



# Off The Blocks

January/  
February  
2015

ROW NOT ONLY PRODUCES GREAT SWIMMERS, WE DEVELOP GREAT PEOPLE!

DIVE ON IN!

## Head Coaches Report

by Mike Thompson

It has been a very eventful last couple of months for the Region of Waterloo Swim Club. Most notably, last month, we welcomed a new coach for Gold and Silver, Warren Barnes, and start a new era towards Long Term Athlete Development. Warren was selected because of his outstanding knowledge of skill and technique teaching. Warren provides another strong piece of foundation for us to build on as a club. His expertise in skill development and teaching will help with ROW's Long Term Athlete Development and Retention Strategy.

Currently, I am in my 6<sup>th</sup> month trying to gauge where this club is in its development stage. My general observation at this point is that we have great team pride and perform well now, but we need to think more long term. IE: How can we continue the great success that

our athletes are having this year for the next ten years? How do we get them from a regional or provincial podium to a national or international stage? I do like to see that the younger groups (especially Bronze, Silver, and Steel) are very spirited and excited about where they are going. The main aspect of development that I want to help all of our athletes and their parents understand is Long Term.

We all love swimming, otherwise we would not be here. The tough part about all of this is keeping it interesting and fun for many many years. Let's face it, if you're 12 right now, you potentially have 10 years before you're done university and possibly your swimming careers. What is going to keep you going for the next ten years? What is ROW's plan to keep you swimming for at least 10 years and (hopefully) longer?

All swimmers are faced with a few different (although very familiar over time) scenarios. The big ones are:

- a) I used to be a really fast 12 year old but now I'm not winning everything anymore so what's the point?
- b) I'm not the fastest and I'll never be the fastest so what's the point?
- c) The group of swimmers I used to be as fast as are now all national qualifiers and I'm not and I'm embarrassed by that so I don't want to swim

Swimming means so much more than just winning. But how much value is truly put on amateur sports? For whatever reason, here in Ontario, clubs driven by parents volunteers, really want to see their kids do really well NOW, with very

## Head Coach's Report, continued

little long term thinking. What is going to keep these athletes involved in the sport long enough to truly succeed? Look around... how many 14-16 year olds were at Pan Pacific Games last summer? How many will be at World Championships this summer? How many will be swimming at the Olympics next summer?

The 6 reasons that we are initiating our Long Term Athlete Development Plan:

1) Sports are about role playing. Tobias Oriwol articulated this very well for another team I coached at their Awards Banquet. Basically, Tobias put it this way: in football the roles are clearly defined: you're a blocker, your job is to stop someone from interfering with a rush or a pass play. Very little glory there; but you know that getting into it. In swimming it's a little different. Training roles and competing roles exist and it's important to figure out what role you play and how you make the TEAM better with you in it. If there was only room for world record holders, there would only be about 6 clubs in the world and those clubs on average would consist of 2 people each.

2) Average age of champions is on the rise. Aside for USA's Michael Andrew, the top 150 swim in the world are not exactly littered with 18 and unders. Swimming has to exist after high school in order for Canada to succeed in the world. Stephen Clarke (Canada's best freestyler and flyer back in 1996-2000) didn't even qualify for Nationals under age 18. Rick Say didn't even really start swimming

seriously until University. If you're 14 and not where you want to be year: don't sweat it! Your career can be very young. ROW is going to help you with that.

3) It's about the journey, not the end result:

"Swimming produces some of the best and most well round people" - Dean Boles, Ontario Provincial Mentor Coach

Swimming can teach you so many things, amongst them, time management. Not many other sports demand as much training at inconvenient house... as a result, swimmers have the opportunity to learn how to balance a busy and important school schedule with a long training schedule. I say the opportunity because it is very tempting to not train during exams or busy school times, and this is the challenge and the lesson. I'll say (and be accountable for) the following statement: Swimmers are better people, but it's a learned attribute. Rise to the challenge ahead of you; not just the easy ones.

4) Self Reliance: I swam for (what feels like) a lifetime. In that time I really learned a lot about myself. At 15, I realized that I was a big wimp and it embarrassed me. Upon that realization, I decided I wanted to become more self reliant (in charge of my attendance, swimming, travel, etc). There were several times when my family was going away for a weekend and I stayed behind to train. There were many times when my mom would put me on a team bus or with another swimmer's family and wish me luck for the weekend. I was (with the exception of my coaches and teammates) on my

own. At 19 I was still not very adventurous (I decided to stay in Ontario for University rather than scholarship) but I really feel that swimming kept me on track in University and made me University ready. Those opportunities are there for everyone in the sport.

