

Dear swimmers, parents, and staff,

Thank you so much for participating with the Northerns Swim team. We had a great year! We had over 150 swimmers ages 5-18 on the team. We brought 130 athletes to compete in the Sections meet, took 3rd place at the MN State meet, had 30 swimmers qualify for Regionals where they competed against 11 other states from the Midwest. Over the year we learned a lot of new skills, dropped time and gained new personal bests, grew as athletes and as a coaching staff, made a lot of new friends, and most importantly, had a ton of fun doing it! Each of the children, parents, and coaches add to the uniqueness of our program. It was a pleasure working with you all and we look forward to having you back next season. I have compiled all of your comments and suggestions from the season review. Please take time to read them over so you are informed about the suggestions and recommendations for next season.

- Most of you seemed to appreciate the manager position
 - Whether we are financially able to support that position next year is going to be determined in September prior to the start of the season. I assure you that the tasks that the manager handled this year will still be taken care of and we will be implementing some new ideas and strategies as well. My continued involvement with the day to day organization and operation of the team will ensure that the coaches are able to focus on coaching the athletes.
- Raise the volunteer fee to \$100
 - As you know if you attended the season wrap-up meeting we all decided to raise the fees to \$75 for the upcoming year which will be an increase from this season. We will see how it goes next season. Hopefully \$75 will entice families to give their time to the team. Thank you to all of those that donated their volunteer fee even after completing your service requirements to the team! We raised about \$500 from your donations which will go right back to the team and your swimmer.
- Most seemed to think home meets went smooth and you all seemed to like the flyover starts.
 - As flyover starts are going to continue to be used during sanctioned competitions, we will continue to teach them to our swimmers next year and use them at our home meets.
- Parent meet & great would be helpful for new members
 - I agree, great idea! If anyone would like to help organize an event next year please let me know. I'm sure our coaches would love to attend also. What a great way to kick off the season! Thank you for the suggestion ;)
- Almost everyone mentioned a bulletin board on the main level
 - Your comments have been heard (finally!) the interiors committee is ordering us a bulletin board right away and it will hang across from the offices near the member service desk and are also looking into a shelf of some sort for the ribbon pick up boxes and some trophy's!
- A few people mentioned that we need to get a new microphone system
 - When we realized ours was broken last year we looked into a new one. They were extremely expensive and in a year we will be in a pool that has

it's own system. Therefore, we fixed ours mid-season and hope it holds through our next and final season at Morgan Park! Keep your fingers crossed! We will bring the megaphone and whistle as backup if our system fails us again.

- It seems that most newer families wanted more communication
 - We have come up with a meeting schedule for new and veteran parents to ensure more feedback. A couple of key times we feel are important are the start of the season, before the first meet, mid-season, and then prior to the final sanctioned competitions. Y staff will be represented at all meetings, but it will be the role of the president to pass out dates, create an agenda, and run these meetings. We tried to pair families up with “mentor families” this year to help share information. I’m curious to know if anyone utilized their mentor families. I’m open to suggestions on how to strengthen that system or create a new one.
- Some comments were made about wanting better swim suits.
 - I will admit that picking out suits is not a strength of mine. When we chose the suits we asked for opinions from most of the coaches and the board. Nobody seemed to raise any concerns. The color was chosen because the National Y had just underwent a branding change and all the colors on the suit matched the color scheme set forth by the National Y. Next year we will meet with interested parents prior to the season about suit selection. At this point we are leaning more towards a black suit with a Y logo. Similar to our apparel order, the suit may be chosen by the family based on the size, style, and affordability. If we keep black with a Y logo for competition suits, if swimmers do not outgrow their suit, they could use it year after year.
- Somebody mentioned an improved swimmer sign-up system
 - I am open to suggestions if anyone has any. Jeff mentioned an online system that we are going to look into, but other parents mentioned that not everyone is “on-line” therefore we are hoping our bulletin board being brought back will help with sign ups. Let us know if you have seen anything else that works. I can connect with some other teams too to see how they do it. No need in re-inventing the wheel if others have a good system we could copy
- It was brought up that a suggested change was not honored with a line-up
 - When we are doing home meets although it is very tedious and time-consuming we do have SOME flexibility to alter the line up once it's created. At away meets however we have no control over the computer and line up once it is sent in and some teams are more strict than others about making changes to the line-up. This makes it really tough to add races, switch swimmers, change races etc. We try to be as accommodating as we can, but at away meets (especially big meets such as Sections/State) we do not have the luxury. Next year maybe we could make the registration deadline earlier in the week so the coaches can compile the line-up, I can send it out and give parents/swimmers the chance to look it over for errors, and then send it in.

