

Coach & Manager's Report

The Florida Gold Coast Synchronised Swimming International Competition

1. Introduction

On Wednesday March 26th 2008 a small delegation of 13 swimmers, Coach Katherine Lim Sang, Manager Dale Webber and four supporters departed from the NMIA to compete in the Florida Gold Coast Synchronised Swimming Competition in the USA. This meet was selected by Coach Lim Sang as a replacement for the Carifta Synchronised Swimming competition which was not being staged in 2008 due to insufficient team entries. The Florida Gold Coast meet is normally at a similar or marginally superior standard to the Carifta meet for the age group level, thus the competition, exposure and opportunities to learn were important factors in the decision to attend this meet. In addition the inclusion of the novice and intermediate levels also allowed for development of the whole team. The international flavor of the meet was highlighted by the addition of a Judge from Jamaica for the Routines (Dale Webber) and a practice Judge from Jamaica for the Figures (Tanya March). An additional Jamaican swimmer who swam unattached added further to the Jamaican contingent with her Russian coach providing a further international atmosphere.

2. Travel, accommodation and meals

Travel arrangements were smooth and were only limited by the need to return to the island on Sunday March 30, 2008 with many schools reopening on Monday. This resulted in the team not being able to participate in the awards ceremony which was held Sunday afternoon after the end of the competition. The girls swam their last event at 12:25 p.m. and departed for the airport with hair gel still in place to make a 4:25 p.m. flight. Accommodation and meals were provided at the Plantation Hotel and Conference Centre which could only have been improved if the hotel were closer to the training pool or competition pool.

3. Training and acclimatization

Under the watchful eyes of Coach Lim Sang, the team participated in two 3 hour training sessions and a 2 hour land drill session over the course of Thursday and Friday which was shared with the Coral Springs Aquacades and their coach Ashley Johnson. After the long training sessions on Thursday, the Aquacades also shared a morning of relaxation and fun with the Island Aquatic swimmers at the Rapids Water Park before the grueling competition on Saturday and Sunday. The camaraderie between the teams was further exemplified as the Island Aquatics girls all received designer towels from the Aquacades as a farewell gift.

4. The competition

Ninety seven girls participated which accounted for one hundred and twenty entries in six possible categories. Island Aquatics Synchronised Swimming Club was represented in the following entries in four categories with the following results:

Novice	Place	Score
(Solo) Laura Lim Sang (8 & Under)	Bronze Medal	45.153
Breann Campbell (9-10)	Bronze Medal	44.67
(Duet) Jada Brown & Deanna Webber (9-10)	Gold Medal	44.709

Intermediate B (16 – 18)

(Duet) Kathryn Chin See & Christina Burke	Gold Medal	51.12
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13 – 15 Age group

(Solo) Michelle-Ann Gabbadon	(eighth place)	58.87
(Duet) Michelle-Ann Gabbadon & Shannon March	(fifth place)	59.669
(Duet) Ashlei Gayle & Jessica Lim Sang	(sixth place)	56.669
(Team)	Silver Medal	58.633

Michelle-Ann Gabbadon,
Ashlei Gayle,
Jessica Lim Sang,
Shannon March,
Tahirah Scott-Anderson and
Tashna Smith-Edwards

16- 18 Age group

(Solo) Kathryn Williams	Bronze Medal	63.063
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The thirteen girls performed exceptionally and returned with 6 medals (2 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze). While the younger swimmers (novice and intermediate) all achieved medals placements in their events the more experienced swimmers were faced with the challenge of larger numbers of participants in their events with up to 32 in the 13 -15 age group. The entire team improved their personal best scores with Kathryn Williams scoring over 63% crossing the difficult 60% threshold to claim the Bronze medal for her solo in what was a competitive event. The duets were all impressive and although they did not place in medal contention, their scores of 56% and 58% take them higher than their previous best scores. Overall the performances were exciting and performed with poise and passion. However there is always room for improvement and in this regard we must work harder on the Figures component of the sport as without exception our swimmers scored lower in the Figures competition which is worth 50% of the final score.

6. Acknowledgements

We must thank our sponsor, whose generous contributions enabled us to take the entire team to this international meet. We also wish to acknowledge the assistance of the parents and supporters who travelled with the team. These parents were responsible for transportation, makeup, hair styling and treatment as well as loud cheers which meant a lot to the success of the exercise. Our thanks as well to the parents and well wishers who did not make the trip but still supported and Sun Island who provided deck shirts for the girls. Finally a special word of thanks must go to our travel agent who battled through the many bookings and changes amidst the airline difficulties as well as the transportation rental.