

The World Swimming Coaches Association Newsletter

Vol 12 Issue 1

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IN PURSUIT OF COACHING EXCELLENCE

*By John Holden, Club Coach
to The University of E-Anglia UK*

Dictionary definitions will summarise that a coach is either a four-wheeled vehicle that transports passengers or someone who teaches, instructs or trains. Therefore, there is no difference between coaching and teaching if we adhere to the dictionaries. However, others feel that there is a distinct dichotomy between the two.

There are performance personnel who prepare athletes for competitions and others who enable swimmers to initially survive in water and subsequently help them to become safer, more skilful and gain more fitness which enables them to enjoy swimming all the more. The former have been traditionally called coaches and the latter teachers. In either case, they both teach, instruct or train, so the whole rigmarole of the differential argument has now turned full circle again which means that the principles of the traditional dichotomy of teaching and coaching values are one and the same in our pursuit for coaching excellence.

As Shakespeare says, "what's in a name?" and whether we like it or not, we are still being referred to as swimming instructors by employers and the general public in the same way as scout leaders are still scout masters and headteachers are still headmasters/mistresses. What matters is what we produce and

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how we coach and that leads all conscientious coaches to pursue this excellence, irrespective if they teach, train or instruct.

Therefore, where do we get this excellence from? Your starting point is your next session/lesson which has to be more than just the normal session. Innovation plays a key role and that is combined with imagination, differentiation and evaluation; rather than sticking rigidly to set text book dogma. To illustrate, it was said that Denis Law asked Bill Shankly* about doing a coaching course. Shankly told him to go to Lilleshall, do an FA coaching course, come back, do the complete opposite and he would have a successful team!

I am not advocating for one moment that coaches should 'do the opposite' but I suspect Shankly was saying a lot more in that the course was only a basis and that coaching had to be innovative. This can take a number of forms in the way the schedule/lesson is planned, the way the swimmers take ownership for their practice, what is included and the style and form in which the work is delivered. I am sure all coaches believe in variety of practice but some times when I watch sessions it seems to be a variation on the same old format. A coach must be able to "read" his charges well. That way he can 'cut his cloth according to its width' and with imagination and differentiation, (s)he is able to capture the confidence of the group and deliver quality coaching.

Shankly also told his Liverpool players that if the ball comes into the box, they were to stick it in the back of the net and he would discuss the options with them later! The lesson here is for the coach to remember what (s)he is on the pool side for and not to over complicate matters. Swimmers have to have complete focus as to what their aims and objectives are. This can range from achieving the next award through to achieving a qualifying time. Therefore, goal setting is very important and should be incorporated into each individual lesson/session on the way to achieving the next level. This way the lessons/sessions are challenging and have a direct purpose.

Differentiation plays a major role in each session; even if it is deemed that the swimmers are in a set squad or lesson of a compatible standard, group work and lane work are a huge benefit to the individuals. To illustrate, when planning a schedule for the University of East Anglia Club, it would appear they are competent swimmers at the outset. So does one schedule makes sense? I could use the one but I get better improvement by planning three different schedules for three different abilities. I am also able to pitch innovative and challenging work, give appropriate feedback to individuals and be more alert to individual needs. This in turn enhances performance and enjoyment. Although a focus on performance is essential there is word of caution.

There is a danger that focusing only on performance may undervalue the interpersonal relationship and its contribution to individual growth(Cross, Lyle et al 2003)

It is here that we must examine our coaching philosophy and the fundamental question is why am I coaching? Is it to serve my needs or serve the needs of my charges? A starting point may include the way you welcome your swimmers when they arrive on the pool side and it does not have to be a verbal greeting. Your appearance must be smart and looking the part. Unfortunately some coaches I have seen dress as though they are just about to go to the beach and psychologically this can conjure up a feeling of laaissez-faire On the philosophy of “welcoming,” I do not mean that you have to be over-friendly but equally the idea is to make sure you speak to everyone in your squad/class at least once during your session/ lesson and listen to the student voice. You must allow the student voice to play a part in your own evaluation of your performance and future planning and we are not looking for variables which are complex. We just need to “stick the ball into the back of the net.” It may just be a simple question such as “How did Lo-Li find the

repeat time on the 100s?” By putting all this into practise you are well on the way in your pursuit for coaching excellence.

