



AQUA-NEWS

February 2021

www.swimmingfast.com

Swimming offers mental health benefits that go well beyond just a relaxing dip in the pool

If you've ever felt refreshed, relaxed and ready to tackle the day after a swim, you're not alone. A [2012 survey](#) of nearly 1,200 swimmers aged 16 to 45 around the world conducted by swimwear manufacturer Speedo investigated how swimmers felt about their sport. According to the survey:

- 74 percent of respondents said swimming helps release stress and tension.
- 68 percent of respondents said being in the water helps them feel good about themselves.
- 70 percent of respondents said swimming helps them feel mentally refreshed.

But there's more to these findings than just a self-reported sense of relaxation or calm. Indeed, science is beginning to unravel some of the mental health benefits of swimming, and some researchers are investigating whether swimming could eventually become an actual treatment protocol for depression and anxiety.

Take, for example, a recent case study published in [British Medical Journal Case Reports](#) about a 24-year-old British woman named Sarah who has major depressive disorder and anxiety. Medications made her feel "off" and groggy, so with the encouragement and supervision of Chris van Tulleken at the University College London, Sarah began exploring cold water swimming as a form of hydrotherapy.

After the first session, Sarah noted symptom improvement, and over the next several weeks, she continued swimming regularly in open water. Before long, she was able to taper off her medications and two years later she was still drug-free and managing well with her swimming-as-medicine protocol. Although investigation is still ongoing as to whether pool swimming can offer the same benefits as open water swimming, the fact remains that humans want to be close to water.

In his bestselling 2014 book "Blue Mind: How Water Makes You Happier, More Connected and Better at What You Do," Wallace J. Nichols, a marine biologist, detailed the psychological effect being in or near water can have. In short, he wrote that water soothes the human psyche and provides cognitive and emotional benefits that may be difficult to quantify exactly but are nevertheless very real.

Researchers at the University of Exeter in the U.K. are continuing to investigate exactly how water helps boost mental health and [recently found](#) that something as simple as watching a video of the ocean while exercising on a stationary bicycle might elevate your mood. It seems logical then to suggest that swimmers who get their

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Congratulations to Coach Ian



appointed as a member of SNB's Technical Committee for 2020-21

workout in the water are cutting right to the chase on this benefit.

But why and how can some people find such powerful benefits from swimming? Here's what we know so far about how swimming supports good mental health.

A Boost in "Feel-Good" Brain Chemicals

Exercise boosts production of beneficial chemicals in the brain and body that can significantly alter how you feel. Endorphins, in particular, are a group of hormones in the brain and nervous system that stimulate cells' opiate receptors, which can cause an analgesic, or painkilling, effect. That's right—runner's (or in this case swimmer's) high is your body's own built-in painkiller.

In addition, swimming seems especially adept at influencing mood by increasing the number of certain neurotransmitters in your brain, namely serotonin, noradrenalin, and dopamine. These "feel-good" brain chemicals are boosted by vigorous physical activity and also increase steroid reserves, which allows you to become more resilient to stress.

A Boost in Brain Cells

In addition to hormones and brain chemicals that can help you better regulate mood, aerobic exercise has also been shown to increase the levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a protein in your brain and spinal cord that promotes the survival, growth, and maintenance of neurons. John Ratey, a Harvard psychiatrist and author of "Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain," [has described BDNF as being like "Miracle-Gro for your brain."](#) Exercise, and swimming specifically, helps your brain increase its levels of BDNF. A number of studies in animals—[rats](#) and [fish](#), specifically—have shown a clear correlation between swimming as exercise and increased levels of BDNF in your brain. These higher levels can have wide-ranging effects on cognition, memory, and mood regulation.

Boosting BDNF levels via exercise is also being investigated as a potential means of preventing or slowing the development of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and age-related cognitive decline, all of which have depression as a symptom.

A Boost in Social Contact

For many swimmers, there's a very important social element to swimming as well. Humans are an innately social species, and interacting with friends and loved ones is a key means of combating loneliness. Social contact is also being investigated as a means of combating age-related cognitive decline, depression, anxiety, and a host of other brain-based problems. What's more, swimming with a group, such as a Masters club, builds in accountability that can make sticking to your training regimen a little easier and more enjoyable.

