

Cascade Speed Meet (Nov. 5th & 6th)

Winter Doesn't Stop the Racing

The weather outside is making those commutes to MNP sketchy and slow but the racing inside the facility is outstanding and quick. One hundred and twentyish UCSC swimmers descending to the waters of the competition pool to test and refine their racing skills. For many, this is the first meet of the season to offer morning preliminary swims with evening finals.

The preliminary sessions had quick turn arounds between swims and challenged the swimmers to practice racing with less than normal rest between their events. Being able to produce quality swims back to back is a great skill that teaches the swimmers grit and perseverance. The outcome is not measured solely by time but how well you execute your race plans when faced with multiple events.

The preliminary sessions saw the dinos heat up the pool with many swimmers advancing through to final swims. Many finals were filled by the bright yellow caps of UCSC showing the depth in our club. I was impressed with the interaction of the swimmers and their coaches. Swimmers communicated race strategies and technical focuses and eagerly returned to discuss outcomes and next steps to improve upon performances.



It's worth noting that some swimmers had succumbed to illness prior to and during the meet. It can be devastating and mentally challenging when things don't go to plan. When this happens the best thing to do is rest. Take that energy and focus it on getting better; don't worry about missing the meet. Allow your body to recover and use this hurdle to motivate towards your next competition. You will be faced with many hurdles during your swimming career and being able to cope and strategize around adversity is a skill that bodes you well as you experience your swimming adventures.

Day 1 – Finals

The finals offered a unique schedule as the events were different between girls and the boys. Swimmers had to pay attention to the event order as well as managing their race strategies. Once again, the UCSC swimmers demonstrated, true grit as they churned up the water racing their foes and dominating the finals. Dinos are fierce competitors yet very compassionate. Hand shakes, high fives and cheering/supporting teammates are typical characteristics of a UCSC swimmer.



Did you catch the 200 back this evening? The 11-14 year girls captivated the audience challenging for medals and demonstrated their technical prowess amongst their peers. It was a beauty to watch. The 11-12 girls swept the podium! Not to be outdone by their younger counterparts the 13-14 girls swept the podium as well.



The senior men's 100 free had two-time Olympian and former UCSC swimmer Yuri Kisil knife his way through the 4 laps. If you need some tips on how to swim a fast 100 free, I hope you caught this race. You can learn lots by observing an elite swimmer execute their race... body position, starts, turns and a flawless race strategy can provide you with insight and things to apply to your own swimming.

The UCSC boys had grit of their own. If you missed it, the boys rocked out the 200 fly. Of the 11 contenders in the whole event, 9 of the boys were from our club. I personally enjoyed watching how technically well they executed their races!



When asked about their thoughts on the evening:

We saw many swimmers who committed 100% to their race strategies which resulted in exceptional swims.

~ Coach Dave

It was great to see the swimmers take a step up and improve upon their morning swims. They swam with more confidence, and were able to get after the front end a little more. Lots of best times this early, under a high training load bodes well for the meets to come!

~ Coach Nick

Day 2 – Finals

After training on Saturday, Coach Carl and his crew raced on Sunday to test their racing skills after hard training. It was fun and inspiring to have the senior swimmers race. It's motivating to have such awesome leading swimmers that set a great example for the younger and up and coming swimmers in our club. Many of these swimmers have developed their swimming skills through the various groups in our club. We are really fortunate to be part of such an amazing organization! 😊



Sunday finals were just as good as the previous day, if not better. For many of the younger swimmers they got to experience swimming multiple events during the morning prelims and follow up these swims again racing in the finals. For the older swimmers it was a chance to reconnect with their ability to race multiple events in a session.

Regardless of your experience level, stepping outside your comfort zone is where the magic happens. You learn new things and your body adapts when you venture into the unknown. It's taking these chances or risks that lead to improvements. This is a unique characteristic of a UCSC swimmer.

When asked about their races in the finals, here's what a few swimmers had to say:

I'm excited to have been able to improve on my time early in the season. I think what got me there was really focusing on my approaches into the wall as well as making it a race. Being able to race, and train, with such strong athletes and getting to chase them in my 800 is always a super useful tool.
~ Kealeigh McLeod on her 800 Free

I'm excited to continue to improve my 200 free at our upcoming peak meet in December. Coming out of a hard week of training I am proud of the swim I was able to put together. I mainly focused on executing my race plan and maintaining technique throughout the race.
~ Claire Bennett on her 200 free

I felt like it was a really good swim; a bit over my best from the summer. Underwater work was good... longer off each wall. Was able to maintain a high stroke rate. Looking forward to getting back to training and building my endurance.
~ Yianni Melonas on his 100 Fly

Well, that was tough. It was a three man showdown, and with great effort, I managed to place in the top three. On a more serious note, I'm happy to have had an opportunity to race 200 breast, despite being in the middle of a large training block. Although it wasn't a best time, it was definitely a productive race.
~ Cooper Scott on his 200 breast

Eventhough winter showed up and created a frozen landscape the racing inside MNP Community Centre was hot, hot, hot. Coaches have evaluated their swimmers performances and have identified areas to work on. In the upcoming weeks coaches will design work outs to practices skills and build towards future meets.

Likewise, swimmers will have met some goals, re-assessed others and are eager to improve for their next competition. November will be the month to refine and test these skills while December will be the month to achieve peak performance.

It was a successful weekend of racing. Mistakes were made, improvements achieved and new goals were set. It is through these experiences we grow. It's going to be a couple of exciting months of racing. Stay healthy, work hard and reach for the stars... where will your swimming take you?

Coach Jeff