5) Fitness: I have 2 children under the age of 8 and it's very easy to let fitness slip when you have children. However, I had done so much in the past that I was still able to fake general fitness for years... and when I got back into a gym, it didn't take me very long to get back into shape... AND I knew what I was going to do to get me there. This is my roundabout way of saying that the benefits of childhood fitness pay off. Trust me! Also, swimming is a life skill. You should always want to pass that skill to your kids... and then beat them in a race and gloat about it.

6. What if you ARE the best and just don't know it? Above, I referenced Rick Say and Stephen Clarke, obvious late bloomers, but how would they know if they backed out at 13? You owe it to yourself to answer that question. Train and practice as if you already know the answer is "yes". You can never prove it unless you stick around long enough to prove it.

Far too many athletes give up too early because no one can give them an answer to that question. I've given you 6. See you at the pool at 18, right?

Mike Thompson

Head Coach ROW/WLU Swimming

# Bronze & Athletic Swim

By: Kaitlyn Mains

Before I dive into my group review for the month, I want to take a minute and touch on what Mike is talking about above.

First off, let me say, you all are unbelievably lucky. As some of you know I started swimming when I was 7 in Toronto for a great little club called East York Swim Club that had much more long term approach to athlete development, sadly this club closed when I was about 12 years old, and I was forced to find a new team to call my swim family. My sister and I relocated to another small team in the area, and sadly the approach was not the same. We swam a lot of metre, and I mean a lot. I swam 11 plus practices a week, and every practice was 2 plus hours in the water. For a few years I was great. I was in amazing shape, swimming best times at every meet, and on what I thought was a program that was setting me up for national success. Sadly at 15 I stopped improving. My coaches solution to this problem? Increase my practice, more training, more metres. Surprisingly this didn't work. Swimming doubles every day but Tuesdays my body had no rest and recovery time, by 16 I had a horrible shoulder injury. At this time my parents decided enough was enough and my sister and I were removed from the club and taken to one that was geared towards long term success. Sadly at 16 it was too late for me, but wasn't for my sister. She thrived on programs that focused on technique and swimming properly.

My sister is has now been a National Team member multiple times, and a national record holder in the 200 and 400 IM, and is still swimming competitively today. I know it can be easy to focus on winning, and being the fastest and best now, but lets strive for having swimmers with amazing technique, who love to swim, and are set up for long term success. I know that is my ultimate goal.

Now, into my group review.

I know it's hard to believe but we are now almost half way into our swim season and I am absolutely thrilled with the progress I've seen in both Bronze and Athletic Swim. It's so excited to see how much the swimmers have changed technically, as well as to see the friendships that have developed within the groups. Friends cheering each other on at meets, encouraging each other in practice, or hearing they are meeting up outside of practice really warms my heart (especially when it's -25 out).

January and February were huge months for our Bronze group. First in January every athlete from Bronze attended the Winter Invitational held at WLU, where two members from our group qualified to participate at the Regional Championships (special congratulations to Kingsten Leu, and Victoria Chai) bringing our total number of group qualifiers up to 9. This meet was also the first competitive meet ever for Shawn Sun, Allie Minard, Lucas Bociort and Vikoria Franjic. In February

Bronze sent Simon Armbruster, Broedan Marner, Alexander Rus, Victoria Chai and Hannah Gallagher to Windsor to compete in our regions championship meet. They all did outstanding, coming home with best times, and the championship experience. The weekend following Regionals Alexandra Oana, Allie Minard, Viktoria Franjic, Charlotte Rus, Samantha Berton and Athan Turner practiced in a dual meet with the Halton Hills Bluefins. This was a great meet for our group. Each swimmers practiced in relays, and swam new events including the 200 IM, and 50 fly.

The last few months have been exciting ones, and we are only just getting started. In March ROW has its annual swim-a-thon. As some of you may know I am extremely competitive when it comes to my group raising money and before my maternity leave had won 3 years in a row for the group to raise the most money, so encourage your kids to ask for sponsors! And in April we start long course season where swimmers will try and pick up new regional times and maybe some festivals! Encourage your swimmers to swim smart and with a purpose when they are in practice. It really does help when they are reminded that training properly is much more effective than training hard and sloppy. Remember, practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.

