



World Swimming Coaches Association  
**Newsletter**

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# Can I truly make a difference?

Do I invest in the world I am in?  
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To help change the world of Olympic Sport,  
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WSCA  
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## contents

*The Rule of Law*  
by John Leonard  
pages 2 .....

*A History of Australian  
Swim Training*  
by Forbes Carlile  
pages 3-12 .....

*Motivation*  
by Eddie Reese  
pages 13-20 .....

*Becoming a Professional  
Coach*  
by Wayne Goldsmith  
pages 21-23 .....

# The Rule of Law

by John Leonard

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At a USA Swimming open board meeting in the Spring 2015, a prominent lawyer who works for both USA Swimming and FINA made the off-hand comment to the board that "**The International Olympic Committee doesn't operate with written rules.**" The mild-mannered lawyer tossed out that explosive comment in his usual off-hand way, and not everyone caught it. But for those that did, it tells the entire story of international sports governance in one short sentence. It says, in essence, that the IOC operates outside *the rule of law*.

The IOC of course is the granddaddy of Olympic Sport. Under them come the International Federations (IFs): FIFA for Soccer, FINA for Swimming, IAAF for Track & Field, etc. The IFs act as subsidiaries for the IOC in each sport. (Recent history suggests the mis-governance and criminal behavior inherent in two of those, already proven and indicted.)

Also under the IOC comes the Olympic committees of each nation; in the case of the USA, the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC). Read that again, please: the USOC is a subsidiary of the IOC. It is not (as it usually tries to portray itself) an American (USA) institution... it is a "creature" of the IOC. And as such, will do *anything* (including go along with endangering American Open Water athletes who will swim in a viral sewer in the Rio Olympics) in order to curry favor with the mother-ship of the IOC and secure an American Olympic Games for Los Angeles. The USOC is not "us", it is "them".

So both the IFs and the various National Olympic Committees "belong" to the IOC as subsidiaries. So when our lawyer friend says "The IOC doesn't operate with written rules", he truly assesses the entire system, including and especially the IFs who learn their every move in international sport politics from the IOC.

No surprise to any of us who have dealt for decades with FINA. A supposedly democratic congress is told how to vote by those that pay their way to the congress (the FINA Bureau) in meetings the day before the congress itself. Then they create "rules" that are regularly *ignored* or *overridden* by the President, the Executive Director and/or the Bureau.

In other words, the rules mean nothing. Not the doping rules, not the facility rules, not the entry rules (entry cut times). All can be set aside by the dictators at the top. **In other words, we are not governed by the rule of law.** We are governed by the rule of dictators at the top.

Is that what YOU want?

Some of my readers also live in countries where that is the case. My sympathy to you. Freedom depends on the rule of law. I am lucky, live in a real democracy, which, while imperfect, generally respects the rule of law.

As we build a new world Swimming organization called the [World Swimming Association](#), we intend to abide by the rule of law. We hope you will join us.

Find the Constitution we are building with world-wide input from everyone at: <http://www.worldswimming.org/>.

We will approve a Constitution at a constitutional convention in September 2017 in Washington, DC, USA. We hope you will be there.

# A History of Australian Swimming Training

by Forbes Carlile, *Australia*, edited from a presentation at the 2004 ASCA World Clinic

## Sports Science 1945

During 1945 in the Physiology Department of the Old Medical School at the Sydney University, Room 22 became the first Sports Science laboratory in Australia. Electronic measuring equipment was only of the most rudimentary kind. There was an emphasis on measuring work output on ergometers on [Frank] Cotton-designed stationary bicycles and rowing machines. Professor Cotton became the “Scientific Adviser” for numerous athletes from a variety of sports including the group of swimmers I was coaching, which produced many National champions and Olympians. I spent my time between twice-daily coaching of these swimmers, working on research projects, and teach. I could have been called Professor Cotton’s “Assistant Professor for Swimming”. Professor Cotton, usually in suit and tie, only occasionally came to the pool. He was busy, daily advising coaches and athletes from a number of sporting disciplines with Rowing a high priority. He was a pioneer in measuring work output under simulated rowing conditions. Not surprisingly, we found a close relationship in many sports between success and an individual’s work capacity. This was put to practical use in the selection of successful rowing crews and single scullers at the Olympic level.

There had been some outstanding sports scientists on the world scene before Frank Cotton, notably T.K. Cureton (1901-92) at Illinois, A.V. Hill (1885-1977) of Trinity College, Cambridge University -- among others. But Cotton’s influence on the Australian scene, on Track & Field, Rowing, and particularly on Swimming, marked a very significant period in the progress of Australia sports and sports science.

I want to make it clear that in a brief ten-year period, Professor Cotton was the brilliant instigator and driving-force behind the application of scientific thinking to training for Swimming and other sports in Australia. Concepts were conceived and practiced, which I believe influenced much of the competitive swimming world at that and later times.

## Applied Science in Sports

In general, the aim of our self-appointed two-man commission was to apply science to sport. In the words of Brent Rushall (personal communication), it became a matter of applying as fast as possible “evidence-based (scientific) principles rather than relying on belief-based coaching as in the past”. With my experimental research, I was fortunate in being given a free hand to pursue an problem that interested me. I did not have to

ask permission to embark on a project, but it had to be funded within a very tight, almost nonexistent research budget.

Some initiatives from 1945 were the use of pool clocks with sweep minute hands so that swimmers could self-monitor their training performances, and the requirement that swimmers keep training log books. I carried out experiments which included investigating the aspects of active and passive warming-up of the body, following circulatory changes in arterial pulse waves, studying changes in blood parameters, and following progressive changes in the electrocardiogram after severe exercise stress.

In his book on the History of Sports Coaching in Australia (University of NSW Press 2000), Murray Phillips, a sports historian, drew into perspective the scientific initiatives which he recognized as emanating from the University of Sydney.

He summed-up the progress which occurred in the mid-1940s and 1950s in Australian sport, not online Swimming. Phillips said:

From the time men started to pass on their expertise to athletes, coaching was devoid of modern science and coaches acquired their expertise by watching what others had learnt, by trialing new techniques, by experimenting with different regimes for conditioning and by dabbling in diets that they hoped would provide advantages. The 1950s witnessed a radical change in this approach. Led by Cotton, Carlile, and Gallagher [the coach of 1956 Olympic gold medalist Dawn Fraser and Jon Henricks and a disciple of Frank Cotton], scientific experimentation and methodology were used to build a set of principles on which athletic performance could be evaluated.

Many ideas, such as the theory on warming-up, using electrocardiograms, and the application of interval training to swimming helped to secure Australia’s international sporting success. (p.88)

Phillips commented on leading coaches of various sports:

These coaches may not have been at the forefront of testing athletes like swimming coaches, but they were quick to adopt any new techniques that were going to benefit their charges.

He went on to say:

Certainly they realized that good coaches had to be adventurous in their approaches.... The legacy of the “Golden Era” of Australian sport was that the previously

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dominant paradigm of non-scientific coaching had been gradually, albeit not totally, usurped by new models based on rudimentary application of scientific principles, principles which are now accepted by many coaches as crucial and inseparable from developing all levels of sporting prowess.

### **Hans Selye and Stress Adaptation**

Many of my research studies regarding training stress were stimulated by the work of Hans Selye in Montreal, who in the late 1940s and early 1950s proposed his famous theory of the general adaptation syndrome. He drew attention to the various signs and symptoms of “failing adaptation”, which he showed could develop variously into what he called “diseases of adaptation”. Selye’s concepts immediately made a great deal of sense to me. I wrote about them that in addition to training exercise, life stresses could act cumulatively on athletes, and about the possible signs and symptoms of failure in adaptation for coaches to monitor.

Sydney swimmers from the mid-1940s were very interesting subjects for physiological studies. This was a very good example of the power of circumstance.

After a six-month lay-off, October in Sydney marked the start of the summer swimming season, and as soon as pools opened, heavy training loads were often undertaken in cold, unheated water at a temperature in the low 60s (16° C) or even colder. In the main, coaches were working with school children and students with busy lives who were endeavoring to reach peak performances by January and early February when State and Australian championships were held.

After six months of swimming detraining, although some had engaged in other sports and carried out the Kiphuth “callisthenic” exercise sessions two or three times a week during the off period, swimmers found themselves suddenly being driven by enthusiastic coaches to log many miles, often in 12 sessions a week, and usually under difficult, uncomfortable conditions. In those days, for many this was a formula for the disaster of severe over-training.

