

Newsletter

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WSCA membership NOW FREE

At the September 2009 WSCA Board meeting, the Board of Directors decided to waive the membership fees for all individual members. As such, WSCA membership is now free. If you or someone you would know would like to become a WSCA member, they can do so by:

-completing the online membership form

<http://www.swimmingcoach.org/wsca/wscamemapp.asp>

or

-sending the following information to Matt Hooper at
mhooper@swimmingcoach.org:

- name (first & last/surname)
- email address
- postal mailing address
- swimming club/team

-WSCA

World Swimming Coaches Association

5101 NW 21st Ave., Suite 200

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Fax: 1-954-563-9813

www.swimmingcoach.org/wsca



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More on Swimsuits

By John Leonard, posted 1/6/2010

Now that 1/1/2010 has come and gone, we are on the new swimsuit rule from FINA, which is, simply put, Textile materials only, and suit silhouette is navel to knees for men, and upper body (nothing over the shoulder but straps) to knees for women. Essentially, we're wearing jammer length suits once again.

A miniscule number of highly respected coaches (I only know of one, personally) are continuing to push that we go back to FINA and demand that we go to brief suits for men and remove the leg covering in women as well. This based on the FINA rule (also pushed through from USA Swimming in July 2010, and not existing prior to that, as it relates to swimsuits) that we ban anything that "may" aid speed and buoyancy. Well, suits over the legs "may" aid buoyancy and speed....so does suits over the torso, so if you follow that line of reasoning, our suits better get a "lot" smaller. Be careful what you ask for....

It is worth a review from a person who was involved at every live step of this fight in July, 2008, of what went down, and how, and why. Then its worth understanding what is at stake. I shall provide both hereafter.

In Nov. 2008, USA Swimming, driven by its coach led International Relations Committee, submitted legislation to FINA to insert the phrase "and swimwear" into the rule that discusses "may aid" etc. etc. etc. Without this insertion, there was no philosophical basis for changing FINA's existing set of non-rules about suits. USA-Swimming also submitted legislation restricting the suits to textiles and a shape that would mean suits "to the hips" in women and men....ie..briefs.

That legislation was before the Congress in Rome.

On Thursday, the Swimming Congress approved, by an overwhelming margin, the inclusion of the phrase "and swimsuits" into the rulebook. This set the stage.

On Thursday evening, in an effort to understand the issues involved, FINA Executive Director Cornel Marculescu met with the head coaches of seven leading nations in the competitive swimming world, and myself. The discussion revolved around where we wanted the legislation to go the next day. All coaches supported the USA-proposal, with the modification that the length of the suits come to the knees....essentially jammers for men, and legs of similar length for the women. This modification was proposed by Coach Alan Thompson of Australia, and supported by every coach in the room.

On Friday morning in the General Congress, Mark Schubert, speaking for the USA, modified the existing USA proposal, (which was for briefs) in accordance with the agreement from the night before of the world's coaches. The vote in favor of this Legislation was overwhelming, in opposition to the Bureau position, and that of the Executive of FINA.

Hence we arrived where we are today.

In the meantime, a few manufacturers have continued to insist that this is "an error" (whatever that means) and they want FINA to override the Congress decision and return to the plastic bag suits of full length.

To the Eternal Credit of new FINA President Julio Magli-
one, he is on written record as stating that the decision
of the Congress is the ultimate authority of FINA and no
further changes will take place until the next Congress, if
then proposed and voted for. Executive Director Cornel
Marculescu has made similar statements. This is wholly and
completely compatible with the FINA Constitution.

We should all be very grateful that our President and our
Executive Director accept the rule of law and constitution,
and we have a democracy in FINA.

Calls for coaches to now go back and disrespect the deci-
sions of its most significant group of national team coaches
and the entire FINA Congress, and demand briefs, to-
tally miss the point. Which is, we should all want the FINA
Congress to be the ultimate authority within FINA, as the
Constitution states, and the President has reinforced with
his comments.

