

Monday, March 3rd, 2014

Letter To All Attending 2014 OWG's Club Presidents, Participating Coaches, Head Coaches, Officials, Games Organizers, Volunteers and Special Guests...

Synchro Swim Ontario celebrated 2014 OWG's over the past 4 days with 109 Athletes, 14 Coaches, 14 Officials, 2 Staff and 1 Meet Manager and hundreds of parents and supporters in attendance in beautiful Bracebridge. The experience was truly memorable and we had "The Time of our Lives" We braved the bitter cold at the Opening Ceremonies, we bonded and made many wonderful friends at Camp Muskoka and we swam in the true spirit of competition at the awesome Bracebridge Sportsplex. In the spirit of sportsmanship, we witnessed teams from different Clubs cheering on their new friends from other Clubs and we celebrated with much fun and tremendous pride in our sport as we put Synchronized Swimming on the map!!! We cannot be more proud of everyone who participated in this experience with us and would like to share some of our glory with all of you!

Please check out highlights of 2014 OWG's at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE4-LOklZR8&feature=youtu.be> with many thanks to Steve Brooks Photography who is a creative genius in capturing special moments. Please also like and keep checking out our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SynchroSwimOntario> and our website at <https://www.facebook.com/SynchroSwimOntario> for updates!

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to a number of those that made the 2014 OWG experience so wonderful, so positive and so memorable!!!

1) To the **Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport** who makes Ontario Summer and Winter Games possible, and to **Susan Golets**, our Director of Sport, Recreation & Community Programs at the Ministry, who attended, encouraged and celebrated the athletes at Opening Ceremonies...We are grateful for your involvement, for your strong message of support for sport in Ontario and for braving the cold together with us. Thank You!

2) To **Blair McIntosh**, CEO at Sport Alliance Ontario and the **2014 Organizing Team, Jill Valentine, Greg Pilling** and **all staff and volunteers** involved, who were available at all times, ready and able to help...Your efforts and willingness to help were always much appreciated!

3) To the **Bracebridge Sportsplex** with special recognition to **Linda Hillman, Manager of Aquatics and Youth**, to **Cathy in the Lifeguard Office with the Aquatic Staff**, and to the multitudes of **local area volunteers** who worked tirelessly to ensure the entire three days at the pool were seamless, professional and as close to flawless as can be!! We would love to package this team up and keep them as our own! You have what it takes and we look forward to building a strong future of Synchronized Swimming in Bracebridge and the surrounding area!! GREAT JOB and many Kudos to all!

4) To **Camp Muskoka** and **Drew "Pike" Black**, Sales & Marketing Manager, who provided our Athletes, Coaches, SSO Staff and Meet Manager with the most beautiful camp environment, a great home away from home and a memorable experience that I am sure none of us will ever forget. To the **Chef and Kitchen staff including "Bubbles"**, the menus, the food and the service were absolutely incredible! You all made the dining room and mealtimes one of each day's highlights and brought smiles to hungry faces at every meal. A special thank you to **'DUBBS'** and **'TIKI'** for being just the **BEST hosts, camp coordinators and entertainers** that could ever be imagined. You are the true essence of leaders for teamwork building, having fun and motivating everyone to "try" to "perform" "being proud out loud" and to "work together as one". You were a positive force, there from morning til night and adored by all! We will never forget those precious times and "OH YEAH" will always resonate in synchro. As honorary Synchro Swim Ontario members..Camp Muskoka and staff are much loved!

5) To his Honourable **Mayor Graydon Smith** of Bracebridge. We thank you for taking the hours out of your busy schedule on a Sunday to co-host and present our athletes with their hard earned 2014 OWG's Awards. Your supporting words, your presence and your presentation of awards to our athletes was a new experience that added a level of appreciation from a local dignitary that made it even more special for our athletes, coaches and parents. We look forward to seeing you at synchro events in Bracebridge again in future:)

6) To **Jan Lucy, Nipissing University-Muskoka Campus, Campus Administrator**. Thank you Jan, for co-hosting and presenting at our Awards Presentation Ceremony on Sunday, and for sharing with us your synchronized swimming passion and stories from the past and for showcasing your precious Silver Synchro medal. Your synchro pride and engagement in our sport was an added inspiration to our athletes. We look forward to your participation in building synchro interest and growth in Bracebridge and being such a wonderful role model, mentor and champion of our amazing sport.

