



The Blazer Newsletter

KANSAS CITY BLAZERS SWIM TEAM

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



Eternal Loyalty

Passion Education

Discipline Dedication

Commitment Leadership

Excellence

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A Speedo Sponsored Team



April 2009 Edition

Page 1

2008-2009 Season Remaining Volunteer Opportunities

Below is a list of volunteer opportunities that are available to help fulfill any outstanding volunteer hours not yet completed for this swim season. Take advantage of these today!

- Early Bird Meet – May 15 – May 17
- Heritage Triathlon - May 17 (contact jeff.branton@ticketsolutions.com to volunteer)
- Blue/Gold Meet – May 23 Job sign ups will be posted on the website soon.
- Shawnee Mission Triathlon – July 12 (contact jeff.branton@ticketsolutions.com to volunteer)
- Division 1 – July 31 – Aug 2 Watch for sign ups on the website.
- Special offer for D1's only: Volunteers for Hospitality, Concessions, Set-up and Clean-up will be given DOUBLE HOURS.

2009 Blazer College Signings

The Kansas City Blazers would like to congratulate the following swimmers on their recent commitments to their respective universities:

Joe Knight- Oakland University
 Vito Cammisano – University of Missouri
 Chris Smith – University of Milwaukee
 Kelsey Bakalar – Xavier University
 Stephan Franke- George Washington University
 Austin Acheson – Seaton Hall University

We look forward with great anticipation to hearing of the great things that each one of these fine young adults will achieve both athletically and academically throughout their college careers and beyond. We wish each and every one of you the very best of success!

"FOR THE RECORD"

Congratulations to the following swimmers for setting a new standard in excellence during phase II. The Kansas City Blazers has a rich tradition of fast swimming at every age, and setting a team record is truly a special feat.

9-10 Girls

Haley Hynes 50 Breast
 Haley Hynes 50 Fly
 Haley Hynes 100 IM

11-12 Girls

Tiffany Liu 50 Free
 Tiffany Liu 50 Fly
 Tiffany Liu 100 Fly

Senior Girls

Shannon Vreeland 200 Free
 Shannon Vreeland 200 IM

Senior Boys

Nate Ladner 100 Breast

Missouri Valley Division I Championships

Each year, the Missouri Valley LSC crowns its team champion at the Division I Championship meet. The recent tradition is for this meet to be held at the Garvey Aquatic Center in Wichita and the tradition And the tradition for the last 30+ years is that the Kansas City Blazers have been the team champions...both were true again this year. The meet is more than just any old championship. It is the end of the second phase of our swimming year and the end point for our short course swimming focus. For many it's another chance to make cuts for higher level competitions. For some it's the first chance to swim at an out-of-town meet and score points for the team. In many areas, the team competed better than in the past few years.

When the Blazers go to Division I, it's difficult to gauge our success based on total points as we outscored the second place team by over 3,000 points. One way we do evaluate ourselves is based on individual points per swimmer in the meet. This year, we were first in that category. Last year, we were third – the Blazers moved up from 25.0 points per swimmer to 31.0 points per swimmer – a nice jump!

Aside from team performance, we really look at individuals stepping up to the “next level”. We had some team records set (please read the Phase II record article). We also had 27 new Zone cuts and 33 new Sectional cuts at the meet. And as far as event winners go, the Blazers fared very well. On the women's side, we won 38 of the 49 events and on the boys side, 19, for a total of 57 of the 98 events, including 12 of the 18 relay events. Our individual event winners include:

10 & Under

Haley Hynes - 50 Free, 50 Back, 50 Breasts, 50 Fly, 100 I.M., 200 I.M.

Yousef Eldakak – 100 I.M., 200 I.M.

11-12

Tiffany Liu – 50 Free, 100 Free, 200 Free, 500 Free, 100 Back, 100 Fly, 100 I.M., 200 I.M.

Hannah Musser – 100 Breast

13-14

Katt Sickle – 100 Free, 200 Free, 500 Free, 100 Back

Jesse Musser – 200 Free, 500 Free, 400 I.M.