One reason we undertook testing lay in the hypothesis that marked physiological changes would serve as a good guide for detecting the overtrained state. There were a number of parameters which could be measure without expensive equipment. Areas of physiological breakdown showed up in our test results. However, although it was often clear to us from diminished performances of swimmers that “adaptation reserves” were low, the bodily changes we found were not common to all totally exhausted athletes. However, with some of these test in a way we “hit the jackpot”. We

quite often found marked physiological changes coinciding with poor performance.

Nevertheless, it should be said that the testing approach turned out in one respect to be a false trail because these tests only touched on unraveling the complexity of the situation of overtraining. No one test or even a group of tests can be all revealing or common to all overtrained athletes. Furthermore, Ursula and I observed during our 1965 six-month stay in Indiana, that Coach Jim Counsilman’s outstanding Indiana University team, which adhered to a swimming program through much of the year, suggested such continuity of training resulted in a marked reduction of the overtraining problems which were frequently observable in the lesser, six-month trained Australians.

### **Year-Round Training**

I think the following is important when considering the progress of competitive swimming in Australia—to tell something of winter training.

There were some intrepid individuals in Sydney who trained during the cold weather during the six months off-season. I have been reminded by one of my old pupils, Brian Browne, now living in San Francisco, of the winter swimming in which he was involved. I asked Brian and Olympic gold medalist John Devitt to share their recollections with me.

A number of Sydney surf clubs and swimming clubs held sprint races throughout the winter in ocean-side pools on Sunday mornings. Two such clubs were the Coogee Penguins and Bondi Icebergs. There were some Sydney swimmers who trained twice daily, year-round. Tom Caddy (I think he swam himself!), Tom Penny, and myself encouraged enthusiastic and hardy pupils to train in the ocean and in rock pools at such places as Coogee Surf Lifesaving Club, Clovelly Inlet, and Bronte.

During winter, the water was often very cold with the temperature as low as 55°F (13° C). There were no lights, and often storm-surf presented the real possibility of a swimmer being washed out of the pool into the ocean. Some, including Brian Browne and John Devitt who beach Olympic gold medalists, trained consistently twice daily, in most weathers. In 1955, Brian left Australia to swim at the University of Michigan.

Coach Penny had Barry Darke, a brilliant young swimmer, John Devitt, and others sometimes train in more comfortable conditions in the coolant outlet channels of Sydney’s power stations at Bunnerong and White Bay where the water was usually warm (75-80°F). The water flow was approximately 2-3 mph and the

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swimmers wore shoes to protect their feet from oysters, which lined the course. A small rope, dangling from a cross wire at Bunnerong, was the only chance of reprieve from being washed out into Botany Bay.

There were a few Sydney swimmers who gained regular access to Tattersall's Club indoor 20-yard pool. Most swimmers who maintained their swimming fitness in this way usually performed well in the summer, many winning State and National championships. The importance of year-round training was becoming apparent.

### **London Olympics 1948**

The Second World War caused the Olympics of 1940 and 1944 to be abandoned, so in the mid-1940s athletes set their sights on competing at the 1948 Games scheduled for war-damaged London. Remember, Australian swimmers had been completely outclassed in Berlin twelve years before, and despite the fact that we, like the USA, had not had our country devastated by war, Australia was considered to be well out of contention.

### **John Marshall**

Melbourne schoolboy John Marshall sensationally appeared on the Australian Swimming scene at the 1947 Nationals. Laboratory testing later, by the famed exercise physiologist professor Tom Cureton at the University of Illinois, showed that Marshall, physiologically, was outstanding. For instance, his heart could produce a stroke volume greater than any other athlete measured by Cureton. He had the greatest range of movement ("flexibility") in extension backwards that Cuerton had seen.

John Marshall was an exception to the rule when it came to training. Up to the London Games, Marshall's training under Coach Tom Donnett in Melbourne consisted each day of only 1000 meters of swimming and 1000 meters of kicking. With this small amount of training, even for that time, Marshall had no trouble in winning all freestyle events from 200m to 1500m at the Australian Championships.

Most of the 1948 Olympic Swimming team gathered for six weeks pre-Olympics training during a depressing Melbourne winter. They were drawn to the southern city because Richmond provided the only 50m indoor pool in Australia. Ten swimmers were selected for London, an increase from the five sent to Berlin in 1936. The 1948 team had five Olympic finalists compared with one in Berlin. Performance improved from no medals in Berlin to winning 2 silver and 2 bronze with a very close fourth place in London. John Marshall was third in the 400m

and finished second to American Jimmy McLane in the 1500m.

After the Games, between 1949 and 1952 while swimming at Yale University under Bob Kiphuth, Marshall benefited greatly from strengthening exercises. (He went to Yale not being able to chin the bar even once.) He had a rigorous water preparation, swimming around 3000m a day which he chose consistently to swim at close to "all-out" pace. I was informed of this recently by Phil Moriarty, an assistant coach at Yale at that Time. Marshall set around 30 World Records between 1950 and 1952. (There were many more World Records to be had, in yards and meters, than FINA provides for nowadays.)

Australian teammate John Davies, who later gained prominence as the California trial judge for the famous "second Rodney King case", continued his swimming career after the Games at the University of Michigan with Matt Mann. In 1952, he won gold at Helsinki in the 200 Breaststroke performing what was soon to be called *butterfly*.

### **Helsinki 1952**

The Australian team four years after the London successes was singularly unsuccessful in Helsinki, John Davies who trained at the University of Michigan being the only medal winner with his gold. In its questionable wisdom, the Australian Swimming Union sent a team to the Helsinki Olympics without an official team coach. The continuing battle of professional coaches with the hierarchy of the Australian Swimming Union is another story.

From 5 medals in London, then 1 medal in Helsinki, followed by 8 gold and 6 other medals at the [1956] Melbourne Olympics four years later was a phenomenal move forward. How did that happen?

### **Early 1950s**

After 1952, Sydney-based professional coaches Harry Gallagher, Frank Guthrie, Sam Herford and myself, and soon a rising Don Talbot, discovered in the crucible of tense competition that swimmers performed best after they had included in their training intensive "interval" training, borrowed from European science-guided track coaches. Better and harder training is not the only explanation for Australia's leap forward in that four-year period. There were other factors, including the fact that Melbourne was for us a home Olympics. Better crawl stroke technique was another important reason for explaining Australia's step forward. However, undoubtedly a crucial influence was the *training* factor. Training and technique continue to be central themes in swimmer preparation today.

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Most of Australia's prominent training squads in the early 1950s lead-up to Melbourne had in common at most sessions swimming a mile of short rest 50m swims "on the minute" in addition to race distance repeats, quite easy basic swimming, some kicking and legs-tied swimming. There were increasing numbers of repeat "efforts", usually spaced out 100m, 200m or 400m swims at from "80%-90%" of all-out speed with varying rest intervals. Intensity of effort made was often checked by taking heart-rate counts.

Coaches were discovering that swimmers could absorb harder sessions and more training miles than had previously been attempted. Most coaches identified when swimmers showed signs of overtraining and needed careful handling. The net result for Australian top swimmers was in 1956 an increasing number of World Records, followed by outstanding Olympic Success.

In his book *Harry Gallagher on Swimming* (Pelham, 1970), Gallagher listed a typical training session carried out by his pupils Dawn Fraser and Jon Henricks, both gold medalists in their Olympic 100 Freestyle events. When training in Townsville, North Queensland during the two-month pre-Olympics preparation, Gallagher's pupils like most of the team were swimming 2-2.5 miles in twice daily sessions. The training often included "effort" swims (at around 90%) at 400m, 2x200m, and 2x100m, with some kicking and pulling. However, Coach Sam Herford had Murray Rose, eventual winner of the Olympic 400 and 1500 events, covering up to about three miles per session, made up mainly of 10x400m "all within the hour", with an average time of 4:45 (representing about "90%" effort). In addition, weight training with light barbell weights and Kiphuth exercises were carried out daily by most swimmers. A total of about 25 miles (40 km) was swum weekly, but this was only for four or five months of the year, outdoors. Both swimmers and coaches at this time thought this was a lot!

