

MASA Annual Report

2022

The Mississauga Artistic Swimming Club (MASA) Annual Report includes summary reports from the Club's Executive members and Head Coach. The club had a successful year thanks to our swimmers and coaches' dedication, determination, and enthusiasm, though the effects of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic continued to be felt.



MASA’s purpose is to provide a positive environment for the development of artistic swimming that is enjoyable for both swimmers and coaches. The club’s objectives are to provide opportunities for education and training in the sport of artistic swimming and to foster a positive atmosphere for swimmers to reach their potential in competitive and recreational programs.

MSSA Executive 2021-2022

Position	Name
Club President	Mélanie Raymond
VP / Director of Human Resources	Sonal Thomas
VP / Director of Communication & Administration	Grace Ye
VP / Director of Finance	Engy Amin
VP / Director of Marketing	Tara Wilson
Head Coach	Erin Dawson

President’s Message

Though Covid kept us on our toes along the way, the club was able to complete our first full season in three years thanks to everyone’s dedication, flexibility, and good nature. We welcomed some new provincial families and many new (and not so new) regional families this year. All our swimmers demonstrated such maturity and dedication - through social distancing in the pool, a closure throughout the month of January, changing Covid protocols, and many illnesses and injuries, they consistently showed up and gave their all. The hard work paid off with so many of our swimmers and teams achieving tremendous results in competitions. Bravo to all!

Artistic swimming is a team sport and MASA is a team of families. Without each other’s support, time, and commitment, none of this would be possible. The several hundred volunteer hours that parents and caregivers collectively dedicate to the club ensure that our athletes have pools in which to swim, equipment with which to train, and ways in which to bond with teammates. Thank you parents! We appreciate everything you do – the early mornings, the late afternoons, the rush to get dinner ready at night for hungry, tired kids, the long weekends, and team support. Thank you for giving your young athletes the opportunity to remain attached to the sport they love.

MASA’s coaching team may be young, but they are wholly dedicated to our club and our swimmers’ success. In addition to developing and coaching routines and figures, they focused on resiliency, sportsmanship, and fair play. Thank you for your devotion to the club and your enthusiasm for the sport.

Erin, thank you for all your support this year – your good nature, historical knowledge, personal contacts, and determination to see things through proved to be invaluable time and time again

throughout the season. Thank you also for helping our coaches to achieve their goals and working with them to ensure a safe and positive sport environment.

Thanks must also be extended to two key MASA partners: the Mississauga Charitable Gaming Association (MCGA) and the City of Mississauga. Working with the MCGA – and all those Bingo/e-Gaming volunteer hours that members do – provides us with substantial revenue to offset pool rental costs. Further, due to our recognition by the City of Mississauga as an “Affiliated Sport Provider – Regional” through their Registered Community Group program, we benefit from reduced pool and room rental rates. The benefits provided by both these partners are invaluable for keeping membership rates more affordable.

Finally, thank you to the other members on the club’s executive: Engy, Grace, Sonal, Tara, and our Head Coach, Erin. While we were all constantly adapting, we managed to make it through with mutual support, teamwork, and your willingness to just get things done.

Some of the initiatives and activities made possible by this team this year included:

- Ensured compliance with a variety of CAS and OAS policies, including the Return to Sport Framework
- Implemented OAS-led changes to our Novice/Regional program
- Launched our first season of the nationally recognized Aqua Go! Program
- Passed OAS’s club compliance audit
- Ensured all our coaches were OAS certified and completed all required training and verifications
- Developed and delivered training equipment bundles
- Conceptualized, designed, and delivered competition suits for all provincial and regional swimmers
- Relunched the club’s social activities, including WOW Night, the Swim Show and the end-of-year Banquet
- Applied for and received the Ontario Small Business Support Grant and an OAS grant

Next season promises to bring new challenges and opportunities. We anticipate 2022-2023 being a growth year, with a renewed push on marketing and promotion, membership recruitment and retention, coach development, and club infrastructure. There’s lots to look forward to!

Human Resources

Volunteers

As a non-profit organization, MASA depends on the time donated by parents in volunteering for various club events. This year, parents took the lead in several events including WOW Night, the Swim Show, the end of year banquet, and of course the day-to-day activities that are critical to the smooth operation of the club – swimsuit fittings, ordering of clubwear, coordinating competitions, sequinning workshops, and so much more!

With the 2021-2022 year returning slowly to pre-pandemic times, we had to lean on our parents more than we have in the last two years. So we would like to extend our heart-felt gratitude to all the parents who helped. Without you, the year would not have been a success!