The alternative would be for a much smaller group, the
Bureau, to be able to overturn a decision of the entire
Congress, on a motion from within themselves. Of such
movements is a totalitarian governance structure created.

Good governance is good governance. No Coach should
be wishing to overturn good governance when it results in
a decision they do not agree with. To insist otherwise, is
to become the bad governance model that so many of us
have accused FINA of being, for so long.

IF there is a problem with Jammers, and a poor decision
was made in Rome, we will have opportunity to correct it
at the next FINA Congress in three years. Meanwhile our
athletes know what they will be wearing for most of a
whole Olympiad.

Personally, since Jammers have been used in competition
since approximately 1982, with no great surge in records
until the advent of full body suits and plastic bag suits, I
have serious doubts that there are any real concerns with
suits to the knees being significantly performance enhanc-
ing. At least, no more than women covering their chests
with their suits. I don't think we'll tackle that one, either.

Thank you Mr. President and Mr. Executive Director.



John Leonard

**18th ascta/Swimming Australia
Convention & Expo
(Australia Swimming Coaches &
Teachers Association (ascta)
annual clinic)
Gold Coast, QLD Australia (Sofitel Gold
Coast)
April 27-May 4, 2010**

**Information available from the ascta
www.clubsonline.com.au**

**DSTV Clinic 2010
[German Swimming Coaches
Association (DSTV) annual clinic]
Weiskirchen, Saarland, Germany
April 30- May 2, 2010**

**Information available
[in German] from DSTV.
www.dstv-online.de**

**WSCA Gold Medal Clinic 2010
[held in conjunction with the 2010
ASCA World Clinic]
Indianapolis, IN, USA
(Westin Indianapolis)
August 30-September 5, 2010**

**Further information available online
here
www.swimmingcoach.org**

**CSCTA National Conference 2010
(Canadian Swimming Coaches &
Teachers Association (CSCTA)
inaugural clinic)
Whistler, BC, Canada
September 9-12, 2010**

What makes a good sports politician?

By Hanne Sejer

Deputy Chief Executive, Sport Event Denmark

Bidding for events is not the only type of campaigns that are seen in the international sports world – personal campaigns are becoming much more prominent as individuals run for key political positions on the executive boards of international sports organizations.

As the world of international sport, and the bidding industry in particular, becomes more developed, having a national representative on the international governing body has become of great advantage during a bid. Simply having a representative, however, is not enough, the advantage only exists if that representative can play the role of a true politician. What should a national federation be looking for as it selects a candidate to put forward for international election?

Choosing the right candidate for the job

Love of the sport was once enough for anyone sitting on the board of a federation, but politics has always been present in sports federations, and is now increasing as the bidding industry becomes more professional. Some of the characteristics that are needed to be an effective politician are the same characteristics that should be present in an individual who is taking on a political role within an international federation.

- The candidate should know how to listen. Listen for all of the untold desires of the other members of the board. What is it that the federation as a whole is looking to achieve, but also what is it that each individual on the board is looking to achieve. It is not enough to rely on old 'friendships' and amicable relations – a true understanding of each of the other board members' underlying objectives for the sport, for their country, or for their own personal goals is important.

The candidate should know how to engage in dialogue. Building support for a bid campaign is done mainly through one-on-one conversations. When people are going to vote or make important decisions they want to discuss ideas and to express their own valid concerns. They want to be able to share these thoughts and not simply be lectured to by someone who is obviously in support of one bid over another.

Some of the characteristics that are needed to be an effective politician are the same characteristics that should be present in an individual who is taking on a political role within an international federation.

- The candidate should know how to compromise. Demanding all or nothing may seem like a good strategy, but it's almost guaranteed to have you pushed to the sidelines when it comes down to the vote. A good representative will be able to make compromises and ensure that the outcome is always a win-win situation for all.
- The candidate should know how to persuade. The merits of a bid may seem obvious to the bidding committee but they may not be to the others. It takes a lot of work to build support. A strong representative shouldn't be afraid to lobby for their ideas, while also balancing their role on the board as a whole.