There was a falling off in Olympic medals following the eight won from the more restricted number of events in Melbourne. At the next three Olympic Games however, Dawn Fraser, Murray Rose, John Konrads, John Devitt, Robert Windle, Michael Wenden, David Theile (backstroke), Ian O'Brien (breaststroke), Lyn McClements (butterfly) and Kevin Berry (butterfly) all won gold medals at Rome [1960], Tokyo [1964] or Mexico City [1968].

During the 1950s and until the late 1960s, there was still no indoor swimming training in Sydney or winter competition held in Australia. Summer training miles,

often in cold water, increased somewhat during this period but training remained much the same in most Australian top groups. However, training clocks appeared in many swimming pools, serious competitors used log books, interval training became widely adopted, and coaches showed a readiness to apply scientific thinking to training.

The training of the Australian swimmers for the 1960 Rome Olympics in the warm semi-tropical climate of Townsville, after about five months lay-off from hard summer swimming training, offered a wonderful opportunity to test for physiological changes in top swimmers starting from a relatively low base-level of fitness. We reported that in the two months training, apart from being able to show physiological improvements in various aspects of the functioning of the heart and circulation, as well as with blood pressure modifications, we also uncovered instances of physiological breakdown coinciding with poor training performance.

### **Sherm Chavoor**

American coach Sherm Chavoor, at Sacramento in the late 1960s, picked up on the idea of interval training and with this and over-distance swimming in a year-round program, he rode the concept boldly and greatly influenced world swimming. Mike Burton and Debbie Meyer, his star pupils, and their performances at Mexico City 1968 *popularized* Chavoor's heavy-volume and high-intensity training carried out by these two greats and other well-performed swimmers.

Twice daily sessions, six days a week, no easy days and continual over-distance work represented Chavoor's training for most of his squad, age groupers and all, including Mark Spitz before his triumphant 1972 Olympics. Usually each training item totaled 1000m or 1500m, with the program nearly completely made up of repeats of 100, 200 and 400 with 10-second and at most 30-second rests. In his book *Fifty Meter Jungle* (1970), Chavoor claimed up to 8000m in a session were covered nearly all in an interval manner. This was for distance swimmers and sprint swimmers alike. Chavoor's training was, in his words, the "constant pressure method". He told how Don Talbot observed his workouts in Sacramento and was *impressed*.

### **Late 1960s in Sydney**

There were two top squads in Sydney and both had indoor training by the late 1960s: Talbot at Hurstville in the south, and us at Pymble on the north shore. It was evident that Don Talbot was continually lifting the bar in the *quantity* and the *intensity* of training he demanded. His swimmers often came to early season Friday night

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meets barely able to lift their arms over the water, and their early season performances were often abysmal. With a taper, they usually swam well later on. We heard of an “incredible” 70 km per week by Talbot’s swimmers who were swimming further and harder than our team.

I was cautious, in retrospect perhaps overly cautious, of observed deleterious effects, sometimes long-term, on performance caused by overtraining. For this reason, I must admit to not having pushed some of our swimmers hard enough. It is very clear that some bodies are better able to withstand greater loads of cumulative training stresses. Some clearly have a greater capacity to respond with defensive resources, perhaps due in-part to stress-combating hormones such as ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone). It is clear now that there are some individuals who can be severely and continually stressed with training long after others show signs of breakdown.

At Ryde, our training philosophy incorporated the idea of starting fairly early to “bend the young twig”, continually encouraging the steady building of a high year-round mileage, and constantly repeating the mantra that “miles make champions”. We believed that swimming miles, not necessarily with excessive effort, not even fast enough to reach what we now call the aerobic threshold, would significantly increase both endurance and speed.

### **Speed Through Endurance**

I did not invent the concept or even the expression of “speed through endurance”, which I have been credited with. In 1947, the German sports scientist Ernst van Aaken had developed on the track the “endurance” method of training, and Arthur Lidyard had outstanding success with New Zealand runners training with mostly “long slow miles” rather than with more intensive interval training.

### **Moras, Gould and Turrell**

Karen Moras was the first of Ryde Club’s very successful trio. Karen was followed by Shane Gould and Jenny Turrell. With them it was mainly regular aerobic, endurance training carried out with two-beat kicking. Two-beat kicking is another story.

All three pupils between 1968 and 1975 broke, and broke again, World Records at distances. For good measure, Shane excelled down to the 100m sprint, eventually gaining all freestyle World Records and the 200 IM World Record as well. She won three Olympic gold medals at Munich.

In usually crowded lanes (often as many as 12 in a 25m lane at our indoor pool at Pymble), we placed emphasis on regularly training for 11 or 12 sessions per week for most of the year, including 6x or 8x 400m repeats at practically every session. We were taking advantage of the “window of opportunity” to enhance aerobic fitness with endurance training for young swimmers, when that is the capacity with which they are most endowed. We coaches seldom asked for, and did not expect, fast times in repeats, but now and then when they felt like it during a session swimmers would ask to be timed with a dive. Such time trials were invariably fast.

Karen, who started off in Ursula’s “tadpole” group when 7 years-old, by the age of 14 was swimming 1000 miles (1600 km) in the calendar year. Shane Gould reached 1500 miles (2400 km) and Jenny Turrell 2000 miles (3200 km). Karen, first on the Ryde scene, set the ball rolling with her World Records at 800m and 400m when she defeated visitor Debbie Meyer in Sydney at 800m in March 1970. Shane followed Karen Moras with a short-but-brilliant swimming career, and retired at 16 years of age. Jenny Turrell, hot on Shane’s heels, in 1973 won the FINA World Championships in Cali, Colombia at 800m, incidentally from an East German and with a negative split. Jenny made a number of World Records over the 800m and 1500m. It is noteworthy that she progressed from first being awarded our swim school’s tadpole certificate, for being able to swim 200m, that in three years and eight months went on to become the World Record holder for 1500m.

Shane and Jenny, without too much pressure to swim fast in training, at times got up to 3.5 miles (5.5 km) a session, mostly with aerobic work. Each day the girls for their dryland training worked with the *Exergenie* upper-body portable exerciser. We picked that up from Don Gambril during a mid-1960s trip to Los Angeles, where we observed some workouts of his outstanding group. This upper-body strengthening, “with elbows up”, was usually carried out daily at home throughout most of the year.

### **Don Talbot**

Don Talbot trained his swimmers harder than we pushed our Ryde swimmers. In fact, his training was harder than any other coach in Australia. From the late 1950s, after developing multiple World Record holders Ilsa and John Konrads, Don Talbot has, together with the American coach George Haines, proved himself on the world scene to be the most productive coach of Olympic medalists. I digress to recognize Don Talbot’s unprecedented successes both in Canada and Australia. Many of his impressive successful swimmers have won Olympic gold and World championships, starting back at

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Rome (1960) with John Konrads. Not too much changed in the years before he retired as head coach of Australian Swimming after the 2000 Olympic Games, and when Australia was firmly established as the world's #2 Swimming nation.

Talbot's philosophy was hard work as his Melbourne Olympics pupil Ruth Everuss has summed up in her description of his training: "If the effort was not there, it was repeated." There are many Olympic swimmers, Australian and Canadian, who can affirm this as truth.

After the success of the 1972 Australian Olympic team at Munich, Talbot coached in Canada. His absence was immediately felt. At the 1976 Montreal Olympics, as in other sports, Australia slumped badly. Steven Holland's bronze medal was our only Swimming medal. As a result of this "failure", the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) was established and opened by the government in Canberra during 1981. Its director was Don Talbot. It had resident swimmers recruited from program around Australia.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the functioning of "institutionalized swimming in Australia. The AIS had some successes, the most notable being at Athens (2004) by Petria Thomas, a long-term AIS swimmer who won the 100 Butterfly race.

The 1970s marked the era of greatly increased training volume as Australians observed American coaches closely. Short-rest repeats were the norm in Australian training. They are believed to have contributed to high levels of Australia distance performances, and at the end of the decade to World Records by swimmers Tracey Wickham and Michelle Ford.

