

We've all seen the Soccer Mom and Hockey Dad bumper stickers and sweaters worn proudly and I can't help but wonder why there is no Synchro Mom and Synchro Dad merchandise. To me, they are the ones to be celebrated. Once you are a Synchro parent, there's no avoiding the obvious symptoms.

Let's talk finance. You might have a separate account or fund for your daughters goggles, nose plugs, caps and bathing suits and when she comes home one day looking depressed you are hanging on to every word as she takes the story very slow. Until her lips finally mouth, "I lost my nose plug" and you cringe. Of course you realize that your daughter doesn't want to dive to the bottom of the deep Lawson tank and get it. And those darn things are small too. You sadly lend her another 20 and you know it's only another 3 months before it happens all over again.

Another thing the parents deal with is the horrid substance that haunts you in your dreams: Knox Gelatin. Parents, you have never had to rig a bun on top of your daughters head so high before and put on elaborate stage makeup. You wonder if your daughter is a part of a circus at times. Maybe you have spent hours contemplating how to dilute the stench of Knox. And maybe you've thought of vanilla extract and it works! Any other bad smell that enters your nose, you simply shake it off and say, "I've smelled worse". For the older veteran parents, you have created the ultimate happy dance because you no longer have to slab on the hot sticky gel on your daughters head anymore. Younger parents, have a long way to go.

Another symptom is your new toughness in mentality. You have to wake up before the crack of dawn to drive to the Lawson and you keep a secret calendar counting down the days before it's all over. Thankfully, those Thursday morning practices are on break for a while. Maybe you have never been so thrilled that you car pool with another parent. And you've had situations where grandma had to drive or you had to leave work early so you don't get a hate email from the coaches. I'm just kidding.

Lastly, you've never been so happy and full of joy seeing your daughter do the sport she loves, performing and becoming stronger with each year. Holding your tears back is difficult once she stands on the podium with a great, big smile or performs her first solo or duet. Seeing her in that sparkly suit makes you jealous that she gets a \$100 suit and you don't; but it's worthwhile because it's what she wants most and it makes her look beautiful in the water. You cheer the loudest when it's her turn to swim and when she's done, you don't care that she's wet, you hug her anyway.

Without parents, this sport would not exist because you guys are the ones to get us to the pool and back, organize meets, hotels and which greyhound bus to take to Saskatoon. The parents are the ones to keep us going, reassure us when we had a bad or hard practice, keep cheering even when they are the only ones at Westerns, Nationals and MASY. There is only one group of people who can do the timer job, score keeping, panel ref and assistant referee work. I would like to personally thank every single parent sitting here tonight, because you guys are more hard core than any Soccer Mom or Hockey Dad.

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June 9, 2010
Tier 6 Swimmer