

Chinook Swim Club Visit to Kisu Swim Club in Penticton

I would like to thank Swim BC and the KISU team for making our mentorship possible. We were able to have a unique learning experience as we went to visit the KISU team with three swimmers. The three swimmers that attended the training sessions also have parents on the Board of Directors so we arranged with KISU Head Coach, Tina Hoeben, for them to meet with some of the KISU Board members. We were able to have a very dynamic learning experience from different points of view. I will provide information below from the parents, swimmers and myself as a coach.

Coach's Perspective:

I attended many workouts when I was in Penticton. Because I brought two levels of swimmers I was able to learn from two different coaches in their club. I attended sessions with their age group program and with their Academy program. Recently we have been looking at ways to increase our pool time. Seeing the Penticton club utilize their academy model was interesting as it allows them to start their training at 1:30 in the afternoon. They explained that their school keeps their last two blocks in high school in a non-rotating manner which allows the athletes to put their elective in this section. This may be a model that our program may decide is feasible in the future as our athletes require more training time. Due to our rural location, we have one 25m pool to train in with 6 lanes. We usually are allotted 3 lanes for the majority of our practices and one to two lanes for morning sessions. If we were able to utilize time earlier in the day when more students are in school we may be able to gain access to more pool time. Currently another sport organization on the sunshine coast has been in discussions with our school district about this model. I will be meeting with these two organizations to discuss this model further.

I enjoyed being a part of their "Talk Time" sessions, which is run on a regular basis – either weekly or bi-weekly. I was present during an evaluation discussion. Tina provided the athletes with a form for self-evaluation as a swimmer and a team member and also asked for an evaluation of herself as a coach and how she could help them in the future. I believe this is an invaluable tool for growth as a club, swimmer, and coach. I plan to implement this in our program for next season.

In one of the Talk Time sessions we reviewed back starts and drills on a video. Then in the pool the next morning we had a chance to practice these. Tina reviewed the drills on her iPad and then the swimmers had a chance to do them and be videotaped. After each drill, the swimmers were able to review how they did and make comments. This was a great learning tool for the athletes and they enjoyed getting the video feedback.

Tina recommended the Ritter Sports podcast. These podcasts touch on many different topics in relation to swimming, strength training, nutrition and mental preparedness. Episodes also have talked about how we as coaches can support our athletes and what we can learn from them. There are many that you can choose from and I believe these will be helpful to listen to as there are little bits and pieces that I can incorporate into my coaching.

Over the past year I have been discussing with our coaches how to create a culture in our club of striving for hard work and excellence. This has been hard as we have not been a competitive club in years past and we have not had athletes reaching for goals such as provincials. So, how do you create that attitude/culture in your club? I think you can provide a means for achieving those goals, but you cannot create the desire to work hard enough to make that a reality. That has to come from within the athlete. I think, as coaches, we can foster a supportive learning environment and encourage the swimmers, but I also believe that it takes a few athletes that want it bad enough to lead the way. In our club, we call these athletes the grinders. They are the ones that are the “First and the Last” at the pool because they want to be. They are the ones that are journaling and setting goals because they want to succeed. They are the ones that the rest will look up to and want to strive to be training with. So how do you create culture? I believe that athletes create the culture and we provide a supportive, enriched environment full of knowledge and encouragement for their success. So, who is best to lead the team to success? I believe it is an athlete with a supportive coach at their side which is why I like the idea that KISU has to have a team captain.

Tina provided me with a book called “[Captains: 7 Ways to Lead Your Team. Be First...Be Last](#)” [By Bruce E. Brown](#). Tina picks a team captain each year to take on this role. Being chosen as a team captain I believe is an honour for an athlete. Also, with this role comes the responsibility of leading by example. When athletes are dedicated, hard-working, and encouraging to those around them, they start to create a culture that is infectious. When teams work together and encourage each other they start to succeed together and that is what makes a great team.

Being a team captain means leading by example. Some of the ideal characteristic of a team captain are below that I summarized from Bruce E. Brown’s book.