### **Jochums, Schubert and Rose**

California coaches Dick Jochums, Mark Schubert and Bill Rose were setting a torrid pace in their training of distance swimmers, in particular before the 1976 Olympic Games, which even today makes for breathtaking reading from the accounts of the highly competitive training sessions which were carried out. Tim Shaw, with Jochums, and Steve Holland, with Laurie Lawrence and then Bill Sweetenham in Australia, separated by the Pacific Ocean, were dueling for the 1500m World Record as it quickly dropped towards 15 minutes, the record being passed from one to the other. The story is well told by Coach Chuck Warner in his book Four Champions, One Gold Medal (1999), and in an article by Coach Courtney Beyer (*ASCA Newsletter* 2014-08).

It is a story of big training mileages and sustained high effort in training, 12 and even 13 session weekly, sometimes as much as 90 km a week, heroic repeats of 100x100 and even 10x1500m. To this add heavy resistance work in the gym. Coaches swapped near "impossible" repeat sets, which their pupils accepted as a challenge and tackled enthusiastically.

Australians Steve Holland and Tracey Wickham both had training stints in American programs. Our Australian coaches were impressed by what they saw and were guided by what was happening there in Mark Schubert's "animal lane" at Mission Viejo.

Brian Goodell (Mission Viejo) and Bobby Hackett (from New York) in an epic Olympic 1500m in 1976 beat Holland into third place—the USA first and second!

What was happening at Mission Viejo was to a large extent emulated in the training pools of coaches Bill Sweetenham and Laurie Lawrence in Australia, both pushing their pupils, in like manner, very hard. Tracey Wickham in her small book Swimming to Win (1984) reports a Sweetenham 8400m training session carried out shortly before her 1500 World Record in 1979, swum in the even-today-very-respectable time of 16:06.63. The session included varied distances and rests between interval sets swum at least at 1500 race pace. A 1500 swim (in 16:20!) and 1500 legs-tied, 10x150 FS on 2:00 averaging 1:50.00, 4x200 kicking on 4:15 averaging 3:50.00, 100 FS easy, 4x200 FS on 2:50 averaging 2:13.00, 10x100 FS on 1:25.00 averaging 1:06.00, 8x100 BF kick averaging 1:50.00, 400 FS easy.

### **Charles "Chuck" Riggs**

Chuck Riggs in the late 1970s at Riverside, California also provided another model for Australian coaches. His 1978 training program produced Sippy Woodhead, whose World Record established in 1979 of 1:58.23 for the 200m still stands-up as a world-class swim some 25 years later.

Riggs summarized his program as being distance swimming at race-pace quality. It was a "high quality" program. Nearly all items were required to be swum at race pace over various distances. With a minimum of 70 km per week, on an aerobic fitness base, the program usually called for around 80 km swimming with many relatively short-rest repeats. "A swimmer," Riggs said, "had to hurt from the hard work because there is no other way to achieve his or her full potential." His swimmers pushed weights at maximum effort three times a week. Riggs recently told me he did not hesitate to prescribe easy swimming when there were signs of breakdown.

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Riggs' training describes well the preparation which in Australia from 1976 into the 1980s produced World Record holders and Olympic champions such as Steve Holland, Tracey Wickham, Duncan Armstrong, butterfly John Sieben and a number of other world-class swimmers, particularly in distance events. Massive training distances and the expenditure of high training effort were constantly required. It was hard training with little compromise.

Although Australian successes may seem moderate, it should be borne in mind that our country's twenty million population is small compared to the USA. However, the opportunity to swim around an extensive coastline, enthusiasm for swimming recreationally and high media exposure of the sport of Swimming assists the cause of competitive swimming in Australia.

Some top Australian coaches and many swimmers since 1978 have been exposed to the theories of Dr. Bob Treffen, who for a number of years was a staff physiologist at training camps and with Australian teams. Although there was nothing new in extending swimmers in training to reach near-maximum heart rates, Treffen's theories and practice centered around the control of training intensities by the monitoring of heart rate responses and later on also using lactate measures. His postulations have not gained universal acceptance by sports scientists, many of whom deny that heart rate and lactates are useful tools for prescribing or analyzing swimming training. A popular Australian training item encouraged by Treffene has been so-called "heart-rate" sets, swimming up to about 10 beats below maximum. Heart-rate monitoring devices became popular with Australian coaches.

### **Perkins, Hackett and Thorpe**

Kieren Perkins won the 1500 Olympic event in 1992 in World Record time, and repeated again in Atlanta [1996]. He was followed by gold medal winners in Sydney [2000] Grant Hackett and Ian Thorpe. All are tall. Physiotherapists and other swimmers talk about their "extreme flexibility", the notable range of movement of their joints, particularly extension backwards at the shoulders. All three have high ankle flexibility.

Perkins developed slowly in a 20m teaching pool in Brisbane with Coach John Carew. He first competed best at backstroke, as a not particularly outstanding age grouper. Grant Hackett, with Coach Denis Cotterill, was developed on the Gold Coast, Queensland. Ian Thorpe, coached until December 2002 by Doug Frost, was developed in Sydney. These three swimmers came under the influence of their coaches in their swimming

schools from about the age of about 7. They all swam regularly and competed when young. All were outstanding Age Group performers, particularly Hackett and Thorpe.

### **Perkins' Technique**

Kieren Perkins came onto the world scene in 1990, then being the third ever to go under 15:00 for the 1500, with 14:58.08. He remains, as I write, the second-ever fastest man with his 14:41.66. Both his swimming style, which was a forerunner of techniques used by Hackett and Thorpe, and particularly Perkins' training under Coach John Carew showed a distinct departure from his predecessors. Perkins' technique, attributed to Coach Carew, was characterized by his being particularly horizontal in the water. Biomechanical analyses by Cappaert and Rushall (1994) showed him unsurpassed in maintaining this horizontal position. His streamlining was further helped by a 4- and 2-beat kick, being narrow enough to lie mainly within the shadow of his torso.

Perkins maintained a high elbow in his nearly direct push back by hand and forearm. The early high positioning of the push back on the water was helped by shoulder elevation made possible by his high range of movement in backward extension in his shoulder joints. This is also a characteristic of Hackett and Thorpe. Perkins' arms were more "opposite" in their action than "overtaking", and his shoulder rotation around the central axis facilitated the most effective use of large back and chest muscles in the propelling action of his hands and forearms.

The above description, I believe, also describes the techniques of Hackett and Thorpe. All three swimmers can be seen to swim with their heads well down, looking mainly to the bottom of the pool, particularly Perkins and Hackett. Thorpe carries his head slightly higher and uses a very effective "six beat" timing in his leg action. It can be argued that the "jury is still out" in assessing the relative values of the characteristically Australian and American freestyle techniques, with a greater tendency for Americans to use a six-beat kick, to use "overtaking catch up" arm timing and to take hold of the water in the push back at a lower position relative to the water surface.

### **Perkins' Training**

Now we come to the training of Perkins. The training of top distance swimmers has often involved sustained, near-maximum effort, with swimmers reaching close to maximum heart rate during much of each session. Perkins was different. In 11 sessions weekly, Coach Carew told me that his swimmer went as far as 88 km/week, but a feature of Perkins' training was that he

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swam 5 of his 11 sessions at what can be described as easy pace; these sessions being designated as “aerobic” and “recovery”. He did very little sprint training. During six mornings of the week, there was a concentration on swimming repeats at race pace, not faster. With the focus placed on his 1500 events, 60 seconds for each 100 was very reasonably chosen to represent race pace.

Coach and swimmer counted heart rates, this procedure aimed at preventing excessive effort being expended. Carew told me that with Perkins, having a maximum heart rate of 180 bpm, in his so-called “heart-rate” sets which doubled as race pace practice, he held the swimmer back to no more than 165 bpm and preferred him to be around 160 bpm. The coach often had to tell Perkins to slow down. Race pace, seldom faster, was held in all those swims. His 100s were kept close to 60 seconds by adjusting the rest periods.

No particular training items were undertaken aimed at “training a number of energy systems”. Perkins was training the mix of energy systems required to swim at a pace of around 60-second 100s (or a little better) as required in his 1500 races. John Carew told me: “Training at race pace, very little faster, much of the time is of the greatest importance, just as adequate recovery swimming is essential.” Some kickboard practice and legs-tied swimming was carried out by Perkins.

Carew said he never did believe in weight training for distance swimmers, so Perkins’ dryland training consisted of: stretch cords, 5x 30 minutes per week; stretching, 11x 20-minute sessions; stationary bicycle, 5x 30 minutes per week. Some “core-strengthening” exercises of Kiphuth were also performed.

