Every team's parents and swimmers need to know their time and effort is recognized and valued. Communication, such as newsletters and weekly updates keep them appreciated and working toward the same goals.

The following is one team's example that made a powerful point.

ACTUAL NEWSLETTER BUT TEAM NAMES HAVE BEEN REDACTED

The following is a two-part e-mail newsletter sent to OUR parents in the Spring of [redacted], after a very exciting State Championships. (Part 1 on Monday and Part 2 on Tuesday.) The State Meet is held a week after the last LSC Championships meet and 8-unders through 15-18 all participate. It is a fun but ***very*** competitive meet.

States summary - Part 1

WOW !!

For all those in attendance at the State Meet, especially during the final session of 15-19's on Sunday afternoon, you witnessed one of the most exciting competitions in 30 years of [redacted] Swimming. This meet was one of the fastest in history with twelve new State Records being set during the first 12 events on Friday night. OUR Team set four of them.... and nine over the full meet.)

We were in third place at the end of Friday night (session 1)..... in second place at the end of session 2 (Saturday morning) ..... and TIED with one event to go in Session 3. We went into Sunday's sessions only fourteen points behind A Club. (The "A" Club is the perennial state champion.)

At the end of Sunday morning's session 4 (all 8-under and the 11-12 Girls) we had opened an 89-point lead over A but we knew A 's older swimmers would be strong and deep. (The program showed them outscoring us in that session but the question would be "by how much?") Their 15-19 swimmers outscored us by hundreds of points last year at the state meet.

Our older girls got us started off with a bang by winning the 200 Medley Relay.....<u>but it wasn't easy</u>. A , us and x **<u>all</u>** broke the old state record and we out touched them both by less than one second! Like four heavyweight prize fighters in a ring together, we traded points blow-for-blow with A , , x and , xx all afternoon. They each had strong and large Senior groups.

A's , however, was a little stronger and deeper than both x and xx and kept whittling our lead away. <u>Our</u> goal was to keep those pieces as small as possible..... and we had one great swim after another.... But A <u>just</u> <u>kept</u> <u>coming</u>! By the start of the relays our lead was only six and a half points! A had just seized first <u>and</u> second place in the Boys 100 Breast.)

But we had a secret weapon. WE had the BEST and largest cheering section during the entire meet. Our Spirit Week was a tremendous success in fostering that. (You could tell that the other teams were learning by watching us. They started putting more effort into cheering about half-way through the session. But was it in time to stem the A tide"?) By the time our girls got up to start the 200 Free Relay there were dozens of swimmers squeezing into that 7-foot width at the end of our lanes..... and it made a tremendous difference.

Our girl's "B" Relay (7th seed) did its job in holding off hard-charging A (8th) but the big points are in first place for relays (40 points compared to 34 for second). A was seeded first, being the State record holder in that event. x was seeded second with a fired-up **(us)** right behind them in third.

It was magnificent to watch. ALL THREE teams broke the old state record ..... but (we) touched the pad first!

We now had a 16.5-point lead but [A] 's boys were strong and deep for the 15-19 Free Relay. We figured around 6 to 10 points for our "B" relay but their "B" dropped an unbelievable 7 seconds for somewhere between 20 and 30 points. They looked to now have an advantage by a couple points. Our Boys "A" relay was seeded third by over two seconds behind [A] and over 3 seconds behind the current State record holder [xx]. But our cheering "posse" was the loudest it had been all season when the starting horn sounded for the final event of the meet.

By the time the water settled, (we) had out-touched [xx] and [A] by only four tenths of a second! It was the most exciting finish to a meet I had ever witnessed in all my years of coaching. The final score was too close to call, and the coaches and swimmers were waiting on pins and needles for the announcement.

(Us) Swim Team 2810

(Them) Club 2809.5

Half a point! Somewhere, Coach [redacted] (had recently passed) is grinning from ear to ear.

Congratulations to all **(our)** swimmers, parents and supporters. You all made it possible.

Stay tuned for part 2 tomorrow.

Coach _____

States summary - Part 2

One one-hundredth of a second.

That is what won the meet for us. Not just half a point ……..

ONE ONE-HUNDRETH OF A SECOND!

That is the smallest margin there is in swimming.

Reading the summary from yesterday you may come away thinking that the 15-19 age groups pulled us through. That they were the "heroes" that saved the day because of relay margins averaging half a second. (This is fifty times larger than one one-hundredth.) There were **many** heroes this past weekend. I wanted to mention one in particular to make a point.

We had a 13-14 swimmer entered in a particular event on Saturday. They were seeded with exactly the same time in that event as a swimmer from one of the top three teams. Neither was in the top heat, but both were in the top 16 for scoring. They both improved their times, but (our) swimmer came away with a time that was one one-hundredth faster. That two point "swing" was the difference! Even a tie would have given us one point less ….. and we would have come in second by half a point.

Message?

Every team member is important.

And not just for what they do in the water….. or the points they score.

* Was that 13-14 swimmer a bit more motivated by their friends patting him/her on the back before their swim? Was that motivation worth a hundredth?

* What about the swimmers at the end of the lanes that cheered and screamed to pump them up to perform?

* What about the posters or shirts that swimmers made during Spirit Week? Each of our swimmers looked at them as they walked up to the starting blocks. Could that have motivated them to be a hundredth of a second faster as well?

That swimmer was just one example of the hundreds of instances at the meet that were critical to our success.

Another example: One of our 7-year-old girls was in tears before the meet. She had just joined last fall and had competed (nervously) at each of her three dual meets during the season. But this was a "different pool" and it was "big" and it was "loud" and it was "STATES" with hundreds of people cheering and yelling. This swimmer was feeling the pressure. Her legs were shaking and she was wiping tears away as she stood on the blocks for the very first relay. It was the toughest thing she had done all season….. perhaps in her life.

That relay scored 8 points. Each of those four swimmers contributed 2 points each to . Each of those swimmers "won" the meet for us!

That is why we stress that every team member attends this meet.

YOU are important!

Not just your times, but your spirit … your personality ….. your enthusiasm ….. and your support. Please pass this along to your swimmers so they can understand their importance to the team. They often forget how one individual can make an enormous difference.

Coach _____