A Boost In Sleep Quality

Sleep is one of the most important things you can do for your overall health and wellness every day. But according to [a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association](#), stress may interfere with sleep. That 2013 survey found that on average, American adults report sleeping 6.7 hours per night, which is less than the minimum recommendation of seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

"In addition, 42 percent of adults report that their sleep quality is fair or poor, and 43 percent report that stress has caused them to lie awake at night in the past month," the APA noted. Adults who sleep fewer than eight hours a night reported having higher stress levels and symptoms of stress in the preceding month.

But one of exercise's most amazing benefits is how it can help you get better rest at night. Exercise helps you fall asleep more quickly and stay asleep longer, according to [an article on Johns Hopkins Medicine's website](#).

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It's not entirely understood exactly how exercise boosts sleep quality, but "moderate aerobic exercise increases the amount of slow wave sleep you get. Slow-wave sleep refers to deep sleep, during which the brain and body have a chance to rejuvenate. Exercise can also help to stabilize your mood and decompress the mind," both of which can help make you feel more ready for sleep when the time comes to go to bed, Charlene Gamaldo, medical director of Johns Hopkins Center for Sleep at the Howard County General Hospital, is quoted as saying in the article.

Swimming is a great way to increase your body's capacity for high-quality sleep, which in turn can help you feel less stressed out. When you work hard during the day and expend a lot of energy, naturally you'll probably feel more tired later than if you just sat around all day.

And we're not talking about hours on end of exercise, either. The Johns Hopkins Medicine article notes that "people who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise may see a difference in sleep quality that same night."

Bottom line: When you exercise more, you sleep better, and that can help alleviate stress and anxiety.

About The Author



Elaine K Howley

Elaine K. Howley is an award-winning freelance writer and editor specializing in sports, health, and history topics. Her work has appeared in numerous print and online publications including AARP.org, *Atlas Obscura*, *espnW*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. A lifelong swimmer who specializes in cold water marathon swimming, she has contributed to *SWIMMER* magazine since 2009 and USMS.org since 2012. Contact her via her website: elainekhowley.com

Governance

January 18, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting Highlights:

- Chocolate Bar Fundraiser: We received a lot of negative feedback but we also have a large number of people who want to continue with this fundraiser. The BOD voted to continue with the chocolate bar fundraiser once we return to the Yellow Health Alert Phase and add the option to "opt out" for a \$45 fee for those not wanting to participate in this mandatory fundraiser.
- Updated Terms of Reference for the Fundraising Committee was approved. Updates allowed for flexibility of the committee and how it works, and ensures the BOD has the final say in where funds are allocated each year.
- FAST is applying for a Covid-19 relief grant through the Department of Tourism and Recreation. Deadline to apply was Jan 22 at midnight.
- Once we are able to host meets again, we have a number of smaller clubs asking to join the next swim meet FAST hosts. The BOD agreed to this assuming there is adequate space to run meets according to the operational plan.
- Next Meeting set for Feb 22, 2021

Volunteer Spotlight

Hilary Ray & Gabby Belsh

As many of you know, our Club Records Board needed a thorough review. Between age categories changing over the years and lack of historical archives, we have been planning on reviewing our Record Board for years.

Hilary and Gabby both made this happen for FAST.

Hilary Ray (nee Seagrave), a former FAST swimmer, spent numerous hours over her holiday break sifting through her boxes of FAST swimming memorabilia! Everyone’s time is precious and we thank her immensely for doing this for FAST. Having the archival information to support our Record Board is priceless!

Hilary’s research was then sent to Gabby. Gabby researched swimmers ages and dates their records were swum, along with any other details and updated the current Club Records. This also took countless hours of Gabby’s time.

We all know time is precious and we can’t thank Hilary and Gabby enough for taking on this huge project.

Thank you both!

Stretching with!

We are noticing a lot of our swimmers have “tight” muscles – they need to be stretched. Given that we can’t do activation or cool down on the pool deck before and after practices, our amazing Coaches have put together a series of their favourite stretches. We will be featuring one per month in the Aqua News, however you can view them all [by going to our website.](#)

[Click here to Stretch with Coach Bea](#)



Coach Bea

COACH BEA'S FAVOURITE STRETCHES

Point and Flex



Point your toes for 20 seconds, and switch to a full flex for 20 seconds. Repeat 3-4 times. I like this stretch because it gives me extra flexibility in my ankles, which helps me kick!