Although admittedly it is not good scientific practice to generalize conclusions on anecdotal evidence, my excuse is that swimming is still an inexact science. I am inclined to regard aspects of Perkins’ training as “straws in the wind”.

### **The Training of Current Champions**

It is not for me to attempt to outline in any detail the training philosophies of the coaches of Australia’s current male and female champions. Clearly it is their prerogative to speak for themselves.

We know that both Grant Hackett and Ian Thorpe, like Perkins, are dedicated, very hard working swimmers, and are consistent in their training, covering high mileages usually in 10 sessions per week. Supplementary dryland training with weights, running, yoga and boxing (by Thorpe) are carried out. Coaches

of these full-time professional swimmers have reported up to 90 km/week. Published training schedules reveal what may be described to be “mixed bags” of distances in repeats with varied interval rests and paces. Various strokes and drills, kick sets and fin use are added.

The underlying theory driving the use of various paces in repeat efforts is that the functioning of all energy systems will be augmented. At various camps of Australian Swimming, a system is adopted of swimming items maintaining various heart rates from 10 to 50 or so below maximum. Whole sessions do not, as a rule as seen in the Perkins’ model, appear to be devoted nearly completely to “aerobic, fairly easy, recovery swimming”. Most Australian training cycles are divided into phases, commencing with an early concentration almost entirely on endurance/aerobic work. In the final “sharpening phases”, faster quality repeats with longer rest intervals are swum and less total distance covered in these sessions. There is general agreement that 12 or 13 weeks are needed to complete the full cycle of preparation to be ready for making peak performances. Selection trials for major meets have generally been placed 12 or so weeks before major competition; I am not convinced that has worked.

### **Australia’s Female Sprinters**

Coach Stephan Widmer has addressed this clinic regarding the training of one of our present, very successful, female sprinters: Libby Lenton. The coaches of our two recent female sprint World Record breakers, Widmer and Shannon Rollason, the latter who until four years ago coached with conventional distance-swimmer-orientated programs, both have prepared their outstanding female sprinters in what may be considered a fairly radical manner involving “reverse periodization”, which is explained as having sprint swimmers in sprint training mode from the first workout of the training cycle. This training, not entirely new, can in a sense be regarded as the reverse of the traditional practice of periodization of training which places fast swimming mainly towards the middle and end of the training phases.

However, there is more to Widmer’s and Rollason’s coaching and training than adopting the reversed periodization principle. Bill Sweetenham, national coach for Great Britain, has had many British coaches follow the general principle of reverse periodization with interspersed aerobic recovery sessions.

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### **Summary and Final Comments**

Swimming training in Australia has developed early along a path parallel to England and then America, where, by today's standards, only relatively small distances were swum in water preparation.

Systematic swimming training commenced in Australia in the 1940s and formed the basis for the preparation of competitive swimmers through the very successful Australian period of the 1950s into the 1960s. Professor Frank Cotton of the University of Sydney established himself as the father of Sports Science in Australia.

In the mid-1940s there was a move in Australia to introduce what may be called a systematic applied science approach to training. For instance, the pool pace clock and log books were introduced. Light dryland exercises were widely used, training distances were increased, and there was a growing recognition of the Hans Selye concept that swimmers in training were using finite and expendable "adaptation energy". Terms were introduced, such as *basic swimming*, *efforts* and *tapering*, and used to describe items in the new training schedules.

The 1970s saw further increased training mileages, some Australian group combining this with intense short-rest interval training, which helped produce Olympic gold medal winners through the 1980s.

In Australia, in accord with much of the Swimming world, there has grown to be a wide use of dryland strengthening accompanied by the firm belief by many coaches and swimmers that strengthening with heavy weights enhances swimming performance. There is no good scientific evidence to support this belief in the value of heavy weight training (Rushall and Pyke, *Training for Sports and Fitness*, Macmillan 1990).

Kieren Perkins, a distance swimmer, did not touch weights and consistently covered high training mileages, which included regular whole sessions mainly of relatively slow "recovery" swimming. He closely adhered to a program that emphasized specific training at race pace with very little swimming faster than at that pace.

A growing belief in recent years by coaches in the effectiveness of "quality training" with long-rest repeats at the expense of aerobic training (repeats with short-rest repeats) is claimed by some to be the cause of a falling-off in the quality of Australian female distance swimmers. A common Australian training practice today provides for a "mixed-bag" of items offering variety (with alleged "minimizing of swimmer

boredom"), aimed theoretically at training all of a number of energy systems.

Whilst recognizing that a strong base of aerobic fitness is important in the preparation of all competitive swimmers, in some Australian programs, especially with sprinters, increased emphasis is being placed on the inclusion of periods of specific, sustained, race-pace, fast swimming.

And this brings us to just about where we are at today. It seems to me to be pertinent to assess what progress has been made in recent years.

### **Progress?**

With burgeoning knowledge in areas of sports science, with ever-improving facilities and now with full-time professional swimmers having more time to rest and recover between training sessions—and in recent years much else, including what we believe is knowledge of improvements in technique and training—we should expect to see marked improvements in top-level performances. Accordingly, it is reasonable to ask the question: what is the extent of improvement by the world's top swimmers? Training and swimming science are supposed to have developed markedly, so what are the improvements that verify their value?

One way of assessing progress is to look at the average times recorded by Olympic finalists (usually 8) in the 400 and 100 men's and women's Freestyle events. In freestyle there will be very little effect caused by rule changes. It can hardly be claimed that there has been any marked improvements in average times of top Olympic performances over five Olympiads (since 1988).

Another way to assess progress is to look at the advance of the Olympic Records in Freestyle. It can be seen by both these measures that progress clearly has flattened (stagnated) in the course of the last four or five Olympiads. Improvement has been non-existent or minimal at best.

Performances have not reflected theoretical improvements in training theory and practice content. This is, well, sobering.

### **Advantage from the "fastsuits"?**

Taking into account the various factors mentioned above that are claimed to have improved performance, we should be wondering what positive effect the "pseudo-scientific" developed new racing swimsuit equipment has had, besides making expensive fashion statements and adding to the so-called glamour of the sport.

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Have the various “fastsuits” really helped improve performance? There are some scientists whose researches say no.

The current situation of stagnation in top performance times should draw interesting explanations from the swimwear manufacturers if, as claimed, “advances” in swimsuit technology have made a significant difference. It does not leave much room for other contributions from sport science and coaching.

Coaches should be looking beyond the promises of what new *equipment* might do for the swimmer, recognizing that we may still be well short of possessing and using reliable, scientifically-verified knowledge which will

need to be widely applied to bring about significant improvement in the future. Of course, for freestyle, it may be possible that the laws of physics and hydrodynamics can explain why we may have come “just about as far as we can go”. However, history tells us we can safely dismiss this possibility.

There should continue to be progress.

There must be a great deal more to learn and apply as coaches in Australia and throughout the Swimming world to continue on the adventure of endeavoring to improve human swimming performance. A present, we do not seem to be doing that well. It is to be hoped that future advances will not be dependent on drugs, genetic manipulation, or swimming equipment and gimmicks.

## Upcoming Clinics

### Australia

[ASCTA Convention 2016](#)

May 4-11 • Gold Coast, QLD

### Canada

CSCA Convention 2016

September 29-October 2 • Toronto, ON

### Germany

[DSTV Conference 2016](#)

May 13-15 • Trier

### New Zealand

[NZSCTA Conference 2016](#)

May 18-21 • Rotorua

### Portugal

[APTN Congress 2016](#)

April 23+24 • Setúbal

### USA

[ASCA World Clinic 2016](#)

September 6-11 • Fort Lauderdale, FL



The Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) has confirmed that [asctaCONVENTION 2016](#) will be held at the luxurious Sofitel on the Gold Coast (Australia) from 4-11th May.

The focus of the event is the road to Rio for the 2016 Olympics. More information on the ASCTA website:

<http://www.ascta.com/Prof-Development/asctaCONVENTION>



# Motivation:

## How to get them to do more than they want

by Eddie Reese, USA, presented at the 2001 ASCA World Clinic

.... I ask those questions because I do not know, and I am at the stage... you know there are a number of stages that you go through. One is where you think you know, the other one is... there are number [and] I probably left out a couple, but you end up getting to the stage where you know you don't know. And, as I said yesterday: what worked last year is not the answer for this year.

