2025 Bellevue Club Visit – May 22nd – 24th

From Grace’s perspective:

Coach Mark Lancaster and I recently visited Abi Liu and her colleagues at the Bellevue Club, where we spent three days observing and engaging with their competitive swim program. During our visit, we observed swimmers ranging in age from 9 to 18 and took part in a total of seven training sessions, observing three and co-coaching four.

Throughout our time there, I noted several key differences between their approach and what we currently do at PCS. One of the most significant differences was in training volume. Swimmers across all groups at Bellevue consistently swam longer distances per session than our athletes, including those in the 10 & under category.

Dryland training was another notable difference. At Bellevue, dryland was generally less structured, aside from organized gym sessions for the older swimmers. Most groups were assigned short, self-directed 15-minute activation routines while coaches prepared for practice. In contrast, PCS provides coach led dryland sessions lasting a minimum of 30 minutes for all age groups.

Group sizes at Bellevue were also larger than ours, with some coaches regularly managing over 20 swimmers per session. Structurally, their program was quite similar to ours, featuring three groups each for 10 & under and 11–12s, as well as four distinct senior groups.

From an administrative standpoint, the club employs around eight full-time coaches. Each coach is responsible for leading their respective group for approximately 12–16 hours per week, with the remainder of their full-time hours dedicated to administrative tasks. This structure has enabled them to maintain strong communication and visibility, including the distribution of weekly club-wide updates, bi-monthly newsletters, and consistent online engagement.

They have consistent, weekly meetings with their coaching staff to talk about the coming week and to plan. I really admire the professionalism and consistency in expectations across groups.

From Mark’s perspective:

I tried to look at how the Bellevue Club (a private members club) helps the competitive swim club to function well and have good swimming, and stable Coaching happening.

The Bellevue Club uses it`s resources to help the swim club. The Bellevue Club employs the Coaches on a full time basis and are taken care of with medical/dental etc employee benefits which is different from most swim clubs in British Columbia I believe. Coach Abi was quite strong on this point that it is not easy to Coach well when you are worried about the basics to take care of your family.
She plans to speak on this subject at an upcoming conference she told me.

The Bellevue Club has one 8 lane 25 meter pool, one 8 lane 25 yard pool, and an outdoor pool that we never saw. The swim team does rent pool time at an outdoor 50 meter pool as well from May to September. So they have good facilities for their 325 swim club members.

The Swim club members pay a membership fee to be a member of the private club, and then pay their swim team fees on top of that. The swimmers seemed to be quite dedicated to the sport and the parents support where and when they could. There is no swim club board of directors.
The Board of directors from the Bellevue Club are the employers of the Swim team Coaches. So the Coaches have full control of the swim club and work hard to keep the communication clear and upfront to the parent members, as well as the private clubs board.

Grace and I were fortunate to have had a chance to see a broad perspective of a number of groups and how they function as well as spend some time with Coach Abi.

Thanks to the BCSCA for their support.

Any questions etc feel free to e-mail/text etc.

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