

Jess Craig's Banquet Speech

Hello everyone, and good evening!

So... even though my time with EBSC has been short, I have technically grown up with the team. From the time that I started swimming at the age of seven, I came to the Ernestown Invitational swim meets. I even remember when EBSC went to BSC for that one year. I've known this team since I was a wee tot and I swam against Nicholle and Emma. Back then, I never thought I'd one day be a part of this team. Mostly because when I was little I thought you had to have red hair to be on the team, obviously I was wrong because there are currently no red heads left on the team... except for Ali Doherty. But anyway, the time came for me to come to Ernestown last year, when in the booming city of Picton, the pool threatened to close. So with my coach Kevin Anderson, I made my decision to trek the whole forty five minutes to the W.J. Henderson Pool, where I was able to meet the infamous Smokin' Joe Emmerson, or Sporty Gordie as Kevin called him. My first few practices I was amazed at how positive, fun and close knit the team was, it was a drastic change from my old team. There were actual practices where you didn't sit around for five minutes at a time, and there were "fun Fridays" with Nick. Where at my first Friday, I was pleasantly informed that Nicks goal was to make everyone puke... fortunately I never puked.

My first "oh my god" moment came when I was a member of this team, the oh my god moment was when I was selected to the 2005 Youth National team. I remember clearly what happened that day... I came as usual to practice... it was the Wednesday after Youth Cup and I had just swam at nationals. Gord came out on the deck and said that we needed to talk, saying that he had gotten a call from SwimCanada. The first thought that went through my mind was the most extreme thing in the world, I thought that something had come up on my drug test and I was being suspended or something. But instead, Gord told me that that SwimCanada was wondering if I wanted to go to Australia. After snapping back to reality and back to realization, I asked Gord if he was joking, he said he wasn't... and I told him to shut up.. and then went on a hyper rampage... two weeks later I was in Australia!

Next year, as I set out on my voyage to Calgary, I can only hope to find people that will go paintballing and not give mercy on the people who are there for their first time, or people that will drink all of water during practice, or do the Pepsi dance with me, or find people that will make ridiculous bets that result in someone wearing my training suit, me attempting to get people to do the wave or me having to put a flaming cobra on my forehead. Nor will I ever know a swimmer/coach like Stefan, with his harsh criticism and all. I don't think that there would be anyone else I'd want to show up fifteen minutes late at a training camp with, where the "mentor" of the camp has probably just lectured everyone about not showing up late. I really don't think I'll ever find a coach who's ok with showing up forty five minutes late to warm ups at Easterns, as long as he has his coffee, it was ok! I also don't think I'll find people to get lost with in every city that it's possible for me to drive in, or people to go to East Sides with me for every meal at a swim meet. I don't think I'll be able to find a substitute to Ali's monkey call or find a training partner as oddly cool as Poppy. From Ken falling, twice, and realizing the diving board is either one metre or three metres, to meeting Peter at Subway, I've never had so many memories in such a short time.

Coming to EBSC brought a lot of firsts for me. My first national final, my first drug test, my first national team, my first junior international medals, my first paintball welt, my first carding money, my first practice in a strip mall and my first trip to the Alps in Switzerland. But now I'm off to Calgary, where I'll hopefully start a whole bunch of new memories, I'll miss it here, but I'm sooo ready to go!

Although, I don't know who Gord's going to make fun of next year in my absence, so Gord, you made the suggestion of having a picture of me to put at the end of the pool to make fun of. So.... I got you one!!!! :D ahah..

Thanks!