I have got a joke, that I told every year for twenty years. Normally I do not remember jokes, because I am so normally funny—as opposed to strange. This Swimming coach went to the doctor, and said “Doctor, my wife and I have had all the children we want to have, what should we do about that?” And the doctor says, “Well, you need to get a vasectomy.” The Swimming coach says, “Fine, how do I do that?” The doctor says, “You take a cup, light a cherry bomb, put it in the cup and hold it up to your ear.” The Swimming coach did not think that applied to the right part of the body, which was highly intelligent anyway. He said, “Well Doc, I don't know if I agree with that. Do you mind if I get a second opinion?”

So he goes to the next doctor, and he says, “Doc, I know I need a vasectomy; my question is the methodology. And the guy says, “Well, you get a cup, light a cherry bomb, put it in the cup, hold it up to your ears and count to ten.” The Swimming coach says, “Alright, give me the stuff I'm ready to go.”

So he takes the cup, lights the cherry bomb, puts it in the cup; holds it up to his ear and goes 1-2-3-4-5, [*puts the cup between his leg, to free his second hand*] [*laughter*]; 6-7-8-9-10....

I think that is the longest delay I have ever had with an American audience. I usually judge I.Q. by the length of the delay. When I told this in Finland and it had to be translated into four languages and there is about a 20-second delay, I was real worried that people might not get it.

I am going to talk on motivation today. The way I see that, me talking on motivation, is... I am asked to do it often and I do not have a clue. And the worst thing: I was eating with my wife yesterday; she said: *talk to me about what you are going to say on motivation*. I just went like *that [motion]*, and she said: *you don't have a clue how you motivate your swimmers*.

I am married to a rather amazing woman—and I say that whether she is in here or not. This is a woman that mentors about eight kids, visits the prison. We have people that stay in our house for a month, or a couple months, that do not have places to stay. In '94 she went to India; spent two weeks working in Mother Theresa's house over there. So truly a woman in-touch with life. She spent about fifteen minutes telling me how I motivate, and I told her, I said, “Well, you're doing the talk.” She said: *there is no chance*. So I will do it.

There is a belief out there that for the athlete to do well they must believe that they can do it, before they can do it. I approach it from a different direction because I do not see that very often. I see them trying it; I see them doing it. Whatever *it is*—going fast. I see them going fast, then I see them believing it. And then I see them having to do it again, to believe it again. Some of the most insecure swimmers I have ever seen are in the top echelon. There is a young man that broke a World Record in a preliminary swim at a Nationals, a long time ago. He had to come back that afternoon two hours before the finals and swim the event again, a little bit slower, to make sure he could still do it and he had broken a world record. It is not what you think with those swimmers. They have just got to be willing to go for it. Now how do you get them to do that?

I had something that I think has worked, and my swimmers are tired of hearing about it. If you think something is good for them to know, or good for them to do, you do not tell them one time a semester; you tell them until they can recite it verbally. I tell a story of a dual meet we had with another college team, and it was in January. And I wanted to make a point with my swimmers, because I thought we were at a crossroads: we could either be real good or we could continue the way we were going. And it was beyond talk.

I had a distance man in that meet went 9:09 in the 1000, twenty five minutes later he went 1:48 in the 200 fly, four minutes later he went 1:52 in the 200 back, four minutes later he went 4:26-flat in the 500 free, fifteen minutes later he went 2:12 in the 200 breast and three minutes later he went 47.2 on a free relay. That is not a normal order for dual meets; normally you can swim three events. Obviously these were, in the true sense of the word, *exhibition* swims, or survival swims.

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My IM'ers, the breaststrokers that were going to swim IM at the end of the year, swam the medley relay—the breaststroke leg of the medley—they swam a 200 Individual Medley, swam the 200 back, had a diving break, went the 200 breast, and got right up for the free relay. So it was a mental toughness thing; I was going to get them to do it or make them do it.

We go to a relay meet in October, that is a conference relay meet. There are 16 relays and we average over 13 relays per man in that event. Never have had anybody go all 16, but I have got people swimming breaststroke—as I said yesterday—that should not do it in public, but they have to do it. One guy I had left out because we only had two guys for a three-man relay, and he said *there is an open lane, is it alright if we get in?* So we checked with the started, and of course they were in like heat believe-it-or-not and they got up and swam. It is an attitude, and you have got to convince them physically and emotionally to try.

That is the biggest thing in our country nowadays: nobody wants to try without a guarantee. And in Swimming, there are no guarantees. I think it is a very honest sport: you do get back what you put into it, for the most part. Unless I make the mistake, and I get somebody that works too hard and I do not rest them.

There is a book out there it has been out there a long time. It says: leadership is an art. It is by a guy named Max De Pree; he is a CEO, or was when he wrote this book, of a furniture company in North Carolina. It is a company where people... I think it is Herman Miller Furniture Company; it is not a big one. But it is a company where people go there to study middle-level management. They go there to see them and they cannot find them, because they are working; they are right-in with everybody else working. It is one of the more popular places to work; one of the top-10 places in the country where people want to work because of the attitude, everybody participates.

It is like I tell people that help us on the deck on occasion. When I am doing lane lines, like everybody else, I said: whatever got you here, you can never leave behind; if you had to do it, there is never a time where you sit back and take yourself out of that picture. And it is boring doing lane lines. The worst thing that ever happened to us was... I can say that. The worst thing that ever happened to us were Olympic Trials in March, at least from the lane-line standpoint. We would change from short course to long course in the morning, then we would have to change back after the morning workout. Then we would change from short course to long course in the afternoon, and change back after that. We figured we got some degree of black belts in lane-line changing.

What did I learn from that? (We are not supposed to talk about 50 meters vs. 25 yards are we.)

Alright, motivation. Golly day. The way I start the year: I start with a team meeting with everybody, then a team meeting with freshman; and I tell them what to expect. I tell the freshman it can be difficult for them to ever win anything in practice. Occasionally I get the freshman that... you know, I am lying to them; they are going to do it anyway. But, generally speaking if you have got a good college team and you get good freshman in and you make them better the second year, better the third year, you do not want your freshman coming in and beating them. It would be nice if that happened, but it does not.

I try to prepare them for what is going to happen. Tell them we are going to shave twice: they shave at conference, we are going to shave again at NCAAs. And that: you will be faster on the second shave.

We know that if someone does something and they do not know what the results are going to be, the results will not be as good as if they know what the results are supposed to be. So you tell them what you expect in a positive sense is going to happen; you let them know what to expect. If there is a change, as soon as you know it.

One year I changed something and... the meet that we were supposed to do  $x$  at, we changed and did  $y$ ; and we were terrible. We were terrible, so I never try to surprise them. I want them to be able to handle surprises, but I do not want to be the one to surprise them. If we lose the medley relay we thought we were going to win, they can handle that. But if they thought that they were going to be on the medley relay for the week before and they are not on it when they get up there and I show them to card—that they are not on that medley—that is too late to let them know that.

If I have ever got a decision, and I had a decision this year at the NCAAs on what to do on the medley. I told the two guys, I said: “Look, at this point I don’t know what I want to do. Or what I’m going to do. Here’s what I’m thinking about and why I’m thinking that way.”

So we have individual meetings at the beginning of the year—I start those next week. We will talk about swimming goals, which they all want to talk about. And most of them want to be unrealistic at it, about the swimming goals; do not let them be unrealistic. If you have got a 16:30 miler, long course, that wants to go

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15:30, you cannot let them put that goal down. If they want to put it down and they fight you on it, then you have got to tell them what it takes to get there. What it takes in terms of dedication, coming to practice; and what you have got to do in practice, what you have got to be able to do in practice. That is hard for me, because if they want to do it, I want to be right-there supporting them. But I have had people that have gone too far and I try to fix that.

We have strength goals, and that is the tough one in college. If you have got a guy like Tommy Hannan who works out with 225 or 230 for sets of 6 on the bench, and you have got Ian Crocker that works out with sets of 135 on the bench, you have got to convince them that they are not competing with each other, they are competing with themselves. Because Tommy has been 52.8 bench pressing 225, Ian has been 52.2 bench pressing 135; if they both get stronger, in theory they should go faster and that is the key. So you set all this up.

We do academic goals also. My meeting with my freshman, I tell them: is there anybody in here that is going to make less than a C. No hands go up. So I say: you need to know it has never happened that way. So somebody either does not understand what is coming down the road in terms in studying or test taking, or they are not being realistic. So... this group better not make less than Cs.

