

2016 NJ Long Course Eastern Zone Report

Submitted by: Sandra Franc

The New Jersey All-Star Zone team traveled to Hempstead, NY for the 2015 Eastern Zone Long Course Championships. 220 New Jersey athletes competed in this 4 day Age Group championship. Many athletes saw not only best times, but a few NJ records and Eastern Zone records. The NJ Zone team finished 6 place overall as a team. Darien Bestances broke the Eastern Zone boys 11-12 50 Breaststroke record with a time of 32.24L. The boys 10 & Under 200 free EZ record as well as the 200 Medley record with Eric Lee, Aaron Baitaylis, Greg Lin, and Hunter Kuenzel) 2:01.00L. and 2:15.28L. The boys 10 & Under 400 medley relay consisting of (Baitaylis, Lee, Kuenzel with the addition of Ha Young Choe) with a time of 4:28.51L.

This years' meet was an exception challenge with only 1 day turn-around between Jr. Olympics and the meet itself. Administratively we were faced with having to turn swimmers away because they made events at JO's but did not fill out an application. The meet deadline was actually one week prior to our JO meet and the meet management held open our entries to accommodate our entries, thus making the meet administratively very difficult on their end. We were not able to have even one practice as a team to for the coaches to get to know the swimmers and vice versa. With 220 athletes this was less than optimal to say the least. The coaching staff of (Sandra Franc (HACY), Ahmed Abdelaal (SCAR), Jim Rimbault (RBY), Andrea Marumoto (SVY), Sara Kucsan (SVY), Will Murphy (OCY), Ryan Carlucci (MEY) and Meredith Forman (BAC) were exceptional faced with having to familiarize themselves with such a large number of new athletes to them with no pre-practice prior to going into competition. The coaches were able to make sure that no athlete missed any events and that each athlete was watched and given feedback. There were many frustrations and difficulties however to be faced by both coaches and athletes as well as administratively. With no pre-meeting by parents or practice with athletes, choosing relays with a huge new team was less than adequate. In addition to the fact that many of our athletes were transient throughout the weekend since LI is so close to NJ. Relay with the exclusion of 10 & under are all swam in the finals pm session and athletes would either not show up or text or email coaches well after prelims when relays are posted and confirmed with swimmers and their families. The coaches spend numerous hours attempting to contact athletes and their families to formulate the best relay teams on short notice.

As the head coach for many years I have seen our athletes rise to the occasion as well as wonderful coaching and team administration by the NJ swimming team manager and staff. This meet as well as the 2016 short course zone meet we were all faced with less than 2 day turnarounds. This cannot continue. First off, we are asking meet management to extend the entry deadline for our team entries which is unfair to them and their smooth running of their meet. I am highly recommending that the H.O.D. schedule the Jr. Olympic championship meet at least one week prior to the zone championship. First off it is a huge undertaking by the staff to have to verify eligibility, make entries and chose athletes, secondly it is unfair to athletes, coaches and parents to go cold into this high level meet with no team preparation and lastly it is additionally unfair to athletes who have just come off a tiring long championship meet weekend of 3 or 4 days to have to turn around and expect to compete at their best

for another meet against the best athletes on the East coast with no rest and recovery, (this is also additionally hard on the coaches). It is no wonder that our standings as a team have dropped to 5 and 6th place in the past few competitions though we have very strong athletes. Our swimmers have risen to the occasion but we saw distinct signs of fatigue by day 3 and 4.

I would like to commend Stephanie Crofton and NJ Swimming office for instilling the new NJ Zone team unify page. It was extremely helpful in all coaches being able to pull lists, send group emails and reports during the course of the meet. The only set back was due to poor Wi-Fi in the Nassau Aquatic Center and difficulty getting both internet and cell service during the meet.

Kudos to the swimmers, coaches and parents for a long, stressful but always FUN meet where despite adversity, we had broken records and best times... NJ ROCKS!

Swimmingly yours,

Sandra Franc

Hamilton Aquatic Club

NJ Swimming Head Coach