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The World Swimming Coaches Association

# NEWSLETTER

## From Endurance to Strength to Power by Way of the Water

*Edward H. Nessel, R.Ph., MS, MPH, PharmD.*

There has never been an athlete (male or female) I've known, coached, or competed against that didn't want to become as strong as possible. The serious competitors all wanted the hallmark defined muscle ("cuts") of a solid athletic build. My venue, starting in the late 1950's, was the pool where "doing weights" was considered a mistake. It was thought that more developed muscle would inhibit flexibility and get in the way of fast swims; the road to aquatic athletic success, as we were constantly reminded by our coaches, was intensely moving our skinny bodies back and forth doing various swim and kick sets. Then in the early '60's strength training was seen by some visionaries more as an aid than an enemy. A few rising stars began to move free weight and pull on resistance cables to increase their strength and add some muscle endurance so they could move more water longer. This was a simple and logical advancement in swim training. This information soon spread to other sports that traditionally didn't incorporate resistance with their sport-specific training.

Throughout this article, I will use this symbol (\*) to emphasize take-home points.

Though most aquatic athletes and their coaches didn't realize the absolute differences between endurance, strength, and power and the importance of correct physical preparation and progression to obtain these, they were content to simply add either a few bouts of resistance exercise a week to their in-pool training or an abbreviated session of "dry-land" work on deck each time just before entering the water thinking they were getting one-up on their competition that stayed only in the pool. They were right.

\*The three elements in this article's title succinctly outline the appropriate progression we want the athlete to take: first be able to forcefully move a constant resistance again and again over an extended period of time without getting injured (endurance), then be able to safely move an increased amount of resistance (strength), and finally to be able to move that increased resistance quickly; power = strength over time... strength time

Emphasis here is placed on leg work since most swim training sessions only afford a minor portion to this. There are advantages to water-stressing the legs that will prove invaluable in close swim races, for the biking and running segments in a tri-

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**CADDA / FINA Clinic**

Buenos Aires, Argentina - November 10-17, 2006

**Workshop Método Halliwick**

San Sebastian de los Reyes, Spain - December 16, 2006

**2007 ASCTA Conference**

Sofitel Hotel, Gold Coast, Australia - May 1-8, 2007

**2007 DSTV Clinic**

Braunschweig, Lower-Saxony, Germany - May 4-6, 2007

athlon, and as productive cross-training for any athletic adventure that requires leg movement. The importance is such that I recommend cutting swim yardage or other training elements, if need be, to allocate precious time of a tight schedule to perform these leg-specific water-based exercises.

There is also a physiological phenomenon of aquatic training that must be mentioned...sort of a one-way street to increased condition. Training seriously in the water usually produces tremendous benefits for those performing exercises and sports anywhere. Yet land-based exercises only help to a minor degree in water since they can not nearly measure up to in-pool resistance training for those needing increased endurance, strength, and power in aquatic sports. \*The message is clear here: if you want to max out your physical potential ANYWHERE, you should work the water.

### **USING THE WATER TO FIRST BUILD ENDURANCE**

The normal physiology of muscle activity (as designed by Mother Nature millions of years ago) allows for some muscle fibers to contract while others relax. We also have been endowed with fast-twitch and slow-twitch muscle fibers in varying percentages. The latter produce less force than the former but have more natural endurance since they have a strong blood supply carrying nutrients and oxygen. The fast-twitch fibers contract more forcefully than the slow-twitch, for the most part, but have no blood supply and can only fire for a relatively short period of time before fatiguing from physiologic acidic build-up and adenosine tri-phosphate (ATP) depletion. This evolutionary fact crudely made use of natural basic endurance by giving our ancestors somewhat of a chance to survive an extended dash to the protective trees in nearby forests to escape being food for larger occupiers of the planet with bad intentions toward us. Unfortunately, this UNTRAINED natural endurance is not enough to carry us through today's sport-specific requirements for an extended period of time. \*And it is established physiologic fact that increasing endurance helps to protect against overuse injury by adapting the connective tissue around the joints and muscles to handle the increased loads of physical exercise we plan to endure. \*The wise thing to do first...adapt the body by increasing endurance.