Cat & Cow



With your hands and knees on the ground, arch your back slowly while tilting your head down, looking at your belly. Hold for 10 seconds, then slowly lower your back, tilt your head forward, and arch your back inwards, looking forward. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3-4 times. I like to do this stretch in the morning, as it warms up my spine and stretches out any stiffness from sleeping. It also helps to correct poor posture.

Kneeling Lunge



Lunge forward and place knee and lower leg flush on the ground. Push torso forward, opening up the hips. Hold for 20 seconds, then switch legs. I like to do this stretch before and after leg workouts and biking, as my hip flexors can get really tight. This also helps loosen up your hips for a strong whip kick!

Fundraising

Bottles – cans, liquor bottles, beer cans/bottles

Remember to drop your recyclables off at Best Metals (Wilsey Road) and ask them to credit our FAST Account! And spread the word to your family, friends and co-workers.

We are planning on holding another Bottle Drive in Spring 2021 and will keep everyone posted.

Update: Chocolate Bar Fundraiser

We received a lot of feedback (both positive and negative) about this fundraiser. It has been put on hold until we are back in the Yellow Health Alert Phase in Fredericton.

Background on this initiative:

- It has been part of the FAST Fundraising plan for this year and information was communicated multiple times at registration, the AGM, various Newsletters, and on our website since Sept 2020.
- Why Cho bars? This fundraiser was identified as one that didn't require a lot of extra "work" for our volunteer committee and would give FAST a profit of about \$4500. The revenue is to be used to subsidize the deficit we are running this year (so we didn't have to increase registration fees more than they were already increased for this season).

Update – the Board of Directors met January 18 and decided that FAST will continue with this fundraiser once we move back to the Yellow Health Alert Phase in Fredericton.

New There will be an option of families to "opt out" of receiving/selling their 1 mandatory carrying case of chocolate bars, but the cost to opt out will be equal to the profit FAST had planned on receiving per family (\$45)

It was felt the opting out option addressed the concerns of those not wanting to sell the bars but also allowed those wanting to participate in this fundraiser the ability to do so. At the same time, FAST will receive the funds planned for subsidizing our deficit for this season.

Random Act of
Kindness Day
Feb 17

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/rak-day>

Sign up for extra
boxes here

LAURA SECORD – PEANUT FREE – \$3

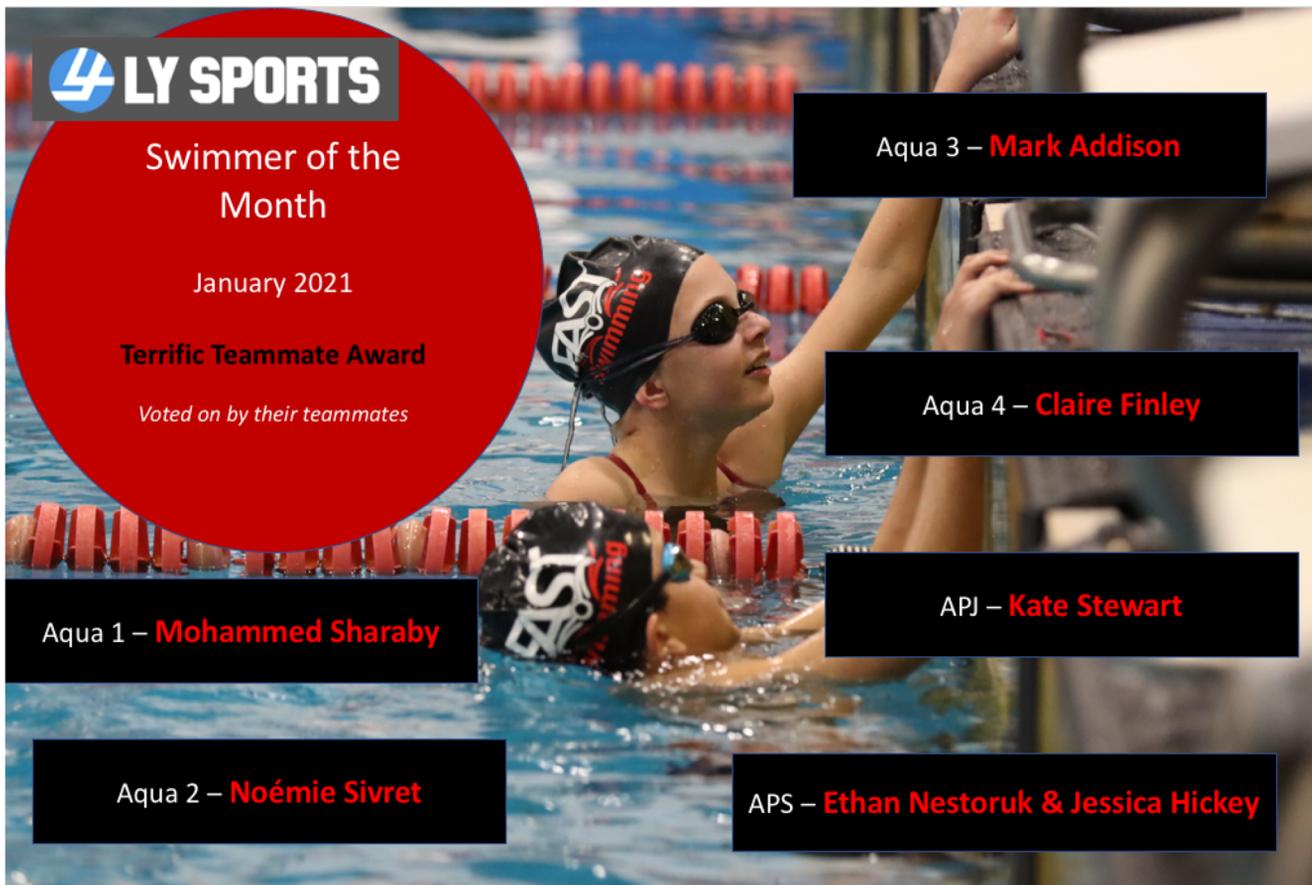
Each suitcase contains a selection of fundraiser items including:

- 4 Continental Almonds
- 6 Crisps Bars
- 7 Pure Milk Chocolate Bars
- 6 Pure Milk Chocolate Bars with Mint
- 5 Caramel & Sea Salt Bites
- 2 Maple Bites





Winners of the random draw for a Ly Sports \$15 Gift Card are:
Mohammed & Jessica



Registration Instalment Payments

Feb 1, 2021 was the last registration instalment payment

Charges on your account from Feb 1 on will include only incidentals, clothing/merch, meet fees, additional fees if your swimmer moved groups and your instalment schedule was extended, fundraising fees, etc.

For more information about Volunteering Jobs, how to submit your hours, etc. please refer to our website:

[Volunteering & the Family Participation Plan](#)

Stress

How to help the young person in your life

Stress is a response to the demands of everyday life. Stress is common and can be positive, because it can bring energy and motivate you to do things. However, too much stress, or feeling stressed all of the time, can take a toll on mental and physical health and well-being.

Common stressors for young people include:

- school
- dating
- family
- friends
- work
- financial stress within the family
- lack of (healthy, fresh) food
- puberty
- sexuality
- mental disorders
- struggles with substance use (individually or within the family)
- feeling isolated
- physical health
- body image
- illness

Here, Kids Help Phone offers some suggestions for talking to the young person in your life about stress.



Empathize with the young person's feelings of stress and their perceived cause.

How do I start a conversation?

When approaching this topic with a young person:

- listen and try not to rush into problem-solving. Empathize with the young person's feelings of stress and their perceived cause.
- normalize feelings of stress
 - stress is a typical part of life. It can motivate us to improve ourselves and accomplish what we need to do in a day.
 - even periods of increased stress in the short term are not necessarily unhealthy
- be alert to extreme levels of stress or panic attacks, which may indicate other problems, such as an anxiety disorder

It's important to find out more about the ways stress is impacting the young person. You can ask:

- "On a scale of one to 10 (where one is not stressed at all and 10 is stressed to the max), how stressed are you right now?"
- "Where in your body do you notice stress?" (listen for symptoms, such as difficulty sleeping, headaches, stomach aches and muscle tension)
- "When did the stress start? How often do you notice it?"
- "On a scale of one to ten (where one is no control and 10 is total control), how much do you feel you have control over your stress?"

- "How does stress impact your daily life?"
- "What have you been doing to cope with stress?" (listen and look for negative coping strategies, such as avoiding tasks, drinking alcohol, isolation, etc.)

What else can I try?