Senior

Monica Dudley – 500 Free, 1000 Free

Bryce Hinde – 100 Breast, 200 Breast

Haley Smith – 200 Back

Natalie Morris – 100 Back

Shannon Vreeland – 100 Free, 1650 Free, 100 Fly, 200 Fly, 200 I.M.

Austin Acheson – 200 Fly, 400 I.M.

Joe Knight – 100 Fly

Luke Musser – 50 Free, 100 Breast, 200 I.M.

Griffin Peavey – 200 Breast

Ben Scheffer – 1000 Free, 200 Back

Cris Smith – 1650 Free

When we walked away from the meet, we had some pretty good individual performances, and a team title, but still could have had more consistency. One measure we use to determine the best all-around performance at the Division I meet for the older kids is the Ultimate Game. It is a composite ranking of the top 6 events that they swim at the meet. For the past three years, we have seen a decline in the quality of this competition. This year, we had several swimmers either miss or get DQd in one or more events to not even be counted in the Ultimate Game. Please read the Ultimate Game article for a full report.

Blazers... The Next Generation. April 2009 Update

After the first Phase of our Swim year, we explained some goals that we had and how we fared during Phase I. Specifically, the Virtual Club Championships and the IMX Rankings. Along with those, we have an update from the Division I Meet and some goals we set there.

Virtual Club Championships – If you read the newsletter in January, you know that we were in 13th place at the time. We have added over 15,000 total points to our score, since then, but have slipped to 16th in the nation. While that is impressive, we have set a goal to be in the top 10 each year in the VCC. Comparing total team points to this time last year is difficult because USA Swimming changed the number of events they scored, so we don't have an "apples to apples" comparison from last year, however, each year, we do our best in Phase III – Long Course. If we had scored the same events last year, we estimate we are about 8,000 points ahead of last year at this time, so Phase III looks promising, but the only way to move up is to swim faster in long course this summer!

IMX Rankings – Just a reminder, the IMX rankings are single-year rankings for swimmers aged 9-18. The events used for these rankings are listed below.

9&10 year olds – 200 Free, 100 Back, 100 Breast, 100 Fly, 200 I.M.

11-12 year olds – 500 Free, 100 Back, 100 Breast, 100 Fly, 200 I.M.

13-18 year olds – 500 Free, 200 Back, 200 Breast, 200 Fly, 200 I.M., 400 I.M.

One of our team goals is to have each swimmer in the program in the Advanced Blue group and up compete in all of these events at meets. We fell well short of this goal in Phases I and II, but hope to improve in this area in Phase III. We feel that just attaining a score is valuable for long-term development regardless of the score. At the top end of the spectrum, the results are very promising. Over the same period last year, our average scores are higher for 1st, 3rd and 10th place, and we had more swimmers in the top 100 of their respective age groups. This is a reasonably new program and one that we have turned our attention to recently. The results are promising, but not quite where we want to be this time next year ☺.

Division I Statistics

Do you want the good news or the bad news first? Good news? Okay, we set a goal to lead the Missouri Valley in points per swimmer. We have not done that over the past two years until this year. Of the top 10 teams, KC Blazers had the most points per swimmer (31.0) ahead of Springfield Aquatics (26.2) and Team Dolphins (22.8). This is up considerably from last year. The bad news regards our Ultimate Game. This is a "game" we play with the award of movie gift cards for 13&Over swimmers who compete in 6 events. We add up the total time dropped (or added) and rank them with the top 10 earning gift cards. One of our goals is to have time droppers be in the majority. As you can see from the included report, this was not the case, and we only had 10 swimmers drop in double digits. We will be looking for better all-around performances next year.



2009 Club Excellence Program

The Kansas City Blazers have been awarded the Silver Level in the 2009 Club Excellence Program with USA Swimming. This is a truly a great accomplishment. The *USA Swimming Club Excellence Program* is a voluntary program that identifies and recognizes USA Swimming clubs for their commitment to performance excellence, successful club administration, and for their support of the sport and USA Swimming. This program strives to meet the following objectives:

- Promote the development of strong, well-rounded age group and senior swimming programs that produce elite 18 & under athletes
- Provide recognition and resources to motivate and assist member clubs to strive for the highest ideals of athlete performance and organizational development.