\*If we bring in aquatic exercise or sports, anything that happens in water requires more than FOUR TIMES THE EFFORT than it does to move on land, yet it spares serious wear-and-tear on the body because of the gravity-free environment water provides. Example: at the world record level it takes longer to sprint-swim 50 meters free-style (21.64) than it does to sprint-run a 200 meter dash (19.72). \*For those needing their legs or to increase their general aerobic and anaerobic condition to tackle land-based exercise or sports, working the legs and various other muscle groups in water is the absolute smart thing to do.

To begin with, the gravitational pounding against an unforgiving medium (roadbed, ground, dirt, etc.) for hours (and miles) on end will take its toll eventually on almost everyone by breaking down the support structures with acute and/or chronic inflammation, especially at the articular (joint) areas. This is not a matter of "if," but of "when." The athlete, of course, must put time on the

ground or on the bike if he participates in running and biking; the body still has to be trained to withstand what we expect to put it through. But a wise use of cross-training will spare body parts and enable the athlete to participate that much stronger longer. But I don't recommend running for my swimmers for just such reason as to prevent needless wear-and-tear on body parts more used to a gravity-free environment. I suggest using the mechanical advantage of a bike, indoors or out, where the negative stresses are shifted away from joint-pounding.

Most training in the pool to build total body endurance requires swimming laps, no getting around that. It is the perfect activity to increase total body condition and to build on the components of becoming powerful. The benefits of the water have even been incorporated into several professional boxers' routines. And swimming with the correct style of fins allows for these benefits to happen even more quickly and to a higher degree for two reasons: (1) \*Since the muscle groups of the legs are the single largest to be utilized at any given moment, putting them through various modes of resistive movement in the water forces the cardiovascular and respiratory systems to reach higher levels of capacity to meet metabolic demand...the heart and lungs don't know you have fins on, only how hard and fast you are moving through water, and (2) unlike air which doesn't change, \*moving through water releases the phenomenon that as you travel faster through it, water's resistance increases, holding you back more. Due mainly to the physical property of water being 1000 times denser than air, doubling your speed through the former causes it to resist your mobility by SQUARED ( $2 \times 2 = 4$ ) the effort; and this occurs only if you streamline and move through it correctly. Fight the water to any degree or add more intentional resistance, and it holds you back CUBED of the effort ( $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ ) which means doubling the effort brings on EIGHT TIMES THE RESISTANCE! Anyone not comfortable and experienced in the water can attest to the fact that flailing through it for more than 10 seconds can bring on a great degree of discomfort both respiratory and muscular, usually in that order.

\*Since forcing the body's conditioning enzymes to produce more mitochondria (energy cells) in the vital tissues associated with vigorous exercise is the key to building any increase in the training effect, extending repeated efforts over distances to 300 yards or meters or holding the efforts for four to five minutes elicits the desired adaptive response. This may prove quite daunting to the uninitiated and would drive away most attempting such training. The perceived feeling of being completely out of air in water can humble even the most determined. What works initially is to break the distance or time interval down into segments that allow short recovery periods. During this brief inserted rest, it is more the need to blow off (exhale forcefully) accumulated CO<sub>2</sub> rather than the perceived need to inhale more air that allows for the greater recovery. The effort becomes challenging but doable and can be expanded and made more challenging as condition increases.

Below is a listing of ways to increase resistance in the water to help build cardio-vascular, respiratory, and leg endurance and then to maintain it throughout the training season.