It takes time to not only find the right candidate, but also to succeed in getting that candidate elected as well as getting them to be in a position of influence. This, again, underlines the importance of getting a good politician on board – as with the right skills he/she will be able to create relationships and be in a position to influence colleagues much quicker.



World Clinic 2010

and the WSCA Gold Medal Clinic

Indianapolis, IN
August 30 - September 5, 2010

Monday, August 30

Dryland Training *Jeremy Heffner, M.Ed, University of Georgia*
 How to Write Workouts *Guy Edson*
 Masters School - Level 1, Part 1 *Jim Halstead, USMS*
 Age Group Sports Psychology *John Leonard*

Tuesday, August 31

Level 1 - Foundations of Coaching *USA Swimming Staff*
 Level 2 - The Stroke School *Ira Klein*
 Level 3 - The Physiology School *Michael Lawrence, Lake Forest Swim Club*
 Level 4 - The Administration School *Jennifer and David Gibson, BEST Swim Club*
 Level 5 - The Leadership School *John Leonard*
 CSCAA - Coaches Education Program *TBA*
 Certified Aquatic Administrator Course *Robert Clayton*
 Masters School - Level 1, Part 2 *Jim Halstead, USMS*
 Coaching Effectiveness, Part 1 *The Pacific Institute Group*
 Instructors Course for Levels 1-2 *John Leonard*
 USA-Swimming Steering Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 1

Breakfast with a Legend - Sign-up Bonus *Sponsored by INDIANA SWIMMING*
 ASCA Board Meeting
 YMCA Coaches' Meeting
 CSCAA Annual Meeting And Program
 Coaching Effectiveness, Part 2 *The Pacific Institute Group*
Gold Medal Clinic
 The Preparation of Ariana Kukors for the Rome 200 IM World Record *Sean Hutchison*
 The Preparation of Liam Tancock 50 Back World Record *Ben Titley, The United Kingdom*
Age Group Track
 Coaching Ten-Year-Olds *Bryan Dedeaux, Mission Viejo*
 Thriving in a Small Market: Making Your Club Special *Jan Mittermeyer, TNT Swimming*
 Developing Age Group Swimmers into Productive Sr. Swimmers *Coley Stickels, Lake Oswego*
Other Talks
 "Ballet for Swimmers" for Increasing Body Awareness and Rhythm *Dr. Monika Schloder*
 "Building a Championship Club" *Ian Pope, Australia*
 "What It Takes to Make It As A Leading Coach" *Ian Pope, Australia*
 Gold Medal Talk - The Training of Cesar Cielo *Brett Hawke, Auburn*
 Welcome Party and Opening of the Exhibit Hall

Thursday, Sept. 2

Gold Medal Clinic
 The Training of Kirsty Coventry *Kim Brackin*
 The Training of Federica Pellegrini *Dr. Marco Bonifazi, Italy*
 The Training of Alessia Filippi *Cesare Butini, Italy*
 GOLD IN THE WATER - How Your Masters Swim Team Can Support Your Age Group Program
David Marsh/ Patty Waldron, Mecklenburg

Age Group - Technique Day

Teaching Freestyle & Backstroke *Coach Bryan Dedeaux, MVN*
 Teaching Freestyle & Backstroke Turns *Jan Mittermeyer, TNT Swimming*
 Teaching Breaststroke & Butterfly *Coley Stickels, Lake Oswego*
 Teaching Breaststroke & Butterfly Turns *Nancy Hennessy, Gator Swim Club*
 Teaching Starts for All Strokes *Nancy Hennessy, Gator Swim Club*
 Learning HOW to Teach *John Leonard*