~ Kaitlyn

# Gold & Silver

by Warren Barnes

We had an excellent month of training going into Regionals, and it paid off in full with our swimmers going personal bests, achieving festival times, and some swimmers making their very first final at Regionals.

We as a group have started to create good habits in, and out of the swimming pool. Some of the most important habits have been making sure have a snack after swim practice, having our equipment ready for practice, have our water bottles filled and ready, and getting becoming more efficient in the water.

In the coming months we will be working on more complex swimming techniques, and working on our mental game in preparation for meets. While training at the Toronto National Centre I have been given a very unique skill set. I was given access to sports psychologist, nutritionist, physiologists, and Olympic medalist coaching. I have learned, and understood how apply this information in my teaching, and I will be passing these skill sets to your swimmers to have that “athletic mindset” of being a champion on every level.

# Steel, TOPs & Stars

by Alexander Johnson

Hello all swimming families!

In this month’s newsletter I wanted to provide just a few updates as we approach March Break.

For all groups, we will be assessing swimmers for group changes throughout this month. All assessments will take place during regular practice times in which coaches will determine whether we believe a swimmer ready to move forward. If we believe further assessment is necessary we will notify the families. Stay tuned. As for our March Break schedules:

**Steel:**

I recognize that many families maybe going away for March Break but I will still be holding workouts regularly for those of you that are around. It is a great opportunity to get out of the house and stay active over the break. We will maintain our regular schedule. Hope to see everyone there!

**TOPs:**

We will be taking Match Break off. I believe that this point of our development it is important to have breaks in our schedule. Take the time as a family and enjoy your break headed into the home stretch of our swim season.

**Stars:**

March 13th will be the last day of session two which is fast approaching! Session 3 begins April 9th, so stay tuned for session 3 registration!

Just keep swimming!

## Swimmers of the Month

Senior 1: Stephanie Zhang

Senior 2: Christian Iverson-Marr

Athletic: Hugh MacFarlane

Gold: Jessica Wormald

Silver: Luka Tomic

Steel: Jack Cui

Bronze: Victoria Chai

Top 1: Pavel Titoura

Top 2: Ivana Ivkovic

Stars: Jack Donovan

## ROW Birthdays

Alina Armbruster

Faith McKay

Monika Czajkowski

Gustavo Santoyo-Orozco

Jasmine Raines

Helena Katona

Lucas Lam

Hooman Reza Nezhad

Marieve Morcos

Jenny Zhang

Ivana Ivkovic

Chelsea Mollitor

Amy Xie

# Swim-A-Thon 2015

Swim-A-Thon 2015 is only weeks away! Saturday, March 28th at the WLU pool starting at 8:00 a.m. Breakfast to be served following swims.

Mike will be sending out details on group time slots shortly. We are planning prizes for group sales as well as Club top sales prizes. Details on prizes will be sent out shortly.

All donations will be made using an online system called RaiseAThon, to make raising funds easier for our membership and for the donors. We will provide instructions on how to register with RaiseAThon in a communication that will be sent out to families via Team Unify. Once your swimmer is registered, you'll be able to reach out to family, friends, and colleagues to get pledges. Please provide them with the link [www.ontarioswimathon.ca/row](http://www.ontarioswimathon.ca/row). The link will remain open until April 30 for donations/pledges.

The proceeds from this Swim-a-thon will be used to purchase a new record board as well as some additional technology for coaches to work with our athletes.

As with many committees within the Club, the Swim-a-thon Committee could use a few volunteers. We are in need of someone who is able to spearhead the swim cap design contest as well as someone to assist with sponsors. Please contact [swimathon@rowswimming.ca](mailto:swimathon@rowswimming.ca) to let us know of your availability to help with this exciting event.

## From Our Director-At-Large

ROW runs numerous programs and events which would not be possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers.

We appreciate all these volunteer contributions and would like to say thank you for the many hours you dedicate to making our club a success. At present, we have a few areas that could use further assistance. The following committees are in need of volunteers: Awards Banquet, Fundraising, Meet Management, Food Services, and Membership.

If you are a parent, or a high school student or know of other high school students in need of volunteer hours, and are able to provide assistance, please send an e-mail to [directoratlarge@rowswimming.ca](mailto:directoratlarge@rowswimming.ca) and arrangements will be made to put you in contact with the appropriate individual.