Coaches

Our coaches worked tirelessly and with steadfast determination this year. Even through Covid-related absences, cancelled and re-scheduled competitions and pool closures, they motivated and challenged our swimmers at every step to bring out the very best in each of them. A big thank you to Emily Jones, Brittany Elford, Morgan Armstrong, Angelina Towadros and our Head Coach, Erin Dawson, for rolling with the punches, for adapting effortlessly to an ever-changing environment and for exhibiting unwavering resolve, all with a smile on their face. We would be nowhere without our coaches' dedication and commitment to the sport and to our daughters.

We will be reaching out shortly to our current coaches to gauge their availability and interest in coaching with us next season. MASA has also received interest from other coaches – interested in competitive, and recreational coaching. We will be working with them through the summer to ensure they all have the necessary training, qualifications, and interest to join our team. Coach-team assignments will be dependent upon the number of swimmers registered next year as well as the programs that we will be able to offer.

Coach Farewells

Over the seasons, MASA has been very fortunate to have amazing coaches who continue to inspire, guide, and motivate our daughters. Unfortunately, at the end of this season we say goodbye to Emily Jones. Emily will be starting her undergraduate studies at the University of Ottawa in September, and we wish her the best of luck.

Head Coach

During our 2021-2022 season, we were able to start rebuilding our club and offering extra routines again. We were able to begin focus on growth with new memberships, as well as having many friendly faces return to the 16-20 Regional League team after some time off. None of this was previously allowed due to the strict Covid protocols and restrictions in place. In our Provincial stream program this year, we offered one 10U duet, one 11-12 Team and duet, two 13-15 teams, two 13-15 duets and one 13-15 solo. In addition to the Provincial teams, we had three newly named Regional League teams, one in each of the following age categories: 10 and Under, 13- 15, and 16-20.

We had a more normal looking season with a return to in-person practices and competitions. We did have one lockdown in place during the month of January, but our club adapted very well to using virtual practices to work on our land skills and on the provincial stream figure analysis leading to the first meet. During this time, some of our teams also had a chance to connect with other clubs in the province during some virtual practices when the first meet of the year was cancelled. It was great to be able to see what our sport has the potential to be.

We were also able to run our first classes of the new Ontario Artistic Swimming beginners program called Aqua Go!. This program focuses on fundamental swimming skills, artistic swimming skills, body awareness, and land skills. We are hopeful to expand this in the fall, through training more potential coaches for this program and offering some new Try Synchro sessions. The club hopes to expand this program as well as our 10 and Under program as we continue to work to build the base of our club.

The Provincial stream was the first to return to in-person competitions with the Leslie Taylor Meet, Hilton Meet, and Ontario Open Championships. They competed in both figures and routines and had great outcomes including a 3rd place for our 10 and Under duet, 5th place for our 11-12 team and a 6th place for one of our 13-15 teams. This is particularly fantastic as many teams in our Provincial stream are competing against National stream athletes. Our Regional League was unable to run the Winter Meet but did go to the Victor Davis pool to compete during the Spring Meet. This meet was a first for many of our athletes and it was a resounding success for the 10 and Under figures as well as their 2nd place finish in routine and championship, the 3rd place finish for the 13-15 team, and the 16-20 Team with their second place finish.

To continue to be competitive we must evaluate the intensity level of our swimmers' commitment and gauge where we want to be as a club going forward. Each season the top-level swimmers in the province increase the degree of difficulty of their moves with more power and height. It takes more effort every year to just hold your position in the province.

I would like to commend our coaching staff who rose to the occasion by adapting to the ever-changing circumstances, kept our swimmers engaged and motivated to improve throughout the season, and took on new challenges in different age groups. They were there to support the teams through a challenging season, adapting through isolations, returning to meets, and leaning on each other to ensure each team had what they needed to succeed. We would not have had the success we did without them.

Thank you to the parents, for supporting and encouraging your daughters. Ensuring that they are able to still have this connection and build on their active lifestyles is important and appreciated. To the MASA Executive, you have covered many roles this year and have put your trust in what the club is working on to help us build our programs. I have truly enjoyed seeing what we have accomplished this year and am excited to see where the work we have put in this season can lead us in the future.