FELLOWS REUNION LUNCHEON: FELLOWS AND INVITED GUESTS ONLY

Other Topics
 "Getting the Club Job You Want and Succeeding At It" *Guy Edson*
 "Getting the University Job You Want and Succeeding At It" *Bob Groseth/Tim Welsh*
 Swimming Anatomy, Part 1 *Ian McLeod*
 "Body Language in Coaching" - A Tool for Effective Communication *Dr. Monika Schloder*
 Sport Massage *Liz Weidling*
 Success Tools for the Swimming Coach *Ira Klein*
 Discussion Groups
 Indiana Swimming Coaches Seminar

Friday, Sept. 3

ASCA Business Meeting
 ASCA Board Meeting
 World Swimming Coaches Association Board Meeting - by invitation only
Gold Medal Clinic
 The Training of Britta Steffen *Norbert Warnatzsch, Germany*
 The Preparation of Ryan Lochte *Gregg Troy, USA*
 The Preparation of Gemma Spofforth *Martyn Wilby, UK*
High School and CSCAA Tracks
 HS - Attitude and Motivation *Lanny Landtroop*
 HS - Seasons from Hell... Dealing with Adversity *Mel Roberts*
 HS - Dryland Training: Bare Bones *Larry Stoebauer*
 CSCAA - Training and Recovery *Kristina Paltell*
 CSCAA - Team Dynamics *Teri McKeever/Kathie Wickstrand Gahen*
 CSCAA - Achieving Excellence *Gregg Parini*
 CSCAA - Success with Once a Day Practices *Joel Shinofield*
 CSCAA - Yoga/Massage *Kristina Paltell*
 CSCAA - Panel Discussion: Out of Water Training *Coaches McKeever, Brackin, & Bauerle*
 HS - A One-Person Coaching Staff of Thousands *Dana Abbott*
 HS - From Low and No-Background to Peak Racing Form in 12 Weeks *Brad Burget*
 HS - Maximizing Time, Space and Personnel *Dick Shoulberg*
Other Topics
 From Beginning Swimming to the Olympic Trials.... A Process *Jim Voss*
 How to Grow an Age Group Program, Part 1 *Leigh Robbins*
 Swimming Anatomy, Part 2 *Ian McLeod*
 Athletic Telemetry for Fast-Forwarding Performance *Scott Hedges, AvidaSports*
 How to Grow an Age Group Program, Part 2 *Leigh Robbins*
 The First Gold Medal Achievement Club in Indiana *Chris Plumb*
 ASCA Annual Awards Banquet

Saturday, Sept. 4

Gold Medal Clinic
 The Preparation of Brenton Rickard (100 Breast, Rome Gold) *Coach Vince Raleigh, Australia*
 The Preparation of Rebecca Soni (100 Breast, Rome Gold), Ous Mellouli
 (1500 Free, Rome Gold) and Katinka Hosszu (400 IM, Rome Gold) *Coach David Salo*
 The Preparation of Lotte Friis (800 Free, Rome Gold) *Coach Paulus Wildeboer, Denmark*
 The Counsilman Lecture *Mr. Steven Farr and Ms. Andrea Stouder Pursley from Teach for America*

Age Group Track

The Oakland Program-Diversity Personified *Ben Sheppard*
 What USA-Swimming Can Do to Help You with Diversity on Your Team *Ben Sheppard*
 TBA