1. Be an example of a teachable spirit - accept constructive feedback with grace and appreciation
2. Be an example of poise-control your actions in response to emotions
3. Be an example of work ethic of the team - first to arrive and last to leave
4. Be an example of excellence - high expectations for quality of work, effort and concentration are standards which provide motivation
5. Be an example of accountability - always be reliable in the work that you do
6. Be an example of initiative - the first to see and take action for what needs to be done and the last to avoid work
7. Communicate-be truthful, direct, and inclusive. Be clear in your communication.
8. Praise others
9. Lead with Humility
10. Be quietly confident-people will trust and follow. Be encouraged and not threatened by others success
11. Team loyalty-to coaches and teammates. Always maintain your own values.
12. Strong leaders are welcoming of newcomers
13. Strong leaders admit mistakes
14. What are your teams core covenants?

15. Be a problem solver
16. Lead through encouragement-be passionate, positive, motivated and keep things in perspective

Group Structure

The structure of the different groups and how they were run was interesting to discuss with the coaches. I have been looking at ways that I can arrange our club based on the number of coaches I have and the pool space available. KISU has many different entry level groups and then the Age group and Academy groups. Tina and Theresa Zurich are a great team that works together to coach the age group and Academy levels. They are able to split the Academy group sometimes into half so that some do Talk Time while the others are training. This allows for a smaller group and facilitates a better learning and training environment as it makes the groups smaller.

I enjoyed having my athlete attend Academy as she was able to experience training with higher level athletes. Eloise is the fastest swimmer in our club so it was an amazing opportunity for her to train with swimmers that are at her level and much faster as well. This opportunity had a lasting positive impact on her confidence, as she elaborates below.

Things I would like to work on with our swimmers after training with KISU is doing more endurance sets and longer race pace sets. I was talking with Tina about how we have been working on decreasing our swimmers' anxiety in relation to their 200s. Because our club is very new into the competitive world of swimming our athletes had very little experience racing 200s at the beginning of the year. The first meet we went to caused our swimmers extreme anxiety in relation to 200s so I spent our Christmas camp demystifying the 200. I broke it down to the causes of anxiety being, not knowing how to race it and not having enough time practicing it during our training sessions. What I found most helpful in my reading was something I read on SwimSwam about breaking all races into quarters. Each quarter is raced as strong / very strong /very, very strong /sprint. This simplicity took away much of the anxiety my athletes were experiencing and they were able to focus on the training. When I was with KISU Tina did many sets at 200 race pace. She provided me with the sheet below of different main sets working on 200s race pace. I plan to try these with our athletes in the new season.

Pace 200s sets for Sarah

Distance: 8,950 meters Duration: 03:08:00 Stress: 312 Course: SCM Type: In pool Created Date: 06/19/2018 Author: Tina Hoeben

Distance	Duration	Set Description	EGY	TYPE	STK	RP	Pace
P200 8x50+100							
1,800	39:00	3 x 8 x 50 @ 01:00 P200	EN2	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		1 x 100 @ 01:30 BT + 8 or faster	EN2	S	CHO	100 +8s	00:45
		1 x 100 @ 02:30 easy	REC	S	CHO		01:15
		Rest: 01:00					
		NOTE: set 1 = Free, 2=stroke, 3= choice including IM.					
Main Set P200 Week 11 2x50, 3x75, 1x25							
1,350	28:30	3 x 2 x 50 @ 01:00 P200	EN3	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		3 x 75 @ 01:30 P200	EN3	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		1 x 25 @ 00:30 no breath	SP3	S	CHO		01:00
		1 x 100 @ 02:30 easy	REC	S	CHO		01:15
P200 - 4x75							
1,200	25:30	3 x 4 x 75 @ 01:30 Hold P200 pace	EN3	S	CHO		01:00
		1 x 100 @ 02:30 smooth back	REC	S	BK		01:15
		NOTE: Explain that the set has to follow race (no 50 back + 25 fly combo). Explain how to figure out your 75 pace . . . (sorry pace charts aren't done yet). Let's get going on becoming better.					
P200 Set Week 8 2x50+4x75							
1,500	31:30	3 x 2 x 50 @ 01:00 P200	EN3	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		4 x 75 @ 01:30 P200	EN3	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		1 x 100 @ 02:30 easy	REC	S	CHO		01:15
Main P200 - 2x50, 2x75, 2x50							
1,350	28:30	3 x 2 x 50 @ 01:00 P200	EN2	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		2 x 75 @ 01:30 P200	EN2	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		2 x 50 @ 01:00 P200	EN2	S	CHO	200 0s	01:00
		1 x 100 @ 02:30 smooth	REC	S	CHO		01:15
Main Set from Facebook group P200, but no P200							
1,750	35:00	5 x 6 x 50 @ 00:50 hold p400	EN2	S	FR	400 0s	00:50
		1 x 50 @ 02:00 BEP P100	EN3	S	CHO	100 0s	02:00