Good coaches seek constant improvement in their search for personal excellence. They have an open mind and an insatiable thirst for knowledge.(NCF 1998)

The quest for knowledge, no matter at what level you coach or whom you coach, is vital and this is where continuous professional development is essential. Watching other coaches, attending seminars, reading relevant information, trying new ideas, using one’s imagination and evaluating, enhances coaching effectiveness and performance in the pursuit of coaching excellence. •

References

Cross, Lyle et al The Coaching Process Butterworth/Heineman 2003

National Coaching Foudnation Analysing Your Coaching NCF Leeds 1998

* The late Bill Shankly was the manager of Liverpool FC



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	March 1 - June 30	July 1 - August 15	August 15 - On site
<input type="checkbox"/> Current ASCA Member Clinic Registration	\$350	\$450	\$500
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<input type="checkbox"/> New/Renew International Member Clinic Registration	\$450	\$550	\$600
<input type="checkbox"/> New Life US Member Clinic Registration	\$950	\$1050	\$1100
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Additional Educational Opportunities Pre and Post Clinic at Additional Cost

Certified Aquatic Administrator: Monday, 9/3 (8am-5pm) — Robert Clayton (<i>register directly with instructor pre-clinic</i>)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Coaching in College (CSCAA Course): Tuesday, 9/4 (8am-5pm) — Bill Wadley			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Dryland Training: Tuesday, 9/4 (9am-5pm) — Vern Gambetta with Nick Folker			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> How to Write Workouts: Tuesday, 9/4 (8am-12noon) — Guy Edson			\$40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Working Successfully with Swimming Parents: Tuesday, 9/4 (1pm-5pm) — John Leonard			\$40.00
Certified Pool Operator: Tuesday, 9/4 (8am-5pm) — Deborah Swanson (<i>register directly with instructor pre-clinic</i>)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 – The Stroke School: Wednesday, 9/5 (8am-5pm) — Ad'm Dusenbury			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 – The Physiology of Training School: Wednesday, 9/5 (8am-5pm) — Peter Banks			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Level 4 – The Leadership School: Wednesday, 9/5 (8am-5pm) — Pat Hogan			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Level 5 – The Administration School: Wednesday, 9/5 (8am-5pm) — KathyMcKee and other MAC Coaches			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> SwimAmerica Conference: Wednesday, 9/5 (9am-5pm) — John Coutts		\$300 prior to 6/1 (\$400 after 6/1)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Advanced Starts and Turns: Wednesday, 9/5 (8am-12noon) — Steve Haufler			\$40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Character and Life Skills in a Swim Team Environment: Wednesday, 9/5 (1pm-5pm) — Ron and Don Heidary			\$40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Masters Level 1 School: Friday, 9/7 (8am-12noon)			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Masters Level 2 School: Friday, 9/7 (1pm-5pm)			\$70.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Take both Masters Level 1 and Masters Level 2 and SAVE: Friday, 9/7 (see above)			\$120.00
USA Swimming Saving Pools Saves Lives workshop: Friday, 9/7 (8am-5:30pm) — (<i>register with USA Swimming, pre-clinic</i>)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Making the Best College Choice for Each Swimmer: Saturday, 9/8 (1pm-3pm) — Chuck Warner			\$40.00 / per family
USA Swimming Build-A-Pool workshop: Saturday, 9/8 (8am-5:30pm) & Sunday, 9/8 (8am-12noon) — (<i>register with USA Swimming, pre-clinic</i>)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Stroke Technician Course: Sunday, 9/9 (8am-12noon) — Lori Klatt			\$40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Securing the Right Coaching Job and Succeeding at it: Sunday, 9/9 (8am-12noon) — Guy Edson			\$40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Swim Meet Coaching: Sunday, 9/9 (8am-12noon) — John Leonard			\$40.00
SwimAmerica Program Director / Site Supervisor training: Sunday, 9/9 (8am-12noon) — (<i>to register contact Julie Nitti, jnitti@swimamerica.org</i>)			

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Flying the flag takes on a new meaning in sport

The complex question of athletes who perform for their national team, having been 'adopted' by a country other than their country of birth, was once again brought into question during last month's World Championships in Athletics in Helsinki. Understandably the whole of the tiny Kingdom of Bahrain joyously celebrated the impressive performances of Rashid Ramzi, winning gold medals in both the 1500 metres and 800 metres. A remarkable feat for any athlete, but for an athlete from a country with a population of less than 700,000 made this feat considerably more impressive and attracted the attention of the world's media. But 25 year old Rashid was not born in Bahrain but in Morocco, which naturally caused all the cynics to yet again question the ability of another immensely talented athlete to wear the red and white vest of his adopted nation.