Communications/Administration

Registration & Membership

This season saw a renaming of the artistic swimming streams by Ontario Artistic Swimming (OAS). The teams previously known as “competitive” were rebranded to being “provincial” teams whereas the old “novice” teams were replaced by a “regional” league. At the same time, OAS and Canada Artistic Swimming (CAS) officially required that all recreational programs be converted to the CAS’ AquaGo Program.

With fewer Covid-19 restrictions this year, the club had a higher return rate and new swimmers were able to join the club, which meant that we had a total of 44 swimmers at year end, including those who participated in our winter AquaGo program. There were four Provincial teams with total of 17 swimmers: 11 swimmers in two 13-15 age group Teams, four swimmers in the 11-12 age group and 2 swimmers in the 10U team. There were three Regional teams with a total of 20 swimmers: 9 swimmers on the 16-20 Regional team, four swimmers on our 13-15 Regional team and another 7 swimmers that made up our 10U Regional team. This meant that we had a total competitive membership of 37 swimmers, not including the three swimmers who left the program due to the Covid-19 closure in the middle of the season.

Aside from our competitive streams, we provided two AquaGo sessions for new swimmers. The AquaGo Program is an introductory program for new artistic swimmers to learn the basic skills of artistic swimming. Spanning 8-10 weeks, participants learn basic artistic swimming technique and work their way through increasingly difficult levels to attain a certain level of competence with sculling, basic figures, and other synchro skills.

We also held three free Try Synchro sessions, with 45 people registering to participate. These free “taste of artistic swimming” lessons are a great introduction to the sport and in fact, that is where many of our provincial and regional swimmers started their synchro journey.

When compared to the 22 swimmers last year and 34 swimmers at the beginning of the pandemic, we grew 68% in comparison to last year and 9% compared to our pre-pandemic numbers despite 2021-2022 still being a challenging situation with restrictive practice rules and social distancing rules in place for much of the season. Our ability to relaunch the AquaGo/recreational program was also a boon. It was not easy for anyone. We really appreciate everyone’s continued support which has been instrumental in allowing our athletes to grow and develop in artistic swimming.

Team Liaisons

Thank you to our Team Parents: Lolita, Candace, Marijke, Sonal, Amy, Sophie, and Julia whose timely communications to parents and coaches helped the year go more smoothly. Whether they were coordinating swimsuit, clubwear and equipment ordering, organizing suit bedazzling, planning team get-togethers, organizing an event, collecting payments, or resolving team-specific issues, they truly embodied team spirit.

Team Snap

Though it isn’t perfect, TeamSnap continues to be a highly effective way for our members to register for programs, to view team schedules, and receive important communications throughout the year.

Website and Social Media updates

MASA continues to maintain a website, Facebook page, as well as an Instagram account. The website contains the latest information for the club including program introduction, competition results, new policies, and club handbook. All are important communication tools for both members and people who are curious but not yet members of our club, and they help attract many new swimmers.

Thank you to Erin Dawson for posting successes, fun times and club moments on Instagram and Facebook.

Please follow MASA on Social Media

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Mississauga-Synchronized-Swimming-Association-159681694068459/?pnref=lhc>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/?hl=en>

Finance

E-Gaming

E-gaming returned to the club after a Covid-related hiatus. Volunteering with the Mississauga Charitable Gaming Association (MCGA) is an excellent source of income for MASA with over \$25,000 in returns as of end of April 2022 and a further expected \$2,000 to \$3,000 over the next two months. As per our agreement with MCGA, these funds are primarily used to offset pool fees which totaled approximately \$40,000 this season. A big thank you to all members who volunteered their time at the RAMA E-Gaming Centre. And an especially big thank you to Bo Lu who in her 3rd year as our Bingo Coordinator has done a fantastic job in coordinating all of volunteers and liaising with the centre.

Pools & Dryland Space

A big shout out to Karen Yi for continuing with the role of pool coordinator. Karen does a great job of coordinating with the City of Mississauga for our swim times and dryland training as well as with Olympium, the City of Brantford and McMaster University for our deep water practises.

Grant and Subsidies

In 2022, we applied and were successful in obtaining an Ontario Small Business Support Grant of \$10,000. This grant allowed us to offset the pool fees for January during the Covid-related closure.

Bookkeeping and Auditing

Our long-time Auditor, Chartered Accountant Stephen Craig, retired in late 2020 and our new auditor A&J CPA, started working with us in June 2021 to provide an audit of the club's financial statements.

Jason Besson, the club's bookkeeper, provided immeasurable assistance in ensuring that day-to-day financial transactions were completed properly and quickly and helped ensure that the club's operation ran smoothly.