



# Silver Tide Undercurrents News Letter

April 2010 Newsletter

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PRESIDENT – Brad Murray 780-416-3900  
HEAD COACH – Chris Nelson 780-455-7203

## President's Message

Spring is finally here, and the short course swimming season is now complete. Silver Tide has had an excellent first half to the season, and we look forward to more great things in the long course season. Silver Tide hosted the 2010 Alberta Age Group Trials at the end of February. I want to thank all of the volunteers who put in so much time and effort into making this meet run smoothly. As always Silver Tide was able to fill most of the volunteer positions required to run such a meet. This is a big feather in our cap, and it serves us well when we bid to host such meets in the future. Hosting Age Group Trials is always challenging because a relatively small number of our team members compete at this meet. What an outstanding commitment from all the parents to making this meet a success. I want to recognize all the help that we received from the senior swimmers, who volunteered as timers, stroke and turn judges, hospitality, and the medal ceremony. It was great to see these swimmers participating in the success of their club.

Recently, watching professional sports on TV has reminded me how important good sportsmanship is, and how some of these so called professionals are not very good role models. I wanted to take the opportunity to state that we strive to maintain very high standards for all club members. When our swimmers put on their Silver Tide Tee shirts and caps, this is their uniform, and they are proud to wear the STSC colors. As with any team sport, the uniform is a key to the feeling of belonging, so make sure that your kids always have their Silver Tide T-Shirts and sweat suits when they are on deck. Silver Tide has a proud tradition, and it is very important that everyone feels part of the team, and wants to carry on these positive traits. Swimming is a great sport in that you are part of a team, but compete as an individual. Everyone needs to remember that when you are at a swim meet, whether at the pool or at a restaurant or hotel, you are representing our club, and should strive to live up to the high standards that our past and current swimmers have set.

## Upcoming Events

**Swim-A-Thon** – will be held on May15 (date still tentative). This is a reminder that everyone has a commitment to fundraise for the swim-a-thon. There is a minimum commitment for each swimmer that was highlighted during registration. If you have any questions about the amount you need to raise, please contact [registrar@silvertide.ca](mailto:registrar@silvertide.ca). For those that are not aware, there are government grants available to organizations such as ours that match donations made to the club. So the money raised through swim-a-thon allows us to apply for matching funding. Also note that any funds raised above your swim-a-thon commitment are considered fundraising, and go towards your fundraising commitment. So the more swim-a-thon donations you can solicit the better off we will be.

**Silver Cup Swim Meet** – will be held on May 29 & 30th. This is the annual long course swim meet hosted by Silver Tide. Virtually all swimmers in the club will be swimming at this meet. Please mark it on your calendar, since as usual we will be looking for volunteer support from all of you.

**Executive / Volunteer Positions** – We are currently recruiting for some volunteer positions within the club for the 2010/11 season. Some of these positions involve being part of the executive, and some are not. If you want to have a say in the operation of your club, and are committed to making a positive impact on the Silver Tide swim club, then I have a job for you. Please contact me at [president@silvertide.ca](mailto:president@silvertide.ca) if you are interested.

**May Pool Schedule** - Unfortunately the May Pool Schedule is not available yet. For those of you new to the club, the May & June pool schedule is different than the rest of the year due to the fact that the summer swim club, the Millenium Marlins, start their season in May. The Strathcona County Youth Pool Allocation committee is tasked with arranging the pool schedule to fit all of the user organizations that primarily service the youth of the county. Silver Tide is represented on this committee by myself and Jim Schamber, and I am the committee chair person. Each year in May, the schedule gets adjusted to meet the needs of all the groups as best we can. The committee tries to work in a cooperative fashion, and many compromises need to be made. Silver Tide is by far the largest youth pool user in the county - that means that we get the most pool time, but also it means that our schedule, as well as those of all the user groups, must be adjusted to accommodate the start of the Marlins season. As soon as we know the May schedule, we will publish it, but be aware that there will be some changes to your child's swim times.