The fact is that Ramzi arrived in Bahrain with his parents at the age of 14, when his parents moved to the little Kingdom in search of work and a better life. As a talented schoolboy athlete, the Bahraini Athletics Association took young Ramzi under their wing and can be rightly credited with developing the talents of this new double World Champion in Athletics and earning the rightful plaudits of a whole nation.

The reason that the world's media once again raise the question of this athlete's nationality is because increasingly sport plays a greater role in the perception and development of a country's position in the world and the way that it promotes itself. Sport is big news and sport is big business. Bahrain, along with many forward thinking nations, has realised the role that

sport can play and has developed its sporting infrastructure accordingly to enable its athletes and sportsmen and women to compete equally with much larger nations on the world stage.

An end to the 're-badging' of athletes?

Athletics or Track & Field has received a great deal of media coverage on the exodus of African runners who suddenly re-appear under the flag of another nation. The pre-eminence of African long distance runners has meant that aspiring nations have been keen to 'adopt' them and to 're-badge' them as their own. Quite correctly the IAAF, the sport's governing body, passed a new resolution at its Congress in August that forbids any athlete to compete for his new nation for 3 years following his acceptance by that country of his citizenship. This will hopefully stop the commercially minded 're-badging' that has been happening in the past in some countries. Countries like Bahrain have always looked to develop their athletes, rather than re-badge existing talent. The new double World Champion is a good example of this.

Athletics has suffered more than most in adverse publicity (most of which has been grossly unfair) in this area, yet such activities have been prevalent in many sports for decades.

A long history of changing nationalities

Let's just look at the individual sports for a moment. How many times has Martina Navratilova represented the USA or Monica Seles for that matter? Is it right that Canadian born Greg Rusedski should represent the United Kingdom in the Davis Cup? Should Italy claim

Sport is big news and sport is big business. Bahrain, along with many forward thinking nations, has realised the role that sport can play . . .

British born Fiona May's two Olympic silver medals which she won following her marriage to an Italian pole vaulter, having previously won the World Juniors and competed at the Olympics as a British citizen? Should Britain claim a World Heavyweight boxing champion in Lennox Lewis, when he grew up in Canada?

But it is in international team sports that countries are quick to 'adopt' their new chosen heroes. How many representatives of the French national football team emanated from Senegal? How many Dutch national team members hail from Surinam or the Dutch Antilles? How many New Zealand 'All Black' rugby internationals come from Western Samoa or other Pacific islands? Wasn't it fortunate for last week's Ashes winning England cricket team that Kevin Pieterse chose to play for them rather than for his native South Africa and was able to score the series winning innings for his adopted nation?

How does this affect the development of international sport?

So is this judicious use of parentage or current country of residence by national sports federations an unfair way to proceed and is it counter-productive for the development of sport throughout the world?

The Kenyan Government would say that it is wholly detrimental to the sport of athletics to have this continuous drain of talent to other emerging athletics nations. They have even threatened to ban such athletes from returning to their home country, should they change nationality. But in reality should the Kenyan government not be doing more to develop the sport within their own country, rather than punishing their home-grown talent whose only opportunity to compete on the world stage is to do so wearing the vest of another nation? Does the presence of these new stars not generate

a new momentum amongst their newly 'adopted' countrymen, in the same way as the presence of some incredibly talented South American footballers does within the big European leagues? Does this spread of the world's best not encourage and motivate the young stars of the future within their newly adopted nations? I think that you will find that every young Bahraini would die to emulate the feats of Rashid Ramzi.

The IAAF World Championships in Athletics delivers more medal-winning performances from more nations than any other sporting event on earth. This can not only be good for the development of the sport within those nations, but is also good for the development of the sport globally.

