**Motivation**

By Gemma Durand

At big competitions, it’s easy to find motivation to race. However, at less important competitions, it can be difficult to find motivation. When you get tired, there’s not that many fans to cheer you on. If there’s no finals, your teammates might not be there to support you and push you to go faster. Also, it can feel like there’s not as many rewards if you go fast since there might not be medals or competitors you want to beat. The warm-ups are usually very busy and it’s difficult to warm-up with different teams and different levels of swimmers all squished into one lane. Even though warm-ups can be very crowded, it is important to prepare yourself for success in your races and warm-up properly.

There are a number of ways to find motivation to perform at your best at every competition, no matter the level. First of all, think about what you’re training for and know what you are working towards. Focus on your goals, whether it be making a time standard to a higher level competition, breaking a club record, or provincial record. Every race is an opportunity to improve and reach your goals. In addition, take advantage of getting to race with less pressure. It’s important to do your best at smaller competitions so that you can push harder at big competitions. Like you should only practice stuff you want to do in a race, you should only practice racing fast at lower level competitions to prepare for big competitions. If you go a best time at a small competition, it is setting you up to improve a lot when you are shaved and tapered. Finally, remember to support your teammates by cheering them on and doing your best in every race. This can inspire and motivate everyone to try to go even faster. Overall, always put in your best effort at every practice and competition as it will pay off in the long run.