNW), Becca Bond (BV), Allison Boyd (SJA), Sam Brennan (BV), Brooke Brull (SMNW), Mardi Buchanen (BVN), Jenna Flottman (BVN), Marston Fries (SME), Melissa Funke (BVNW), Beth Houghton (BV), Margaux Kent (BV), Kalli King (BVNW), Katie Kruse (BVN), Ana Kuehler (BVN), Jenny Martin (BVNW), Natalie Morris (ONW), Paige Morris (ONW), Ally O'Hearne (BVN), Bridget Petersen (STA), Mackenna Rife (ONW), Kaela Ropson (STA), Haley Sieben (STA), Hannah Singhal (SMNW), Haley Smith (BVN), Kate Snyder (SMW), Allie Snyder (BV), Rachel Staudmyer (BVN), Felicia Walker (BV), Caroline Woody (BVN)

Check out the full results at <http://www.kshsaa.org/CURRENT-CHMPS/curgrlswmchmp09.pdf>

Congratulations to all of our Blazer girls!

## Voorhees-Maxfield Invitational

The Voorhees/Maxfield Invitational has been in existence since the opening of the Capitol Federal Natatorium at the Hummer Sports Park in Topeka. Since then, the meet has marked the beginning of our long course competition season. It's unique format (all 13&overs on Saturday, all 12&Unders on Sunday) gives us the opportunity to go up to Topeka, get some long course racing in, and come home to get back to work. That is *as long as the meet isn't cancelled by lightning*.

I remember hearing about a great battle in ancient Europe that was cancelled when a solar eclipse came and rubbed out the sun. I remember thinking how silly it was that people would be so superstitious to cancel something so important for something so simple....until we found out thousands of years later, we have to cancel an entire day of a meet if there is a tornado warning. Anyway, back to the meet....Although the meet was abridged; the Blazers did get some good racing in for this time of year and went home ready to work even harder for the next meet.

Probably the highlight of the meet was the 50 Breast for Haley Hynes. It was a new KC Blazers Team Record – 40.02. She broke the record from 1997 by Abby Hoisington of 40.34. Haley has until the end of June to keep getting best times in her age group and keep lowering the record. GREAT JOB, HALEY!

With both Saturday and Sunday shortened, there were only 11 girls and 11 boy's events swum to completion. Our girls won 7 of the events and the boys won 6.

The winners were:

Haley Hynes – 50 Breast	Michael Hynes – 50 Breast
Kristine Sullivan – 50 Breast	Ben Bravence – 400 Free
Shannon Vreeland – 50 Free, 100 Free, 400 Free, 1500 Free, 200 Back	Austin Acheson – 1500 Free, 200 Back;
Bryce Hinde – 100 Breast	Nathan Welchlin – 200 Fly.
Nate Ladner – 100 Breast	

## 2009 Early Bird Meet

The Early Bird meet was held on May 15-16-17, 2009 at the Capital Federal Natatorium in Topeka, KS. WHAT?! Yes, we were in Topeka due to the construction on Central High School's pumps and drains. The folks at Cap Fed Nat were awesome and really went out of their way to make it all happen on a short term basis.

The Blazers had 196 of the 519 swimmers in the meet and we decided this year to start keeping meet records, so every event winner is now a meet record holder! In addition to the meet records we also had a few Blazer and Missouri Valley records set. Haley Hynes broke the Blazers team records in the 100 Backstroke (1:17.60) and 100 Breaststroke (1:28.87). The 100 Backstroke was also a Missouri Valley Citizen Record.

Other than the tornado warning on Friday that cancelled the 800 Free session, the only storm in the pool was brought on by the Blazers. There were huge numbers of people who missed going 6 for 6 by one swim. These 65 Blazers did go 6 for 6 and nailed 100% best times:

Mitchell Adams, Anna Arends, Jay Arends, Sam Arteberry, Emily Beiter, Cassidy Branton, Liam Bresette, Haily Brull, Sydney Butler, Jung Bin Choi, Marin Durkin, Heidi Ekborg-Ott, Nik Ekborg-Ott, Yousef Eldakak, Isabelle Finzen, Sarah Freshnock, Miranda Gibbs, Alison Gray, Lexi Harmon, Clarissa He, Sida He, Adam Houghton, Michael Hynes, Marshall Januszewski, Miranda Januszewski, Logan Johnson, Faith Kopecky, Kyle Kopecky, Alex Krause, Ian Lee, Selina Lee, Elexyss Lode, Gabriella Lorino, Anderson Maginn, Riley Manning, David Martinez, Ryan McMonigle, Jordan Milhon, Taylor Mills, Shale Morris, Hannah Musser, Jesse Musser, PJ Musser, Himadri Narasimhamurthy, Shyam Narayanan, Srivats Narayanan, Alexandra Nutter, Jeannie O'Flaherty, Phillip O'Larte, Suruchi Ramanujan, Gillian Schwartz, Ellie Senneff, Amy Sevcik, Mason Shipp, Meghan Shirling, Colin Strickland, Ryan Sweat, Andrew Swetnam, Aubrey Torkleson, Katya Vakshteyn, Jake Watson, Garrett Wilder, Claire Williams, Allie Wooden, and Jason Xue.

So many new Division 1 and Division 2 times were made that we cannot list them all here. So this is going to be a short article, because so many of you just flat out ROCKED!!!!!! GO BLAZERS!

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH**  
**ELITE PROGRAM**  
**April 2009**  
**Stephan Franke**



**CRITERIA:**

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Attendance          | D. Growth as a Person   |
| B. Attitude            | E. Inspiration to Staff |
| C. Growth as a Swimmer | & to Team Members       |

Stephan has been one of the great additions to the Blazers program. He moved his home from Chillicothe, Missouri to train full time with the Elite group in May of 2007. Stephan has become the example in his senior year for what I hope and look for out of all my Elite swimmers. Daily, he has taken full advantage of his opportunity and potential to prepare for the next stage of his life and development. He will be attending George Washington University in the fall to further his academic and swimming development.

Congratulations, Stephan, for what you are doing and for taking full responsibility of your potential!

Peter D. Malone, Maggie Kroemer, Scott Bliss  
Elite Coaching Staff

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH**  
**ELITE PROGRAM**  
**May 2009**  
**Ben Bravance**



**CRITERIA:**

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| D. Attendance          | D. Growth as a Person   |
| E. Attitude            | E. Inspiration to Staff |
| F. Growth as a Swimmer | & to Team Members       |

Wow! Ben is our first swimmer to move from the new senior group to the elite group. Ben made the move in April after an outstanding high school season for a freshman and then followed with an outstanding Sectional and Division 1 Championship.

From the day Ben stepped onto the elite deck, he has been focused, determined, aggressive, and coachable. He enjoyed his Phase II success and has started to take ownership for his potential and new established goals. On a 1-5 scale, Ben has been a 5 in the month of May in training and racing. Ben is setting the standard versus just following.

Congratulations, this is what excellence is and what champions do!

Peter D. Malone, Maggie Kroemer, Scott Bliss  
Elite Coaching Staff

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
BLUE VALLEY WEST – BLUE GROUP**

**May 2009**

**Abby Brock**

During the last few months, the swimmer of the month for the Blue Valley West blue groups has gone to a swimmer in the Blue group. Over the past few months, the Blue group has been outshining the Advanced Blue group. There have been some nights where practice in Advanced Blue has been very good, and others where there have been no standouts, and a lot of starting sets over. One person who stood out though on a consistent basis, was Abby Brock.

Abby has become more vocal over the past few months and taken more control of her swimming performance in practices. She only swam three races in May, so I can't say she got a ton of best times in meets, but her practices have been pointing toward some very good summer swimming. The practices that have really separated herself from the rest of the group in May are the Friday practices. She was one of the few Advanced Blue swimmers who not only showed up on Friday, but came to PRACTICE on Friday to get better. Watch out for her on the weekends! Good job, Abby.

Coaches Derek, Jenny & Pat

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
BLUE VALLEY WEST – SENIOR GROUP**

**May 2009**

**Kyle McDonald**

Kyle McDonald has improved a lot over the past year. He's dropped time to be sure, but he's mostly made improvements in technique. It's hard to measure the improvement of technique – it often does not have a direct correlation to speed. Even when swimmers improve their skill, the results do not often show up in races until the new skills become habit. This can take weeks or even months for a Senior swimmer. However, in May, Kyle went a long way toward seeing the work that he put in during the fall become habit.

