

# FORT MCMURRAY'S CHILD...IS A SWIMMER!

By Kim Norris

For 44 years, the Fort McMurray Manta Swim Club (FMSC) has been developing young athletes, creating healthier individuals and helping one or two Olympians on their way. Unless your child is a swimming prodigy it's not likely that they will start at an elite level like the Olympics, so where DO you start?

## *Let's start at the beginning.*

You've done the parent and tot lessons, or put your child into swimming lessons that develop aquatic readiness and you want more.... more progression, more water time, more activity. Potentially the Fort McMurray Swim Club can help with that but, before you register, consider if your swimmer is really ready. Competitive swimming levels are determined by age but your little one's emotional and mental readiness are equally, if not more, important. Swimming should be fun but without the emotional and mental skills to be able to achieve and deal with competition, coaching critiques, winning and losing, your child may soon decide that it's not fun, it's too much work, and they don't like swimming at all.

A swimmer that is not quite ready for the competitive team or a swimmer who needs to work on strength and endurance in the water in order to advance in their swimming lessons can continue learning and developing in the Fort McMurray Swim Club Manta Swim School. It could be called a bridge program, if you will; a great place to help prepare and guide a swimmer to the next level through the introduction of competitive strokes and drills. The Manta Swim School is a pre-competitive program based on skill development taught in a fun and positively reinforced environment. Even if your child decides the competitive vein is not for them, the Manta Swim School will help them become stronger and safer in the water.

Goals and dreams are the right of every able bodied or disabled athlete and the Fort McMurray Swim Club will help kids to establish and realize theirs. Exercise-induced asthma may be reduced in the moisture rich environment of the pool, attention deficit



Mini Mantas 2015



Breana Rusnell and Aidan Borse at Westerns 2015



Pre Practice Activation May 2015

disorder (ADD) may be calmed through the rhythmic and repetitive motions of the strokes, and tactile teaching methods can be used for athletes with visual or cognitive impairments.

Swimming provides both an aerobic and anaerobic workout, it takes (and develops) motor skills and coordination. Once a child has the basic command of the four competitive swim strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly), can swim the length of the pool unassisted, is mentally and emotionally ready, and expresses a clear desire to join the Fort McMurray Swim Club competitive program, they are most likely ready to try out.

If successful at the tryout, the coach will place your swimmer with other swimmers in the same general age group and ability. Competitive swimming means competing against other kids. Swimming Canada recognizes the youngest age group as 10 and under, though in local meets there may be a further breakdown to the 8 and under age category. Typically, the other age groups are 11 and 12, 13 and 14, 15 and 16, and, 18 and under or 18 and over (you could swim in the "Master Manta" program too). The Fort McMurray Swim Club has a range of swimming squads, or levels that promote growth and progression according to age and ability (see "Group Descriptions" on the website listed below).

Until the coach thinks it's time, your swimmer will compete in friendly in-house competition, and when it IS time, they will begin participating in local or regional swim meets and possibly as they progress, will move on to national and international events. As your swimmer progresses, their commitment, training, travel, and equipment requirements will increase. Likely, your involvement with the club will also increase. Many swimmers, coaches and swimmer family members resort to referencing their club with fondness as their "swim family", which is a commentary on how close the bonds that form are. The Fort McMurray Swim Club is a non-profit organization with a membership elected volunteer executive since 1971; generations of swimmers and executive members have been involved.

Your competitive athlete will need your support! They will need your support financially to pay for coaching, swim meets, lane rental, other facility rentals (dryland or weightlifting facilities for exam-

ple), and equipment. They will need your support as a volunteer so that the above fees can be kept in check and so events run smoothly and efficiently with combined efforts and brainpower of the membership. They will need your support physically to provide healthy and nutritious food. They will need your mental support and love most of all.

Swimming is a sport that can be continuously practiced well into adult years. It is a sport with benefits that go beyond learning how to swim fast and if you choose to give your child the opportunity... welcome to the family!

Online registration is open for the Fort McMurray Manta Swim Club 2015-2016 swimming season.

Go to: [www.fortmcmurrayswimming.com](http://www.fortmcmurrayswimming.com) to learn more, or email: [registrar@fortmcmurrayswimming.com](mailto:registrar@fortmcmurrayswimming.com) to set up a free assessment.

Associations and governing bodies: Swim Alberta

<http://www.swimalberta.ca/>

Swimming Canada <http://www.swimming.ca/>



A whole lot of Mantas on the blocks



Tia Norris and Alex Karamujic Ready for 200 Back Freeze or Fry 2015

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