



# The Blazer Newsletter

## KANSAS CITY BLAZERS SWIM TEAM

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



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Excellence

### Inside This Edition

- Page 1 – Volunteer Opportunities, '09 Blazer College Signings, & Blazer Alumni Wins Award at SAAC Banquet!
- Pages 2 & 3 – Zone Training Camps: Are You Up To The Challenge?
- Page 4 – FINA Set to Rule on High-Tech Swimsuits Soon.
- Pages 4 through 8 – Swimmer of the Month Awards
- Pages 9 through 12 – Corporate & Family Sponsorship Recognition

A Speedo Sponsored Team



May 2009 Edition

Page 1

### 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!

- Blue/Gold Meet – May 23 Job sign ups will be posted on the website soon.
- 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.

### More 2009 Blazer College Signings!

The Kansas City Blazers would like to congratulate the following swimmers on their recent commitments to their respective universities:

Nathaniel Savage – University of Maryland at Baltimore County  
Nathan Welchlin – University of Milwaukee (Wisconsin)  
Luke Musser – Western Kentucky University  
Steve Sharp – Xavier University  
Greg Jacobs- New York University

We look forward with great anticipation to hearing of the great things that each one of these fine young adults will achieve both athletically and academically throughout their college careers and beyond. We wish each and every one of you the very best of success!

### Blazer Alumni Wins Award at SAAC Banquet!

Seton Hall sophomore swimmer **Kevin Webster (Leawood, Kan.)** earned Male Athlete of the Year honors at the annual Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) awards banquet, held recently at the Seton Hall University campus. Webster was dominating in the pool with 23 first place finishes. Named BIG EAST Swimming & Diving Athlete of the Week on November 2, he broke the conference record in the 200-yard individual medley at the USA Short Course Nationals. As his personal records fell, Webster set Seton Hall records in the 100-yard backstroke, 200-yard freestyle and 200-yard individual medley and was a part of relay teams that broke school records in the 200 and 800-yard freestyle and 200-yard medley. Congrats Kevin! The Kansas City Blazers are very proud of your accomplishments. Keep up the great work!

## Zone Training Camps: Are You Up To The Challenge?

What do 65 talented and driven Missouri Valley swimmers, ages 10-15, gathered in Kansas City last April, have in common? They are all qualified to represent Missouri Valley swimming at the Zone Meet in Grand Forks, North Dakota! Swimmers and coaches have been working hard since last fall to build teamwork among the top swimmers from all the Missouri Valley teams. Zone Training Camps (ZTC) were held in Lawrence in September, Columbia over the holiday break, and the last one (April) in Kansas City. Attendance increased significantly at each successive camp. Zone Training Camp is sanctioned by USA Swimming, and was the collective effort of coaches from multiple Missouri Valley teams, in the interest of developing teamwork at zone meets.

### ***Why should swimmers consider ZTC in addition to their club training?***

Taking the lead in organizing the camps were Coach Megan Pittman, Columbia, and Coach Henry Morrow, Kansas City Blazers. Their objective was to build and maintain Missouri Valley spirit when the collective clubs arrive as one team at zone meets, or wherever multiple zones are gathered. "During the return trip from the Mega Zone meet in Indianapolis last August, we (coaches) were excited about the whole team experience and wanted to continue that spirit and enthusiasm in Missouri Valley all year long. From that discussion, the camps concept was born," explains Coach Henry.

Each zone training camp was scheduled over a weekend, and included segments on training, nutrition and motivation. They focused on fast swimming, while educating swimmers on technical, mental and training aspects of swimming. For all this, camp registration was just \$50! Overnight accommodations were arranged so the swimmers were often rooming with members of other teams, if they chose the overnight registration option.

At least six coaches from other Missouri Valley teams generously helped during the camps. And they didn't do this for the pay: coaches receive a minimal stipend from USAS for helping at zone camp. Their expertise enhanced various training segments in the water, and in discussion groups. They also served as chaperones in the hotel. The host cities' teams recruited parent volunteers who collected donations (to help off-set costs), served the hungry athletes, provided transportation and chaperoned.