In addition to maintaining old habits, Kyle added some new skills. He, and the rest of the group, found out that Kyle swims really fast when he kicks hard. When he adds fins, he goes really, really fast. In a set of 100s this month, Kyle was able to maintain his 200 freestyle race speed down to an interval of 1:00 per 100. He went between 53 and 54 seconds on several of those 100s, which was several seconds under his pace.

Another reason that Kyle is most inspirational swimmer of the month for May is because of something he did in February. Specifically, he came to practice the Sunday morning after high school state championships and a school dance. He was the only boy who did that, but in May, we had four girls do the same – partly because Kyle had set the precedent – Great job, Kyle!

Coach Derek

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
BLUE VALLEY NORTH – BLUE GROUP**

**May 2009**

**Ryan McMonigle**



I remember when I first met Ryan last fall. I was excited that I had this great 10 and under red-head boy that enjoyed training at practice. We had time to develop him into an "A" swimmer. Then I found out Ryan was 11 and I knew we had our work cut out for us to get him to become an "A" swimmer before his 12th birthday.

Ryan has been very consistent in his training the past nine months. Ryan's improvement on his T-30 test sets from last fall was considerable and his aerobic conditioning base is improving. Ryan comes to practice with a smile on his face and a genuine willingness to train and compete.

Ryan's Early Bird Meet performance this May is another testament to why he has been selected as swimmer of the month. Ryan swam six events at the meet, all in personal best times. He achieved his first "A" time as an 11&12 boy in the 50 meter Backstroke, and followed that performance with his second "A" in the 100 meter Backstroke the next day of the meet. Good luck, train hard this summer and I hope you have a fantastic D-I Meet!

**KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK AND CONGRATULATIONS!**  
Coach Bob

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
BLUE VALLEY NORTH – GOLD GROUP**

**May 2009**

**Madeleine McCully**



I am not sure if Madeleine is shy or just very quiet, or maybe she is a little of both. Either way, she is a joy to coach. Madeleine has shown steady improvement throughout the year and her spring T-30 test set improvement over last fall was in the top three for the Gold group. Madeleine has really picked up the pace in her workout efforts and I am hopeful, with a great summer of training, that she will be pleased with her results at the end of Long Course Season.

It seems that Madeleine (13) is starting one of her last growing spurts and I have noticed more muscle tone development. This renewed strength and growth has been paying off in practice with some of her best training sets being performed on a daily basis. I am hoping that this new energy and mental toughness will get Madeleine back into the D-I Championship meet this summer. Keep up the great work, keep being you and I will miss you very much this fall!

**Good luck this Long Course Season!**  
Coach Bob

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
SHAWNEE MISSION NORTH/ROELAND PARK – BLUE GROUP**

**May 2009**

**Augusta Garies**

I am so pleased to announce Augusta Garies as our Blue group "Swimmer of the Month" for May. She has earned this award by her excellent attitude towards all aspects of her training.

First off, her work ethic has been second to none. She comes in to practice always with a smile and ready to work. She has worked her way all the way from Advance Blue to Gold beginning this fall.

Augusta has shown the mindset it takes to become a great swimmer. Whether it is a practice or a meet, whether she wins or loses, Augusta is always giving it her best effort. When things don't come out the way she had hoped she doesn't sit around and feel sorry for herself. No, she will ask me or think about what she could do to improve for the next time she swims the event. She looks at a bad swim as an opportunity to learn to do it better the next time.

She is the type of athlete that makes coaching a fun and rewarding profession and I can't of a higher compliment I could give to one my swimmers. Thank you, Augusta for helping me to enjoy my job. I always love seeing you come to practice.

As Augusta's commitment level rises I am confident that her performance level will rise equally as well.

