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Hello Stingrays swimmers and families:

I hope this note finds you having settled into your busy fall schedules. I just wanted to take a moment to provide a brief update on the team's season thus far.

As you know, with my late arrival, the season was off to a unique start. In September, we endeavored to create a number of enhancements in and around the program. As a staff, we are well aware that the project of operating a swim team, with athletes capable of competing at an elite level, can be daunting. Additionally, we remain dedicated to creating success within the framework of this community's ideals and expectations.

Firstly, I want to thank you all for your patience while we made amendments to training groups, increased requirements and reformed practice schedules. Overall, our swimmers have responded fabulously to the new expectations placed on them.

A few weeks back, we set out on our competition season, beginning with a string of duel meets in the Southern Michigan Swim League (SMSL). While this is traditionally early in the season for competition, our swimmers didn't let the short pre-season bother them one bit. Throughout the first 3 SMSL meets, we posted over 85% personal best times, a highly optimistic result for this point in the season.

Over the past weekend, the SST USA swimming registered athletes took to the Saline High School pool at the SMAC invitational. I am pleased to report that our swimmers posted over 90% personal best times at this meet. Given the grueling training program, a 90% rate is stunning for this point in the season. We expected the kids to see a bump in results from their increased workload, but did not expect to see it so soon. **Additionally, we would like to send special congratulations to 10-year old Stingray Ethan Saunders, who posted a 5:53.37 in the 500 free this weekend, a time that ranks him 10<sup>th</sup> nationally in his age group and away from the pack in Michigan! Congrats Ethan!**

Moving forward we expect to increase focus on biomechanics for all groups, while developing a vast aerobic base within our top group swimmers. This aerobic base will serve as the engine, so to speak, on which our athletes will perform later in the season.

The biggest challenge to our team's success thus far has been swimmer attendance. While Platinum and Gold+ swimmers have risen to the challenge, they are the only groups with strong attendance numbers. Please make every appropriate effort for your swimmers to attend training. Swimming is a technique limiting sport and swimmers who attend consistently have the greatest chance of success.

Additionally, I am pleased to report we have already added two capable coaches to our staff and expect to add one more high level assistant to the crew shortly. We have interviewed many, but have chosen to be patient and picky when filling the final spot on our coaching roster.

Additionally, **I would like to invite you to a “State of Stingrays” parents meeting.** During this meeting, our discussion will include, but not be limited to the following topics:

- Training Schedule, Communication, New Website Update, USA Swimming Update, and much more...
- Parent’s meeting: details below.

I also want to take a moment to thank the Stingrays and Saline Community Education staff who have been critical in helping us through this transition. Their dedication and work ethic helped steady the ship as we move into this exciting time in the team’s development.

Please know, while we have made a number of strides, our work has just begun. We pledge, that this is only the beginning of our transformation. We will work tirelessly to provide a program, which will make our members proud and provide an atmosphere where your feedback is always heard.

Kind Regards,  
Jeff Gross, Head Coach  
Saline Stingrays Swim Team  
[grossj@salineschools.org](mailto:grossj@salineschools.org)

## **“STATE OF STINGRAYS” Parent’s Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, Saline High School**

6:45-7:45 (All Parents)  
7:45-8:15 (\*USA Addendum)

\*For families currently enrolled or interested in joining USA Swimming.