This program's goal is to embrace leadership and excellence in up to 200 of USA Swimming's top member clubs. The program provides grant funding to Gold and Silver clubs and recognizes the club development system as integral to achieving excellence. To learn more about this wonderful program, please feel free to visit the following site:

<http://www.usaswimming.org/usasweb/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=571> .

The Annual BLAZER "Ultimate Game"
"DIVISION I - Challenge Your Peak Potential"
March 2009

RULES OF THE GAME

1. POWER RANKING FOR ALL 13 AND UP WOMEN AND MEN FOR THEIR PERFORMANCES TO REACH FOR THEIR PEAK POTENTIAL AND LEAD THE TEAM TO ITS PEAK PERFORMANCE AND SUCCESS AT DIVISION I.
2. SWIMMERS MUST ENTER AND COMPLETE AT LEAST 6 RACES TO BE ELIGIBLE.
3. WE WILL TAKE YOUR TOP 6 RACES IN SPRING AND SUMMER AT THE DIVISION I CHAMPIONSHIPS AND THEY WILL BE YOUR ENTRY INTO THE "ULTIMATE GAME".
4. RANKING IS BASED ON SECONDS DROPPED OR ADDED AT DIVISION I VERSUS BEST TIMES OF EACH SWIMMER. A NEGATIVE SCORE IS A TIME IMPROVEMENT AND A POSITIVE SCORE IS TIME ADDED.
5. TOP 10 FINISHERS WILL BE AWARDED MOVIE GIFT CARDS TO RECOGNIZE THEM FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING MEET PERFORMANCE.

RNK	NAME	SCORE
1	Lexi Bergeron	-48.66
2	Becca Bond	-35.41
3	Nathan Welchlin	-30.39
4	Alex Lombardo	-26.83
5	Nick Foster	-22.77
6	Shannon Vreeland	-20.34
7	Jacob Fisher	-17.19
8	Ben Koeller	-14.13
9	Samantha Laffin	-12.15
10	Katt Sickle	-11.19
11	Monica Dudley	-8.11
12	Peyton Gajan	-7.81
13	Cris Smith	-6.37
14	Bryce Hinde	-5.54
15	Heath Maginn	-5.54
16	Kaela Ropson	-5.16
17	Alec Jackson	-5.06
18	Jacob Berger	-4.50
19	Jesse Musser	-2.49
20	Mackenzie Neeley	-1.93
21	JT Nelson	-1.29

RNK	NAME	SCORE
22	Stephan Franke	-0.65
23	Laura Klover	-0.38
24	Amy Davis	0.15
25	Rosie Hutchison	2.18
26	Hallie Breidenthal	3.73
27	Ben Bravence	3.80
28	Nathan Hoisington	4.15
29	Katherine Miller	4.76
30	Natalie Morris	5.57
31	Mardi Buchanan	6.60
32	Jean Madison	6.67
33	Sihan Liu	6.80
34	Carolina Dugan	7.39
35	Bobby Faulkenberry	7.41
36	Jenny Martin	7.64
37	Cammisano, Vito	7.70
38	Hunter Stevenson	7.81
39	Michael Glenn	7.86
40	Luke Musser	9.02
41	Seth Musser	10.04
42	Ryan Dake	10.28

RNK	NAME	SCORE
43	Mackenna Rife	10.76
44	Matt Benson	12.30
45	Brent Crosby	12.43
46	Chelsey Weatherford	13.25
47	Nate Savage	15.80
48	Alli McCollum	15.83
49	Jared Johnstone	16.35
50	Bryan Haring	17.37
51	Griffin Peavey	18.52
52	Steve Sharp	18.66
53	Kate Snyder	19.10
54	Brooke Brull	20.01
55	Sam Brennan	20.48
56	Melissa Funke	29.81
57	Caroline Woody	36.28
58	Joe Lytle	39.36
59	Ryan Smith	41.57
60	Paige Morris	42.94
61	Jordan Milhon	43.51
62	Jon Benson	44.19
63	Emily Rohde	54.33

MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH

ELITE PROGRAM

March 2009

Austin Acheson



CRITERIA:

- A. Attendance
- B. Attitude
- C. Growth as a Swimmer
- D. Growth as a Person
- E. Inspiration to Staff & to Team Members

The month of March was a very successful one for Austin Acheson. Recently returning from his high school campaign during his senior year, Austin was focused on improving himself for a final short course Sectional and Division I run.