Best Wishes,  
Coach Henry

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
KANSAS CITY BLAZERS, EAST – GOLD GROUP**

**April 2009**

**Ellie Senneff**

It has long been the goal of the coaches in the Advanced Blue Groups to move swimmers into the Gold Group; and have them jump over the swimmers in the Gold Group who were not working very hard. It is often a hard lesson for swimmers to find themselves in a slow lane with the new kids now in the faster lanes. This is what appears to have happened to Ellie this year. New swimmers came in and moved ahead of the old swimmers. Ellie had poor attendance and a low focus with the laps swam.

That is until the start of Phase 2 in the 2008-2009 swimming season. Something popped in Ellie and she has quickly taken her place among those who are on the fast track to more success. She did it and continues to do it the old fashioned way. She focused on skills and came to practice more and she has flat out got the job done.

As one of only 6 swimmers in the Gold group with over 80% attendance for April and 4 with over 80% in Phase 2 overall, Ellie is leading by example. Her test sets have all stepped up where last year she languished with very little improvement on FIP sets, kick sets, or T-30's. Now she leads the lane and leads the way. She is bound and determined to move up and out and be noticed for the right stuff.

Her actions, her efforts, and the new found pride in herself have earned this award and we are proud of her and her Blazer spirit and drive.

Congratulations Ellie, and thanks for the inspiration! Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
KANSAS CITY BLAZERS, EAST – GOLD GROUP**

**May 2009**

**Drew Adams**



This month's award is really the result of a long string of work and effort. Drew Adams has been on a long drive to excellence since last year. He has great practice attendance and great meet attendance and his day to day work is as consistent as any East side swimmer the Blazers have had.

After qualifying for the Sectional Championships in March, Drew moved to the Senior Group and rather than be satisfied, was hungry for more. The willingness to do more yardage, more work, more intensity have paid off and placed Drew in a position to achieve several more Sectional cuts this summer.

Drew has also set his eyes on achieving Zone cuts and has steadily moved to continue improving his kicking strength and endurance, and his practice test sets. With the meets in June looming in the near future Drew has not backed off to rest for the little meets. He is keeping the pressure on the other swimmers in the group through his day to day actions. He is keeping the pressure on his body, forcing it to adapt to living at a higher competitive level each day.

We are looking forward to Drew's performance in Columbia and Wichita in June and his Championship performances in July,

Congratulations Drew, and thanks for the inspiration! Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
KANSAS CITY BLAZERS, EAST – BLUE GROUP**

**April 2009**

**J.P. Hynes**



On his last practice in March, J.P. Hynes told Coach Ann that he wanted to be the next swimmer of the month; and he did it. That's a special kind of focus that we don't see very often in the swimmers. Considering that J.P. is 8 years old, we were expecting a "more good practice than bad practices" sort of month, or maybe a really good week followed by a gradual tapering off as he forgot about his new goal.

Instead, we were surprised and impressed by a month where every single practice was a good practice. We didn't have to remind him one single time about his goal, either. He set his mind to it and went after it all on his own, and he earned Swimmer of the Month by the biggest landslide of any Longview swimmer this year.

In the month of April, J.P. worked hard and stayed focused regardless of circumstances. He took a big step making a commitment to getting along with his teammates and lane mates, even at times when we wouldn't have blamed him for getting frustrated. He went from being one of the more easily distracted swimmers in the Blue group, to the swimmer who was most focused and on task; even when he wasn't the lane leader, even when we were working on the same thing over and over again more times than you can count, and even when everyone around him was goofing off and not paying attention. Coach Ann can't remember ever seeing such a dramatic turnaround in a swimmer.

J.P. hasn't always been the type of swimmer to "roll with the punches" and accept constructive criticism, but lately, his attitude has been just wonderful. He now accepts input on his stroke technique with grace and works to apply the new ideas, and he has been rewarded for it by becoming the swimmer most used in demonstrations. Other parents and coaches were approaching Coach Ann at the Schlueter meet to comment on his nice butterfly stroke technique, and that sort of thing doesn't happen often. We love it when a swimmer surprises us with what they are capable of, especially when it comes in the form of a positive change in attitude and focus. We hope J.P.'s new focus pays off this summer, because he sure deserves it.

