



Mya Garcia makes the podium in the 50 Breaststroke

# Chicago Park District Swim Club Newsletter

1119 W. Cullerton St.  
Chicago, IL 60608

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## CPD Steps it Up

by Camaxtle Olivo

As the largest swim club in the USA, the Chicago Park District has open the door for children across the city into the sport of competitive swimming. The park district's partnership with USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming enhances the program with access to the highest levels of competition in the sport of swimming.

The Chicago Park District would like to invite you to take advantage of the amazing program made available to the City of Chicago.

The 100 USA Swimming member coaches of the Chicago Park District are provided with unique educational opportunities provided by USA Swimming. Our staff is scheduled to attend various swim clinics held by some of the top sports consultants in USA Swimming.

USA Swimming is building a coach mentorship program for the staff of the Chicago Park District. Lead Instructors from each region of the city have been selected to work directly with the USA Swimming sports consultants and the CPD aquatic coaches. In an attempt to streamline educational information and growth of staff coaching skills, lead instructors and aquatic coaches will have direct lines of communication with USA Swimming mentors.

Coaches bring the knowledge that they obtain from National level consultants back to your community.

What does this mean for you?

The level of competition within the Chicago Park District local program is rapidly rising. Athletes are becoming faster and achieving the best times of their swim careers. Along with developing important lifelong habits, skills, and ideals associated with student-athletes. Student-Athletes happen to be some of the best students in school, often achieving higher test scores and better grades than those who aren't.

This past January the Chicago Park District "A" Championship was sanctioned by Illinois Swimming as an official USA Swimming competition. This competition was held at the Whitney Young High School pool. From this competition alone 20 different park locations across the city had athletes qualify for the Illinois Swimming Regional Championship. Of these athletes only 5 are attending the Illinois Age Group Championship, and 1 athletes for the Senior Championship.

The Age Group Championship is the top most competition for athletes 14 and under in the state of Illinois, as is the Senior Championship for athletes 15 and over. Beyond this swim meet athletes strive to qualify for the Central Zone Championship.

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Melissa Yu gets the Silver medal in the 100 IM

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Kimberly Acosta flies through the water, Butterfly.

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# Swimming Tips

by Camaxtle Olivo

Trying to swim at your optimal speed requires lots of training and commitment. One of the key components to a great swim is efficient turns. Often lots of swimmers lose time on the walls, due to bad habits rather than poor technique. We will focus on open turns in this segment and breakdown the common mistakes.

"Get in and Get out" should be the mantra your swimmers ponder when practicing turns. Athletes should never slow down when approaching a wall. If anything teach them to speed up, and always focus on pushing away from the wall, not grasping the wall and pulling toward it.

Open turn common mistakes include; #1 Jack in the box, #2 pushing off on the stomach, #3 pushing off to shallow, #4 looking at the wall.

## #1 Jack in the box

This refers to swimmers that grab the wall, pulling in and pushing up sending the head and shoulders up out of the water. The swimmer gets a lot of air time but at the cost valuable time.

Don't be the Jack in the box!!!

To remedy this unsightly common mistake, begin with a simple drill. Allow the athlete to swim into the wall, letting the arms act as shock absorbers stretched out in front of them. The arms should absorb the wall by collapsing into the wall, then springing back propelling the swimmer backwards. Having your athletes to repeat this action will help prevent grasping and pulling of the wall.

After athletes become comfortable with springing back off the wall, add the legs in and complete the turn. The head should remain down and continue traveling forward toward the wall as the athlete drives the knees and legs forward beneath them. As the legs come forward the elbow bends to push away from the wall. Keep the shoulders and head down until after the touch, tuck, and elbow.

Delay the breath.

The breath should come late in the turn as the head and shoulders roll back. Reinforce the idea that the breath is the last step of the turn, not the first.

A very good drill to work on driving the knees and legs forward while keeping the head down is the tuck and back spin. Athletes should swim breaststroke or butterfly. At a designated spot in the pool away from the wall, the athlete should stop and drive the knees forward into a tuck while keeping the head down. The force of driving the knees and legs forward under the body, into the tuck, should carry enough momentum to cause the athlete to perform a backspin or back somersault. Have your athlete focus on keeping the head down and using the legs to initiate the back spin, not the arms.