As you will see in the following coaches reports, we are off to a great start with swimmers at all levels achieving fantastic results. Let's do all we can to keep our kids passionate about swimming, and proud to swim for Silver Tide.

## Go Tide!

Brad Murray  
President, STSC

## SILVER TIDE EXECUTIVE 2009-2010

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Brad Murray                 | President               |
| Gavin Vankuppeveld          | 1st Vice President      |
| Russ Elford                 | 2nd Vice President      |
| Sandra Hillman              | Treasurer               |
| Margie Grant / Jim Schamber | Registrar               |
| Gene Strocher               | Secretary               |
| Patty Gau                   | Officials Coordinator   |
| Shirley Froese              | Grants Coordinator      |
| Sharon McCaul               | Fundraising Coordinator |

## NON-EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Tim Janzen        | Webmaster       |
| Sheldon Weatherby | Co-Meet Manager |
| Joe Kozell        | Co-Meet Manager |
| Ian Williams      | Communications  |

Karen Hughes  
Gavin Vankuppeveld  
Ian Williams

Bookkeeper  
Equipment Manager  
Parent Liaison

## **YOUR COACHING STAFF**

|                            |                 |  |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Head Coach                 | Chris Nelson    | <a href="mailto:Chris.Nelson@silvertide.ca">Chris.Nelson@silvertide.ca</a>       |
| Assistant Head Coach       | Maciek Zielnik  | <a href="mailto:Maciek.Zielnik@silvertide.ca">Maciek.Zielnik@silvertide.ca</a>   |
| Jag & Jag Provincial Coach | Erica Peterson  | <a href="mailto:Erica.Peterson@silvertide.ca">Erica.Peterson@silvertide.ca</a>   |
| Junior Development Coach   | Chelby Binkley  | <a href="mailto:Chelby.Binkley@silvertide.ca">Chelby.Binkley@silvertide.ca</a>   |
| Youth Development Coach    | Michelle Nelson | <a href="mailto:Michelle.Nelson@silvertide.ca">Michelle.Nelson@silvertide.ca</a> |

## **Upcoming Events attended by Silver Tide**

Apr 12-20 - World Grand Prix Open Water, Tuxtla Gutierrez

April 25 - OSC 10 & under series #4

April 29-May 2 - EKI - Edmonton Keyano Invitational (Edmonton)

May 1 - May 2 - Vorgee Series # 4

May 15 - Swim - A - Thon (**tentative** @ Kinsmen in Edmonton)

May 29 & 30 - Silver Tide - Silver Cup (Kinsmen pool in Edmonton)

May 28 - 30 - Mel Zajac - Victoria

Jun 2-7: US/Canada Open Water World Championship Trials, Long Beach

Jun 8-14 - TYR Swim Meet of Champions, Mission Viejo

June 6 - OSC 10 & under series #5

June 11-13 - Freeze or Fry - Red Deer - Remember to take your lawn chairs, sun screen and winter coat

June 18-20 - Alberta Age Group Trials (Lethbridge)

July 1 -4 - Senior and Age Group Provincials (Kinsmen pool Edmonton)

July 22-25 - Age Group Nationals (Winnipeg)

July 28-31 - Senior Nationals (Victoria)

## COACHES CORNER

### Senior

We are on our way back to the pool for the Long Course season, and I am really excited with some new plans for workouts. Be ready for anything, as the opening weeks will begin in technique work and then shift towards the most challenging workouts of the season. Hopefully, the senior swimmers that read this are as excited as I am to test ourselves and make ourselves better. I will do everything I can to help each swimmer achieve their goals.

April will be a little different, as I am going to be away for the first week of practices. Beginning on Mon Apr 12, Nadine and I are off to Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico for a World Grand Prix Open Water event. It is a 15km race in the Sumidero Canyon river. During the week, practices will be coached by Maciek in tandem with the TAG group. When I return on Tue Apr 20, I look forward to seeing everyone looking better than ever and ready for their next challenge.