CSCAA and High School Track

CSCAA - Stroke Analysis *Genadijus Sokolovas*
 CSCAA - Fundraising ... a Yearly Template, Part 1 *Terry Warner/Chuck Warner*
 CSCAA - Fundraising ... a Yearly Template, Part 2 *Terry Warner/Chuck Warner*
 HS - True Colors, Part 1 *Jeff Lowell*
 HS - True Colors, Part 2 *Jeff Lowell*
 HS - Training Sprinters: A 30-Year Perspective *Dick Shoulberg*
 HS - Shoulders 101 *Larry Stoebauer*
 HS - Modern Day X-Factor *Lanny Landtroop*
 HS - Building an Inner City High School Program - Part 2 *Chris Van Slooten*
 CSCAA - Teaching Stroke Changes, When and How *Panel*
 CSCAA - The Assistant Coach at a Major Program *Panel*
 SwimAmerica Conference - (open to all as part of the Clinic)
 USA-Swimming "Build A Pool?" Track - Separate fee required
 see USA Swimming Site to register
 (www.usaswimming.org) *Mick Nelson, Sue Nelson & John McClargy*
SPEEDO SWIMMERS CLINIC
 Pacific Institute Class for Swimmers

Sunday, Sept. 5

World Class Beginnings *John Leonard*
 Personal Organization for Swimming Coaches *Guy Edson*
 Certified Stroke Technician Class for Learn to Swim Instructors *Steve Fenning*
 Pacific Institute Class for Swimmers
 YMCA Principles of Competitive Swimming and Diving Course *Meredith Griffin*
 SwimAmerica Program Director/Site Supervisor Training *Call Julie 1-800-356-2722 to sign up*



ALL registering (USA) coaches will receive a free *Swimming World* subscription for one year.



Registration

ASCA World Clinic 2010 and the WSCA Gold Medal Clinic

Registration (please choose one):

	February 1 - April 30	May 1 - July 31	August 1 (ON-SITE)
<input type="radio"/> Current ASCA Member Clinic Registration	\$330	\$380	\$400
<input type="radio"/> New / Renew US Member Clinic Registration	\$400	\$450	\$470
<input type="radio"/> New / Renew International Member Clinic Registration	\$430	\$480	\$500
<input type="radio"/> Current Life Plus Member	FREE Clinic Registration		
<input type="radio"/> New Life Plus US Member	\$1500		
<input type="radio"/> New Life Plus International Member	\$2000		

Life Plus Membership Benefits: Free registration to all ASCA World Clinics and associated Certification Levels 1-5 School, plus Annual Awards Banquet and a World Clinic Yearbook. (This will average out to be valued at over \$300 a year.) Plus other benefits.

Additional Educational Opportunities Pre- & Post World Clinic

School	Date & Time	Speaker	Cost
<input type="radio"/> Dryland Training	Mon. 8/30: 1-5pm	Jeremy Heffner	\$50
<input type="radio"/> How to Write Workouts	Mon. 8/30: 1-5pm	Guy Edson	\$50
<input type="radio"/> Masters School - Level 1, Parts 1 and 2	Mon. 8/30 & Tues. 8/31	Jim Halstead	\$70
<input type="radio"/> Age Group Sports Psychology	Mon. 8/30: 1-5pm	John Leonard	\$50
<input type="radio"/> Level 1 - Foundations of Coaching	Tues. 8/31: Full Day	USA Swimming Staff	\$70
<input type="radio"/> Level 2 - The Stroke School	Tues. 8/31: Full Day	Ira Klein	\$70
<input type="radio"/> Level 3 - The Physiology School	Tues. 8/31: Full Day	Michael Lawrence	\$70
<input type="radio"/> Level 4 - The Administration School	Tues. 8/31: Full Day	Jennifer & David Gibson	\$70
<input type="radio"/> Level 5 - The Leadership School	Tues. 8/31: Full Day	John Leonard	\$70
<input type="radio"/> Certified Aquatic Administrator (CAA)	Tues. 8/31: Full Day	Robert Clayton	Register separately
<i>Register directly with Robert Clayton at rclayton41244@msn.com 970-493-4124</i>			
<input type="radio"/> Coaching Effectiveness, Parts 1 and 2	Tues. 8/31 & Wed. 9/1	The Pacific Institute Group	\$70
<input type="radio"/> Instructors Course for Levels 1-2	Tues. 8/31: 7-9pm	John Leonard	\$50
<input type="radio"/> "Build a Pool for Your Team" Conference	Sat. 9/4: 8am-5pm	USA-Swimming	Register separately
<input type="radio"/> SwimAmerica Conference	Sat. 9/4: 9am-5pm		No cost
<input type="radio"/> Pacific Institute Class for Swimmers	Sat. 9/4: 9am-1pm	The Pacific Institute Group	\$50
<input type="radio"/> Pacific Institute Class for Swimmers	Sun. 9/5: 9am-1pm	The Pacific Institute Group	\$50
<input type="radio"/> World Class Beginnings	Sun. 9/5: 8am-12noon	John Leonard	\$50
<input type="radio"/> Personal Organization for Coaches	Sun. 9/5: 8am-12noon	Guy Edson	\$50
<input type="radio"/> Certified Stroke Technician Class for Learn to Swim Instructors	Sun. 9/5: 8am-12noon	Steve Fenning	\$50
<input type="radio"/> YMCA Principles of Competitive Swimming and Diving Course	Sun. 9/5: 12noon-5pm	Meredith Griffin	\$50
<input type="radio"/> SwimAmerica Program Director/Site Supervisor Training	Sun. 9/5: 9am-3pm	Call Julie 1-800-356-2722 to sign up	