### ***There's time to have fun, too!***

The camp itineraries were also structured to allow for social time when the swimmers could really get to know one another, away from the competitive atmosphere. A social highlight of the most recent camp held April 3-5 in Kansas City was the dinner at Don Chilitos on Saturday night. After a big day of training and motivation, the group relaxed (and re-fueled) at the taco bar provided in a banquet room.



Then plain white swim caps were distributed, thanks to our friends at Swim Quik, and a wide variety of craft supplies were provided so the campers could decorate a cap. But they were directed to focus on creating a look for the team cap that Missouri Valley would wear in Grand Forks. The creativity electrified the banquet room as the 65 swimmers focused on just the right design. The winner will be recognized when the team materials are distributed for the Zone Meet.



### ***Testimonials for attending ZTC***

Coach Megan explains that the Columbia swimmers have been significantly impacted by their participation in ZTC. “It fuels their competitive drive, and, by extension, they are more focused in daily training. Even more, attending ZTC has guided these young athletes towards recognizing swimming as a significant part of their lives. It’s an evolution from ‘I swim’ to ‘I am a swimmer’”.

One camper said, “Camp really got me motivated for long course season. There were so many kids there, and I know if I want to be at the top, I need to buckle down and get after it right now!”

“The enthusiasm and diversity of personalities – amongst all the coaches and swimmers – was really great... They are building connections with one another that can be kept throughout the years,” was the sentiment from one of the parents. Swimmers are recognizing that ZTC is not only challenging and educational, it is fun, too. “Now, I have a lot more friends at swim meets,” remarked one participant. “Thanks for making me go to camp. It’s been fun,” one twelve-year-old swimmer told her coach. He talked her into attending, and it’s paid off.

So when the Missouri Valley team arrives in Grand Forks in August, the teamwork and camaraderie will be noticeable. Not only that, but with all the great tips they learned at ZTC, they will dominate in the finals heats, as well! “This time, we will really be a Missouri Valley TEAM,” exclaims Coach Henry.

The next ZTC is planned in early October, and it should be the biggest and best yet. The dates, times and location are to be determined. Watch the Missouri Valley Swimming website for details when registration opens this summer. Talk with your coach to determine if you will be eligible to participate.

Thank Karen Maginn for this contribution to the KCB newsletter!

## **FINA Set to Rule on High-Tech Swimsuits Soon**



May 14, 2009 Edition

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — A panel of swimming experts will meet Monday to decide which models of high-tech swimsuits can be worn at the world championships this summer. Governing body FINA said Wednesday that independent laboratory tests have been completed on all models of suits that were used by swimmers to rewrite the sport's record book in the past 15 months.

"Now we have the results of the tests," FINA said in a statement. "The commission will analyze the results and draw a list of the swimsuits that are approved and not approved." The commission, which includes technical officials, athletes and coaches, will meet at FINA headquarters in Lausanne to decide which suits can be worn at the July 19-Aug. 2 worlds being held in Rome, and for the rest of the year.

Testing on suits' thickness, buoyancy and permeability was carried out last month by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. A second round of updated tests will be done this year to create a new list of approved suits for use in competition from Jan. 1, 2010.

FINA is trying to keep up with and regulate the rapid development of new materials and designs in swimsuits which has been described by critics as "technological doping." A total of 108 world records were broken last year and 18 marks have fallen in 2009. The governing body stated in March that its core principle was to run "a sport essentially based on the physical performance of the athlete." FINA was criticized for allowing the suits to be used at last year's Beijing Olympics and failing to provide a clear distinction between an acceptable suit and one that enhances performance.