1. Using fins and alternating freestyle and butterfly kicks with a kick board in a straightforward (neutral) position for 100 yards/meters; rest 10 seconds, a 2nd 100 with another 10 seconds rest; finally the 3rd 100; no matter how the legs burn each 100 must be traversed uninterrupted and with the same steady cadence held from the beginning. Eventually the goal is to kick 300 yards/meters straight holding the pace. As condition improves, speed is increased throughout the distance, and two more repeats are added after 30 seconds recovery.
2. In deep water, holding the hands continuously above the water line, kicking both freestyle and butterfly at first with NO fins; kicking bout is held for 15 second intervals at first, resting 15 seconds after each, progressing to three by 30 seconds, then 45, then 60; once at this level, USING FINS should bring the athlete to two minutes of straight kicking with several repeats after 30 second recoveries.
3. "Water-walking:" performed both with fins and without; this is not typical kicking as would be practiced with swim strokes; this entails quick, smooth alternating repetitive movements of the legs raising the knees up as high as possible toward the chest and then kicking back away from the body with the bottom of the feet pressing against the water; performed on the stomach and on the back with hands folded in a praying position; this works not only all the muscles of the legs but also serves to stretch and develop the hip-flexors. It is the most inefficient way to move through water but the one that brings out the training effect of leg endurance the most. One length of "water-walking" is equivalent in metabolic demand to three to four lengths of traditional swimming or kicking. One-length repeats of 25 yards or meters are worked with 15-30 seconds rest per length; the use of fins requires doubling the distance.
4. Lastly, the athletes are tied to fastened sturdy latex tubing and are asked to kick with fins against its force starting for 15 seconds; the goal is to continue the kick and hold a set distance from the starting wall while stringing the 15-second segments together to continuously move against the pull-back of the tubing for up to two minutes. A further benefit is derived here: preventing the "cocoon effect." Normally when the brain perceives movement it expects movement, either forward, backward, or side-to-side; but when the tubing is fully extended there is no longer forward movement, so the brain starts to "short-circuit," and the athlete may panic and feel that he is being swallowed or smothered by the water. If handled properly, this builds mental toughness and the aerobic condition to withstand this most demanding of stresses.

#### **PROGRESSING FROM ENDURANCE TO STRENGTH**

To train for increasing strength, every workout procedure listed above needs to be handled in a more demanding fashion. We are less concerned with how long we can hold an exercise than how much resistance we can overcome during a designated length of time.

1. To further increase resistance, the board is placed in front of the swimmer half submerged with the rounded end up resembling a "tombstone." This **DOUBLES** frontal resistance. Then we increase resistance by **FOUR TIMES** original by placing the kickboard half

submerged sideways so it resembles a "snowplow." A typical exercise bout calls for using one type of kick, alternating the kickboard positions, one length of each: neutral, "tombstone," and "snowplow." The speed of the kick is held constant while the resistance is increased. This is repeated four times with a 30-second rest in between bouts. Another exercise demands that all three lengths of the pool are traversed using the "tombstone" configuration, 30-second rest, then three lengths using "snowplow;" three lengths holding the board in neutral position, finally one length each way with the board. Constant speed is something that must be maintained or attempted.

2. Deep-water kicking is now performed holding a medicine ball with both hands out of the water; recommended starting weight is six pounds for a duration of 20 seconds; this is attempted four times with a 20-second rest in between. As strength increases and condition rises, slightly heavier medicine balls are used topping off at 10 pounds while holding the kicking bout for up to 60 seconds. Fins are to be used for free and fly kick but those wanting to train breast-stroke kick must do it sans fins. Upper body strengthening is a welcomed "side-effect" of supporting the ball above the water line.
3. "Water-walking" with a medicine ball overhead should be done with fins except those wanting to work the breaststroke kick; the already taxing demands of this exercise are magnified by four holding the ball above water. Water-walking forwards on the belly holding the ball up is called "presentation" and is the absolute hardest exercise to do; more than twice the difficulty of "walking" on the back. Stress is placed on the arms, shoulders, trunk and legs and is magnified as the athlete moves down the lane.
4. Kicking against the pull of latex tubing with an increasing intensity up to a pre-determined point in the pool over a designated length of time, then stopping and allowing the tubing to pull back the swimmer to the starting point; repeating this bout after 30 seconds rest for a total of five.