The movement of athletes from one nation to another must be controlled, as the IAAF have been so careful and sensible to do, but it cannot, nor should not be outlawed.

With the explosion of new communications technology, each year the world gets a little smaller. The job-for-life syndrome of the past century has all but disappeared in the modern world of business and a young executive not only hopes, but expects, to work in many countries during his or her career. In the world of international sport this is particularly true, so with business continually seeking to break down borders and to operate in a global village, sport must naturally follow suit.

Such an attitude is not only healthy for the development of sport and its young emerging talent from around the world, but commercially, the development of sport will more and more rely on the public sector, the very sector that is now developing and selecting this young talent to represent their national teams, no matter where they were born. •

Movie 'Watermark' A Story

By Sara Mackay – Cayman Islands

While in Buffalo recently, I saw a new movie, that was fascinating, yet you might not hear about (or get the opportunity to see, especially here!), so thought I'd share it a bit.

'Watermarks' is about a swim team in Vienna, Austria in the 1930's & re-uniting them, now in their 80's. As Hitler came to power and with the 1909 'Aryan Paragraph' in Austrian politics, sports clubs could no longer accept Jewish members.

So also in 1909, the Jews in Vienna started the Hakoah, a Jewish sports club, with a variety of sports: football, polo, and a magnificent pool (still looks like an opera house). The men's football (soccer) team went on to take the Austrian national championship in an upset 5-0 rout, and earned a trip to the U.S. Nine of the team defected and didn't return!

The swim program had a great, before-his-time coach, Zsigo Wertheimer. Most of the girls started when they were 10 yrs old. They trained hard and developed into the best swimmers in Europe. The coach sounded remarkably familiar.

The Hakoah and swimming became their mainstay, the social and purpose of life in increasingly tough times. All this is told through interviews with some wonderful old footage. Every time they showed one of the 80 yr olds, they had her name and then 'breastroker' or 'backroker'. It starts with this old lady saying, yes, I'll do it on one condition. You can't show me from behind, on dry land in a bathing suit. They become a force in European swimming. Became the team to send to the '36 Olympics in Berlin. But the biggest champion, Judith Haspel, 15 (broke 12 European records, best events the 800 and 1500m), decides not to go to Berlin, she was

so offended by signs in parks that said, 'No dogs or Jews'. Needless to say, Austrian Swimming was furious, banned her from all future competition for Austria and erased all her records (recently re-instated, with apology). Her younger sister was also a swimmer/interviewee. She talks about what enormous personal cost that was; she saw it as the bravest thing she'd ever seen, calls Judith 'the first girl to defy Hitler'.

1936 Olympics. It was known that the entire Austrian swim team was Jewish. They march in the Opening Ceremonies to boos, jeers and giant waves of hatred. Afterwards, they all ran & to a room where they hugged & cried. Pretty powerful description. They competed well, shattering Hitler's stereotypes.

Soon afterwards, the coach left, for London then the U.S. He sent back forged documents for everyone on the swim team, to get them out. They scattered in all directions around Europe, Israel, China, and the U.S. Many were on an illegal boat when word came, war is declared. They escaped just in time. The Germans took over the pool and ban Jews. The coach did a newsletter for years, keeping them in touch. He died in 1965.

Now the seven women are in their 80's, and this filmmaker decides to invite them back to Austria to swim together again. Six of the 7 come. They all built good lives, one is blind, one is a psychologist who worked with Freud, one a sociology professor in NJ, from LA and London. Only one returned to Vienna to live, then left again when Kurt Waldheim was elected.

Afterward, my strongest thought was: our coaches would do that. •

The Passing of H.G. “Tubby” Lynn South Africa

Dear Anne,

Tubby was always so vibrant in all the conversations we have had over the years either via email or personally. He has been a special mentor to me over the past 20 years, challenging my thinking, and that of other swimming coaches. And he has done this for hundreds of people in his life. The measure of his contribution to others will be the memorials that come back to you, telling you how your father helped us all. When someone departs this life, he or she is measured by their real contributions to others. Your father was a champion amongst champions in this realm!

Go with grace Tubby. The swimming coaches you have influenced with your thoughts, questions and advice will keep your name high and continue to teach to our swimmers and assistants all the lessons you have given us all throughout your career.