So I try to believe in them, realistically believe in them. Because coming out of the whole thing, the key to their willingness to try something is tied directly to their self-image. How you set the whole thing up, how open you are with them.

When I define *motivation* for my program, I say... and I do keep things very simple. When it comes to stroke drills, the physical stuff, I keep it real simple—I do that for me. But when I define *motivation* in my program, I talk about: how you treat people every day. I am not a believer that you must have mountain-top experiences. I know those are good, but a mountain-top experience means you reach a real high peak and you come off that peak. You would like them to learn something, so wherever they started, they do not come down as far as they were. But it is how you treat them every day.

Remember I mentioned yesterday about saying five positive things to people. Back when I was younger and had fewer swimmers, every time I would make a talk like this, it helps remind me to do that. That is so simple. It is like simple in the relationship with my wife: we know we love each other, but it helps to hear it, often. It is better to hear it often, than not hear it often. So it is better for your swimmers, also, to hear the good

things. Once again: they have got to hear the criticisms, or there is no reason to change.

There are no miracles out there. The only miracle is in the athlete—it is in the athlete. It is not with us; we are just lucky to be in these jobs. It is not a pain-free job, at any level; wherever you are, or wherever I am, wherever anybody else is. Anytime you deal with people, it is painful. But you have got an opportunity.

See, I think I have got the secret to life; I know why you are here on Earth, I know why I am here on Earth. It is not for me; it is to help other people. You have got a perfect job for that; teachers have got perfect jobs for that: we are supposed to help them. And we will help ourselves, for whatever we want, better by worrying about helping them than worrying about us. (I almost gave the finish to my talk a little bit early.)

I get a lot of help for my team. And I had to go to them before I made this talk because they did something last year that was the key. (I am not going to tell you about now, but I will tell you about it.) What they do in practice... and I have to remind them of this. What they do in practice as far as noticing how other people perform, and I tell them: it is not your position to comment on someone having a bad day or saving up for the last set. You cannot... I cannot stop those comments. I have got some guys that are very good at pointing out good and very good at pointing out bad but I see it and that is up to me. Because as athletes, as peers, have so much power, not over each other but to enable each other in a positive manner. They have very little power negatively; all that does is push them apart.

That is what I have got to do; I have got to take that part. *You're having a bad day in practice. Is it because you don't like the set? Or are you feeling bad, what? Tell me what it is.* If they are feeling bad, I will move them out, put them in the diving well, and let them kick and pull easy. That is acceptable to do; my team will allow me to do that. Now somebody tells me a story about why they need to do that, then my team will get upset at them because I am going to trust them, I am going to believe them.

But we had our in-the-pool practice success... and I love practice; I would rather be at practice than meets—I love practice. We had young guys taking over their lanes, as far as *alright guys, let's...* I do not let them do: *alright guys this is the last one. Alright guys, this is the last half.* If we are doing 8 of something, it is the last four we want to work hard on—the last four. Anybody can work the last one hard, and they should. But I wanted them to get used to working 5, 6 and 7 harder and then still go an 8 hard. And they did that.

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It was, once again, an unusual group: most everything came from them. If the outside-of-the-pool discipline comes from them, it is the miracle you want. Anything that comes from them is stronger than that which comes from you. But then you may have to trick them into doing it. I will meet... we will spend five minutes on: supporting each other in practice; notice what they are doing. We will do that every two weeks until they have got it. And it is great when it is occurring; it is great for them. It enables them to go faster, longer more often.

Probably the most important thing they did, that I asked them about—if I could tell one of their secrets. They had a team meeting Friday afternoon after practice. Personally... for them to be good, they have got to give-up something for the team, each individual. Friday afternoon—5:00 when we get out of the water—they went and sat in the locker room. Most everybody is ready to get out of the pool, go find supper, and then wait until 11:00 to go out. I have suggested 8:00, but that does not work. They said there is nobody out there. I said, “If you’re out there, there is somebody out there. Call a group of friends.” But it does not work.

They go in the locker room, sit around the locker room. Since we have got 11 lanes with 25 yards apart in some places, not everybody knows what sets people are doing, much less how well they are doing them. They sat around, and they go around and each person would talk about one or two good things they had done that week, so everybody would know. Then they would all go eat together.

That is one way; I would have never thought of that—I am ready to get out of there Friday too, but that held us together, raised us higher than we could have been. I believe Swimming is a great-part physical but you must have that mental commitment also. You cannot have somebody going-through-the-motions. So that.

We have had team meetings in April and May, after the season; *what could we do better, what are you worried about for next year, what do I have to do for you to make you better.* They were all concerned that the chemistry on the team is changing. And I told them, I said, “Well, you know, two years ago it changed from then also. It always changes.” I said, “Some of you may have to work harder to make this team as successful.”

And I define success as: going fast. We do not talk about winning the NAAs; we talk about... if everybody on my team goes significantly faster, that takes care of whatever we need. What if everybody on the team goes fast enough to be happy with their season, we get fifth;

we could not have done any better. That is all that matters, getting them to go faster.

One thing I wanted to mention about them eating together, you need to know thirty people deciding on a place to eat, there are people that are going to go eat some place for the sake of the group that they do not want to go and that is part of the game. There is always people that must give more than others; they have got to be willing to do that.

And I am aiming for perfection. I know that we are not going to get it, but you need to aim fairly high. Any time you deal with the human animal, there are going to be ups and downs—especially the male college animal, there is going to be ups and downs.

The back to this book, Leadership is an Art. My wife found this book; we were at a non-denominational church retreat, over in the middle, right next to a crystal-clear river. And when we went in, it is just a place where you see turkey and deer and catch six-pound bass, or two-pound bass; it is just a perfect place. We were over there and there was no meeting going on. We knew the guy that ran it and he let us come over for three or four days in May—it is one of the neatest things I have done. They would always leave the library open for Eleanor, because she is a voracious reader and she found this little book. (Found this little book; it is about *that* thick.)

And at that time my glass was full. If you pay attention to practice, and I am a very sensitive person, and I notice everything. I notice who sleeps in my talks; not at school they do not, but here. (That is good and bad.) But I notice who grimaces when I give them a workout, or a set, and it bothers me. And I am not getting over it; you would hope that day that you would get over it. So I tell my guys: I get from 100-200 negatives a day and at their age they could not stand it.

But this was about fifteen or sixteen years ago, we were over at this place and my glass was full. I was fed up, I was emotionally burned-out. In the sense of taking what they gave me; taking their negatives to heart. And anybody can say *don't take it personally, big deal.* I do. You know, it is because I am part of it. I like to put out a workout or a bunch of sets that everybody loves; I am in the wrong business. [laughter] You know, because I say we decide what is good for them by what they do not like. If they like a set, they never see it again; but if they cry and bleed from the face, we know it was good for them.

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Anyway, I read this book. I just read the protective cover and it said: *the leader should bear the pain and never give the pain*. I was well; someone else told me I was doing it right. And then it goes on to say: all you do the rest of the way is say *thank you* and *please*. And make sure you know the person's name; address them by their name, because that is important to them. It is all simple stuff. Well anyway, I have not needed a refresher course in that in a while. I am still getting my 100-200 negatives, and some of them are much bigger than others.

But I am not a motivational talker. There are a number of coaches out there that are successful at motivating a team because they will be real rough on the team, it will be the team verses the coach a little bit. I cannot stand that; that is purely personal. I see it work and sometimes I envy that, but that is just not the way I am. It does not make me right or it does not make them wrong; it just the way I am, I cannot do that.

Then there are great story tellers out there, and I really want to be a great story teller. When my daughters were growing up, I used to tell stories all the time. And then I started singing stories to them, and at age 3—one turned three two years before the other one—both of them at age 3 said: *Dad, please don't sing*. I have never gotten over that; but I do sing terribly.

Then I try to appeal on a... *intellectual* is too potent of a word; but I try to appeal on a *logical* basis. I have got to set it all out. And occasionally before... we had one NCAA, in 1981, that we had a morning... the first morning session, we were terrible. I took them in after the morning session and yelled at them, and I do not yell very often. We came back to do very well the rest of the meet. I do not know if they would have done that anyway, they might have.

