Report for Junior Pan Pacific's 2024

Brandon Schuster – Coach

Overview:

Junior Pan Pacific's 2024 (JPP24) was held in Canberra, Australia at AIS. Samoa selected six Junior elite-level swimmers to represent at JPP24. Team Samoa management included a coach, manager, and technical official. Please refer to the team breakdown in the list below.

Team Samoa JPP24

The JPP24 team included a total of six swimmers, three management, and one technical official. This is the largest team of athletes we have sent to a Junior event (JPP22 was four) while the management is smaller than last JPP. The small management worked well as there where less "heads" where each management was leading a specific area where others wouldn't interfere.

Athletes:

a. Solomona Hamilton (18)
b. Salani Sa'aga (16)
c. Skye Dennis-schwe (15)
d. La'auli Hamilton (15)
e. Kobe Tuioti (14)
f. Nafanua Hamilton (14)

Management:

g. Brandon Schuster (Coach)
h. Clyde Hamilton (Team Manager)
i. Ivapene Hamilton (Meals Coordinator/Team Support)
j. Seuga Frost (Technical Official)

Results and Athlete Performance:

Solomona Hamilton

7/4/2006 [18]

This will be Mona's last Junior event and he was selected to be one of the two captains for this competition. Mona is coming off of an extended period of rest (travelled to Europe for 3+ weeks) so he wasn't in the best shape possible coming into this competition. He still had strong goals to reach for his races, even with the limitations of training. He showed maturity in coming off a challenging 100 BA where he missed his goals and as well as in the 4x100 Medley Relay on the first day. After bouncing back from that Mona showed some great leadership and growth in wanting to improve his performance and training in the future.

Name	Event	Time	Age Record	PB	WA Points
Mona	100 BA	1:01.40	Y	Y	593
Mona	100 FR	54.74			627
Mona	200 BA	2:14.11		Y	581
Mona	200 IM	2:19.47			546

Salani Sa'aga

10/5/2008 [16]

Salani is now coming into her fourth time representing Samoa and has come a long way from Pacific Games. This is her first time being in a leadership role being the captain alongside Mona. She came into the role of captain quiet well, leading by example and voicing out when others were not present. For her results Salani was able to get PBs in a couple of her events. For her main race 200 BA, she decided to also swim the 100 FL before which helped her not feel as much pressure on the 200 BA. She PB'd in the 100 FL but struggled in the 200BA, I was really impressed with her mentality around racing this competition really pushing herself to enter multiple events. While the times may not have been to her liking it was an encouraging step in the right direction for her development.

Name	Event	Time	Age Record	PB	WA Points
Salani	100 BA	1:07.65	Y		608
Salani	100 FL	1:08.17	Y	Y	541
Salani	100 FR	1:03.45		Y	539
Salani	200 BA	2:28.48	Y		570
Salani	50 FR				533

Skye Dennis-Wesche

24/09/20098 [15]

This is Skye's first time representing Samoa, she was very shy at first but became the voice of the team throughout this competition. An analytical and driven athlete that knows exactly what she needs to do to get what she wants. She was able to open up to the team and become comfortable in both Samoa and Paskifika teams. She dropped some massive PBs and was receptive to advice on her races and expanding her range in events, deciding to do the 200 FR helped her understand the importance of middle-distance sprints in helping her use speed in her 400/800FR. Having her parents separated from the accommodation allowed Skye to grow as her own which was wonderful to see, excited to see the growth that she will have for herself and Team Samoa. While her WA points are not very strong she has a positive outlook for how she can improve her times.

Name	Event	Time	Age Record	PB	WA Points
Skye	200 FR	2:24.20		Y	479
Skye	400 FR	5:11.72		Y	430
Skye	800 FR	10:56.99		Y	401

La'auli Hamilton

15/11/2008 [15]

Uli is on a good track in his swimming career, and he understands the position he is in with his racing. The biggest barrier is his stroke rate (SR) in his races, he hits a SR that is slower than cool down/warm up tempo. Throughout the competition we helped him understand what his SR looks like and used other swimmers as a standard he should target. Going into this competition he was working on his base by entering both the 200 BA and BR. Uli got really sick the day of his 200 BA and pushed through the race but was hesitant to race the 200 BR the next day, he showed strong mental capacity in continuing with the race and prepping himself for the race. He removed himself from team activities so he could be best ready to race. Going into the future he is going to target SR sessions and build up his capacity for 200s. Overall a solid result given the obstacles he overcame.