As a friendly reminder, Team Unify e-mails went out regarding official's clinics presented by The Western Ontario Swimming Association on Saturday, March 7th at Conestoga College located at 850 Fountain Street, Cambridge, ON N3H 0A8. Please contact Glenn Greig at [westernswimofficials@gmail.com](mailto:westernswimofficials@gmail.com) to sign up.

## Message from the Office

### 2014 Tax Receipts

With Team Unify, our new registration/account billing system, you are now able to print your own tax receipts. Please follow these steps to print your tax receipt for 2014.

- 1) Log into your account
- 2) Click the My Account Tab
- 3) Select \$My Invoice/Payment from the drop-down menu
- 4) Select Billing History (at the bottom)
- 5) Click the Search Billing/Payment History button
- 6) Enter 01/09/2014 for begin date and Enter 31/12/2014 for the end date
- 7) Click Search
- 8) Click the Print Button

If you have questions please contact [office@rowswimming.ca](mailto:office@rowswimming.ca)

# ROW Movie Matinee

## You're all invited to a ROW Movie Matinee!

What's the event? : "TOUCH THE WALL" smash hit movie, starring Missy Franklin and Kara Lynn Joyce - swim Olympians

When's show time? : Sunday March 8th at 2:00pm

Where is it? : Princess Twin Theatre, Waterloo

How much does it cost? : Only \$5 per person donation

How do I get tickets? : We've booked the whole theatre with only 140 seats available. Tickets will go fast!

Please email Lynda Wormald to reserve your tickets today at [lynda@wormald.ca](mailto:lynda@wormald.ca)

### About the Movie:

On the evening of Saturday August 4, 2012, 17 year-old Missy Franklin won her fourth Gold medal of the London Olympic Games when she swam the backstroke leg of the women's 4x100 medley relay. It was Missy's second world record of the Olympic games; it was her 5th Olympic medal.

It was a crowning moment for swimming's brightest new star and end of a chapter of her marvelous journey.

That Saturday was also the end of her teammate Kara Lynn Joyce's long and productive Olympic career. And though she finished with four Silver medals, just making it to her third Olympics was her greatest accomplishment.

The fortunes of Missy and Kara - and that of their coach, Todd Schmitz - are the stories of Touch the Wall.

Missy's story is becoming known - an all-American teenager who, when she's not dominating her competition in the pool can be found doing her homework, hanging out with her friends, or just having fun at whatever she's doing. And she possibly might just be the nicest person on the planet.

As for Kara, she finished her college career as one of the most decorated female swimmers. She has long had the reputation as one of the sport's hardest workers ... and most respected athletes. Somewhat unexpectedly, they both made the Olympics, and Missy had a phenomenal start to her Olympic career as she won 4 golds and a bronze.

Upon returning to Colorado, Missy resumed her life as a teenager. Determined to stay amateur and swim for the NCAA's as Kara did, she turned down millions of dollars and committed to UC Berkeley. She'll start as a freshman in the fall of 2013.

Touch the Wall is the story of how these two amazing women and their coach got to where they are. It's a story of winning and losing, of commitment, and of triumph through adversity. It's also a story of family, of loving what you do, and having fun with the people around you. In a world starved for heroes, Missy and Kara stand tall in

Touch the Wall.

# 2014 Year-end Financial Statements

On February 2, 2015, the Board approved the annual audited financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2014. These financial statements will be posted in the members-only section on the ROW website. Highlights of these year-end financial statements are:

- Good fiscal management has left the club in a strong financial position for the future.
- Revenues, comprised primarily from member fees, account for 75% of the overall revenue.
- Expenses have remained fairly constant over the last several years with pool rental and coaching salaries accounting for 82% of the total expenses.
- The Club has reserves for the future:
  - No Restricted Reserves. There is nothing imposed on us externally.
  - Internally Restricted Reserves, mainly for the High Performance Fund. These funds support our swimmers once they reach the Provincial level and higher of competition with meet fees.
  - All other reserves are Unrestricted Reserves and are available for use at the clubs discretion.
  - The Club has a cash balance to support the reserves.

These results are good and indicate the club is sound financially for the future. Should you have any questions on the actual financial statements, please feel free to contact me through email to [treasurer@rowswimming.ca](mailto:treasurer@rowswimming.ca).