Our swim meet schedule for the Long Course Season is as follows:

Apr 12-20: World Grand Prix Open Water, Tuxtla Gutierrez (Nadine only)  
Apr 29-2: EKI Invitational, Kinsmen (All Senior swimmers)  
May 27-30: Mel Zajac Jr, Vancouver (Senior National Group only)  
May 29-30: Silver Cup, Kinsmen (Senior Age Group)  
Jun 2-7: US/Canada Open Water World Championship Trials, Long Beach (Nadine only)  
Jun 8-14: TYR Swim Meet of Champions, Mission Viejo (Senior National Group only)  
Jun 11-13: Freeze or Fry, Red Deer (Senior Age Group)  
Jul 2-5: Alberta Age Group and Senior Provincials, Kinsmen (All Senior Swimmers)  
Jul 21-25: Age Group Nationals, Winnipeg (Qualifiers only)  
Jul 28-1: Senior Nationals, Victoria (Qualifiers only)

If you have questions about the schedule, please talk to me. I am happy to talk to swimmers and parents about the benefits of going to any competition and ensuring that each swimmer gets the most out of their competitive schedule.

Good Luck this long course season... Go Tide!!

Chris

### TAG

Wow have we had a busy and action packed few weeks in TAG leading up to a well deserved rest over spring break. It's been back to back racing for many swimmers going from Age Group Trials to Age Group Provincials to Double Double and finally having a group full of TAG 11 and 12 year olds representing the team at the North/South Duel. Over all of these weekends the TAGs kept piling on the successes with some huge swimming. Here's a recap of just some of the highlights from TAG over the last few weeks:

- Seeing 5 TAGs qualify for Age Group Provincials from Age Group Trials
- Getting a total of 14 TAGs qualified for Age Group Provincials
- Rebecca Schamber's Top 5 Youth Recognition
- Allison Hender qualifying for Age Group Nationals for the first time in the 200 Breaststroke

- Having Halle Elford, Emma Funk, Brooklyn Janzen, Haley Wirachowsky and Josef Legaspi all get chosen to represent team North at the North/South Dual
- Matthew Whiteside getting selected to represent Team Alberta at the Best of the West duel.

I'd also like to congratulate all the TAGs (meaning everyone in the group) that swam fantastic best times or won events over the last few weeks. Recounting all of these would take up much more space than I have but these achievements are no less important.

We've done a whole lot of hard work in TAG so far this year and I'm really happy with the swims we've been getting at the end of the short course season. That hard work is definitely paying off. With the memory of all these great swims hopefully fresh in everybody's minds we're now taking another step in our training for long course. The weeks leading up to EKI will be spent focusing in on all the little things that make a good swimmer great. From streamlines to body position to breathing and pull, we're working on it all. It takes a big and more importantly consistent focus and desire to really improve your technique and make bad habits good and good ones great. Over the last 2 weeks I've really seen a lot of this desire throughout the group and the changes are already being made. The times it gets tough to focus and train I think it's important to remember the goals that you're working towards. We're already working on long course's highlight reel and the way TAG has been training so far I have no doubt it'll be a lot longer than the one I wrote here.

So the performances in TAG have been great, training is going well and getting better so what else does a coach and a group of swimmers need? How about some fun? Having fun during training can be a challenge in itself but I don't think that's been a problem for the TAGs. Just being a team and having a good time with each other is the most important part of what we do every day so why not do it some more? The first Friday back from spring break we'll finish practice at 5:00PM and meet up somewhere for a group event that has nothing to do with swimming. We'll try to make this a monthly thing from now on so swimmers don't forget to email me some ideas for things we can do that Friday and for the next TAG nights out. Past that, I'd like to wish everyone a fun and relaxing spring break (remember it starts next week) and I hope everyone is as ready as I am for warmer weather. Do I hear bacon for dry land outside? Yes, Yes I do.

PS: For a full explanation of bacon (not the food kind) please ask your swimmer.

