

Happy Holidays, ROW!

DECEMBER

Newsletter

Vol 2. Issue 4.

MEET HIGHLIGHTS

AGI Short Course
OJI 2026
Team Showdown
GMAC Dash 4 Cash



CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

50TH ANNIVERSARY HISTORY SERIES

Celebrate our Olympians (part III)

We hope everyone is still enjoying the warmth and joy of the holiday season. It's a perfect moment to reflect on the achievements of 2025 and celebrate the dedication and hard work of our swimmers, coaches, and families throughout the year. May these final days of the holiday break bring rest, laughter, and time spent with loved ones. With the New Year just ahead, we're excited to dive into 2026 with renewed energy and focus. Training resumes, championship meets are on the calendar, and our athletes are ready to embrace new challenges and opportunities for growth. Let's carry the spirit of teamwork, perseverance, and positivity into the New Year, supporting one another in and out of the pool. Here's to a 2026 filled with personal bests, memorable moments, and continued success for our swim club community!



OUR OLYMPIANS

(PART III)

Jennifer Button 2000 Sydney



Jennifer Button, the shortest member of Canada's national team at five foot four, rose to become one of the country's top butterfly swimmers. After joining ROW at age 13 when her family moved to Waterloo, swimming quickly became central to her life. Trained by Dean Boles, she achieved strong provincial success and fulfilled a lifelong dream by qualifying for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.

At the Olympics, Button competed in four events, highlighted by a fifth-place finish in the 4x200-metre freestyle relay. She narrowly missed advancing in the 200-metre butterfly but returned home motivated, continuing to train and establishing herself among Canada's best, including holding the national record in the 100-metre butterfly. Button later earned a master's in sports administration, and has worked with the Canadian Olympic Committee, crediting swimming for the confidence and resilience that continue to guide her beyond sport.

Takashi Yamamoto 2000 Sydney; 2004 Athens



Takashi Yamamoto is a Japanese swimmer who trained with ROW for six years under former ROW coach Bud McAllister and went on to compete in two Olympic Games. He moved to Waterloo in 1988 to train alongside fellow swimmer Suzu Chiba, whom he met at Japan's prestigious Osaka swim club. Yamamoto has credited his time and training at ROW as a key factor in his international success.

At the 2004 Olympic Games, Yamamoto earned a silver medal in the 200-metre butterfly, finishing just fractions of a second behind Michael Phelps, and also helped Japan's 4x100-metre medley relay team win bronze. Following the Games, Yamamoto and his wife returned to Japan in September 2004.

Jessica Tuomela 2000 Sydney; 2004 Athens; 2008 Beijing



Jessica Tuomela is a Canadian Paralympic swimmer and three-time Paralympian who specialized in freestyle sprint events. Blind since early childhood due to cancer, she learned to swim while attending the W. Ross Macdonald School for the blind in Brantford and later developed as a high-performance athlete training at the Laurier pool with ROW. Tuomela competed at the 2000, 2004, and 2008 Paralympic Games, winning a silver medal in the 50-metre freestyle in Sydney and achieving strong finishes in Athens and Beijing.

Throughout her career, Tuomela overcame significant challenges, including injuries, to compete at the highest level. She credits swimming with teaching her discipline, perseverance, and goal-setting skills that shaped her beyond sport. After completing her athletic career, she pursued studies in massage and hydrotherapy and hopes to support athletes behind the scenes.

MEET HIGHLIGHTS

AGI (SC)