#### **GOING FROM STRENGTH TO POWER**

Now we are least concerned about holding an exercise for time; rather, we want to move whatever resistance is in our way as quickly and **POWERFULLY** as possible. Short bursts of intense energy are required, and the fast-twitch muscle fibers are tapped in repeated bouts, each after adequate recovery. Per unit time, this type of training is the most demanding and is correctly reserved for the last position in the progression. \* You can not be powerful unless you have endurance and strength in place. Go for power too soon in the training scheme, and injury is more than likely to occur. **THERE IS NO SHORT-CUT TO POWER.**

1. Three ways to bring power into the legs: (a.) one-length kicking, starting off slowly from the wall and building every three seconds into all-out effort to the finish; (b.) starting off slowly from the wall until mid-pool then suddenly all-out kicking till the end; (c.) starting off as fast as possible from the wall then shutting it down midway through the length. Each of these bouts has the kick board at first in neutral position for four lengths, then "tombstone" for four lengths, finally "snowplow" for four lengths; 15 seconds rest for neutral, 20 seconds for "tombstone," and 30 seconds rest for "snowplow."

*contintued on page 4 >>>*

2. Deep-water kicking with the medicine ball has now progressed to snapping to one-quarter turns in one direction holding the ball overhead every 15 seconds for a 1-minute total; then execute the same in the opposite direction after a 30-second rest. Then someone on deck in front of the person in deep water throws the medicine ball downward quickly to the kicker who must snap it back. Three bouts of 10 are endured with a 60-second rest in between. Not only are the legs and cardio-vascular systems taxed but also the upper body.
  3. What we do with water-walking for power is to carry the medicine ball, no fins, and kick as if our lives depend upon it for half a length or 30 seconds, whichever comes sooner; then the ball is placed down or passed to another athlete who kicks hard with the extra weight for half a length; an easy kicking recovery follows quickly to prepare for the next five bouts.
  4. Being tethered to the latex tubing, the athlete pushes off the wall and initiates intense kicking immediately for a 15-second bout, no longer. This is repeated for a total of 10 bouts; the rest period between bouts is 60 seconds which includes the pulling back to the wall of the extended tubing. All kicks other than breaststroke are done with fins.
- Our goal is power. It is a prolonged and challenging process to attain it. If things go well, the athlete will perform up to his potential. But we know how hard he has worked to make it all look so easy. ●

## 2006 British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association & American Swimming Coaches Association Awards

### BSCTA COACH OF THE YEAR

Fred Vergnoux – City of Edinburgh  
For the performance of Kirsty Balfour at the European Championships in winning the women’s 200 Breaststroke.

### BSCTA AWARD OF COACHING EXCELLENCE

Ian Turner – Loughborough  
For the performances of all seven of his swimmers at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, where all seven medaled.

### BSCTA COACH OF THE YEAR FOR SWIMMERS WITH A DISABILITY

Colin Hood – Manchester  
For his work with Matt Walker (Commonwealth Bronze medalist & world record holder in the 50m Free), and earlier work with Sascha Kindred and Nyree Lewis.

### BSCTA YOUTH COACH OF THE YEAR

Colin Stripe – City of Liverpool  
For his successful work with Francesca Halsall.

### BSCTA ALAN HIME MEMORIAL AWARD

Graham Antwhistle – Borough of Stockton  
For his work with Jessica Dickons.

### BSCTA CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION

Russ Barber – City of Sheffield  
Dave McNutty – Derwentside  
Ian Wright – Warrender  
Emma Patrick – Leominster  
Nick Juba – Hatfield

### BSCTA FELLOW

Dave Crouch – Rochdale Aquabears

### BSCTA LIFE MEMBER

Lindsay Powell

### ASCA COACH OF THE YEAR

Eddie Reese

### ASCA HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

John Collins  
Dennis Pursley  
Ed Solotar  
Murray Stephens

### ASCA OUSLEY AWARD

George Block (WSCA Board Member)