You can encourage the young person to establish priorities. Here are some suggestions:

- If they have control over what is causing them stress (like studying for a test), encourage them to make a plan.
- While young people may not have as much choice as they'd like to establish their own priorities, talking about what they're facing may reveal more "wiggle room" than previously thought.
- Suggest that they create timelines that also include stress-reducing activities and sleep.
- Help them to identify people who can support them.
- You can ask, "Is there someone in your life who can help you with your commitments?"

You can also help the young person to develop "positive self-talk." Positive self-talk involves saying things to yourself that are positive while also being realistic. You can encourage the young person to:

- focus on the facts
- give themselves credit for each success, big or small
- show themselves compassion
- praise themselves for all of their good qualities
- practice accepting kind words from others
- avoid words such as "should," "ought to," "must" and "have to"

It's also key for young people to focus on realistic expectations. Here's some more information:

- Perfectionism is closely linked with high levels of stress. Young people who are

struggling with perfectionism often find their self-worth is dependent on their accomplishments, which may make them worry about the adequacy of their efforts.

- You can ask, "What would help you be gentler with yourself?"
- You can ask, "What is a goal that would allow you to do well AND feel well?"

And lastly, you can share these ideas for building a healthy and balanced routine with the young person:

- work on recognizing which aspects of life are changeable and which are beyond their control
- practice deep breathing and relaxation techniques
- engage in active time management and scheduling, including building in time for self-care
- avoid overcommitment
- eat a healthy diet (if this is available to you)
- engage in regular physical activity
- spend time in nature
- engage in an artistic practice (such as journaling, drawing, photography or music)
- participate in cultural activities (such as dancing or drumming)
- promote the establishment of healthy sleep patterns
- avoid too much caffeine
- limit screen time, especially just before sleeping
- spend time with friends and family

Stress comes with both pros and cons for adults and youth alike.

If a young person in your life needs support, they can connect confidentially with Kids Help Phone 24/7 by phone at 1-800-668-6868 or by texting 686868. To learn more about how you can support a young person in your life, visit [KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca) for tools, resources and information on a wide range of topics.

From the Kitchen...

Ideas for Healthy Meals and Snacks for Athletes

www.swimming.org

If you're a competitive swimmer you'll already be aware of the importance your diet plays on your performance in the pool. Here are a few healthy meals and snacks for athletes.

Exercise Meals

If you're planning to go swimming or training later in the day try to eat an exercise-friendly meal two and three hours before you go. This means keeping your carbohydrate and protein levels high on roughly a 60:40 ratio and not pigging out on sluggish unsaturated fats.

Here are some good examples:

Baked potatoes – fill them with beans, sweet corn or chilli, not too much cheese, and remember to eat the skin, it's the healthiest bit!

Pasta meals or bakes – again go light on the cheese, throw in plenty of vegetables. Tuna is also a great energy source.

Beans on toast – they may be the signature of a student's staple diet but low-sugar baked beans are actually really good for you. Bags of protein in the beans and wholemeal toast has your complex carbohydrates. And if beans aren't your thing, eggs will do a similar job.

Chilli con carne – beans, lean mince, and brown rice all should set you up perfectly for exercise in a few hours. Fatty, greasy mince, white rice and salty tortilla chips will not.

Pre-training Snacks

Unless you're trying to lose body fat don't train on an empty stomach, you'll be running on empty and your performance will be impaired. Eat a small meal or snack between one and two hours before you start your training.

Great snacking foods are:

fruits (fresh is best but dried are still okay)
energy foods (cereal bars, energy drinks, protein shakes)

yogurt (low fat if possible)

whole grain foods (whole wheat cereal or wholemeal toast).

Snacking During the Day

Elite athletes keep their blood sugar level as constant as possible by snacking regularly (and healthily) during the day. Only do this if you're training enough not to add body weight from the increased food/calorie intake.

Target the same snacks you would as a pre-training boost – complex carbohydrates, fruits or protein shakes.