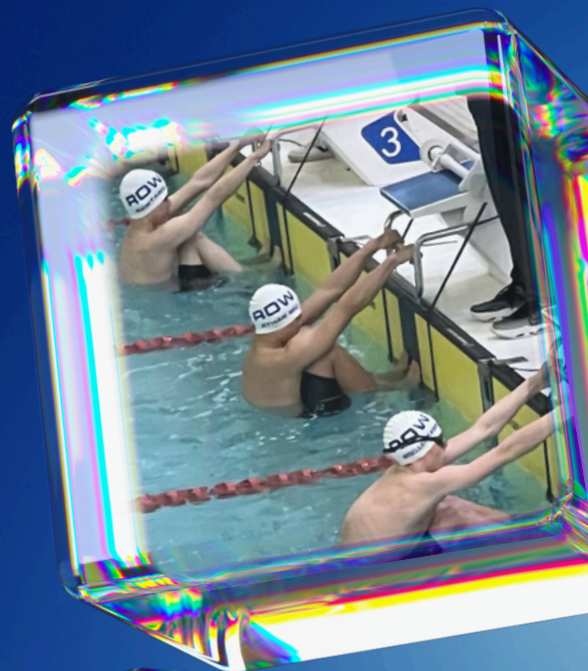
NOV 27-30
ETOBICOKE

The AGI short course meet from November 27–30 was our first 3.5-day competition and included a distance session on the evening of Day 1. With heats and finals for 13&O and timed finals for 12&U, the meet placed high physical and mental demands on the athletes. Many 13&O swimmers raced 10+ events across prelims and finals, often with short turnarounds and a mix of sprint, middle-, and long-distance races, and continued to perform at a high level throughout the weekend.

Relay events were a major highlight of the meet, adding excitement to each session and providing valuable team-racing experience against strong GTA clubs. Podium finishes were achieved across multiple age groups in the 4×50 freestyle and medley relays: 10&U Boys – Silver (Tim X, Harry F, Wellington M, Max BY); 11/12 Girls – Bronze (Alex GF, Eliza L, Abigail F, Chloe F); 11/12 Boys – Silver (Nikkolai T, Sky Q, Cole B, Miran D); 13/14 Boys – Gold (Ethan W, Zade M, Sebastian H, Chris R); 15&O Girls – Bronze (Sunny X, Mia T, Athena L, Aly L, Megan B, Sophie R); and 15&O Boys – Silver (Nathan L, Lucas LB, Rhys B, Aris C, Beckett S). These relays reinforced the importance of racing for the team across all age groups.

Individually, the team earned 21 gold, 37 silver, and 28 bronze medals. Medalists included Cole B, Megan B, Abigail F, Harry F, Alex GF, Sebastian H, Aly L, Athena L, Daphne L, Eliza L, Nathan L, Lucas LB, Wellington M, Zade M, Chris R, Sophie R, Beckett S, Nikkolai T, Ethan W, Sunny X, and Tim X. Several swimmers also reached finals for the first time—Madison T, Leo S, Vlad B, Calvin L, and Drew C—marking an important step in their competitive development.

The meet also produced several significant performance milestones. Club records were set by Sebastian Hui in the 13/14 Boys 50 Breast (31.47 SCM), Ethan Wu in the 13/14 Boys 50 Back (27.62 SCM), and Sunny Xu in the 15/16 Girls 400 Free (4:19.86 SCM). Sunny Xu also earned the High Point Trophy for 15&O Girls. In addition, Oliver M, James Z, Claire S, Tim X, and Chloe F achieved an OAG qualification standard, highlighting continued progress and depth across the program.



MEET HIGHLIGHTS

BAC TEAM SHOWDOWN

**DEC 12-14
BRANTFORD**

The BAC Team Showdown held in Brantford from December 12–14 was a unique and highly energetic team-focused competition. Modeled after Swim Ontario's Div 1, 2, 3 Team Championships format, the primary goal was to compete as a team rather than focus on individual results. Final standings were determined by "points per athlete," creating a level playing field and rewarding depth, commitment, and collective effort. This format consistently produces one of the most spirited meets of the season and highlights what athletes can achieve when racing for something bigger than themselves.

ROW athletes fully embraced the team challenge and stepped up in a big way, particularly on Sunday, racing with intensity despite quick turnarounds between events. Their efforts paid off as ROW finished 1st overall with 15.08 points per athlete, ahead of LAC (14.14), OSAC (11.55), WEST (10.93), and host club BAC (9.78). This result earned ROW their 3rd Team Banner in the past four seasons, a testament to the program's depth, consistency, and strong team culture.