2010 World Clinic Yearbook – The Solution for Keeping Up with Your Profession

Choose option: Book Only - \$20 CD Only - \$20 Book and CD - \$30

Publication in February 2011. \$10 shipping will be added to any international order.

After the Clinic, the price of the World Clinic Yearbook increases to \$30 for book or CD only and \$45 for book and CD.

Mail form to **The American Swimming Coaches Association, 5101 NW 21st Ave., Suite 200, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309**

or fax to 954-563-9813. To register by phone call **1-800-356-2722** or **954-563-4930**. To register online go to **www.swimmingcoach.org**.

Hotel information: **The Westin Indianapolis, 50 South Capitol Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204** Phone: **317-262-8100** Single or Double: **\$111.00**

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CANCELLATIONS: The ASCA cannot issue refunds or credits for any cancellations. **TERMS & POLICIES:** (a) The ASCA reserves the right to cancel, reschedule, or substitute speakers for particular events, activities or sessions. (b) The ASCA may record or photograph portions of the convention for sale and distribution. By registering, individuals agree that the ASCA may photograph or record by audio/video their attendance and involvement in program discussions. Furthermore, individuals agree that the ASCA may use these photographs and/or video for promotional purposes. Only the ASCA may electronically record any portion of the convention. (c) Registrants agree to refrain from marketing products and services during the convention except as part of a booth in the Exhibit Hall. (d) Registrants agree to turn off their cell phones/pagers (or keep on vibrate) during all convention sessions. (e) The ASCA does not endorse any speaker's or exhibitor's products or services.

Selecting a coach or a swim teacher?

Thoughts by Peter Ruddock – Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association – Gold Licence

These points are presented as a means of giving parents/clubs/coaches food for thought when looking at employing swimming staff.

Have we got it right?

Today we see many advertisements for swim teachers and swim coaches. As a general rule candidates apply for the position, they are appointed and away they go. Often when teachers / coaches begins work they are given a group of children and left to the own devices to “sink or swim”.

What they need is someone to oversee their work, to have weekly staff meetings and to have a structured in-service program. Many would benefit from having someone coordinate their work and help them develop sound teaching strategies that are consistent among all other staff. Among the professional development program that should be part of the coaches/teachers development is attending the National and State Conferences where one can hear the best in the land and network with the best in the business

In other sports (namely football) inexperienced coaches don't last and if they do they have very little success. Is it time that all swimming coaches/teachers are given an apprenticeship to help them become more professional? Could it be that those with the right apprenticeship have a greater chance of being successful?

Coaching Director Is it time that we employed a senior teacher/coach to be the Director of the Swimming club? The senior person could assist the new staff, oversee the operation of the organisation, help evaluate and run in house training.