## **MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH BLUE VALLEY NORTH – GOLD GROUP April 2009 Allie Wooden**

Allie Wooden has had a sensational month of swimming. During the winter months, Allie had a huge growing spurt, a little over three inches in fact. While her growing spurt was happening, Allie struggled at times to keep up with her group in work outs. Allie's energy level seemed low on most days as the growth of her body was taking up the fuel that she needed to perform in practice. She also struggled with muscle motor memory as her limbs were growing and creating havoc on her stroke technique.

Now that the growth has stopped or is at a slow crawl, she has been able to recharge her batteries so to speak and make new stroke adjustments. With this new found energy, height and strength, Allie has been able to put together a great month of training in the water. The month of April should help Allie with a super fantastic jump start to her Long Course Season.

Allie had perfect attendance for April. Her T-30 test sets were outstanding. In her IM T-30's, she dropped an average of 9 seconds per 100 and on freestyle, her T-30'S dropped 5 seconds on average per 100. These are the types of drops you would expect to see in B or BB swimmers that come to practice a lot; Allie was an AA to AAA swimmer before the growth took place.

**Good luck this Long Course Season!**

Coach Bob

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH**

**BLUE VALLEY NORTH – BLUE GROUP**

**April 2009**

**Elexyss Lode**

Elexyss has had a very upbeat month, her positive attitude and her funny off-the-wall humor that she brings to the pool has been very inspiring to me as her coach. Elexyss's attendance was higher this month, and I am hoping this will pay off at the next meet that we get to swim in (no more tornado warnings during swim meets, please).

Elexyss might be short in stature, but her big heart, tenacity in her training, spunk, and genuine love for the sport of swimming has really impressed me as she moves closer to becoming an "A" swimmer. Elexyss had a great swim in the 50m Breast in the tornado-stopped meet in Topeka. I was saddened to see the meet stopped, because I know she had some more great swims in her that morning.

Elexyss's T-30 test sets in April saw the greatest improvement of any of the X-Blue and Gold Group since last fall. Her greatest improvement has come in the Free T-30 no fins, with a 15 second average drop per 100 swam. The coaching staff has worked hard at lengthening out Elexyss's strokes. With her aerobic base starting to come along, I know the speed will follow soon.

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

Coach Bob

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH**

**SHAWNEE MISSION NORTH/ROELAND PARK – GOLD GROUP**

**April 2009**

**Ali McCollum**

The month of March was a "turn the corner" month for Ali McCollum. Her short course season was not what she had hoped. Her disappointment was evident, but instead of backing off or making excuses she made a change. After our spring break a new and improved Ali came back to train. Same old smile, but with new and more intense training attitude. It's been really fun and exciting time watching Ali move up from the end of the lane to the leader of the lane. Ali's training has not only improved but her coachability as well. By that, I am referring to her desire to make the needed stroke changes to race at a higher level. She has taken the initiative to ask what she needed to do and then proceeded to put in the effort to make the necessary alterations.

In short, Ali has a great attitude, is working much harder, is focused on refining the stroke changes to enhance her efficiency, and has ambitious goals for the Zone meet, including a path to get to the meet. After the upcoming long course season both Ali and myself are looking for results that are in the excellent to super range.

I would personally like to invite anyone else interested in going to Zone meet this summer to join Ali on that sometimes bumpy road to success.

Best Wishes,  
Coach Henry

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

**April 2009**

**Gabby Keiffer**

Gabby Keiffer is April's "Swimmer of the Month". Gabby has truly been an inspiration to me this year with her whole approach to the sport of swimming. She has made a tremendous amount of progress during the year and is poised to continue this steady improvement.

She is the only swimmer who actually asks me to do more work and wants to get started earlier before the practice starts. Stroke technique is one aspect of swimming that is crucial to success and is an area that Gabby is constantly asking for guidance on how to make improvements. I have observed Gabby's progress throughout the year and enjoyed watching her learn to appreciate the value of hard work and perseverance. The result has been a girl who has learned the love of competitive swimming with the qualities necessary to have great success in the sport.