I particularly liked the first one there, having to hold a strong 100m after 8x50 at 200 race pace. I would like to repeat this set with our seniors in the fall. I feel that my athletes hold back sometimes on longer sets but having the repeat 50s on a pace and recording times on the water proof paper holds the athletes accountable to their effort on the set. Also, on this paper they have their performance from previous times doing this set so they can compare how they are doing in their training.

Equipment

My swimmers all enjoyed using the Dorado Audio Transmitting system (*ed. note: Not an endorsement or suggestion of where to buy, but to give you a sense of what the system looks like, [here is something very similar.](#)*) in one of the training sessions.



This setup includes one “broadcast” microphone, which connects wirelessly to a number of bone conduction headphones worn by the swimmers. They had 10 headsets that the athletes wore like headphones. This allowed me to provide immediate stroke correction to the athletes while they were swimming. It was amazing to be able to talk to the athletes when I noticed something that needed to be corrected. You can see the changes in action as the swimmers got the feedback.

I would like to invest in some of these for our club.

KISU utilized snorkels when they were doing a fly set. I would like to use these with my athletes as I feel that they can do more distance and maintain proper head position for a longer period of time if they are able to keep their heads in line with their body as they swim. The athletes mentioned that sometimes on Fridays they large sets of 25s fly working on proper technique. I would like to increase the amount of fly that my swimmers do in practice but I like the idea of keeping the sets shorter so that they can maintain their technique and correction can be made at the walls.

I had a breakthrough with our team’s fly before I left the coast. We have been working on “head before hands entry” on our fly all year but I could not get my swimmers to get their face back in the water quick enough. They consistently had a late face entry into the water even after doing every drill I could find online. Finally, on the camp before we left for Penticton it struck me to tell them to smack the water with their forehead and their strokes all changed! I couldn’t believe it. We nicknamed it “smash face fly”. Even though you are to keep your head in line with your body and not have a lot of movement up and down it got them to understand the head before hands concept. The “Head before hands” did not connect for them as they were just thinking of their head as a whole lowering into the water and not their forehead leading the way.

We utilized paddles when training with the KISU team. This allows for proper hand position to be maintained throughout the stroke. The paddles that we used slide onto the swimmer’s thumb so easily come off if the stroke is not done properly. These are different from the paddles that our swimmers currently use. I did purchase a pair of these paddles for my athletes to try so that we can decide what pair we feel works for us. We can also switch between the sets depending on what part of the stroke we are working on.

The team utilizes water proof paper with graphs to monitor their test sets. This past year I implemented log books for our senior athletes but only a hand full actually use them. I would

like to use the waterproof paper and test set recording to make logging immediate. This facilitates the process to start on deck and then the swimmer later takes it home and keeps it for reference in the future. I have encouraged my athletes to journal when they go home but I think this immediate recording makes sure it is accurate and complete.

My athletes appreciated the dynamic program that KISU offers. They liked the talk time, dryland, and stretch time. Next season I plan to incorporate more dryland time into our program. I found it interesting that they have a trainer that does their dryland for them and their stretch time. We currently have our swimmers attending a cross fit one day a week which has been beneficial to improving their strength. Benefits of utilizing a trainer for this portion of our program for us is that we do not currently own equipment for dryland. There is a variety of equipment available to us when we attend our trainer's gym such as medicine balls, chin up bars, bands, boxes, and light weights. Having someone work with the team that specializes in this area brings knowledge to the athletes that is more specialized than what I have to offer. Also, the coach at the gym works with us to make the program specific to our swimmers needs. Another benefit is that because of our rural location we do not have a lot of coaches for our team so this adds another coach to help in their training. I have found this to be greatly beneficial to our athletes. I am assuming that KISU has found similar benefits in utilizing a professional in this area.

