



Athlete of the Month

Athlete Name: Matthew Buckingham

Year: Sophomore

Month: January

Sport: Swimming

Coach Submitting Form: Caroline Clement

Why is this person your team's Athlete of the Month?

Matthew Buckingham is the Jenison Swim and Dive Athlete of the Month based on his hard work ethic, his great attitude, and the great improvement that he has shown over the past year. Matthew started swimming when he was eight years old. I have been coaching Matthew in the JAWS program for many years. As a result of his early start, Matthew has solid technical skills in all four of the strokes which makes him very valuable to the team. As a freshman, Matthew was able to swim every event on the event list, which is rare for most freshmen swimmers. Matthew is a great trainer and understands the rigors of swimming, so he is finding a home in the "Distance Lane." Matthew has the ability to swim a lot of yards for a long time - and do it with a positive attitude. Matthew recently swam the 500 freestyle and broke six minutes, which is a "landmark goal time" for novice distance swimmers. Once they have achieved this, they start to get hungry to become faster and faster.

Matthew has grown greatly as a swimmer over the past year - both figuratively and literally. He attacks practice as a sophomore, no longer apprehensive about the long hours and great number of yards that are daunting to freshmen. But he has literally grown over the past year - and his new height and strength are also starting to contribute to his time drops and success. It has been fun to watch him lead his lane and set new personal records for himself both in practice and in meets. With his great work ethic and attitude, we expect to see a lot more personal best times out of Matthew during the next three years.

Matthew is also a great teammate. We have many freshmen on the team, so as a sophomore, he is already modeling great practice and competition behaviors. He practices hard and supports his team. He has experience and understanding of the sport, so he is already able to mentor the freshmen class.

Congratulations Matthew!