- Questions have been brought up about the line-up and what kids are swimming.
 - The coaches will all discuss this at our first meeting next year and come up with a strategic plan as to why we are putting swimmers in certain races and how we will compile relays. We will share this information with you at the orientation/registration meeting and prior to the first meet.
- It was suggested that we set up a Jooners page for concessions items.
 - I'll talk with Laurie (our Jooners expert) about that. It seems to me that it should work, and we could try that for next season (rather than a volunteer job title, there would be a food title) the person that mentioned this said that it would allow for easier changes mid-season and I'm not sure what they meant, so if you wrote that, please let me know how you think it could work and we can look into it!
- The walkie-talkies and communication to the cafeteria was poor
 - Yes, we agree, that was always frustrating! The Y has a couple of good ones that we could maybe use for our home meets. I would hope they can get by 4 Saturdays out of the year without them! ;) Otherwise, we can purchase a better pair prior to our first meet. We'll make sure to bring the good ones along next season!
- Someone mentioned that their child needed to learn more "technique" and another asked if they could spend more time on flip turns.
 - We are brainstorming some different coaching models for the upcoming year which we feel will allow more concentration on key skills and better attention to the varied levels of swimmers. That being said, please let the coaches know during the season if you feel your child needs more help in a certain area, certainly don't feel that you have to wait for the end of the season evaluation to let us know! We have head coaches for each age group for a reason, so please touch base with them as soon and as often as you need. Also, all of our coaching staff teach private and semi private lessons as well. In addition, some of the practice times are less busy than others where kids can really get some good feedback on their strokes and turns.
- A few people said to find a way better than emails to get information out to parents.
 - PLEASE let us know how we can best communicate with each of you! We are always looking for ways to better our communication process. We are hoping more regular meetings will help as well as the bulletin board. If you have any other suggestions, please let us know how we can reach out to you if you do not get email or cannot check the website.
- People seemed to like getting the results after the meets and especially liked it when it included info from the other teams.
 - We will continue to post results and can post them in a variety of formats so you can get the info that you are looking for.
- Input from new parents: Everything does not have to be "just like it's always been"
 - Thank you for being open to change! We will never progress if we always stay the same. This is not a static program, it will always be changing as

we learn new trends, techniques, best practice, and standards. Please have an open mind and understand that change is tough but can often lead to good. We do realize that we make mistakes sometimes as we learn and try new things, but in the grand scheme of things, everything we do is in the best interest of the team, your swimmer, and the Y. It would be great to have some new parents on the board to hear your ideas and thoughts!

- It was said that the person leading warm-ups at meets should not be the one coordinating the meet as well.
 - We agree. It was hard for Jeff to be doing both, especially at away meets. I will be assuming the role as manager next year and am not a coach so I can focus my attention on the issues that arise pre-meet and leave the coaches to what they do best!
- Someone mentioned having the younger kids come later during the home meets.
 - One of 8 and under races happens right away (#'s 7 & 8) so we don't want them getting their too late, we start rounding swimmers up for that race right after warm-ups! Also warm-up is an important part of the meet to prevent injury, review skills and drills, practice starts and turns, and get a feel for the pool they'll be swimming in. We'd hate for them to miss out on an important warm up. If it's too early, you can always request to only be put in the second half of the meet. It does tend to be a long day for the little ones.
- Have a parent watch over the little ones at the State Meet
 - I have that on my list of things for coaches and our State League to discuss. It would definitely be nice to have some extra support with the younger kids. Maybe a buddy system of some sort, or a pick-up/drop-off delivery site to ensure swimmers are getting from the parent to the coach and back. I am open to suggestions. We will let you know what we come up with closer to that time next season.
- It was requested to have a few swimmers sit on the board.
 - I think that's a great idea! We'd love to hear their input and I'm sure one (or a couple) of them would be honored to represent their age group on a swim team advisory committee! Thanks for the suggestion!
- Donate left over concessions food to Second Harvest
 - Another great idea! We do keep everything that is non-perishable and save it for the next meet, but anything perishable if it is able to be donated, should be. If anyone wants to stop by concessions after the meet to see if there are any items to donate they are welcome to drop them off at a place that accepts food donations.
- We would pay more for a nicer cap
 - Similar to the suit situation, if anyone has a particular cap in mind, please let us know. We would like to continue to put our logo on them and could possibly customize if people wanted their names on them.
- Have a captain for each age group
 - I'll have the coaches discuss this as a possibility. Any ideas about what their role would be as captain?

- Have the awards ceremony at Morgan Park, possibly skip the potluck, and have more time for awards
 - Unfortunately we would have to pay to use space at Morgan Park and I'm not sure what space they would be able to provide us with that we don't already have (gym). We could try doing the banquet on a Saturday next year so we don't run into leagues (if that Sunday league is even going to be continuing next year, we are not sure at the moment). We will hopefully have a little more time for awards next year!
- The Y needs to celebrate and showcase the swim team
 - We are looking into some new banners for the pool area, and a new display for trophies, records, and bulletin. We are proud of our team and do want to show the world how awesome they are!
- Bring treats back to concessions
 - We are operating under new policies set forth by the Y USA. Apparently some Y's are slower to catch on than us, but our Y has already been following the guidelines set forth by "Activate America" and we are working on the "pioneering of healthy communities". Our gymnastics team follows the same policies. We are open to suggestions for more fun healthy snacks, but won't be bringing back things like candy bars and cookies and pop as they are not good foods for kids to be having before or after races, and we'd like to provide healthier options.
- The Y lost money by not letting non-regional qualifiers continue to swim
 - We actually saved a lot of money by cutting the 4:00 practice and have also been able to give the regional qualifiers the attention they need in order to be successful at the regional meet. We also have 14 kids signed up for the competitive swim class that we are offering (which is greater than the amount of non-regional qualifiers that participated last season when we allowed people to extend their swim season). So far we have been enjoying the benefits of this system and are defiantly thinking of continuing it next season as well.
- Put a Northerns logo on the wall in the youth locker rooms to give our kids ownership
 - Not a bad idea! I'm not sure if it's possible, but we will by next season have a big banner in the pool that says "Home of the Duluth Y Northerns Swim Team" so everyone can see it whether they go into the all ages locker rooms or not. Also, then next time we need to purchase backstroke flags we were considering customizing them to spell out the name of our team.

Thank you for helping make our program better. Please let me know if I left anything out, did not address a concern/suggestion, or if you have any ideas. Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Emily Marshall
Program Coordinator