## #2 Pushing off on the stomach

Many swimmers waste time on the wall during the turn waiting to rotate all the way to the front on the stomach, while others increase resistance by dropping into the water with the entire width of the body rather than sliding in on the side.

Don't waste time rotating.

The easiest way to correct this mistake is to re-teach the ready position and push off. The athletes should get in the habit of always pushing off in the ready position. Athletes need to be toward the front when leaving the wall but not on the front side. They rotate to the front as they push off.

When setting up the ready position ensure that the swimmers grasp the wall and plant their feet on the wall while remaining on their side. Keep the feet and knees facing up and have the swimmer release the wall and drop into the water on their side. Swimmers should push off the wall on their side keeping the knees above the feet until after they leave the wall. Then rotate in streamline on to the stomach.

## #3 Pushing to shallow

Often when an athlete is pushing off the wall to shallow, it is due to a bad timing. If your athlete has mastered the ready position and pushing off the wall but continues to push off to shallow when performing a turn, perhaps their arms are too slow.

The athlete needs to move the arms faster. An athlete must swim into the wall, use the arms to absorb the shock and push off as the knees and legs are driving forward.

The hands and feet are never on the wall at the same time.

Getting the hands off the wall faster allows the body to get in the ready position faster and to drop into the water far enough to push off at the optimal depth.



Kimberly Acosta and Natalia Bautista on the podium for the relay

## #4 Looking at the wall

Athletes are very competitive, often they want to look at their competition, the finish or the turn wall. Although athletes may gain motivation from these images, they break the streamline position and increase drag.

Don't look forward.

There is a reason why the swimming pool has a black line on the bottom of the pool. While athletes may need to look forward when practicing for safety reason, when they race there is no one else in the lane.

Begin training your athletes to keep their eyes on the black line. They should know where the wall is and should initiate the turn without looking forward.

Using an underwater mirror on the bottom of the pool could help an athlete. Instructing your athlete to look at the mirror as they touch the wall will help them keep their head down. Tell them, "See the touch." If they cannot see their hands touching the wall they are lifting their head too early.

Work on these common mistakes and watch as the turns become smoother and faster, shaving second off.



*Avery McDowell, Kacper Staniszewski, Kajus Rudzevicius, and Shuhan Zhao take 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 200 freestyle relay.*

## CPD Steps it Up cont.

by Camaxtle Olivo

The Central Zone is comprised of 15 LSCs (Local Swim Committees) that govern the sport of swimming across the mid-west. Athletes represent the state of Illinois when attending this competition, and compete against 8 different states' top swimmers. Athletes that excel may qualify for swim competitions on the national level. It all begins at a park near you.

This year the Chicago Park District will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Splash meet at UIC. This meet will take place on April 28-29, 2018.

The Spring Splash is a great opportunity for the athletes of the Chicago Park District to obtain officially recorded times. These times will be stored on the USA Swimming National database, and may be used to qualify for championship meets. Such as, State, Zone, and National championships.

The Chicago Park District will maintain the extremely low entry fee of \$1 per event, and \$2 per athlete IL surcharge.

This is made possible through the partnership. Often fees to these types of USA Swimming sanctioned meets are much higher and facility charges are applied, leading to entry fees 5-10 times as much one would spend at the Spring Splash meet.

The Spring Splash will be officiated by volunteer members of Illinois Swimming Inc. Amanda Schleede, the CPD's first volunteer official, will be the meet referee at the meet in April.

Some of you may remember Amanda from the "A" Championship, she was the meet referee. Once again she will be taking up the task of ensuring we have a smooth running swim meet. Without her and other volunteer officials these meets would not be possible. If you are interested in becoming more involved in your children's sport, consider becoming an official.

The parent's group has been amazing helping out with fundraising and running concessions at some meets. Adriana Ortiz, President of the parent's group, has been a huge help to the swimming program. She has organized the parents for volunteering to run concessions at our "A, B, C" and summer swim meets. As well as the Spring Splash meet at UIC. The parents group will provide a Hospitality Room for officials and coaches. As well as run concessions and organize various vendors to be present at the meet to help with fundraising.



