



Synchro Alberta Coach of the QUARTER

2nd Quarter – January 1 – March 31, 2016

Jennifer Bilou – Strathcona Synatics

Jennifer's passion for synchronized swimming resonates through the various ways she contributes to the sport. While maintaining a full time job outside the world of synchronized swimming, Jennifer commits a tremendous amount of time to the sport by holding the head coach position with the Strathcona Synatics (including coaching her own team, three duets and one solo) in addition to coaching the local Masters team. Any remaining spare time away from the pool is spent ensuring the smooth operation of the Strathcona Synatics including both competitive and recreational programs.

Jennifer is truly the heart and soul of the Strathcona Synatics. Her excitement and dedication to the sport is evident in every routine that she choreographs and every interaction she has with the athletes, parents, board members and coaching team. She is a true advocate for the idea of a "synchro family" where club athletes, coaches and parents are actively engaged in all aspects of the sport.

As a parent I am amazed by Jennifer's relationship with each athlete. She treats each team member as an individual and she strives to pull the very best out of each of them as athletes. She is committed to helping them achieve personal bests in the individual aspects of the sport and then shows them how they can contribute to the "team" which is the true spirit of synchronized swimming. Her easy going nature combined with great knowledge of the sport makes her an inspiration to her swimmers. Her athletes truly want to do their best for her, not out of fear of ridicule but because they have the utmost respect for her as their coach.

Jennifer is a talented choreographer and over the years has had much success as a coach at the provincial level with many teams and routines achieving podium results but that is most certainly not the only focus of her coaching approach. That was particularly evident at this year's Alberta Winter Games where her team, having many setbacks including last minute injuries and the stomach flu put in a most honorable performance to obtain last place. While there was much disappointment about the results, Jennifer reminded the girls about the various other lessons learned from just simply taking part in the experience.

Jennifer is a perfect example of what makes an exemplary coach and is the type of coach that every parent wishes their child to have. She has true enthusiasm for the sport, she is dedicated to promoting the sport at a grass roots level, she is a mentor for both athletes and the other members for her coaching team, she is creative and knows how to develop her swimmers both as athletes and as individuals. In addition, her involvement as a coach for the master's level promotes the sport of synchronized swimming as a lifelong endeavor.

Jennifer Bilou is a true asset to my children, the Strathcona Synatics and the sport of synchronized swimming. I hope she will be carefully considered by the nomination committee for "coach of the quarter."