Maciek Zielnik

Assistant Head Coach & I Can Swim Program Coordinator

## **JAG & JAG Provincial**

The past few weeks before the break, the JAGs have really been focusing on their technique during workouts. As a group these swimmers are learning to swim to the best of their abilities all of the time which requires focus and dedication. This group continues to impress with their great attitude and passion for the sport. On the dryland side of training the JAGs now have a great group warm up they complete together before workout and they are beginning to master their dryland circuit on Wednesdays. Also, we are continuing to promote hydration at workouts by bringing water bottles to dryland and swimming. Keep up the good work JAGs! I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate a few swimmers on some excellent performances in the last couple of weeks. We had five JAGs compete at Age Group Trials all swimming some excellent races! These athletes are Caleb Vander Leek, Welton Graham, Matthew Reeves, Jennifer Reeves and Megan Wirachowsky. Three JAGs qualified for their first ever Age Group Champs; this included Madison Carr, Jennifer Reeves and Megan Wirachowsky. Kier Vander Leek also competed at Age Group Champs contributing to the success of the 10 and under relays. These ladies did an outstanding job, congratulations! Katelyn Whiteside and Kier Vander Leek

recently qualified for Age Group trials at the double double meet. Way to go ladies! I would also like to welcome two new swimmers to the program, Kage and Matt. They have been a great addition to the group! The JAGs have had an outstanding short course season. I look forward to continuing this success into the long course season!

Erica

## **Junior Development**

It has been a great couple months for Junior Development! In practice, we continue to work on skills such as turns and streamlines. We have spent a lot of time learning to use the clock: leaving 10 seconds apart; going on an interval; and getting our times. As swimmers are working on improving their technique, remember that they will sometimes get slower before they get faster. Although swimming fast and getting best times is fun, it is important that swimmers are encouraged to always be practicing their best technique. Swimmers need to have healthy food to be their best at practice, meets, and in dryland. Granola bars are a great idea for a snack. Please feel free to contact me if ever there are any questions.

See you on deck!

Chelby

## **Youth Development**

I hope that this two week break has everyone relaxed and refreshed for the last third of the season! You have all worked so incredibly hard and deserve this chance to refocus.

The short course season was extremely successful – both in time AND skill/stroke improvements. I am extremely impressed at how efficient and clean everyone's strokes look in comparison to the beginning of the season. Due to this, you have all seen HUGE improvements in all four strokes, and events this part of the year. A few notables:

Georgia Fetzko – several life time bests this season, with a HUGE best time of 32.58 in the 50 fly at Double Double

Mark Toma – has made stroke improvements in all four strokes and as a result, has taken off almost a full minute in his 200 IM this year

Roxanne Hughes – has become one of the strongest kickers in the club, and toughed out a short and intense session at Vorgee to go 100% best times in all 5 events

Chantelle Scratch – another very hard worker who has transformed everything into efficient and strong strokes, narrowly missing an MQT in the 200 IM at Double Double.

Sharanya Reddy – another swimmer always ready to train her best. Sharanya has swam huge best times throughout the season with greatly improved skills and strokes.

Rizal Ignacio – has had a huge change in focus and always tries to make changes at every workout he is at  
Jaci Grotkowski – has made significant changes, most notably in her butterfly, to swim a best time EVERY time she has hit the water in a race this season. She also swam a fantastic first ever 200 IM at the Double Double.

We also welcomed two new swimmers to the group in the last part of the short course season: Matt and Mikaela. Welcome!

For the upcoming Long Course season, the YD group will continue to focus on stroke technique, and improvements in all skills, from dives to turns. Although you have made great leaps forward, even the Michael Phelps' of the world continue to work towards perfection. The next four weeks will see intense work on all four strokes, and a continued effort on our kicking abilities. Remember that kicking is a fantastic way to increase your cardiovascular fitness and endurance (which many of you have seen as so important in your races). We also have some meets on the horizon – be sure to get those meet forms back!

See you at the pool!

