

## **London 12 and Under Celebration - 2009**

Alllllll ABOARD!! And we are off! 40 swimmers, 5 coaches, 4 chaperones and 1 bus driver all settled in their seats fussing over what movie to put on for our 2 hours bus ride into London for the 12 and under Celebration meet. Once the movie went on there wasn't a peep out of anyone, not even a slight worry about what achievements and excitement was about to happen over the next two days.

The plan was for everyone regardless if you were part of the team travel or not, to meet on deck at 2pm for a group meeting and stretching. Since we got there a little early I thought I could sneak off into the officials room and stock up on heat sheets for our team. I was caught in a conversation with the meet manager about the weather outside and how it concerned both of us regarding the attendance for today's meet. I then quickly gathered my things and headed for the deck to get the swimmers ready. As I was looking down at the heat sheets noticing that relays were first I couldn't help but hear this cloud of voices in front of me. As I looked up I was overwhelmed by the sea of blue that flooded the deck. MSSAC had made their entrance and was letting it be known. There was not one swimmer that was out of uniform. Royal blue was dominating that deck for the rest of the weekend. From that moment I knew that each one of these swimmers had a goal set out for themselves that weekend and they were going for it! I am not quite sure what it is with London and MSSAC if it's the water, air or just team spirit, but when we compete there the adrenaline of these swimmers is felt through the stands.

Now it's known that Mississauga won high point again this year, and from what I know this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row that we have succeeded so well. Winning high point was only one of the highlights of the weekend. There were many more that took place in order for us to win high point. First off we as a team had 59 first place finishes, 55 second place finishes and 37 third place finishes. We had more swimmers than we can count on all coaches' hand and toes go best times. We had more than I know of qualify for Central Regions and a few that came shy to the times that they needed but still swam the best races they have ever swam. There were some outstanding performances that need mentioning, Megan Vuong made her first ever National time in the 200m Freestyle, and Ahmad Abdullah made provincials in his 400m Freestyle, what a way to finish the meet. There were many other swimmers that were just as outstanding like those swimmers that swam best times after having a two week break over the Christmas holidays, swimming while fighting the flu, a constant bloody nose, and to all those swimmers that swam their best while they had their family back in Mississauga.

I would like to write a little about our trip back home but I was probably the first out of all of us to quickly fall asleep all the way to Mississauga. So on behalf of all the coaching staff I'd like to say thank you to the chaperones for all their hard work and to congratulate every single one of you in all the effort that you put into competing at the meet. Regardless of best times or not the energy and enthusiasm was there and we could see that each and every one of you tried your best. Thank you again for making this trip to London such an exciting weekend.

Looking forward to next year. Meghan McDonnell