### ASCA AGE GROUP COACHES OF THE YEAR

	Coach
LSC	
Adirondack	Meghan VanAken
Alaska	Cindy Pitta
Arkansas	Carolyn Haefner
Central California	Kacy Ota
Connecticut	Dave Reilly
Florida Gold Coast	Brunno Darzi
Florida Swimming	Chuck Burgess
Georgia	Pike Hightower
Gulf	Derek Howorth
Hawaii	Kevin Flanagan
Iowa	Dave Joensen
Inland Empire	Heidi Kuntz
Indiana	Jim Voss
Kentucky	Scott Paulson
Minnesota	Steve Varney
Montana	Shane Syndergaard
Missouri Valley	Scott Berry
Midwestern	Bryan Kratky
North Carolina	Patty Waldron
New England	Laura Matuszak
New Jersey	Erin Miller
New Mexico	Richard Taylor
Ohio	Ken Dunlap
Oklahoma	Ben Harlow
Potomac Valley	Marilyn Mangels
South Carolina	Tim Conley
Southeastern	Sean Marshall
San Diego Imperial	Dave Kilmer
Sierra Nevada	Peter Brown
Snake River	John Apgar
Virginia	David Schreck

# Report on the 2006 ASCA World Clinic

by Terry Denison, Chairman BSCTA - September 12<sup>th</sup> 2006

The 2006 World Clinic was attended by over 1600 swim coaches including a group of 12 coaches funded by British Swimming and led by Bill Sweetenham, John Atkinson, Kevin Renshaw and Tim Kerrison as part of the GB programme of coach development. The group met each evening after lectures finished to share their findings. Bill also arranged for our coaches to have breakfast meetings each morning with a leading US coach so that our coaches could question these world leaders about their home programmes and philosophies. This was an amazing learning opportunity for all our coaches and Bill is to be congratulated on having set this up. British Swimming will certainly benefit from the knowledge and motivation which our young coaches have gained from this experience.

What follows in this Report is my interpretation of the Talks which I attended. Since the Conference is divided into 4 parallel strands it is not possible to attend all the talks and therefore my Report covers only the Talks which I personally attended.

**Tuesday and Wednesday at the Conference** is taken up with various "Swim Schools" leading to ASCA Coach Accreditation. The main part of the Conference opened on the Wednesday evening with **the Keynote Speech given by John G. Miller**, author of "QBQ: the Question behind the Question" and "Flipping the Switch". John is a very motivational speaker whose theme is that we all need to promote "personal accountability" for our actions. We can do this by asking "good" questions which begin with "how" or "what" and eliminate the "bad" questions which begin with "why" and "when". So, the question "when are we going to get more resources/help/cash to do this job" becomes "what can I do right now with the resources I have to get this job done". John's whole philosophy hinges around the saying "If it is to be then it's up to me" and contains great advice about removing the blame culture and the victim culture from our lives. If we want to be more productive then WE are the ones who should see that it gets done not leaving it to others and then complaining when it is not done. John's website for anyone who wants to follow this up is [www.QBQ.com](http://www.QBQ.com).

I also attended two talks on **Masters Swimming and on training Triathletes** during Wednesday afternoon. These are two very big sections of American Swimming and are growing fast in Britain and we do need to consider how we can incorporate these groups into our existing Training Programmes. There was much discussion about how to adapt our training methods to the needs of these groups when triathletes will have to consider training for two other disciplines as well as swimming and some older Masters swimmers will have restricted mobility and also less time available for training. It was emphasized that coaches need to consider each swimmer's personal goals and needs but that the rewards from coaching these "older" swimmers can be great. One quote which I did like from these talks was "criticism, like rain, should be gentle enough to develop growth without destroying the roots".

Thursday morning began with **Dennis Pursley, ASCA Coach of the Year 1980**; coach to Mary T. Meagher, US National Performance Director for the past 15 years and, during the last 4 years, coach to the BEST swim team in Phoenix, Arizona. Dennis spoke passionately about what he had learned from his lengthy coaching career and emphasized the need to "be yourself" and work with what you have. He said: "There is no coaching Utopia. The grass is never greener on the other side". He said that to be a successful club coach you need (a) an optimum population base; (b) adequate pool time; and (c) an effective coach. When you get these three things in combination, anything is possible if you believe in yourself and persevere through the difficult times which come to everyone from time to time. Dennis concluded after 90 mins of strong motivational talking by acknowledging

that there have been great cultural changes over the past 10 years which certainly create more challenges for today's young coaches. Coaches need to adapt to these changes whilst at the same time maintaining the tried and tested values of discipline, hard work, consistency and integrity.