As the Sectional met unfolded, it was apparent that Austin was ready to swim. He was the Sectional champion in the 1650 free, second in the 1000 free, and took third in both the 400IM and 500 free. He also showed great toughness with consolation swims in the 200 fly and 200 free.

The following week in Wichita, he was ready to race again. He was Division I champion in the 200 fly and 400IM, and number of top 8 swims.

Austin has become a leader in the pool during workout, and is poised to have a great long course season. He will attend Seton Hall this fall, and we are sure that he will enjoy great success in his collegiate career. Congratulations to Austin Acheson and his pursuit of excellence.

Elite Coaches: Pete Malone and Scott Bliss

MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH

BLUE VALLEY WEST – BLUE GROUP

March 2009

Andrew Goode



March is a different Month. There is a lot of transition. We finish up our short course season and Phase II of our swim year. We take a week off, and we start up to get ready for Phase III of our swim year and long course swimming. It's important for the swimmers to focus on everything they've learned in Phase II for the end of the season meets and then transition to learning new habits for success at the end of Phase III. One person who really didn't make a transition was Andrew Goode – he kept working hard the whole time.

Andrew moved up to the Blue group from Novice at the beginning of Phase II. By the end of Phase II, he was a regular lane leader and one of the most frequent attendees at practice. He's worked hard on his flip turns and continued to work hard on developing all of his strokes – especially breaststroke.

His hard work has been paying off. He's really improved his flip turns and has qualified for Division II in two different strokes. With effort like that, the other strokes should be close behind. Andrew hasn't always been a leader at practice, but he's moved up consistently and is now a regular leader in and out of the pool at practice.

Keep it up, Andrew!

Coach Derek, Tamara and Susan

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
BLUE VALLEY WEST – SENIOR GROUP**

**March 2009
Max Bennett**



The month of March was an eventful one for Max Bennett. It started by finishing up the Division II meet in finals on Sunday, March 1st and winning the 50 free and 100 Back. At that meet, he got his first three Division I qualifying times. Two weeks later, he went to Wichita to swim those events. Sunday the 15th was even more eventful than the first as he found himself back in finals in the 100 back on his 15th Birthday.

After two eventful weeks, and a birthday, Max deserved the week off for Spring break, but came back ready to compete in the Senior age group. He's been at every practice at Blue Valley West in March and is practicing with more confidence than ever. In the T-30 that we did the day after spring break, he increased his lifetime best performance by 4 lengths! He's also moving up on kicking intervals and has done a great job working on backstroke and butterfly technique at practice.

If he keeps this up, we could see him scoring at the *next* Division II and Division I meets! Keep it up, Max

Coach Derek

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
BLUE VALLEY NORTH – BLUE GROUP**

**March 2009
Yousef Eldakak**



Yousef finished his 10 & under short course yards swimming career with some great performances at the D-I Championships. Yousef won both the 100 and 200 IM to show his great talent as a superior all-around swimmer. Yousef's greatest area of improvement has been in his Breaststroke. Improvements made this short course season enabled him to win the two IM races At D-I's. Yousef also has the highest IMX score of all the 10 & under boys on the Blazers Swim Team.

