

Smoke Signals

Newsletter of the 2009 Woodley Swim Team, July 7, 2009 No. 7

Final Score Woodley – 173, Cottontail - 228

The Woodley Warriors matched up well with the Cottontail Swim Team, despite missing several swimmers and kept the score to a respectable 173 to 228. Although there were several great swims as shown in the results, a few in particular stood out and need to be mentioned.

The bravest warriors of the meet were Frankie Iglesias and Victoria Gianopoulos. Early on in the meet, it was discovered that we were one 8 and under girl short to have a relay. Frankie Iglesias, a time card runner for the meet, was asked to step in. She refused and kept repeating, “No, I’m not ready for this kind of A meet, I can’t swim very well.” After several attempts to convince her, it was decided that ok, we will scratch our relay. Then, lo and behold, the relay was announced and there was Frankie, smallest swimmer in a suit, lined up to swim third. Cottontail graciously allowed us to change our scratch and when it was Frankie’s turn, in she jumped and 25m she swam!

Likewise, Victoria Gianopoulos, who is a new 9-10 swimmer, was placed on the meet sheet in breaststroke – not her most favorite stroke. Well, it can be daunting when it’s not your favorite stroke, you’re new, and you line up at the start realizing that you are the only warrior against three opponents. However, Victoria put on her game face, gave us the best 50 she could, and displayed the true character of a brave warrior.

Our boys – the most pleasant to watch as they become friends and encourage each other. Observing our 11-12 boys’ relay this past Saturday, I realized that the entire relay is new to the swim team this season. Mark Gianopoulos, Jonathan Burgess, Jamie Lebahn, and Erick Samayoa swam their best and even though they lost their race, they exited the pool in a good natured manner, with smiles and laughter. Similarly, we welcomed back John Canan who combined with our veteran swimmers, Evan Massaro and James Sturges, as well as our new swimmer, Joey Kammerer, won the boys’ 13-14 relay. At the beginning of the season, it appeared that there would not be enough swimmers in this age group to even field a relay and now we have five actual 13-14 year old boys that are improving each week and stepping up the competition.

In every stroke, Woodley had some top three finishers receiving points for the team. In freestyle, they were Anthony Suarez, Helen van Wijngaarden, Jonathan Burgess, Serena Morales, Nicole Drucker, Joey Kammerer, Marilisa Morales, Michael Flach, Pieter van Wijngaarden, Elena Marsilii, and Caroline Hendrick. Looking for the flags and finishing in the top three of backstroke were Aaron Tingley, Anthony Suarez, Nejev Polo, Joshua Sims, Meaghan Wheeler, Serena Morales, Anna Flach, James Sturges, Joey Kammerer, Marilisa Morales, Michael Flach, Pieter van Wijngaarden, Katie Flach, Catherine Prahm, and Emily Sturges. In breaststroke our top three times went to Noah Morales, Ella Kline, Joshua Sims, Jonathan Burgess, Julia Hendrick, Anna Flach, Evan Massaro, John Canan, Debbie Ledezma, Scott Nash, Joe Dubas, Catherine Prahm, and Caroline Hendrick. Lastly, our fast fliers were Henry Lewis, Meaghan Wheeler, Nicole Drucker, Julia Hendrick, James Sturges, Marisa Sims, Scott Nash, Joe Dubas, Elena Marsilii, Emily Sturges, and Helen Landon.

Character and sportsmanship were displayed by Laura Massaro, Kara Sims, and Grace Wald. Have you ever noticed that we are very strong in the 15-18 girls? There are several girls that have aged up to this upper age group this season and for the first time in years, have not been on the A meet sheet. Despite this, these girls have continued to support and cheer on their teammates. They showed us their true team spirit this past Saturday by painting themselves and dressing up as warriors, encouraging all of the swimmers to do their best.

The Divisional Relay Carnival

All of the divisional relay carnivals within NVSL will be held and completed on Wednesday, July 8. Then, the fastest 18 relay teams overall in the league will qualify and advance to the All Star Relay Carnival on Wednesday, July 15.