**John Atkinson** spoke on Developing an Age Group Programme. John outlined his own career at Milfield, Norwich, Jersey and in Australia before returning to GB in 2001 to help Bill develop the World Class Programme. He spoke of the need for coaches to be leaders and to stick to their own philosophies and beliefs. He recommended that coaches ask 4 questions of new swimmers who come to join their programme.

1. What are your goals?
2. What are you prepared to do to achieve them?
3. What do you expect from me as a coach?
4. What can you bring to my programme?

This then clearly establishes the basis upon which you can run your squads. John spoke at length on the stages of development that young swimmers go through and the need to think "long term" in all your planning. He emphasized the importance of "break point" volume from ages 13 upwards as the true foundation for success in senior swimming careers.

Thursday afternoon began with **George Block**, former ASCA President, interviewing **Chuck Wielgus**, Executive Director of US Swimming. The general theme was "Where will US Swimming be in 10 years time". Chuck stressed the need for US Swimming to become financially independent. We have to make swimming more marketable and more diverse in its appeal. He talked about "enhancing our assets" and increasing marketability by looking at the example of other leading sports such as tennis and basketball. Perhaps we need to fix our National Championships on the same weekend every year in the same venue and ensure that all our leading swimmers are there - just as tennis does with the US Open. Perhaps we need more events that are specially prepared for TV. He certainly felt that we need to be more media friendly in terms of having swimmers and coaches available for interviews immediately after events as happens in most sports. The leading growth sports in the US in the past few years have been NASCAR, soccer and lacrosse, all of which are extensively marketed. Swimming, however, has much to offer:

1. It is a clean sport in terms of not having major drug issues
2. In the US it is the primary Olympic Sport
3. It can offer many community benefits - fighting obesity, public safety, open to all.

We just need to sell ourselves better.

This was a very thought provoking interview, not least because it shows the culture in the US's NGB and Coaches' Association working closely together to address the issues in our sport.

**Rick Curl**, who owns the Curl-Burke Swim Club in Washington and is currently working with Forbes and Ursula Carlile in Sydney, spoke on "Rebuilding a formerly great Swim Team". The Carlile Swim Programme is a massively successful teaching programme in North Sydney but the competitive side has been in decline in recent years. Rick has been taken out there to try to help rebuild this.

His philosophy of Team Building is:

1. You need to build a united team - swimmers, coaches, parents, administrators.
2. You need to educate parents through regular Parents Meetings, explaining your goals and philosophy.
3. You need to educate swimmers and inspire them to aim ever higher.

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4. You need excellent support staff to make all this work.
5. You need to incorporate Team Building activities such as travel, camps and social events into your programme and encourage people to "think big".
6. The swimmers need a sound aerobic base of training to build for future success
7. We need to sell to parents the long term benefits that their children will gain from the disciplines of a structured training programme. "Success is the journey, not the destination".

**Frank Busch of Arizona State University** spoke on "Kicking: the foundation for success". A good kick is the basis for swimming success in all events. A great kick promotes good body position and a balanced stroke. Frank's squads kick at least 1000m in every session and on Tuesday and Thursday they do a major kick set of 2800 to 3200 kick. Legs are also strengthened by running 3x per week – distance runs, stadium steps, interval runs. He also does a lot of work on ankle flexibility and hard fins for flexibility. Kick sets take all forms – 8x400 easy/hard; 8x200 timed; underwater kick; vertical kick aiming for 18 dolphin kicks in 6 secs to encourage "fast feet". Frank believes that "kicking is 90% will power" and that it is the basis of all great swimming.

Friday morning began with **Chuck Warner interviewing Coach Eddie Reese**. As always, Eddie comes across as a thoughtful, caring coach who has great knowledge and insight into what makes older swimmers go even faster. He emphasized:

1. the importance of technique from young swimmer up to senior
2. his dryland programme which is important for increasing and for maintaining strength
3. the importance of good kicking. Eddie expects senior Fly, BC and FStylers to be able to kick 50m under 30secs.
4. competitiveness in his swimmers. One of Eddie's favorite sayings is "Great swimmers hate to lose more than they love to win".