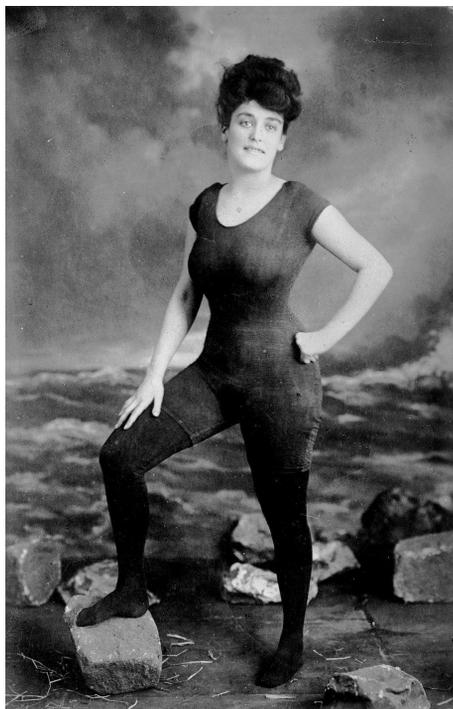
Recovery

If you're putting in the metres in the pool, your body will need a boost when you finish your training.

Always try to refuel within 30 minutes of finishing and preferably within 15 minutes – your body immediately needs nutrients to repair muscles and replace energy. A sandwich is a good choice. To learn how to make the perfect recovery sandwich [click here](#).

Make sure you're refuelling with the 'right' foods though – something low in fat but high in carbohydrates and protein.

A piece of History



"My early physical misfortune has turned out to be the greatest blessing that could have come to me. Without it I should have missed all the grim struggle upward and the reward that waited at the end of it all."

Annette Kellermann was just six years old when she developed weakness in her legs. This required her to wear painful steel braces and to help recovery, her parents enrolled Annette in swim classes.

As a teen her legs recovered and she became a champion swimmer, a record holder in the 100 yard and mile races in her native Australia. But more than just swimming, she became famous for advocating for women's rights.

"I can't swim wearing more stuff than you hang on a clothesline," she once said.

In a time when women were expected to wear dress and pantaloons to swim, she wore a one piece suit. And while doing so led to her arrest in 1907 in Massachusetts for indecency, with time she helped change the social norms. Her one piece suit, known as the Annette Kellermann, became a popular swimsuit for women.

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Note: If you enjoyed this story, please consider supporting Historical Snapshots with a donation. To donate, please visit our Patreon page at <https://www.patreon.com/historicalsnapshots>. Your support is much appreciated

Source: How to Swim by Annette Kellermann



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Inventory
Available

[Click here](#) to go to
our Online Order
Form or email
Michelle Barclay at
fastswimmingclothing@gmail.com





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Aqua Dates			Group						
Date	Event	Notes	PC	AQ1	AQ2	AQ3	AQ4	APJ	APS
Feb 17	Random Act of Kindness Day		x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Pre Competitive Winter 2021 Session

Start Date: Jan 11, 2021

End Date: March 14, 2021

The following must be completed/received prior to your swimmer being able to participate in the Winter Session:

- Respect in Sport Parent Certification completed
- CNB Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk Waiver signed and original handed into FAST at front desk
- Swimming Canada Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk Waiver electronically signed
- Payment of registration/insurance fees.

Please see our [website](https://www.teamunify.com/team/canfast/page/home) <https://www.teamunify.com/team/canfast/page/home> for last minute changes to our schedule as well as Swim Meet & Practice dates

Officiating Clinics

- March 16 – Stroke and Turn
- March 18 – Chief Timekeeper
- March 21 – Chief Finish Judge
- March 21 – Clerk of Course

[Sign Up for an Officiating Click Here](#)

For support with any issue, big or small.

 Text 686868

 KidsHelpPhone.ca

 Call 1-800-668-6868

 Message at Facebook.com/
CrisisTextLinepoweredbyKidsHelpPhone

Kids Help Phone 

February Birthdays

Caitlyn Blair	Ellison Hatt	Talia Nixon	Claire Van den Broeck
Benjamin Counsell	Dave Hu	Ewan O'Connor	Isabel Van den Broeck
Zade Farmer	Amelia Jeon	Rosalie Sinclair	Liam Weber
Tia Fonagy	Vivi Luo	Sally Smith	Sky Yu
Jerry Fu			

Used Clothing & Gear

- We have a growing amount of FAST used Team Clothing, gear, etc. that has been donated by our FAST families. If you have a need, please reach out to our office or any of our coaches and we will see if we have anything for your swimmer.
- If you have any gear or Team Clothing that your swimmer has grown out of and would like to donate to the Team, simply send it with your swimmer to practice and ask them to give it to their coach. Thank you!



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[Click here for more Contacts](#)