A large number of athletes contributed points across the weekend, reflecting a true team-wide effort. Point scorers included Jack A, Navarra A, Cole B, Rhys B, Megan B, Ellen B, Liam B, Hazel BY, Max BY, Abigail C, Aris C, Yifan C, Miran D, Anabel D, Kentaro D, Chloe F, Abigail F, Harry F, Tommy F, Sebastian F, Ayanna G, Alex GF, Anna GF, Everett G, Olivia G, Lucas H, Olivia H, Xavier H, Sebastian H, Claire H, Kate H, Ariana K, Aly L, Ruby L, Athena A, Daphne L, Atlas L, Eliza L, Sophia L, Dakota L, Benton M, Wellington M, Oliver M, Zade M, Sky Q, Tiger Q, Sadie R, Chris R, Brooklyn S, Beckett S, Cam S, Alyssa S, Esther S, Olivia S, Leo SM, Claire S, Beth T, Michael T, Madison T, Nikkolai T, Darin W, Nathan W, Nic W, Ethan W, Evelyn W, Tim X, Nicole Y, Rein Y, Felix Y, James Z, and Irene Z.

The meet also featured notable performance milestones. A new club record was set by Aly Laing in the 13/14 Girls 100 Backstroke (1:04.06 SCM). In addition, Navarra A, Ayanna G, and Meili C achieved WOSA qualification standards, marking an important step forward in their competitive progression and rounding out a very successful team weekend in Brantford.

MEET HIGHLIGHTS

OJI 2026

DEC 11-14
TPASC

The Ontario Junior International (OJI) meet took place from December 11–14 at the TPASC pool and is recognized as the fastest 18&U competition in Canada. The meet featured exceptional depth across all events, with numerous age group Canadian records and para records set throughout the weekend. ROW was represented by five athletes—Mia T, Sunny X, Sophie R, Lucas LB, and Nathan L—who competed in a truly elite, high-performance environment against the best junior swimmers in the country.

A key takeaway from OJI was the continued development of the mental and emotional side of racing when facing top-level competition. The meet provided valuable opportunities for confidence building, exposure, and experience, particularly in managing pressure through prelims and finals. Racing in this setting challenged athletes to stay composed, resilient, and focused while executing their race plans against deep, fast fields.

Performance-wise, all five athletes achieved at least one personal best, a strong result given the caliber of competition. Sunny X, Sophie R, and Lucas LB qualified for finals, with Lucas also placing top 10 in the 800 freestyle. Sunny recorded top-10 finishes in the 1500 freestyle and 400 IM, and set a new club record in the 15/16 Girls 400 IM with a time of 4:54.70 SCM. Overall, OJI was an outstanding developmental and performance experience that reinforced the athletes' readiness to compete at the highest junior level in Canada.



MEET HIGHLIGHTS

GMAC DASH 4 CASH

DEC 5-7
GUELPH

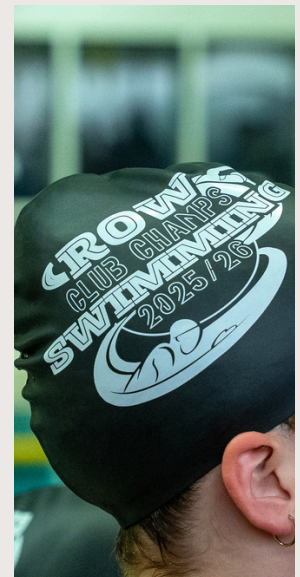
RSA COMP competed at the GMAC Dash for Cash short course meet from December 5–7 with a strong overall performance. All swimmers achieved at least one personal best time, showing consistent progress across the group. Notably, Oliver A, Solafunmi S-L, Zoe D, Aubry P, and Ananya P recorded personal bests in every event they swam.

There were also strong individual and relay results. Jackson W earned a silver medal in the 50 Backstroke. Other top finishes included Oliver A – 8th in 200 FR; Alex B – 8th in 100 BK, 5th in 200 FR, 6th in 100 BR; Zoe D – 8th in 200 FR, 6th in 100 BR; Calvin H – 6th in 100 BR; Keira M – 6th in 200 FR; Aubry P – 7th in 100 BK, 6th in 200 FR; Solafunmi S-L – 8th in 100 BR; Smriti V – 8th in 100 BR; and Jack W – 8th in 100 BK.

The boys' 4×50 freestyle relay (Alexander B, Solafunmi S-L, Oliver A, Jonathan T) placed 4th, while the girls' 4×50 medley relay (Smriti V, Neha V, Aubry P, Zoe D) finished 5th, rounding out a successful meet for the team.