Congratulations J.P., and thanks for the inspiration! Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler

## **MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH KANSAS CITY BLAZERS, EAST – BLUE GROUP**

**May 2009**

**Delaney Butler**

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Delaney Butler's last month of the season was clearly her best. Her attendance was fantastic; one of the best in the Blue group, and her focus was greatly improved. In the water, she was probably the most focused and on task of anyone in her group, and it showed in her strokes. Her freestyle and backstroke straightened out considerably, and her breaststroke became a lot more efficient. It was obvious that she was being diligent about her technique. And, she slid seamlessly into a leadership role in Blue.

She was usually the first one at the pool, and the first to get to task with dryland and with getting in the water. She was a leader during dryland for at least 80% of her practices, if not more often, and she was always willing to help guide our new swimmers through their first couple practices. By the end of May, both Brandi and Ann were sure she was our Swimmer of the Month.

And then, she sealed the deal by getting 100% best times at the Cupcake meet; where, by the way, her strokes looked better than ever.

Congratulations J.P., and thanks for the inspiration! Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler

### **“Ageing Up”**

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Published by: The American Club Swimming Association, 5101 N.W. 21 Ave., Suite 200, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309 (Unedited)

“My Eight Year Old Was The Fastest Swimmer In The Zone Until He Turned Nine. Now He Is Continually Being Beaten Since He Is The Youngest In His Age Group. How Can I, As A Parent, Keep Him From Getting Discouraged?”

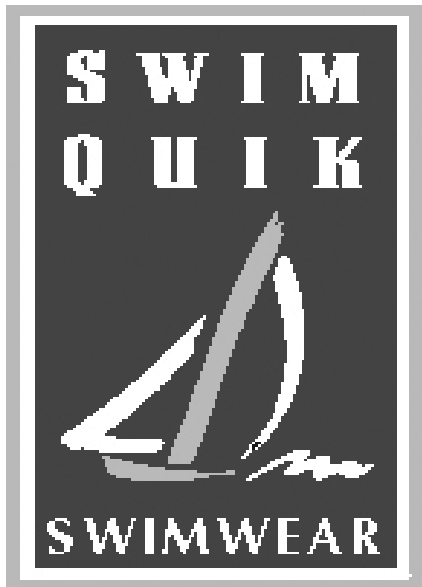
Every age group swimmer goes through the trials and tribulations of “ageing up”. It is difficult for a swimmer, who was the top of his age group, to readjust to swimming against older and faster swimmers. It is also normal that a child will have difficulties dealing with this new age bracket.

It is important to communicate with your child's coach when a situation like this occurs. When you feel that your child is becoming discouraged, you should inform your child's coach of your concern. Chances are the coach has sensed the discouragement also. It is a common response to “ageing up”. Your child probably became a swimmer because it was an activity where he was better than the average swimmer, he found it to be fun, and he could please you, the parent. He did not become a swimmer to win.

Ageing up is part of “growing up”, part of the learning process and that is a challenge. It is also great opportunity to learn and to improve. If we were always at the top where would be the desire to improve? Where would be the quest to be the best and achieve excellence? Ageing up opens the door to a whole new set of challenges to overcome, and persevering through these struggles is one of the great values swimming offers our kids. When your child is making the transition to an older age group, look for positive aspects, other than winning, such as improving times, techniques, and developing new skills. Changing age groups can mean the discovery of new talents, racing in different distances, new events and tougher competition.

Most importantly, no one in swimming has ever won all of their races. Only one swimmer can finish first in a race and sometimes we as (parents and coaches) place too much importance on winning. We actually equate our own value with the success or failure of our swimmers. This puts a tremendous amount of pressure on the athlete. A swimmer can be a winner when he faces a new and tough challenge, competes and tries their best. Swimmers win when they set a goal for themselves and make a commitment to work towards realizing that goal. A well-balanced individual needs to accept defeat and disappointment as graciously as victory. How can anyone enjoy success if they first have not tasted failure?

Encourage your swimmer to have faith in themselves and their coaches. They will adjust with time. It can be a very good experience for our swimmers to realize that winning is much more than just achieving first place, and if they try hard enough and long enough they may obtain something even greater. It is called character. Losing can be our greatest motivator if we take the opportunity to learn from our setbacks. Remember “it is not how many times you get knock down that matters, it is how many times you get back up and the manner in which you do so.”



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