Larry

Hi Anne

I am sorry to hear of Tubby's passing. He spent a large portion of his life doing what he loved most. He had an unquenchable passion for swimming, read all he could, enjoyed coaching and loved to communicate his knowledge to swimmers, coaches, media men, scientists and anyone else with the remotest interest in swimming. He will be sorely missed in the swimming world. We send our deepest condolences to you Anne, and the rest of Tubby's family.

Warm regards

Jean Nortje, North Durban Swim Academy

Thank you all for being a part of Gordon/Tubby's life and for sharing special memories with him. It is with great sadness to inform you that he passed away on Friday night. I'm sure we will all remember him for the kind and loving person that he was who gave unselfishly to others. We will miss him dearly as he has touched each of our hearts in his unique way. Details of his funeral will be in the newspapers shortly.

Regards

Anne Riley, his loving daughter.

Perspective

By John Leonard

Listening recently to a group of parents (moms, specifically) discussing the challenge of dealing with the drama that gets created by their teenage girls, much of it fueled by incomplete understanding of human interactions and artificially both “sped up” and “widespread” due to all the electronic communication tool every teenager seemingly has access to...I was struck with the “counter-points” that need to be taught to teenagers, pre-teens, young adults and related “young folk”.

Without going all “Hillary Clintonish” on you, it did strike me that it takes a combination of parents, teachers, coaches and better-informed peers to work on educating our young people on this...if not “it takes a village,” it certainly takes a good number of friends.

What would constitute some of the parental/coach “talking points” that would address the self-absorbed angst of those challenging years? Here’s my personal “short list.” Please enhance it with your own.

#1. Look at your issue within the overall context of your life. (This is called “Growing Up.”) The fact that Billy ignored you in Math Class does not mean that your life is “ruined.” Nor does Mary being mean to you in study hall rise to that level...these are MINOR distractions that you are allowing to control your emotions and your temperament. Why give ANYONE that much power over you? Don’t you want to become independent? Actually, you have a roof over your head, food to eat, your life in a great country and a family that loves you. Get some context here, people! NO BIG DEAL. Your life is actually pretty OK. (or a lot better than that.)

#2. Recognize the marvelous stuff going on around you. Appreciate your surroundings, the talented people you are with every day and take some time to “smell the flowers.” There is far more light than dark in your life. (for most of us.)

#3. Reach out to others. One of the tried and true ways to “feel better” is to help someone worse off than you are. Reach out, get your head out of your

own problems...and do something that helps someone else. It creates instant Perspective.

#4. Associate with people who are positive and upbeat. Hang around with doom and gloomers, and you’ll soon become one. Look at the good side when you can, speak only with good intent, act by doing random acts of kindness and see how quickly it is returned to you. If all you do is hang out with people complaining about something, pretty soon you’ll think that’s normal and right. It isn’t. What’s right is DOING something to fix your problems.

#5. Every problem comes with a chance for you to challenge it, and GROW. Get better, Get stronger. If it was a struggle to get food to eat, you’d soon become very creative about getting food. Stop whining and get creative about resolving your issue. Accept and learn to enjoy the challenge of life. You’ll face it every day. Better get used to it and get a good attitude.

#6. “Chop Wood, Haul Water” – the rural Chinese say that 99% of life is the mundane task..”Chop wood, haul water.” American TV shows life as an endless series of exciting, dynamic, thrilling ACTIONS. Not so. Most of life is mundane...interrupted by moments of sheer joy and sheer terror. Get used to your version of “Chop wood, haul water.” Learn to enjoy the rhythm and essence of your daily life and realize that without the mundane the special wouldn’t be so special. And having “special” all the time is NOT what it’s cracked up to be. (Witness all the unhappy and dangerously ill Hollywood starlets...who may be living very “special” lives...not a prescription for happiness is it?)

Unhappy teenager? Simplify your life. Turn off the electronic stuff once in awhile and get outside and experience the real world. Focus on what you can DO for others, not what they can do for you. Find something you love and engage in it fully.

Parents, remember, your goal is strong, independent children. Every time you do something for them that they should do for themselves, you make them weak. Give them the opportunity to grow. It’s a great gift from Parent to Child. They need psychological tools to cope with the world. My top 6 are above. Teach them your own.



