

Janica Lee and Megan Vuong Provincial Champions in Thunder Bay

MSSAC was well represented by the 17 swimmers that participated at the long course Provincial in Thunder Bay at the beginning of July. Fifteen medals, one Club record and an impressive 92% best times are excellent numbers in a tough competition such as the Provincial Championship.

Leading the charge was Janica Lee that won gold in the 100 and 200 breaststroke. For Janica, this meet was an important test to see her condition approaching the National Championship that will see her back in the water at the end of July. Well.... now her competitors know that in Calgary she will be ready for the challenge. Good luck at the Nationals!!

The other bust came from one of the youngest in the team. Megan Vuong came home with a gold in the 200 FR, two silvers in 100 and 400 FR and a bronze in the 50 FR. Not bad at all for this 11year old that is still learning how to compete but is shaving her times meet after meet. Great year Megan!!

Two medals came also from the “veteran” of this squad. Kim Flemming finished third in the 100 backstroke and second, with an all time Club record, in the 200 backstroke. Kim will be swimming at Nationals as well where she will be one of the favorites in the backstroke field. Let’s go Kim!!

Two medals for Victoria Gardiner as well. She finished an excellent season with a silver medal in the 100 FLY and a bronze medal in the 400 IM. Her performance was impressive in the 200 FLY as well where she improved almost 6 seconds and touched fourth overall. Victoria (just 11 as well) is already a tough competitor when it comes down to meets. Keep it up next year!!

Marcus Hughes is back!! After a year affected by several injuries that kept Marcus out of the water for several weeks, he showed at Provincial that he is stronger than any adversity. In the last month he worked really hard and in Thunder Bay he got well deserved results with a silver medal in the 50 breaststroke and best times in all his events. Marcus is back!!

Particular attention must be paid to the other medalists since it was their first medal ever in an individual event in a Provincial championship:

- Laura Johnston finished third in a very exciting 50 backstroke. Laura, at age of 10, is still learning that with the proper mind set, she can be really fast. It was great to see her out of the blocks with a speed I have never seen before!!
- Victor Truong got a bronze in the same distance, 50 backstroke. This time he did not lose a second and he started charging right from the start. A great finish was important as well for getting him this prestigious medal.
- Melanie McDonald ended a spectacular year with a bronze medal in the 200 breaststroke. The results at this meet was the right recognition of a turning point season for Melanie. She was the most improved swimmer in a group (Bronze 1) where we had a lot improvement!!

- Gillian Wu won a bronze medal in a very exciting 100 breaststroke for MSSAC colors. In the same race Melanie McDonald finished fourth and Karen Zhao fifth. This was an extraordinary year for Gillian as well. To get a medal at her first LC Provincial appearance says a lot about the potential of this young girl!!

Out of a medal for just a few hundreds of a second was Olivia Bellio, who placed fourth in the 50 FR. Olivia improved her time twice, swimming an impressive 28.73 in the morning and an even better 28.30 in finals. A good sixth place in the 400 FR for Rachel Hickey as well. With a 6 seconds improvement and an 8th place overall in the 800 FR, it was part of a very good meet for Rachel. In the 200 FLY, Meghan Borg improved her time by almost 3 seconds and showed how tough she can be in this event. In another tough event, Jessie Hickey had her best swim of the week. Improving five seconds in the 400 IM with best times in the 200 IM and 400 FR, Jessie had a very positive meet. At her first appearance at the Provincial, Wennie Zhang got best times in both the 50 and 100 FR.

It was also an excellent weekend for two of the young swimmers that got best times in every single event they swam in Thunder Bay: Michael Kalman dropped 6 seconds in the 100 breaststroke and almost 5 seconds in the 400 FR. This year Michael really turned around from a single stroke specialist (breaststroke) to an overall swimmer with great results in freestyle, backstroke and IM as well. Stephanie McDonald was 12 and 10 seconds faster than last time she swam the 200 BK and 400 FR!! It's great to finish this season with a smile on her face again! Steph went through really rough times in the last couple of months, but she kept focused and confident in her potential. Watching her swim this fast, was the right reward for this really skilled and enthusiastic young swimmer.

A final note of this exciting and successful week in Thunder Bay goes to the group of parents that helped to organize and orchestrate this "out of town" trip. Terri Johnston, Linda Hughes, Marlene Gardiner, Tiffany Vuong, Laura Borg, Ron McDonald, Richard Bellio, Jackie and Raymond Hickey were in many ways, the reason of this week's success. Thanks to all of them for their dedication for swimming and support of Mississauga Aquatic Club.

Have a great summer to all of you!!

Andrea Pittis