IMPORTANT UPDATES DEC 2025



IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan 10-11th Dean Boles
- Jan 22nd-25th MAC Invitational
- Jan 23rd-25th David Lawson Invitational
- Feb 1st Winter Skills & Thrills
- Feb 13rd-15th GTA Skins
- Feb 13rd-15th WOSA



WINTER TRAINING CAMP

ROW's 2025/2026 Winter Training Camp is currently underway in sunny Cancun, Mexico! From December 27 to January 4, nine of our National Development and Provincial Development 1 athletes are taking advantage of this week-long camp to sharpen their skills and build fitness for the season ahead.

The group departed from Toronto early on December 27 and will return on the evening of January 3, staying at the Fairfield Inn and Suites Cancun Downtown. Training sessions give our swimmers a great environment to focus on technique, endurance, and team development.

STAY CONNECTED

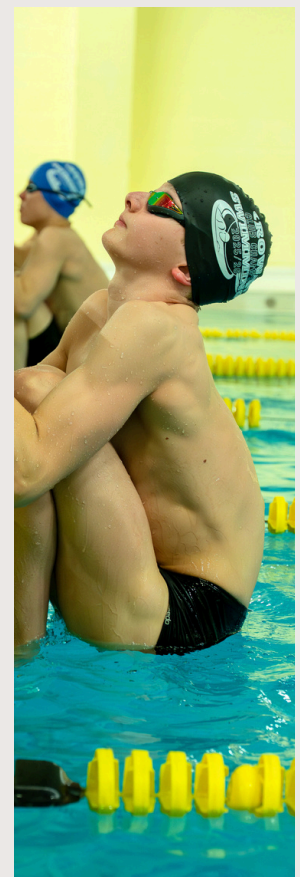


Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) for the latest updates, photos, and team news!



OUR SPONSORS

WALTERFEDY



Volunteers Needed!

ROW needs volunteers to help officiate our first multi-day meet of the 2025-26 season is coming up on **January 10 and 11**. For this meet we will have 2 long course sessions on Saturday and 2 short course sessions on Sunday. There will be an officials room with refreshments and continental breakfast in the morning and lunch between sessions.

If you can help, please let us know by filling out <https://tinyurl.com/row-db-2026-avail>. More details about the event can be found in the meet package.

If you have any questions, please contact us via officials@rowswimming.ca.

Sincerely,

**Club Officials
Administrators**

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Annual General Meeting

DATE: JANUARY 20, 2026

TIME: 6:30–8:30 P.M.

**LOCATION: HAWKS LOUNGE,
WLU ATHLETIC COMPLEX**



@rowswimming.ca

WE ARE LOOKING FOR BOARD MEMBERS



OPEN POSITIONS

As the ROW Annual General Meeting (AGM) approaches on January 20, 2026 (6:00–8:00 p.m.) at the Hawks Lounge, WLU Athletic Complex, we invite interested individuals to apply for a position on the Board of Directors. Board members serve a three-year term (up to two consecutive terms) and meet monthly, with additional communication as needed. Completed applications are due by 12:00 p.m. on January 14, 2026.

Board positions are open to both members and non-members. While experience in areas such as sales and marketing, legal, fundraising, human resources, or digital communications is valued, it is not required. The Board is committed to diversity and strongly encourages applications from individuals of all backgrounds to better reflect our club community. For questions, please contact board@rowswimming.ca or speak with a Board member.

Apply Now

**Send your application to
board@rowswimming.ca**

Click here for [application form](#)
and the [overview of board
member roles and expectations](#).

JOIN OUR BOARD NOW!

rowswimming.ca



Club Champ #1



Team Spirit Championships



Swim & Smile





AWARD
BANQUET

RQW

December 2025





*Photos from
Team Showdown
2025*

MEMORIES

Fun Outside the Pool



RSA Comp Bowling



PD2 & PD3 Bowling



ND Gift Exchange



AGD Party



PD2 Gift Exchange



SD Bowling



ROW House Party



TOP4 Brunch



JD1 Gathering



AGD Breakfast at Kypreos



PD1 Bowling