**Coach Marcus O'Sullivan**, Track Coach, Villanova, brought the perspective of an athletics coach to the topics which swim coaches discuss. Marcus is a former Olympic 1500m runner who believes in doing the bulk of training at or just below the Anaerobic Threshold which he described as being at 90% of HR max. He has his own individual coaching style and said that the psychology of team building and motivation is probably more important than a great knowledge of sports science although he clearly knew a great deal about both.

There were 5 different strands in the Friday pm session. I attended a **Teaching Strand on Back Stroke Starts and Turns** which was well presented by Michelle Bernal-Sweeney with video support.

**Rick Curl** continued his talk on the Carlile Swim School Organisation. Forbes and Ursula built their own pool in their back garden in 1962 for 7000 Aus Dollars. This past year they spent 360,000 Aus Dollars on refurbishing it and a further 250,000 Aus Dollars on re-branding the whole Carlile Organisation with uniforms for teachers, pool staff and office staff; pool décor with child friendly graphics; lesson booklets; certificates and awards and full teaching plans for all groups; staff training for all staff and management. They now operate in 7 different facilities and in 2007 are projected to take in 2.3 million Aus Dollars. This is an amazing example of Swim Schools Aussie style.

**An excellent Open Water Panel** was led by Steve Munatones, US Open Water Team Coach, and Charlene Boudreau, US Swimming Nutritionist. Steve gave a clear and concise explanation of the planning that goes into Open Water Racing including Pre-Race Prep, Mass Starts, Feeding Strategies, turning the buoys, finishing and the role of the referee. This is a very complex

sport that needs a lot of thought and planning as well as extraordinary levels of fitness and courage. Charlene gave one of the best talks I have ever heard on sports nutrition with particular reference to racing 10k and 25k where refueling is needed during the race. She stressed the need for a good year round nutritional programme to ensure that swimmers could deal with the training and be fully prepared for racing. She talked about the strategies for refueling and rehydrating during the race and how this was affected by the number of stations, the water temperature, whether salty or fresh water, and the race tactics. The full talk will be published on the US Swimming website.

On Saturday morning, **Mike Curley** spoke on the 12 "C's" of team building:

1. Clear team goals understood and accepted by everyone
2. Good communication with swimmers, parents and Board
3. Clear expectations – everyone should know their role
4. Context -everyone in the team matters and has a role to play
5. Commitment – everyone understands and supports the levels of commitment
6. Competence – surround yourself with good people
7. Control – who?
8. Collaboration – discussion and cooperation
9. Creative innovation – constantly seeking better ways of running the team
10. Consequences – squad rewards systems for good performance, behaviour etc
11. Coordination – is everyone working in harmony
12. Consistency in applying rules

**Dr. Monica Schloder** – Starts, Turns and Finishes: Physical and Technical Preparation on Dryland. Dr. Schloder is a gymnastics coach and a swimming coach and gave an excellent presentation along with videos about how we need to prepare young swimmers from an early age with well structured land programmes that will develop the agility and athleticism needed to execute good starts and turns.

Much of this was in the form of basic gymnastic type activities of the sort that was practiced in our school PE lessons years ago but with a progressive series on exercises aimed at developing strength and confidence to do the skills. She has broken down the start and turn skills into specific motor units such as balance, streamlining, leg power agility and then developed a progressive set of exercises to use from very young ages upwards. Wheelbarrows, grapevines, wallbar climbing, pull ups, frog jumps skipping were all incorporated into this programme and much of it could be done around poolsides or in nearby gyms as a means (a) of developing strength and agility in young people and (b) of having fun whilst doing it. In terms of flexibility Dr Schloder's favourite saying seems to be "Squeeze the butt and tuck in the gut". Many of these exercises can be found on the website of Canadian Gymnastics.