Michelle

## **ICS Mar 20 10**

Welcome to our first newsletter section for everything I Can Swim. If you're reading this then I'm glad you found it. I'd like to use this space for a bunch of non critical information that can help you get the most out of our program and show you more of the wide world of competitive swimming. Thanks for tuning in.

If you are a returning member then you've no doubt heard about the long term competitive focus of the I Can Swim program by now. Anyone telling you about it probably sounds really excited that your swimmer is taking these first steps. Sounds great except what does the world of swimming look like past Stage 3? The first and largest difference between learning to swim and being in a competitive group is racing. That makes sense and it doesn't sound like much of a big deal but that one word really defines competitive swimming. I guess they call it competitive for a reason. Competition gives our swimmers a clearly defined goal: move down the pool as quickly as possible. That goal can really change the landscape of swimming because swimming as fast as possible also means swimming as efficiently as possible. That means working on the best swimming technique right from the get go. Without competition it's harder to define a goal and direction. Is my goal to not drown? Maybe it's to be able to swim safely at the lake in the summer or be as fast as I can be for no reason other than I want to. Usually it's all of these and more so training can take just about any form as well. Even though swimmers in the I Can Swim program don't race yet and some maybe never will, our goal is to teach everyone the basic skills and techniques necessary to later succeed in competitive swimming.

If you're thinking that all this information has raised more questions than it's answered, you're right. What does swimming in a competitive group look like? What are these skills and techniques that my swimmers are learning? How long is all this supposed to take? Thankfully there are a heap of resources available out there to help answer these questions and many more. The first and easiest spot to look is our own club web page at [www.silvertide.ca](http://www.silvertide.ca). Here you'll find information about our entire club from current happenings to old records. A great resource for new swim parents is the program continuum. Here you can take a quick look at the places your swimmer can go after I Can Swim all the way to swimming at a senior national level. Another fantastic resource can be found at the Swim Alberta website at [www.swimalberta.ca](http://www.swimalberta.ca). Under the parents tab you'll find enough information to fill a week of reading all about swimming. If you're interested in learning more about racing there's a whole section dedicated to that. Maybe you've heard someone mention the long term athlete development model and you wanted to look in to that, you'll find it here. Last but not least is another great resource. Our coaches all live and breathe competitive swimming. If you have a question about any part of our program or about swimming in general don't hesitate to ask. Personally, I can babble on about swimming for hours so I'll always find some time to talk. I'm really excited to have you all take part in this great sport and I hope your swimmers all continue to love swimming for many years to come. See you on deck.

Maciek

## **If you missed the Parent Information day at the end of January, here is the information presented by our Head Coach, Chris Nelson**

Parent Information Day #1  
Millennium Place – Activity Room #1  
Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010  
10:15-11:15am

### Agenda Topics:

#### 1. Silver Tide Swim Club – Mission and Goals

- a. As you know, we are a competitive swim club. Our goals and teaching go beyond regular learn-to-swim programs and involve years of dedication and effort. The result is not only better performances, but a well-rounded athlete with values of responsibility, perseverance, and a positive work ethic that will lead them to success throughout their life after swimming.
- b. Head Coach - Chris Nelson
  - i. I believe in building a full athlete. STSC swimmers are taught to race every event, not just their current favourite or best. We teach all skills and strokes, and train according to what is best for each athlete's development according to their age, ability, and maturity.
  - ii. I believe in positive coaching. To swimmers – coaches are educators and motivators. To parents – coaches are partners in developing a young child into a well-rounded young adult.
  - iii. My background includes: 15 years as a competitive swimmer up to an International level; 6 years of coaching including 7 National Records and dozens of Provincial Records; Degree in Developmental Psychology from the University of Alberta; lifelong friendships with some of the brightest swimming coaches and sport psychologists in the world.

#### 2. Team Expectations

- a. Attendance – I'll talk about this later on.
- b. Respect – for all coaches, swimmers, parents and public while representing STSC.
- c. Communication – we will do our best to keep you informed of pertinent club activities, and we are always available to you; please give us the courtesy of knowing if you have any problems or questions about the club or training program.