*Lizeth Montes with Bronze in the 100 Butterfly.*



*Avery McDowell clinches the Bronze in the 50 Breaststroke, and Gold in the 50 Freestyle with IL age group qualifying times.*

The parents group has been able to fund Championship Team t-shirts for all of the athletes that competed in the Illinois Swimming Championships. In the past, they have supplied the funds to purchase the underwater cameras used by the aquatic coaches to film athletes that attend the center of excellence practices, and the underwater filming days held at parks across the city, for performance evaluation reference. If you wish to help out please reach out to the parents group

In June USA Swimming sports consultants will be flying out to host a Top 10 clinic. The lead instructors and aquatic coaches will work with the USA Swimming consultants to facilitate this exclusive top 10 clinic.

Clinics like this normally cost hundreds of dollars. This will be free to the top 10 high points winners from each age group and gender at the Spring Splash meet. The minimum age will be 11 and age will be determined the first day of the swim meet. The list of athletes invited to the June Top 10 Clinic will be posted on the CPDswimclub.com website in the event page "USA swimming Top 10 Clinic." Please keep an eye out for the list of the high points winners from the Spring Splash meet.

So be sure to sign up and swim fast.



Rafael Munoz takes Bronze in the 400 IM

## Season Performance

by Elizabeth Pantoja

The Chicago Park District's winter season was a huge success! Having attended 13 Illinois Swimming Inc. swim meets as well as having our very own "A" Championship sanctioned as a USA Swimming event helped contribute to the success of this season. There were 43 Regional Championship qualifiers from the Chicago Park District "A" Championship swim meet alone, a total of 52 qualifiers all together.

The Chicago Park District's biggest swim meet this season was the Valentine's Day Last Chance swim meet hosted by BRRY Ryall YMCA. The CPD was in attendance with 71 athletes participating. We had eight athletes qualify for additional Regional events and three athletes qualify for the Illinois Age Group Championship.

At the Illinois Swimming Regional Championship meet, the Chicago Park District had 35 athletes in attendance. The Chicago Park District came in 9<sup>th</sup> place out of 19 teams overall. CPD had many athletes make the podium. Awarded with Top 8 in one or more events, the top 8 finishers were; Melissa Yu- Fosco Park, Shuhan Zhao – Independence Park, Brayan Ruiz - Kosciuszko Park, Emmanuel Cisneros – Piotrowski Park, Avery McDowell – Ping Tom Park, Christian Gonzalez – Portage Park, Lizeth Montes – Welles Park, Elisa Montes –

Wentworth/Kennedy Park, Kimberly Acosta – Harrison Park, Mya Garcia - Harrison Park, and from Shabbona Park - Camila Bautista, Daniel Galinski, Kristina Muharremaj, Rafael Munoz, Suzana Sharakhija, Kacper Staniszewski, Maja Staniszewski, and Abigail Tipan.

One athlete, Suzana Sharakhija, participated in the Illinois Swimming Senior Championship.

The final swim meet of the Short Course Yards (SCY) season for the Chicago Park District is the Illinois Swimming Age Group Championships. This year the Wheaton swim club will be hosting this meet at the Pleasant Prairie RecPlex in Wisconsin. The qualifiers from the Chicago Park District are Daniel Galinski, Biko Hooper-Haviland, Avery McDowell, Brayan Ruiz, and Melissa Yu.

Daniel Galinski finished in 15<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> place in the state for his age group in 1000yd Freestyle, 200yd Breaststroke and 100yd Breaststroke. Avery McDowell finished in 20<sup>th</sup> in the state for the 50yd Breaststroke in 10 and under. Biko Hooper-Haviland finished 8<sup>th</sup> place in the 100yd Butterfly in 10 and under.

Kicking off the spring season, is the Chicago Park District 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Splash swim meet. The swim meet will be April 28-29 at the UIC Natatorium. The Chicago Park District expects a great turn out once again, with many new Championship qualifiers.

The first official swim meet of the Long Course Season (LCM) will be the Arena Spring Pentathlon hosted by St. Charles Swim Team. This swim meet will be May 4-6 at the John B. Norris Rec. Center. The deadline for this swim meet is April 2, so sign up now!