As always, I found the Conference stimulating and motivating. Much of it was a "back to basics" theme emphasizing the old values of discipline and hard work which is not easy to "sell" in the modern age. Coaches have many challenges to face but "if it was easy then anyone could do it" (That's from me, by the way!!). There is no doubt that there are many life skills for young people to gain from being involved in Swim Training programmes. We just need to sell these better and then to be willing to stand by our principles and not allow our efforts to be "watered down" by compromise. I strongly believe that a strong, independent Coaches Association is essential to British Swimming, both to promote this message and to support our fellow coaches. You can obtain more information on the World Clinic by talking to the other coaches who went or by ordering the Clinic Year Book from the ASCA website ([www.swimmingcoach.org](http://www.swimmingcoach.org)).●

# Swimming Coach's Self-Evaluation and Study Questions

## Environment and Club Structure

*Bill Sweetenham, National Youth Coach*

Becoming a more effective coach means that self improvement must come from a number of different sources. Most coaches actively pursue improvements in theoretical knowledge, but this may be far removed from the human side of interaction with swimmers, parents, and Club officials. Listed below are questions which may act as 'thought starters' to challenge your present thinking. This self-evaluation is not a 'test', but it may help you to shape the focus of your coaching practices. After answering these questions you may want to seek additional references or discuss your ideas with other coaches; I would encourage you to follow-up on any/all of these questions.

1. Well-run organisations (think of your Club as a business) have forward plans and goals. How do you use your Club's plan to support your team goals? Is your annual coaching plan (i.e., for competition and training) on display or published for all Club members to see?
2. How do you use Club nights (i.e., both competition and social) to your advantage?
3. How often do you require your age-group swimmers to attend Club competitions? Do you have a plan which utilises these competitions to help swimmers learn race skills which they'll need as senior swimmers?
4. If you were judged as a coach based upon the least talented swimmers in your squad, how would you rate?
5. What are the possible advantages (or disadvantages) of encouraging parents from your Club to become accredited Level 1 Swimming Coaches?
6. Do you have a qualified swimming referee or starter attend your training sessions periodically to offer advice on the skills of your swimmers (i.e., starts, turns, and compliance with stroke rules)?
7. Most coaches have a Club/Team newsletter (or contribute to one published by the Club). Have you ever considered how you put your views out to the public; for example, why should you not use "I", "me", or "mine" when talking about your Club/Team objectives or events?
8. What are the lines of communication to each of your Club officers? What types of information do you expect to obtain from each, and what do they expect from you?
  - (a) President
  - (b) Secretary
  - (c) Treasurer
  - (d) Registrations or Competitions Officer
9. How do you create a positive relationship with the local schools?
10. When and how do you maintain contact with your State: (a) Swimming Association, and (b) branch of ASCA? Have you ever turned to these organisations for support on an issue (and if so, do you think their response was influenced by your relationship with them)?
11. When was the last time you circulated copies of an informative article to: (a) parents, (b) members of your staff (i.e., assistant coaches or learn-to-swim teachers), and (c) support personnel working with your program (i.e., physio, doctor, or sport scientist)?
12. When you address parents or Club functions, do you take on the "hard issues" such as drugs in sport (this includes the use of recreational drugs and alcohol), training attendance, Club loyalty, etc.?
13. Does your Club/Team have one or more 'parent support' group(s); such as a fund raising committee, social committee, coach's help group (i.e., when the coach needs timers and recorders for specific training sessions, etc.)? How many such groups would benefit your program (make a list)?
14. How do you recognise, support, and reward the people in the Club who support you and your program?
15. How many different methods do you use to ensure that Club officials and parents are well informed and up-to-date on your squad's goals and activities?
16. In your own words explain the following statement, "Although it's optional to commit to joining an elite squad, it's compulsory to attend training sessions".
17. What do you do to enhance the environment of your pool (i.e., so that each time someone walks through the door/gate they feel comfortable: (a) for swimmers (something to appeal to juniors and/or seniors)? (b) parents ? (c) other members of the public ?
18. Do you have a 'job description' or 'duty statement' for your Club/Team Manager? What about other Club officers or positions? ●

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## Nations with WSCA Members (Individual members from these nations are members of WSCA)

Antigua, Australia, Argentina, Barbados, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Iceland, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Philippines, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, St. Lucia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America.