During Phase II, Yousef had the 2nd highest attendance of all the X-Blue swimmers with a 93.5%. Yousef has worked hard over the last 6months to developed better technique and a much stronger leg kick. He always comes to practices extremely excited about the workout and how that day's practice will challenge him to become a future star in the sport. Yousef is a pleasure to have in practice as he is always ready for any challenge that I may throw his way.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Coach Bob

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
BLUE VALLEY NORTH – GOLD GROUP**

March 2009

Tiffany Liu

Tiffany has been as solid as a rock this past short course season. Her meet performances are second to none on the team. In the four major meets that we swam this short course season (Level I, Plano, All-star and D-I), she has lost only three times and 2 of those 3 have been in the 100 Back where Tiffany currently ranks 21st in the Nation. Tiffany's top ranking for short course is in the 200 free at 12th place. She has set three individual Blazer 11&12 team records; 50 Fly 27.58, 100 Fly 1:00.53 and 50 Free 25.26. She has won High Point award at every meet she has entered this season. Tiffany has an abundance of natural talent, which paired with a focused mindset, equates to some super swimming skills! She has learned how to use the pace clock during practice sets and pushes herself each time. Her ability to work and make adjustments to stroke technique is uncanny. Tiffany is a coach's dream to have at practice and is always a performer that you can count on in the Meets. I hope she understands the true talent that she possesses and capitalizes on the opportunities that may come to her in the future.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Coach Bob

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
SHAWNEE MISSION NORTH/ROELAND PARK – BLUE GROUP**

March 2009

Jeannie O'Flaherty

Jeannie O'Flaherty only began swimming with the Blazers this past September she has already made a big splash with her presence on our team. While Jeannie was only able to swim one day in the recent DI Championship meet she managed to place in two of the she events she swam. She ended up winning the consolation event for the 10 & under 50 breast and placed a respectable 13th in the 100 IM.

Jeannie is not only blessed with the necessary physical tools to be successful in swimming, but she also possesses some other traits that are necessary to succeed not only in swimming, but life as well. First of all, Jeannie has a very healthy competitive spirit where she wants to win and do her best for the fun of it. She enjoys the thrill of competition and doesn't allow her performance to affect her self esteem. Next Jeannie is very coachable. By that I mean she respects her coaches, listens to what they have to say, and then she proceeds to follow the instructions and make the changes necessary to improve. Lastly and this applies to her whole life; Jeannie has a strong desire to do well at whatever she attempts be it in the pool or at the school. She takes things in stride, learns as she goes and is willing to do what it takes to do her best.

While only beginning to reach her potential in the sport of swimming, there is no doubt in my mind that Jeannie is strong and capable of having an awesome future in the sport, if she chooses to make the right commitment. She is a definite keeper and the Blazers are fortunate to have her as part of our team.

Sincerely,
Coach Henry

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
SHAWNEE MISSION NORTH/ROELAND PARK – GOLD GROUP**

March 2009

Rilye Fries



Rilye has done it again, she is our Gold team “Swimmer of the Month” for the 2nd time this year. She won it the first time for her outstanding work ethic, the intensity of her practices, and her rate of improvement. This time however, she won it for the same reasons plus her outstanding performances at both the Plano meet and the DI Championships. At the spring championships Rilye who had just turned 12 qualified and raced to top eight in all eight events she swam, and placed 2nd in the 100 fly. This feat could not have happened without the great commitment determination and perseverance she possessed consistently all throughout the year.

I am so proud of Riyle not only for her achievements this year, but also for the role model she has been for the others on the team. Rilye is not only very humbled about her successes this year, but she was always happy for her competitors when they did well. Rilye showed me that you can do whatever you want when you follow a planned path and set your mind to do so.

It’s going to be fun to see what Rilye can achieve this long course season especially with the 2009 Zone meet looming ahead, maybe even sectionals. Time will tell.

Best wishes,
Coach Henry

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
ROELAND PARK – SENIOR GROUP**

March 2009

Josh Reinhardt



It’s been noticeable that the size of the Roeland Park Senior group has been reduced over the past couple of months. But because the numbers are lower doesn’t mean that good practice performance goes unnoticed. Actually, it’s a good time to get individual attention. One person who is deserving of attention this month is Josh Reinhardt.

While he didn’t swim in any meets in March, Josh has been pretty solid at practice. He’s attending on a regular basis and has used the interseason to regain fitness and form better habits for the training to come in the summer. He improved his T-30 length total from the fall and his training intervals have dropped. He’s responded with better effort in practice, not just with speed, but attention to technique.