#### 3. Team Equipment

- a. Clothing:
  - i. STSC T-shirts should be worn at all practices and swim meets. It is recommended for Junior Development swimmers to own 2 t-shirts, and that swimmers add 2 more shirts

each time they move up a group (JrDev > JAG > TAG/YD > Senior). Don't forget to replace torn or faded shirts.

b. Training Swim Suits:

- i. For girls, any training suit will do. Look for an open back to the suit, with appropriate support as girls get into puberty. Lycra and polyester are 2 of the best materials, with polyester outlasting any other material by far. "Speedo Endurance training suits" are one of the best available suits for girls.
- ii. For boys, any training suit will do. Briefs are preferable to Jammers because of the drag and loss of feeling created from the covered quadriceps. Lycra and polyester are 2 of the best materials. "Speedo Polymesh Square Leg" are one of the best suits for boys, and are often more comfortable to young swimmers still shy about wearing a brief.
- iii. Sizing: The suits should be snug and for girls there should be no wrinkles left in the suit once it is on the body. If the suit is not stretched tight on the body, then it will fill with water and slow you down when you swim. It will also risk not fully covering your body. For girls, our most senior girls wear size 26-28 training suits. For boys, our most senior boys wear size 28-30 training suits. Many 13-14-year-olds wear size 22-24 suits. I am 6'4" and 200lbs, and I wear a size 32 training suit. Keep this in mind before purchasing your next suit.

c. Racing Suits:

- i. For Junior Development, JAG, YD and TAG swimmers, a standard Speedo Aquablade is recommended, but any good condition suit is appropriate. STSC will be ordering these as team racing suits for the Long Course Season (Apr-Jul) or earlier. Aquablades are the cheap base model of racing suits in competitive swimming.
- ii. For Senior swimmers, a standard Speedo Aquablade is expected at all meets. As swimmers progress to National and International levels, they may talk to their coach about purchasing a technical suit, such as the Speedo LZR or Fastskin.
- iii. Sizing: These suits are generally smaller than the training suit size. If you wear a size 28 training suit, then you will probably wear a size 26 racing suit. Suits should be quite tight, even uncomfortable, but not painful.

4. Swim Meets

a. STSC vs Host Deadlines

i. STSC Deadline:

1. These are necessary for our meet sign-up forms to be compiled in time to arrange for meet entries, and any travel or other factors that may be applicable. Missing this deadline may result in being ineligible for a competition.

ii. Host Deadline:

1. These deadlines are sent to us by each host of a competition and are not negotiable. Missing this deadline will result in being ineligible for the competition.

b. About some of the Swim Meets

i. Introductory levels:

1. 10 & Under Series – This meet is a very comfortable launching point for first time swimmers. You must be 10 years or younger as of the date of the first meet in the series, but once you join the series you may compete for the entire season, regardless of aging up to 11. The host club is very accommodating to help young swimmers find their way to their race and is one of the first meets to introduce Oops cards to let swimmers know if they broke a swimming rule (a kinder method than a standard disqualification).
2. Penguin Novice Series – This is another very comfortable launching point for first time swimmers. The meet includes events for all ages, so at STSC we subscribe to this meet for our 11&over swimmers who are too old to attend the 10&under Series.
3. Vorgee Series – This is a brand new series in 2009-10, and offers a 3<sup>rd</sup> series of local introductory meets. STSC subscribes to these meets to fill in the competitive calendar for our younger groups.

ii. Provincial levels:

1. Age Group Trials (SC in Feb; LC in Jun) – Qualification for this meet via the Meet Qualifying Time (MQT) in either the 200 IM or 400 Free. This meet is for 14&under swimmers, and gives a chance for kids to qualify for Age Group Provincials. Host locations are within Alberta.
2. Age Group Provincials (SC in Mar; LC in July) – (also known as “A’s”) Qualification for this meet via the Provincial A standard in any event. This meet is the Championship meet for 14&under swimmers in Alberta. Host locations are within Alberta.
3. Senior Provincials (SC in Jan; LC in July) – Qualification for this meet via the Provincial B standard for 15-16 year-olds. This meet is the Championship meet for 15&over swimmers in Alberta. Host locations are within Alberta.

iii. National levels:

1. Canadian Age Group Nationals (LC only in July) – Qualification for this meet via the Age Group National standards from Swim Canada. This meet is the largest

meet hosted each year in Canada, and is the National Championship for all 18&under swimmers. Host locations are within Canada.

2. Western Canadian Nationals (SC only in Feb) – Qualification for this meet via the Western National standards from Swim Canada. This meet is a championship for all provinces west of Ontario. Host locations are within Western Canada.
3. National Championships / Trials (often Apr and Jul) – Qualification for this meet via the Senior National standards from Swim Canada. These meets are the overall Championships of Canadian swimming, and are often the trials for such meets as the Olympics, Pan Pac Games, Commonwealth Games, World Championships, etc.

c. About Time Standards

- i. Invitational Standards – These are applied to swim meets by host clubs to limit entries to their meet. These are not known until about 1-2 months before a competition.
- ii. Alberta Standards – MQT, B, and A standards are used in Alberta. All are available from the STSC homepage or [www.swimalberta.ca](http://www.swimalberta.ca).
- iii. Canada Standards – Age Group National, Western, and Senior National standards are used in National competitions. All are available from the STSC homepage or [www.swimming.ca](http://www.swimming.ca).

5. Silver Tide Training

- a. Groups follow the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model, created in 2008 for Swim Canada and under current implementation into Alberta through Swim Alberta.
  - i. I Can Swim = “1. Active Start”
  - ii. Junior Development = “2. FUNdamentals” teaches basic movements, balance and coordination. Competitive swimming rules are taught and dryland activities support these developments.
  - iii. JAG& YD = “3. Learn to Train” looks for consistency in skills and continues to teach the rules and technique of swimming. Dryland training is high in coordinated activities and strength/flexibility.
  - iv. TAG& YD = “4. Train to Train” furthers the skill training in stage 3, but emphasizes aerobic development. Looking for mastery of swimming skills and learning the mental skills to handle higher level competitions. Dryland training includes core stability and strength using own body weight.
  - v. Senior Age Group = “5. Train to Compete” is typically after the peak height growth of a young swimmer. Individualization of training based on coach evaluations of the athletes is important, as well as teaching advanced technical and tactical skills. Development of autonomy and responsibility for their own sport.

- vi. Senior National = “6. Compete to Win” is built around an annual training calendar. These swimmers have the ability to compete at high levels under a variety of environments, assume leadership in group settings, and are developing the highest level of technical, physical, mental, and tactical skills.

b. Attendance

- i. Becomes increasingly mandatory as the swimmers progress. We are a competitive club and not a drop-in service, and we invest a lot of effort to help all swimmers improve. Part of our mission is to have a culture within each group that supports each swimmer’s improvement, and group attendance is one of the fastest ways to create a positive group dynamic.
- ii. In Junior Development, JAG and YD we encourage swimmers to participate in other sports alongside swimming, and this may occasionally create a conflict with swimming. The important thing is to communicate any absences with your coach so that we know when and when not to expect your child at practice.
- iii. In TAG and Senior, attendance is expected to be near 100%. Illness, family conflicts, and other conflicts discussed with your coach are completely acceptable. As swimmers become more senior, the acceptable reasons to miss a practice must become stricter.

