

# **FISH OF THE MONTH**

## **DEREK LIU**



Congratulations to Derek Liu on being named the November FISH of the Month. His continued dedication and motivation, ability to take criticism and praise, and his attitude at practice and support of his teammates made him a standout for this honor. In the eight years that Derek has swam for the FISH he has progressed through four of our practice groups (from Mini FISH to Terrific FISH), traveled to Omaha with his teammates for our Olympic Trials training camp, and experienced the joys and disappointments of meets.

Derek has always worked incredibly hard at practice; striving to not only be on the top intervals at practice, but to perfect his stroke technique as well. And though his times would drop throughout the season, Derek had never qualified for any of the meets requiring cut times or made finals at any of the prelims/finals meets he attended. For many swimmers, this would be a disappointment that would be hard to overcome. However, Derek never gave up.

This summer, his last summer as a 14 year old, Derek had a chance to make Age Group Champs (our end of the summer championship meet for 14 & unders). In both the 50 and the 100 Free, he missed the cut by tenths of a second. Instead of allowing this to derail him, he set a new goal for himself: qualifying for the RMSC Holiday Invite in December.

Heading in to the Swim and Rock, his last chance to qualify for Holiday Invite, Derek knew he needed to make one more cut time. On the first day, he swam the 200 breast, 100 fly, and 200 back, and for the first time ever, made finals in all three events. Excited for his first finals swims ever, he was able to drop 6 seconds from his morning swim in the 200 back; winning the "B" final and earning his third qualifying time for the Holiday Invitational. After eight years, at the age of 14, he had done it! Many swimmers would have given up, or simply stopped setting goals for themselves. Their practice attendance may have dwindled and their effort and attitude at practice may have changed. It's easy to let the discouragement take over, but if you keep changing your outlook and setting new goals, you can accomplish great things.