We have been working a lot on stress and anxiety this year in relation to competition and training. Our swimmers have come so far from panicking at the thought of doing a 200m race to racing these same events at provincials. We have been doing race prep, meditation, mental prep strategies and exposure to stressful situations. We have attended many meets at various levels to decrease the stress response to these events. I feel that we have made a lot of progress in relation to this and training at KISU contributed to the confidence of these swimmers as they were put into training sessions where they did not know what to expect. They managed well and made some great friendships.

We went to Tier 1s with 4 of the KISU athletes. We did team cheers together and the swimmers cheered with each other for all of their races and socialized during the meet. The bonds swimmers form during training and competition are so important to their enjoyment of the sport. I feel that KISU has worked hard to teach their athletes how to be inclusive strong team members. As a coach, I was impressed with how they embraced having another team there and included all of my swimmers in their club. They were supportive and encouraging to my athletes.

Swimmer's Perspective:

I asked my swimmers to submit a paragraph to me on their experience training with KISU. Because they had similar responses I am going to consolidate the comments for this report. The three athletes reported that they enjoyed training with KISU as it put them in a situation where

they did not know what to expect. They felt that this was emotionally and physically draining as they were nervous about what they could accomplish but felt more confident leaving the session as they achieved something they did not know they could do. They enjoyed getting feedback from other coaches and having techniques explained in a different way. It is great to get input from many different people which is one aspect of our club that I think is beneficial, as we have multiple coaches that work with our athletes.

Eloise is a 14yr. old who was part of our group at this camp. She normally trains with Rory (12) and Ava(11) in our program as they are our top athletes, but Eloise is getting into the train to compete stage. She has been on a steep curve in terms of her training since she began swimming two years ago and the idea of doing larger distances is daunting for her. Training with KISU, allowed her the opportunity to swim with some athletes that are her age and training ability. She was challenged as she has not done some of the distance that KISU does. We have been discussing the need to increase her training in the upcoming year and now I believe she feels like she can. Being with a team that does this on a regular basis helped build her confidence and drive to move forward with her training next season. She said that “It was difficult for me to attend practice not knowing what to expect. I was nervous that I wouldn’t be able to keep up with the swimmers. I really liked learning how other clubs train. It made me wish that my club got more pool time. I enjoyed doing sets that were new to me and I hope that my club continues to do them. “

One of the sets that we did there was 6x400 free first three negative split and next three descending 1-3. Eloise initially was very nervous to do this set but we talked about it and she took one 400 at a time and completed the set no problem. At the end, she said that it was not as bad as she was anticipating. This opportunity gave her the chance to realize that she is capable of so much more than she thought. The practice total was 6050m which is about 2k further than she usually trains. Our goals will be for her to increase her meters next year while maintaining quality training focusing on her technique.

Another experience that Eloise described is that she enjoyed not being the fastest on the team. She feels a lot of self-induced pressure to constantly be the best on our team. She enjoyed not being the fastest and focusing on achieving something she didn’t think was possible. It was interesting to have her say this and then attend Mike Flegel’s talk to parents at the Tier 1 meet where he discussed the pressure that some athletes feel in relation to their performance. I feel that Eloise got the opportunity with KISU to experience being nervous about the set but supported in her attempt to challenge it. By feeling supported she was able to take one step at a time and complete the set which in turn raised her confidence for next time she is faced with a challenge.

Rory and Ava I think felt more in their element in regards to the level of training they were doing but I do think that having another coach was beneficial; the coaches pointed some things out to them that they could work on and different training methods to fix problem areas. Coach Theresa recommended that they use paddles that do not strap onto their hand so that they can work on longer strokes and not finishing too short. I think it is fantastic for our

athletes to experience constructive feedback from a number of different coaches. I believe that this experience of swimming with different athletes and coaches will help to make Rory and Ava stronger, more confident swimmers.