Unfortunately, due to her summer league rules Gabby will not be able to compete with the Blazers this summer. Gabby has opted instead to swim with not only her regular summer league team, but also Stingrays a summer league team coached by Blazer coaches. This will allow her to get the work she needs to maintain her condition over the summer. Again, just another example of Gabby's desire to achieve excellence. Way to go Gabby. Keep up the good work!

Best Wishes,  
Coach Henry

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

**April 2009**

**Mary Frances Donnelly**

During the Spring, there are a lot of distractions for many of our swimmers. For Mary Frances Donnelly, there are maybe more than for most – homework, track team, the fact that there are only five girls swimming in the Senior group this time of year. However, instead of focusing on potential distractions, Mary Frances has been focusing on reasons to come to practice and be successful.

In a busy time of year for her, she often arrives at practice tired and still gives 100%. She often leads her lane and races the boys (many times, she beats them). One time in April, we did a set of 500s freestyle alternating with 400s I.M. While descending the I.M.s, she came within 10 seconds of her best time and led the lane for the entire set.

Since returning from her freshman high school season, she's dedicated herself to making technique changes and increasing her abilities in the water while also maintaining a full workload at school and doing a second sport – something that the Senior group was designed for. Mary Frances is showing us all what the possibilities can be when you want to be successful in many areas. *Some* days she starts her swim practice tired, but she **usually** ends her days exhausted and sleeps well knowing she's filled her day with quality.

Nice job, Mary Frances!

Coach Derek

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

**April 2009**

**Beth Traw**



The Blue group has changed a lot over the past couple of months. We've had several swimmers move from Blue to Advanced Blue and several swimmers move from Novice to Blue. We've also had some schedule changes with the coaching staff. Amidst all this change in April, Beth Traw has consistently moved toward the front of the lane and is quickly becoming a standout in practice.

Beth moved up to the Blue group in March, but has quickly caught on to the longer swimming in the Blue group and the turns that come along with multiple lengths. She has done a good job in dry land and can usually be seen smiling during Nordics.

Beth has especially stood out at the end of practices. While many swimmers are asking what time it is to see how long until the end of practice, Beth is quietly moving toward the front of the lane. She won't be able to do it so quietly from now on ☺.

Keep it up, Beth!

Coach Derek, Tamara and Susan

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH  
KCB 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 who were in Gold but not working very hard. It is often a hard lesson for swimmers to find themselves in a slow lane and the new kids to be in faster lanes. This is what appears to have happened to Ellie this year. New swimmers came in and old swimmers moved ahead and Ellie sat with poor attendance and a low focus and swam laps.

That is until the start of Phase 2 in the 1008-2009 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 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,

Thanks for the inspiration!

Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler

# **MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH**

## **KCB EAST – GOLD GROUP**

**April 2009**

**John Paul 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.

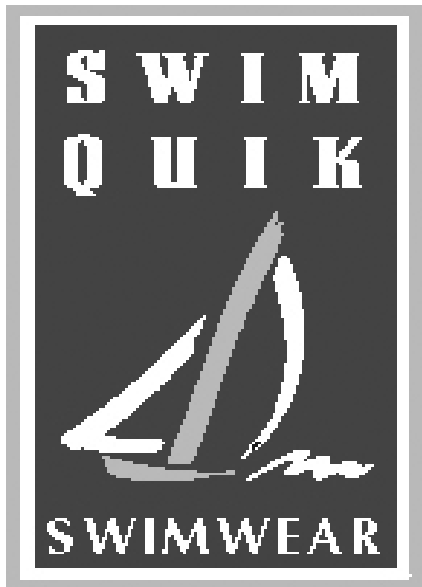
Instead, we were surprised and impressed by a month where every single practice was a good practice. We didn't have to remind him one single time about his goal, either. He set his mind to it and went after it all on his own, and he earned Swimmer of the Month by the biggest landslide of any Longview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

Thanks for the inspiration!

Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler



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