The Chicago Park District is planning on attending 7 qualifier swim meets and 3 championship meets. It is also recommended that anyone that qualifies for the Zone Championship attend to represent the state of Illinois.

Over the winter break, the Chicago Park District hosted a Winter Break Camp at Whitney Young High School. Our focus was to improve technique and teach new drills to the athletes. Each day was broken down to focus on 2 strokes per day. On the final day the focus was starts and turns.

There were 46 athletes at the winter break camp. This included athletes from other more expensive swim clubs in the state such

as North Side Aquatics and Chicago Wolfpack Aquatics Club.

The Chicago Park District would like to give a great thank you to the swimmers, coaches, and parents for putting in the effort this season. By attending swim meets, organizing fundraisers, and offering to help wherever it was needed, CPD was able to successfully finish the season. The CPD Center of Excellence continues to grow in participation and the participation at swim meets continues to increase. This is all thanks to you guys who have put in the effort to try and make the Chicago Park District not only the biggest team in the country, but also the best. Again, thank you.



Camila Bautista makes the podium for 50 Breaststroke



Brayan Ruiz takes the Bronze in the 100 Butterfly with an IL age group qualifying time.

# NEW RECORDS

## Chicago Park District Short Course Yards (SCY)

Old Record			Age & Event	New Record		
Year	Name	Time		Time	Name	Year
2014	Adrian Gorski	10:33.51	1000 Freestyle	<b>10:33.06</b>	Daniel Galinski	2018
2008	Ruben Garcia	30.31	50 Backstroke	<b>29.48</b>	Jalen Harris	2018
2013	Adrian Gorski	2:06.72	200 Backstroke	<b>2:05.39</b>	Daniel Galinski	2018
2017	Natalia Sotelo	1:11.71	100 Breaststroke	<b>1:08.45</b>	Suzanna Sharaxhija	2018
2009	Lagodzinska N. Martinez R. Lara K. Rodriguez Y.	2:02.83	200 Medley Relay	<b>1:58.27</b>	Muharremaj K. Acosta K. Sharaxhija S. Bautista N.	2018

### New Records by Age

Old Record			Age & Event	New Record		
Year	Name	Time		Time	Name	Year
			50 Freestyle			
2010	Erika Martinez	25.63	15-16	<b>25.43</b>	Suzanna Sharaxhija	2018
2015	Adriana Velazquez	27.42	17-18	<b>26.99</b>	Lauren Hodges	2018
			50 Backstroke			
2010	Nikol Lagodzinska	31.53	13-14	<b>31.33</b>	Kristina Muharremaj	2018
2008	Annastasia Bell	36.23	17-18	<b>32.49</b>	Yuliana Estrada	2018
2017	Kenneth Hamlin	30.41	13-14	<b>29.48</b>	Jalen Harris	2018
			100 Backstroke			
2008	Rebecca Martinez	1:08.11	11-12	<b>1:07.93</b>	Kristina Muharremaj	2018
2010	Erika Martinez	1:07.66	15-16	<b>1:04.41</b>	Suzana Sharaxhija	2018
			200 Backstroke			
2013	Adrian Gorski	2:06.72	13-14	<b>2:05.39</b>	Daniel Galinski	2018
			50 Breaststroke			
2014	Daniel Galinski	39.29	10 & U	<b>38.80</b>	Avery McDowell	2018
2017	Yarely Contreras	50.88	15-16	<b>36.57</b>	Kimberly Acosta	2018
N/A	N/A	N/A	17-18	<b>38.19</b>	Yuliana Estrada	2018
			100 Breaststroke			
2010	Erika Martinez	1:13.93	15-16	<b>1:08.45</b>	Suzana Sharaxhija	2018
			200 Breaststroke			
N/A	N/A	N/A	10 & U	<b>3:19.81</b>	Avery McDowell	2018
2010	Erika Martinez	2:39.43	15-16	<b>2:38.46</b>	Suzana Sharaxhija	2018
			50 Butterfly			
N/A	N/A	N/A	17-18	<b>30.40</b>	Lauryn Hodges	2018