Name	Event	Time	Age Record	PB	WA Points
Uli	100 BA	1:05.65	Y	Y	485
Uli	100 BR	1:11.83	Y	Y	496
Uli	200 BA	2:29.22		Y	421
Uli	200 BR	2:42.44			460

Kobe Tuioti

30/9/2009 [14]

This was Kobe's first Team Samoa competition, for one of the youngest athletes he exuded a confidence that was refreshing for the team. Knowing that he was chasing a feeling and not necessarily a time, while he was specific on splits and goals for his races. He was able to thoroughly enjoy himself in his first cap. PB's and Age Records came smoothly for Kobe and he had the most reciprocative response to feedback on where he can improve, building up his base and adding more distance events. Coming out of this competition Kobe will be an energetic and hopefully integral part of Samoa Aquatics. Personality and actions jelled well with the other members, became the teams little brother (youngest sibling), him and Skye became close "siblings".

Name	Event	Time	Age Record	PB	WA Points
Kobe	100 BA	1:03.41	Y	Y	538
Kobe	100 BR	1:15.07	Y	Y	434
Kobe	200 BA	2:17.57	Y	Y	538
Kobe	200 IM	2:25.95	Y	Y	476
Kobe	50 FR	26.36	Y	Y	497

Nafanua Hamilton

19/01/2010 [14]

Nua is the youngest athlete on the team and also has two older brothers on the team. She is learning how to best prep for competitions and has a strong aversion to distance (200m) events. It makes it difficult when her 50m free time she dropped the most time, but she has a lot of potential for middle distance. Her mentality and prep before races are still maturing, but she is showing more initiative in team events/support as well as knowing what she needs for warm ups. She doesn't have any 50 paces when racing 100s or 200s however she is still young and will adapt her pre-race routine for the future. Overall, really positive results with the intention to increase capacity.

Name	Event	Time	Age Record	PB	WA Points
Nua	100 BA	1:08.05	Y	Y	597
Nua	100 BR	1:19.71			520
Nua	200 BA	2:28.08	Y		575
Nua	50 FR	28.06	Y	Y	595

Team Dynamic:

With two new members (Kobe, Skye) there was a bit of awkwardness at the start, however the team melded well together. Both team building and having all of them in the same house and rooms. Helping out with chores and keeping strong support for teammates when not racing. There was a strong sense of team camaraderie with swimmers coming to the stands after races to cheer on teammates that raced after. The car rides to and from the pool were opportunities for the swimmers to give encouraging words for their teammates and for the coach to get everyone on the same page. There was a little issue with overexcitement at the start of the competition but that was channelled well with the assistance of the team manager.

Outside of Competition:

The team received overwhelming large support from the local Samoan community. This was possible due to the team's accommodation being the Hamilton's home, they are already part of the Samoan/Pasifika community and they would come and offer support throughout the competition. From fresh bread, snacks, meals, cars, transports, and emotional support the team was welcomed well into Canberra.

When the team didn't compete in finals, they would enjoy some of the local events. On one of the evenings the team explored the Australian War Memorial Museum learning about the history of major wars within the Pacific, and getting a chance to see more of Canberra outside of AIS. The team would also take the Hamilton's dog "talo" for walks through the reserve found less than 1 minute away from lodging. From the reserves to the parks and museum the team thoroughly enjoyed their experience. A highlight being team building activities like "fishbowl" and cars.

For the last night of the competition Samoa management decided to invite the Cook Island and Fijian swimmers to join us for dinner (that was sponsored by the parents). It was a wonderful Paskifika bonding moment where the Junior swimmers ate and conversed together outside of the pool premises. There was a massive game of "Fishbowl" and spoons where laughter and team building were present. A great way for the competition to be capped.

Challenges:

Throughout this competition very little challenges occurred. The primary area was understanding the position of coaching Juniors while having parents in the vicinity. The parents were very respectful in giving their children space to compete, however there was sometimes where clarification was addressed to allow the athletes the most authentic experience as a Samoan Athlete. Outside of the parental positions, only the swimmers getting over excited and speaking poorly of competitors. The lack of respect and attitude was brought up at the start of the competition and reinforced by the team manager. Once the issue was brought up the team quickly understood and it no longer became a problem.

Overall:

The JPP24 event was a wide success for both swimmers in and out of the water**. 17 PB's** and **14 Age National Records** is proof that these swimmers are developing in the right direction and are growing into strong representatives for Samoa. While there are still struggles in getting them invested into more distance level events there is no question on their involvement and commitment in representing Samoa. All are very eager to get prepped and ready for the next Team Samoa event (Mini Games 2025, Palau).

The swimmers ranked their performance out of 10 with the average being 7.5, preparedness for JPP24 being a 5.8, and how they enjoyed the experience of JPP24 at a 9.2. Overall, with these numbers the swimmers came out with strong accomplishments and positive experience. However, the preparedness of the swimmers was lower than expected and they have acknowledged what they need to do to better be prepped for Team Samoa events.