7) To our **SSO Officials - Judges: Lesley Ahara, Lorian Hardcastle, Heather Hogan, Susanna van Leeuwen, Erika Lindner, Leanne McDonnell, Debbie Sands, Jennifer Saunders, Leslie Taylor, and Wendy Yule; Chief Referee Catrina Klein and Chief Scorer Emmy Hendrickx** - Thank you for your time, your commitment, your love of synchro and your dedication to ensuring our athletes have the BEST officials in Canada. You made it up in time to ensure that the competition went as scheduled through the nastiest of winter travel conditions. Thank you also to SSO staff member **Chris Gauthier** who was able to wear multiple hats in assisting at the scoring desk, on deck and with judging as required. The Judges' participation in joining the Athletes for dinner on our closing night and making Talent Night at Camp Muskoka the best ever with the Village Judges Routine, was an incredible ice breaker and stress reliever for our Athletes on the eve of their Finals in Team Routine competition on Sunday morning. Your preparation, choreography and originality definitely earned you top marks and will live on forever as one of the weekend's highlights!

8) To **Ellen Blainey, Meet Manager 'Extraordinaire'** and President at York Synchro. Can't say it enough, but you are AMAZING!!! You bring a breath of fresh air to running a meet and your coined phrase of "Go with the Flow" speaks to your ability to accept unforeseen changes and challenges no matter the magnitude. Your ability to work in concert to help find and implement the best solutions, always in the best interest of Athletes first is paramount! Your ability to coordinate all pieces of the puzzle, together with all parties involved, worked impeccably and left us all smiling with a beautiful experience. Music to my Ears...What a Team!!!! Thank You!

9) To our **Clubs, Volunteers, Parents, supporting Family Members and Spectators**. Without your unconditional and endless support of our Athletes, we would not be here today. Though seldom acknowledged enough as the backbone of our synchro community, we are forever grateful and cognizant of your contributions to our sport and for our Athletes. We appreciate your willingness and commitment to making our sport and SSO the best that we can be. We thank you for entrusting your daughters to us for the four days of 2014 OWG's and we hope that the stories and memories that they share with you and keep close, will leave you with as warm and positive a feeling as it has for us. We hope also that you enjoyed your stay at the 2014 OWG's and engaged in all that Bracebridge and surrounding areas had to offer. Thank you all for your support and your trust! *Note: A special thank you to the **Sudbury Synchro Dads** who drove out to camp at the crack of dawn on Sunday morning, and in the bitter cold, loaded the **Luggage Bus** for all cabins so that the Athletes did not have to!!! Took over an hour with barely any room left from floor to ceiling on the bus...who'd have thought all that luggage for 3 days :) WTG Dads...Most appreciated by all!!!

10) To our **Coaches and our Athletes..."HEADS UP SYNCHRO" ... 'A PERFECT 10'** Each and every one of you in attendance at 2014 OWG's made Synchro Swim Ontario and our sport so very proud to have you on our team! Your perseverance, hard work and team efforts, that brought you to 2014 OWG's are achievements that you should always be so very proud of. You are the major reason that 2014 OWG's were such a wonderful experience and such a success. Once here you showed the world that our province has incredible talent and you represented our sport with all the grace, beauty, sportsmanship and athleticism that is so deserving of achieving a place in the record books of Ontario Winter Games in perpetuity. We hope you had as much fun with us as we had being there for you. May all the good memories of 2014 OWG's live on forever!

We appreciate your contributions of stories, videos and photographs that we promise to share as much as possible. Please forward to me at mdwyer@synchroontario.com

As always, I look forward to seeing you all on deck at the upcoming Regional Championships, at the Hilton Worldwide Invitational and at OOAGSSC's

Many Thanks,
Mary Dwyer