6. Parenting at the pool

\*\*\* There are a lot of great resources out there for parents, beginning with the Canadian Sport for Life and LTAD models. If you want more information please ask Coach Chris about where to find more information.

a. During Training / at Home:

- i. Junior Development / JAG: It is important to acknowledge that a parent’s presence is more powerful than a coach’s at this age. Parents can really help their swimmers learn to listen to their coach by letting the coach be the sole instructor for swimming. This doesn’t mean that a parent has to be invisible... on the contrary, parents are very important at this stage of development. Swimmers need support from their parents and guidance towards trust, fair play, inclusion and having fun. You can even help your swimmer become a fan of swimming.  
Instead of telling your swimmer what you thought of their practice, try to ask your child about what they learned or how much fun they had at swimming, or have them recap what they did at practice and guide them to answer those questions fully. This will develop their interest in the practices, rather than stress over your evaluation of them. Parental evaluations are more than twice as stressful as those from a coach or teacher, especially if the evaluation differs from that of the expert you hired to coach / teach them. If you have concerns or questions about practices, the best course is to talk to an experience parent (Parent Liaison Ian Williams) or Head Coach Chris Nelson. In kids this age, lapses in concentration are normal and completely expected.

Our staff is taught to coach positively and patiently while making the necessary interventions in technique or skill execution. Their patience is not to be mistaken for being soft. It is hard work to capture a group of 8-12 year olds for 1-2 hours at a time – both for the coach and the swimmer. If we are having unmanageable issues with any swimmer, we will talk to their parents about it.

- ii. YD / TAG / Senior: To be brief, let the sport become your swimmer's to own. This means really backing off from any swimming advice, and instead asking questions like “what would your coach say?” or “do you think that's a good idea?”. If you become the dictator of swimming law, then the sport is yours and your child is just a participant. If you let them take the lead and guide them through each decision, then they will start to feel ownership over their sport and develop a very valuable sense of responsibility that other kids their age won't realize until they reach university.

b. During Meets:

- i. Junior Development / JAG: Remember that parents have a greater presence at this age. If they are in swim meets, they have to learn to become independent in following the pool action, talking to their coach, and swimming their races. They need to rely on their coach for information. It will be just as overwhelming for a parent as it is for a swimmer at their first meet, but if you takeover and help them on deck, you will instantly dissolve any independence and the swimmer will look to you again on the very next race, and the next one. I've seen this go on for years because the pattern of behaviour is very hard to notice and then to break. Independence is necessary as swimmers will soon be going to bigger meets where it is a handicap to be overwhelmed. 1000's of swimmers, with and without learning disabilities, are able to master the on deck skills necessary to be independent at a swim meet.

The biggest hurdles to letting go are instinctual reactions to seeing your child uncomfortable. Please remember that it is okay and normal for them to be uncomfortable. Encourage them. Encourage them to talk to their coach, and to speak up if this is difficult for them. Show confidence that you know they will be fine on their own, even if they do make a mistake. We're not making world records at this age, only setting the skills up that they need to continue being a successful swimmer in the future.

Basic rules for swimmers at a meet: Talk to your coach before and after races – Ask coach before you leave the deck or go talk to parents (remember the coach has to tell them if there is enough time – don't be the coach) – Stay with teammates in the team area as much as possible (keep visits with family fun but quick to allow them to get back to their meet).

Good things to say as a parent include: “Swim fast”, “Try hard”, “Have fun”... “Good job”, “That looked fast/fun/etc”. If your swimmer is upset after a race performance (which happens), make sure that they went to their coach first and if so, give a hug and just remind them to try hard and have fun – by far the most important things to remember!

- ii. YD / TAG / Senior: Most kids this age are resistant to their parents' involvement, and this is especially the case if you try to talk too specifically about swimming. You probably won't like it, but at least you know you're not alone. Try to ask them questions about swimming, and if you're lucky then they'll open up a little for you. Again, no matter how confident you think they are, they are looking for support and not another

evaluator. Any swimmer with goals in swimming is critical of themselves. Coaches at this level have to give critical feedback all the time, and criticism is not needed on all fronts. They love you, so whatever you criticize will have a more emotional reaction than if a coach says it. Support their effort and ask your coach if you are having trouble getting information out of your swimmer. We are happy to let you know how things are going at the pool.