Practice is a really important piece of the puzzle, but it will be even better to see what he does in the meets coming up. Keep it up, Josh!

Coach Derek, Eric & Christie

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
KANSAS CITY BLAZERS, EAST – GOLD GROUP**

March 2009

Audrey Synder

When a swimmer wins the swimmer of the month award, they are judged at a higher level in order to win it again. That is because we don't judge the swimmer of the month nominees against the other swimmers, we judge them against what we perceive as their peak potential. This is the third time Audrey has won the award. Each time she has won it she has jumped forward to reach the next level. We think that, maybe, one of her secret, personal goals might be to win all of the awards for an entire year!

As a 10 year old, she wanted to make an "A" time in the 200 meter free so she could go to Zones and swim the ½ mile open water race. As an 11 year old she wanted the "A" time in the 400 free so she could go to Zones and swim the mile open water race. This season we told her to stop messing around and just qualify for the meet. The challenge is that her 13th birthday falls before Zones this year and she would have to make the "A" time in the 1500 or 1650 free as a 12 yr old.

Audrey had her shot at the Plano meet where the 11-12 1000 freestyle was offered. She made the 11-12 "AAA" time and made the Division 1 Senior 1000 free time. On Sunday at the Division 1 meet, Audrey had not qualified for the 100 backstroke so for her 3rd event of the day we entered her in the 1650 free. Audrey brought her very high attendance and considerable hard work to the fore and made the 13-14 "AAA" time and the Sectional cut as well!

Audrey serves as an example of how the game should be paid. Always shoot for the top, always strive for the best, always set high goals, and do it often be having great attendance. It is a winning formula for anyone willing to pay the price.

Congratulations Audrey, and thanks for the inspiration! Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler

**MOST INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER OF THE MONTH
KANSAS CITY BLAZERS, EAST – ADVANCED BLUE GROUP**

March 2009

Sidney Butler

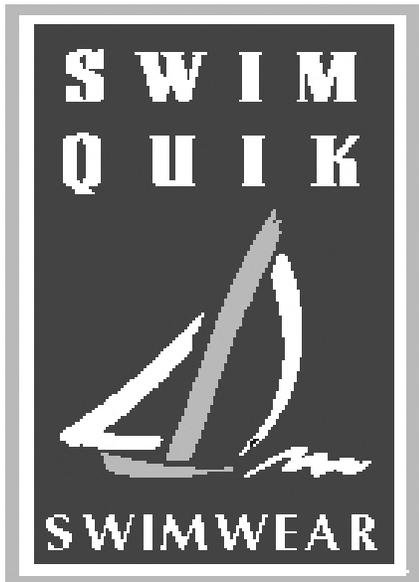
The March swimmer of the month goes to someone who really worked hard all season and had a great show in her championship meets because of it. Sydney Butler has had great attendance all year, and a great attitude to go with it. She works hard.

At 11, there were a lot of swimmers older than her this year; some of them a lot older, that she was challenged to keep up with. And sometimes she had to work a lot harder than they did at the same set because of it. But she did, and she was more successful because of it.

There were some rough meets this year, where for one reason or another it didn't seem like the hard work was paying off. But her last couple of meets, especially Division 2's, really let her shine. Sydney looked stronger and faster than we could have even imagined at the end of the season this year. We were so impressed with her work ethic and so thrilled that it paid off for her.

And then, when her season was over, she turned right around and got right back into the pool working just as hard. No break, no "easing back in", no complaining; just hard work and focus, and smiles. Ann was thinking the other day, how it seems like the girls her age are more interested in the social aspects of practice than in the challenge of the set or the drive to excel. No doubt Sydney has a lot of friends on the team, but we rarely, if ever, see that get in the way of her giving it her all and going after her goals. We hope she knows how much we appreciate that.

Congratulations Sydney, and thanks for the inspiration! Coaches Mike Lewellyn and Ann Gibler



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Wish to Thank
The KC Blazer Boosters!
2008-2009 Blazer Booster Families:**

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The Kansas City Blazers swimmers would like to thank the many wonderful businesses for their continued support in assisting the team in their quest for excellence. Please let them know that you appreciate their support!

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