Among the areas we should consider when looking at appointing someone .

Police check .Has the person had a police check?

Professional Development. Will the person been attending regular professional development?

Staff meetings Will the coach conduct/attend regular staff meetings?

Qualifications. Is it time we stopped employing people with no training and placing so many good talented children at risk by not teaching/coaching them in the correct way. There

are National Teaching and Coaching courses and all new staff should be only employed if they are qualified.

Have we checked to see if the coach/teacher is qualified, and are they licenced by the controlling body of swimming?

Is the coach/teacher insured?

Selection Panel When selecting the coach /teacher the club must look carefully at who is on the panel. It should not be just club officials .Other areas to consider are –
Does the selection panel include an experience coach?
Do we interview the candidates?
What questions are asked?
What process should be undertaken to select a teacher / coach?

Against what criteria do you measure candidates?
How do you assess the teacher /coach?

Role Will the coach /teacher only work independently at their level of competency? If not do they work under someone trained and qualified at a higher level?

Evaluation Do we evaluate and appraise the coach/teacher on a regular basis to assist them with their work? Who does the evaluating? Do we set performance benchmarks for all the teachers/coaches?

Feedback Will the coaches/teachers have regular meetings with parents and swimmers?
In a school; students get reports each term, do we give swimming parents a report even once a year?

Planning Will the coach/teacher have lesson plans for the day/week/month/year?
Will the coaches/teachers have records of the stage of developments their pupils are at? For example heart rates, stroke rates, learning stages.

Contract Will we provide the coach/teacher with a contract?

Success Is it time we stopped judging success by gold medals? We cannot afford to just look after the talented swimmers and let the others sink.

Goals What are the goals of the coach in the short term / long term for the club?

Extra Activities How will the coach support the club with extra activities?

Training Versus Learning

By John Leonard

Get the strokes right FIRST instead of purposefully practicing mistakes.

Last week I was speaking to a young coach who had just taken a new job.

His specific problem was that the coach that was there before he was, had everyone "training hard" and had done a great job of selling that concept. Everyone from 8 and unders to seniors was pounding the yardage daily.

The new coach wanted to spend 6 weeks or so concentrating on skills development, because in the first few days on the job, he noticed that many of the swimmers were deficient in the types of stroke, turn and start skills that would support them as they aged into older swimmers in the program.

He'd laid out that plan to his parent group, including cutting back practices from 2 and one half hours per day to just 90 minutes for the older swimmers and 60 minutes for the middle groups and 45 minutes for the youngest swimmers. This, consistent with today's best advice to dedicate oneself to "purposeful practice" of new skills if you hoped for optimum learning... shorter periods of intense concentration, with little to interfere with the concentration process.

He immediately faced rebellion.

Moms and a few Dads, called him to complain that important swim meets were coming up and their little darling needed to "train" in order to be successful. Interestingly, more than 70% of the calls came from the parents of younger children. The coach asked my advice on how to educate the parents on this issue.

Here's my answer.

Long practices, with high training volumes will make all swimmers VERY good at what they are doing. Repetition builds habit. Habit stands up beautifully under the pressure of competition... when in fact, nothing else does... as the pain of competition effort removes all traces of thought from the brain...it becomes habit that the swimmer relies upon to get him home to the finish.

Unfortunately, if they are practicing poor technique, that will be learned and habituated, just as well as good technique. And poor technique makes you biomechanically inefficient at the time of greatest stress. Hence you struggle more, go slower and your stroke collapses at the end of races.

This makes swimming a technique limited sport. Your child will be severely limited by the degree with which they can perform the strokes with good habits, instead of poor habits.

Lots of training with poor habits will make a very poor swimmer. A little training with good habits, will result in a good swimmer and one that is "unlimited" in their future.

Which one do you want for your child?

HINT: Get the strokes right FIRST instead of purposefully practicing mistakes. All the Best for Great Swimming Experiences!



John Leonard