John Leonard

Training Perspective... Listening to the World Today... The Concept of “Hard” Training.

By John Leonard

One of the many beauties of my job, which I very much appreciate, is the opportunity to listen to marvelous swimming coaches from all over the world who are producing today's star swimmers. If you listen long enough and wide enough, you can certainly learn enough to reach true confusion, which someone famous once said is the first stage of “enlightenment.”

While I am not claiming any degree of “enlightenment,” I can assure you that on one topic today, I am not confused at all. Swimmers are working “hard.” Perhaps harder than ever.

One of the great attractions to me in the 1970's when I first got into the sport, was the aura created by the great coaches and athletes that this was a sport for “hard workers.” Many of our best coaches, Sherm Chavoor and George Haines among them, Peter Daland and Jim Counsilman among others, who said (in one form or another) “You don't have to be a great athlete to succeed in this sport, but you do have to be hard worker.”

Coaches like Jim Montrella, Mark Schubert, Richard Quick and many others proved that in the 70's with monster workouts that could extend up into the middle 20's in mileage per practice

or per day. The Famous “Animal Lane” that Mark instituted at Mission Viejo for the milers was an epitome of that thought process. And highly successful for the individuals in it.

Then for awhile in the 80's and 90's, “hard work” went a bit “out of fashion.” We found the limits to the “more is better” approach and we went through a couple of other trends including bulking up in the strength training area and doing greatly reduced workloads. (Influenced to some degree by some faulty and fraudulent science.) Who didn't want to spend less time on deck, in the water, etc., and led by a natural human trait to want to earn more for less work, most of the world bought into it. In some places, pure sprinting was the only training going on. It all worked fine for awhile, until, in most cases, the bottom dropped out of the performances.

Meanwhile, in Eastern Europe and Russia, state sponsored cheating programs further confused our view of what was necessary to swim fast. The Flying Frauleins of East Germany were subjected by their doctors and coaches to huge, health-ruining regimens of steroids and other illegal drugs. At the same time, they claimed

Swimmers are working “hard”. Perhaps harder than ever.

they “worked harder than everyone else” and thus, they were winning the medals and western coaches were frustrated with themselves and with their athletes.

And of course, the Eastern Europeans DID work harder than anyone else...harder in a very strict sense...they swam multiples of the number of “yards/meters” that westerners did, AT RACE PACE.

Their training volume was slightly lower than “ours,” but their training intensity made ours pale by comparison. Coaches from those tainted systems came to the USA and spoke to us at the ASCA World Clinic about “accelerated recovery” (code for “doping”) and other methods and means that they used to get the athlete ready to do more quality work in practice once again the next day. And the next, and the next.

No longer was Forbes Carlile’s “Speed through Endurance” the key to our thinking; it became “Speed through Cheating” or more specifically, “Speed through Specificity which was POSSIBLE through doping/cheating.”

As the Wall fell, and the old East German Regime bid us adieu, we learned of the extent of doping behind the wall, and we learned about the nightmares suffered by the old Eastern athletes, and coaches. Along with that we saw their training programs and were largely shocked at the amount/percentage of work that was being done at race intensity.

Of such things are breakthroughs made.

Coaches worldwide began to think quietly to themselves...“hmmm...if they could do that with drugs, I wonder what level of that my athletes could tolerate without drugs?” And in informal

experimentation all over the world, at the same time, coaches began “experimenting” to determine how much more “quality swimming” (as defined by at or close to “race pace” or “race temp” or “race intensity”) one could do.

The results of that decade-plus of experimentation are available today. And what we found in most cases, was that the non-doped athlete was very capable of recovering from “Hard” efforts at a much faster rate than anyone suspected, particularly when recovery methods, including such things as organized stretching, hot and cold baths, massage and related items as well as nutrition that is well coordinated with practice, could all be provided for the athlete.

Today’s world class athletes in most of our middle distance events are all doing very similar training, wherever they are in the world... 7-9K a practice, 8-11 practices per week. More certainly for our pure distance swimmers, perhaps a bit less for the 50 specialists in all strokes.