Our divisional relay will be held at Springfield pool. Each age group competes in a medley relay and a freestyle relay with the exception being that the 8 and unders swim a modified medley relay (one lap of backstroke and breaststroke and two laps of freestyle). Swimmers, even if you are not on the selection list for this meet, I would like to strongly encourage you to attend the meet and wear your bathing suit. At several meets, we have had to make substitutions at the last minute due to a variety of reasons. This meet in particular is difficult to field as each race requires four swimmers in that particular age group – there is no swimming up. For example, we only have four 13-14 year old girls so if one of you is unable to swim, all of you will be unable to swim.

Upon the completion of the divisional relay carnival, the Blincoe family has once again agreed to host an after party at their home. The swim team will order pizza and we ask that everyone bring a side dish or dessert to share as well as any drinks that you wish to consume. Directions to both the Springfield Pool and the Blincoe family are provided on the officials' list.

Last Home Meet For Our Seniors

On Saturday, July 11, we will host our last home meet of this season. At this meet, we will honor our four 2009 graduates – Michael Flach, Helen Landon, Catherine Prahm, and Pieter van Wijngaarden.

Michael Flach will be attending the University of South Carolina on a partial swimming scholarship. He has been a pleasure to watch in the swimming pool over the years and if you study the record boards, has become our very own legendary Michael – forget Phelps! What you may not know is that there are stories of Michael from when he was very young. It seems that he too, suffered from nerves and used to cry prior to the start of some of his races. Somewhere along the way, he learned to channel those nerves into a quickness that the rest of the team has always strived to beat. Although some think of Michael as quiet and shy, those closest to him, know that he has a quick sense of humor and in his own way, encourages our swimmers to achieve their personal best times.

When Helen Landon was a very young teenager, she began helping coach the 8 and unders as a volunteer. She taught them the basics of streamlining, breathing, etc. while at the same time praising their achievements and providing them with a new sense of confidence in their abilities. During this time, she noticed that the age group swimmers had begun a book club. Despite being older, she would read the designated book and join the age group swimmers in their discussion. Since then, we have watched Helen grow up and participate in new roles as a swim coach, lifeguard, pool manager, and swimmer. For several years now, she has coached the youngest children, usually between ages 3 and 6, through our swim team's winter program at Providence Recreation Center and in private lessons during the summer at Woodley Pool. Helen's unending patience with kids possessing a very short attention span and her ability to teach them how to swim has families continuously seeking her out for more instruction. Helen is attending college in the fall but I forgot to ask her as to where!

Catherine Prahm plans on attending Longwood University to study Athletic training and if we encourage her, may someday start a swim team at Longwood for future students! Catherine has been a Woodley swimmer for many years and the past two years, has been Woodley's assistant swim coach. Catherine has been known for her quick freestyle and powerful backstroke but even more so, for her long time friendships with Michelle, Helen, and Caitlin. For as long as I remember, those four names were stated in one long breath by any parent that was looking for one or the other. Unbeknownst to Catherine, she has passed this tradition of friendly competition on to the next in line. Have you seen the look of satisfaction in Caroline Hendrick or Katie Flach's expressions when they manage to beat Catherine in a race and how they all joyfully discuss it after?

Pieter van Wijngaarden waited until he became a teenager to join the Woodley Swim Team after much prodding by many of the team's teenagers. In his short time on the team, Pieter has shown us what we knew all along – that he is a good swimmer, has a great sense of humor, and yes, we sure wished he had joined many years earlier. He will be attending Old Dominion University in Virginia and studying something but as usual, I forgot to ask what!

Congratulations to the four of you as you venture off to college. It is very hard to believe that this is your last year as competitors for Woodley and it is our hope that the team has provided good memories that you can carry with you into the future.

Upcoming Dates – Only Three Weeks Left In the Season!

July 8: Swim and Dive Team Movie Day, More Information Soon

July 8: Swim Team Divisional Relay Carnival at Springfield, Woodley Warm-ups 6:00 p.m.

July 10: Woodley Setup 7:30p.m.

July 11: Swim Team A Meet vs. Springfield at Woodley, Woodley Warm-ups 8:00a.m.

July 13: Swim Team B Meet vs. Parliament at Parliament, Woodley Warm-ups 5:20p.m.

July 16: Swim and Dive Team Putt Putt Day 11 a.m.

July 18: Swim Team A Meet vs. Stratford at Stratford, Woodley Warm-ups 8:20a.m.