

Cochrane Comets shoot to the top of their short season

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By Cori Lee Miller

The Eagle

The Cochrane Comets winter swim club is ready to spend some time on dry land after a successful short course season.

The Comets spent the season collecting medals and showing larger clubs they're more than just small fish in a big pond.

Head coach Suzanne Gaida said the season has been full of success for the Comets.

"It's been great. The kids work really hard and they swim a lot," she said.

The clubs has 35 members ranging in age from six to 17.

"I sometimes see them more than their parents do. They spend a lot of time with me," Gaida joked.

This season Gaida had her hands full taking the swimmers to compete around the province.

On Feb. 20-22, the Comets attended Age Group Trials in Sherwood Park.

Haley Jaques, 11, Savanna Neiser, 10, Serinah Gicuhi, 10, and Michael Audia, 11, all qualified to swim.

Jaques raked in medals with golds in the 200 metre backstroke, 50 backstroke, 200 individual medley and 100 butterfly, and bronzes in 50 freestyle and 100 backstroke.

Neiser received a silver in 50 backstroke, and Audia received a silver in the 100 butterfly.

"They all swam very well. They all made finals," said Gaida.

Next up, the Comets were off to the Senior Championships in Medicine Hat, Feb. 27-March 1.

Club members Jacque Sinnett, 15, Katie Vanderkley, 15, Jesse Boutin, 16, Jon Wilkins, 17, Claire Uren, 17, Mary O'Neil, 17, and Christian Daniel, 15, attended.

O'Neil achieved an A (faster) qualifying swim time in the 50 backstroke and 50 freestyle.

Daniels medalled in all events in the Swimmer With A Disability (SWAD) category.

"He medalled in everything and he swam very well. This is his first championships," Gaida said.

Most recently the team was in Calgary at the Age Group Championships March 20-22.

Connor Mattheizing, 11, Stefan Daniel, 12, Kelsey Martinez, 14, and Jaques ruled the Calgary pool.

"We had lots of best times," said Gaida of the swimmers. "It was a very successful meet for them."

Daniels took medals in all the SWAD events he swam, and along with Mattheizing and Jaques, was selected to represent Southern Alberta in the 11- to 12-year-old North-South Alberta Dual Meet on April 10-11 in Edmonton.

Now that the short course season has ended the swimmers will be participating in a year-end swim-a-thon March 25.

The Comets will be collecting pledges for the swim club, and spend a two-hour stint in the pool during the swim-a-thon.

The swimmers will only get a brief break before starting the long course season, which runs from April to July.

They will be swimming in a 50 metre Olympic-sized pool instead of the 25-metre facilities used during the short course season.

For more information, e-mail president@cochranecomets.ca.



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