And a high percentage of that work is being done at race intensities and race speeds. Most coaches are measuring “amount of work done at high intensity” as well as how much volume of training is accomplished.

Another example of such a breakthrough came from understanding the effects of the so called “technical suits.” One of their big benefits was to act as an “exoskeleton” on the swimmer who was fatiguing in the final stages of a race and as a result, their body position was falling apart, greatly increasing form drag in the water over the last 20-25% of the race distance. The full body suits prevented that from happening and along with other aspects of the suits, allowed

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more than 200 world records to be set. Of course in the aftermath of banning those suits, coaches have learned of the importance (or had PROVEN TO THEM the importance) of body posture in the latter stages of races. Hence, in the last year or two, all over the world, coaches have dramatically increased their use of core body exercises to replace the engineered suits, with a new racing BODY, engineered via hard work in the dryland circuit, to produce the same hard-body at the end of the race. And it is gaining all the time in effectiveness. We'll be faster athletes because of this breakthrough... again, learning from what we "can't ever do." (which of course we learn, we CAN...)

For those who study the literature, if this sounds a lot like an old book called "Sprint Salo," I would concur that it does indeed. Not that Coach Dave Salo was the first, or even the only coach to get off the "more is better" bandwagon of measured volume of training, but he certainly put his reputation on the line espousing that idea long before many others did.

Today of course, Coach Dave has athletes who "Sprint the 1500" and athletes who are sprinting the 50 of all strokes and every distance in-between. His training is now one of the most widely copied and admired paradigm in the world of swimming.

The similarity of high level programs around the world is remarkable. We are back to being a "hard work" sport...but the "hard work" is perhaps defined slightly differently and is measured more by intensity than sheer volume.

And one of the other constants is that as swim training moved from "hard work" to less work, and back to "hard work," society's trends have

continued in the opposite direction...more about convenience, more about limited commitment, more about instant gratification...and less about long term commitment and delayed rewards. So our sport is still very much "counterculture" and SELLING our sport to new families and new athletes, depends on a balanced approach, particularly with age group swimmers, that can still begin with a focus on "fun, learning, and reward." It takes years to "hook" your athletes on the marvelous fruits of "hard work"...in the meantime, we all have to use intelligent application of the law of learning that says we "repeat what we enjoy." And those of us who are age group coaches, have to focus on teaching the fun and the romance and the excitement of our sport with limited references to the "hard work" ahead.

There is plenty of time in an athlete's career to learn about that.

For the age group years, it's enough to learn that the age group years are for learning to do things correctly, love the sport, love to race and that "hard training" means training at race pace and intensity.

Each coach needs to learn their own methodology of moving the paradigm of successful age group swimming, into successful programs for teenage and older athletes.

It's still hard work. Just different!



John Leonard

ascta CONVENTION

2012

**Sofitel Gold Coast, Broadbeach
24th April – 1st May 2012**

Trade Expo (swim & pool products)	27th - 29th April
Silver Coaching Accreditation Course	24th - 28th April
Coaching Open Water Swimmer Extension Course	25th - 26th April
Coaching Adult Swimmers Extension Course	26th April
Coaching Swimmer with a Disability Extension Course	27th April
Bronze Coaching Accreditation Course	29th April – 1st May
Swim Australia™ Teacher of Babies & Toddlers Course / Workshop	26th April
Swim Australia™ Teacher Course	27th April
Swim Australia™ Teacher of Competitive Swimming Course	27th April
Swim Australia™ Teacher of Learners With Disability Course	30th April
Certificate IV Training & Assessment Course (TAE40110)	25th - 26th April
Trainers & Assessors Upgrade Course	24th April
Coaching Stream	24th - 29th April
Teaching Stream and Club Coaching Stream	28th - 29th April
asctaAWARDS Dinner	28th April
Welcome Party	26th April
Golf Day	26th April
Swim Australia's SwimFEST at the asctaCONVENTION	
Swim Australia Conference for Swim Schools	30th April - 1st May
Swim Australia Awards Dinner	30th April
ABC's Workshop	27th April
Swim Australia's Partner Display	30th - 1st May

For information on events, accommodation and registrations: convention@ascta.com

For more information on courses: accreditation@ascta.com

For more information on the Swim Australia events: Jay.Johnston@swimaustralia.org.au