

# Five medals for Polar Bear Swim Club

Swimmer earns gold, two silver and two bronze at Edmonton meet

by Natalie Danilow  
Northern News Services

The Polar Bear Swim club is making great strokes towards setting themselves up for the 2009 Canada Winter Games.

With five medals and club records broken at the JP Fiset Memorial Swim Meet in Edmonton last weekend, the team is stronger than ever.

Stephen Giovanetto, 14, who qualified for the A Division Alberta Age Group Championships at his last meet, claimed five medals for the club while improving his times.

He won gold in the 50-metre breaststroke, silver in the 100- and 200-metre breaststroke and bronze in the 100- and 200-metre freestyle events.

Head coach Ian Legaree said it was especially impressive considering Giovanetto swam several of his events within 90 minutes.

"It's a phenomenal athletic accomplishment to swim that hard and race competitively at the same time," he said.

## Training shows

Since Giovanetto qualified for Age group Championships in November, he's only getting better, Legaree said.

"He just continues to lower those times," he said. "By the time we get him (to Championships) next August I expect he'll do well."

Legaree said Giovanetto's dedication in practice and strength training is showing in his performance.



Stephen Giovanetto, 14, pictured here in a breaststroke event, won five medals at the JP Fiset Swim Meet in Edmonton Dec. 1 to 2.

"Physically and from a development standpoint he's doing very well, and it's still just December," he said.

Jenny Aiken did not win any medals this time, but reached times very close to qualifying for the Western Canadian Swimming Championships in Victoria in February.

"She improved her swims but it

was heartbreaking to be so close," said Legaree.

He said they will aim for Aiken to achieve qualifying times in meets before February.

Also making an impressive splash was the female 13- and 14-year-olds' relay team, who broke club records in the 200- and 400-metre individual medley relays.

Laura McBride, Paulina Brooks, Rachael Bernard and Lauren Klassen achieved 2:30.37 in the 200-metre, beating the 2001 record of 2:31.31.

In the 400-metre, they beat a previous record from 1996.

"It's significant to knock off something 11 years old," said Legaree.

He said it is often hard for smaller clubs to have a group of four

swimmers in the same age group at the right time.

"It's nice to see that combination," he said. "It bodes well for when we go to the Canada Games in 2009. We should have a stronger team than we've had in the past."

The Polar Bear Swim Club finished 14th out of 30 clubs at the meet.

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