Board Member's Perspective:

Recently, Christine Miller and myself (Maggie Scott), both Chinook Swim Club Board members, and Sarah Hynd, our Club's Head Coach/Registrar had the opportunity to meet with Tina Hoeben, Head Coach of the KISU Swim Club, and Jackie Kliever from the Club's Board of Directors.

The generous offer extended by the KISU Club, to invite our swimmers to train with their team in the week leading up to the Tier 1 Championships in Kelowna not only benefitted physically and mentally in their preparation, but also, allowed comradery and fellowship to develop that lasted through the Championships and beyond. It was invaluable to have them train with the KISU team as they bring back knowledge and training experience to their peers. Having support of program ideas by athletes as well as coaches helps to ease the transition of these ideas into practice.

Meeting with Tina and Jackie was hugely beneficial for us as well. Their knowledge and experience with fundraising, building community awareness, club structure, alternatives to meet hosting, and ideas on club growth management has informed our practices going forward. Sarah was also able to meet with Tina, her Head Assistant Coach, Theresa Zurich, and their administrator, Amy Wall, to discuss the running of the club and weekly newsletters that are distributed. Building on some of the central themes that we discussed, we are inspired and excited for the year ahead.

We also discussed ideas on recruiting and hiring staff to grow the club. Currently, we have our senior swimmers volunteer with our learn-to-swim program so that we as coaches can train them on teaching proper technique to young swimmers and demonstrate appropriate teaching techniques for their age. We discussed with KISU how they run their program with the head coach of the learn to swim program overseeing the new coaches and their course outline/lesson plan. We will work towards having our senior swimmers train to a level of being able to run this area of our program with guidance by our head coach.

We discussed training our parents in stroke and turn. KISU trained their senior athletes in stroke and turn so that they are able to help run meets when they are hosted by their club. We discussed the possibility of attending a meet with them in October where we may be able to have our parents trained on the Friday and then be observed during their meet. Our parents will be encouraged to do the online training for stroke and turn through Swim BC at registration next year. KISU has it as a requirement for parents to be certified once their athlete is at a certain level. This ensures that they have parents available to run meets that are trained and also to volunteer at their away meets.

We discussed the end of the year banquet and how important it is that every athlete is celebrated. Tina shared that they do a jelly bean for every second taken off for the athlete in the year. It is a simple representation of their success that that the athletes love.

Club structure is something that we have been building over time. It was helpful to discuss the grouping of their athletes along with the costs of the programming. Our club has been run with volunteer coaches but this has not been a viable way to run the club with the expectation of coaches being certified and maintaining their certification. With the hiring of coaches, we have had an increase in the fees. Our fees are substantially lower than any other club we have compared ourselves to, so it was interesting to discuss those fees and see how KISU structures their program.

KISU outlines the expectations of the parents and swimmers on their website for all members to access. I feel that this is beneficial to running a club that follows policies and procedures. KISU has all of its program information easily accessible to the public without having to be a member of the club. We would like to modify our web information to model that put out by KISU.

There are challenges unique to a rural club that are unlike the experience of some of the Clubs in our immediate catchment in the Lower Mainland. It was the insight in these areas that KISU shared that have allowed us to become more creative in our thinking for the 2018/2019 Chinook Swim Club year.

It was a very positive experience for both the swimmers and ourselves to collaborate and exchange ideas with the KISU Swim Club. This type of cross-pollination is helpful and in the spirit of partnership, can only improve our Club's ability to grow in the right direction.

Maggie Scott, Secretary Chinook Swim Club Board
Christine Miller, Vice President
Sarah Hynd, Registrar/Head Coach

As a team!

As a team, I found KISU to be very welcoming of our group of swimmers and myself as a coach. This welcoming team atmosphere comes from the great leadership their coaches provide. Having a team captain that came over and greeted our swimmers eased the transition of our athletes into their group. It can be very daunting to go and join in with a group you have never trained with, but having the captain introduce your swimmer and make them feel welcome makes an amazing difference. Tina said that they have worked hard at doing team building over the past few years and it has changed their team atmosphere. It was such a pleasure to be able to spend some time with KISU. Our visit to KISU was an invaluable tool for helping us gain ideas into building a sustainable model for our club with a vision and ideas for the future.