

Hay River swimmers hit new highs

Plenty of personal bests, new records for Hay River Lions Swim Club

by James McCarthy
Northern News Services
Hay River

The Hay River Lions Swim Club saw 21 of its swimmers hit the pool for the third annual Elks Invitational Swim Meet at the Hay River Aquatic Centre on Nov. 14 and 15.

Some swimmers managed to win some and lose some, but head coach Kelvin Yee said the big positive he's taking from the meet is the number of new records set by the swimmers.

"We had 30 new meet records set and over 70 per cent of the swimmers set new personal bests," he said. "Two kids also managed to hit qualifying times for the age group trials."

Successful start

This was the first big meet of the season for the club. Yee said it was a successful start to the competitive season for his team.

"You're usually looking to see how the kids have done and you're looking at technique, such as the flip-turns, but we had so many personal bests set in the water so the kids are in pretty good shape right now," he said.

The two qualifiers for the age group trials are Graham St. John and Lyndon Yee, both in the 400-metre

freestyle. Yee said the pair are at the top of their categories and are expected to be fast, but there was the emergence of some new blood within the club.

"We have a lot of new kids this year," he said. "Two kids who stood out are Abby and Danna Webster. This was their first meet after they joined our club. Also, Ryder Jahner was a blast for everyone. He's only five years old and it took him about three minutes to swim 50 metres, but he had everyone cheering for him.

"The louder they cheered, the faster he kicked."

This, too, was Jahner's first ever meet. He was given the aid of a flutterboard to swim his race, but he stressed it wasn't going to be a full-time thing.

"I only used it once," he said.

Yee said the reason for Jahner using the flutterboard was to make sure he simply stayed afloat.

"He was really nervous about going into the deep end, but he had so much heart and he finished the swim with a smile on his face," said Yee.

Next up for the club will be the JP Fiset Invitational Meet in Edmonton beginning on Dec. 4. Colton and Lyndon Yee will be representing the club at that event.



Paul Bekford/NNSL photo

Danna Webster of Hay River practises her breaststroke at the Elks Invitational Swim Meet at the Hay River Aquatic Centre on Nov. 14.



photo courtesy of Kelvin Yee

Colton Yee, left, helps out Ryder Jahner in his swim during a 50-metre freestyle event at the Elks Invitational Swim Meet.

Olympic icemaker

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he said. "Everything is automated except the adjustment of the blade that scrapes the ice. You're normally able to control the amount of water that goes on the ice, but this one controls that to make sure there's just enough water going on."

Langille was in the host city from Nov. 13 to 15 for a training session on his duties. He said there will be certain things he has to remember while out on the ice.

"There will be two machines out on the ice every time," he said.

"That will be tough to get used to because I'm only used to having one out there. There's

also going to be a headset I'll be wearing to keep in contact with the supervisor at all times because there's a certain pattern I have to follow. I also have to remember to not do anything silly because I'll be on TV in Europe. They don't go to commercial during intermissions and they follow the resurfacers."

Langille will not be at Canada Hockey Place, where all the main action will be. He'll be at the UBC Winter Sports Centre, but he said that's OK with him.

"I'm just happy to be there," he said. "I don't care about not doing games at the big arena. This is just a once-in-a-lifetime thing and I'm happy to be a part of it."