Like this time, we had two freshman, one with Olympic experience, one high Olympic Trials finish experience. And the one, Ian Crocker, who went to the Olympics, said that the NCAAs was more frightening for him than the Olympics had been. It is hard to defuse that. So I just left him alone and he was fine. But that kind of fear can slow you down.

And on occasion, I do give emotional talks. But I always tie it to something that we know; something that happened for our team. Like two years ago at the NCAAs we had a young man who had tried real-hard for four years to make the NCAA team. He had done everything I asked, and he had not done it. He had gone considerably faster. Our system of picking the individuals that go to the NCAAs is difficult, difficult to sit through. Send in your fastest times then you have to

wait until everybody scratches, and then you see how it fits into a formula with taking only 235 swimmers and then you know whether you are going or not.

Well, he had a flight the next morning to like Cancun, we find out that he is going and we never thought he had a chance. He went and he took-over the team while he was there; he was an inspiration to us and for us, just by the way he handled it. He had not been in the water in four or five days before he found out he was going, and he got up and swam one of the best swims of his life. But that was... he was not doing that for himself, he was doing that partially for himself but for the team.

Swimming is an individual sport, that is scored as a team sport; that the individual will be better if the team is behind the individual. Not just at the meets, but in practice all the time. Once again: there are not miracles out there. The only miracle is in the athlete, and you are the ones that get to unlock that. There is a big physical part and a very important mental part.

My wife said: *have you ever motivated an audience?* Well I am going to try. I tried earlier by reminding you how important your job is: what an opportunity you have got to help people. Not to be Olympians; to try things there are no guarantee for, to commit to something with no guarantee. Not many of us will do that, to commit to something with no guarantee. I think that is the biggest problem facing... at least swimmers at my college, is to try something. Whether it is to commit to doing workouts the way that I want them to, or trying to race the way I want them to.

I read a lot. I read a lot of fiction, so I can hide; and I read some non-fiction. But I really believe that the fiction writers have got a better grasp of real life, if you listen to some of the lessons they have in there. And a long time ago I read a couple of sentences by a guy talking about... the theory is that no matter... well you have heard the one about the person who dies with the most toys wins the game? Even before that saying was: whatever you have got when you die, you cannot take it with you.

One of these fiction books, it was either by a guy named John D. MacDonald—if you have not read any of his books, they are very entertaining—or a guy named Alistair MacLean—who wrote many, many books. One of those two guys, it was in their book, and it was very simple. It said: the only thing you can take with you when you die is that which you have given others. That is the whole crux. If you aim in that direction, you will succeed. It is difficult.

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The greater the task you try to accomplish, the higher you try to go, the more pain involved, the more problems involved. The Peter principal that you get advanced one job beyond what you can do, I do not believe that. We get advanced one job beyond the problems we are willing to handle; that is how that seems to work to me. Not skill level, it is what you are willing to face, because it is painful. But you know that.

Erma Bombeck was one of the greater humorous of our time, and she spoke at a graduation of college students. She talked to them in a humorous sense—I wish I could have it here to read. The main deal with her talk was that young people that age are not getting ready to go into life, they have already been in life. And they have; they face everything we do. They do not face as much of it, but they do face the same things. The tragedies, the happiness, all of that kind of stuff.

(So I have motivated everybody in here to go take a nap, haven't I?)

Once again, it is a simple process. It is like marriage, when you are coaching swimmers: it is not give-and-take, it is give-and-give. Just be ready for that. If you have a real problem with it or you need some help, e-mail someone else (other than me). No, I am glad to help.

Have you got any questions that I can talk about with you? If not... I am going to do something you should be doing. I have been coaching college for over twenty years—and over thirty years, but I was not going to brag about that. Started when I was 12. [laughter] (That is correct: that is a lie.) I have never repeated a workout. That is from being left handed—I blame it on my left handedness. Supposedly we do not like to do the same things over and over. In fact, I was rewriting what I wanted to say in this talk as you were coming in, because I had some different angles that I had thought about.

Are there no questions out there? Oh! we got them. Yes sir?

[audience member]: What do you guys do in regards to team unity and team building? Any concepts?

[Reese]: To talk about team unity, it does not happen... we are the last team in the country to get together as a unit, I think. It does not happen for us because I do not force it, because I am not good at that. Either that or it is easy for me to do. It does not happen until Christmas training, when they go home for a week, come back December 27; they do not go to school for three weeks and they do everything together. Now I really believe

this Friday deal, if they keep it up... and if they do not keep it up, I am going to ask somebody to suggest it. But there are some people that are real good at that, and we do not force that issue.

But we come together naturally and pretty much on their terms, somewhere in early January. It scares me. Sometimes just going to meets help that. So I have got two meets in October this year to help that, because it is very important. But if you do the little things in practice, and you can get the athletes to buy-into, as a peer, not doing the negative thing, lets you do the negative things, then it is going to happen. I am much more interested in that group, my group, making it happen than I am making it happen myself. Probably I could.

Yes sir?

[audience member]: Can you speak a bit about how you work, or encourage, the leaders on your team?

[Reese]: Well before we vote, I give them my how-to-elect-captains talk—probably about three or four days. I say: *do not elect a captain that you think this is going to help them be better, outside of the pool or in the pool.* Not true: it has happened; but rarely does that happen. *Elect somebody that is going to help you and help me.*

We finish practice at five o'clock, and I make it a point, three days a week, to just go sit in the office. Not to talk to anybody on the deck, other coaches or anybody on the deck; I just go in the office and sit down. And they come out of the locker room through my office, so if anybody wants to talk. I do not force the captain issue. I will check with them; I just say: *is there anything I can help you with.*

Kind of like when you have roommate problems. I think I am a genius at putting roommates together. One year, during the first semester, everybody wanted different roommates; recently, I have been better at that. But I told my freshman the other day: if you have got a problem with your roommate, I want you to handle it. And that means you have got to sit down and talk. Here freshmen comes in, they want to do everything the first year—whatever everything is. And they used to... [break in recording] ...problems and they have got to get used to not having their way or not having their territory when they want it. Both roommates do. And if they cannot solve it, I sit down and talk to them.

The last thing I want to do is change roommates. Then I have lost: I have not done a good job. Not just at putting them together, but keeping them together. If it had not

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been detrimental to the team, or anything like that. But the captains get in on that, if there is someone that... not *if, when* there is someone that plays their music loud in the dorm. Captains are usually juniors and seniors, do not live in the dorm, and they will come in and ask them. It is so much easier for them to ask, than for me to worry about all of that. I do worry about it, but if I ask them not to do it they know I am not going to come up in their dorm room. I will never know; I will just hear about it again. It is all simple living skills.

But I want to... the reason I sit in the office is I want to be there if anybody wants to talk. And occasionally... not occasionally: a lot of swimmers are introverts and you have got to force the issue. So you have got to have your questions that you want to ask that individual. Because they are not going to come up with anything; they are going to give you the shortest answers they can give you. Now, they will come out of that by... somewhere around the end of their freshman year, they will be better. But when they first get there, they are quiet.

Yes?

[audience member]: What or who motivates you?

[Reese]: Wooh. Well, I really believe that I am there to help them. I mean, you go into practice not feeling good. You know the normal work force in America today, if they do not feel good, they do not go in. I gave my guys a talk, maybe the beginning of the summer; I said: you are graduating in the easiest time in the world to get a job. People do not care; if they do not feel good, they do not go in. You get to do that; we all do that.

I do not do it for money; I do not do it for winning. If I go back a long way, when I swam, I could have been a good swimmer. Of course, I could tell you how good I was and you would not know. But I would have a hard time being ranked Top-16 11+12 girls. And if they were using my yards times as meters. But I could have been a real-good swimmer. I did not have anybody... I honestly believe this, Randy and I have talked about this—my brother—and we both could have been real-good swimmers and we did not have an opportunity to do that. And I think that is part of the drive.

But I am also, as easy-going as I seem, underneath I am very competitive. But I can... once it is over, I can give it up. I played a lot of racquetball in my life, and I lost a lot. I played a lot of good players and lost a lot. When I am in there, I am trying to beat them; I think that I can beat them every time. When it is over, if I have played well or competed well, I can live with it; when I play badly, it is tough on me.

But I was not a great racer, because when I came through Age Group swimming, I won everything. I was first in the nation in a couple of events at age 16. When I was 14, I was first in one, second in one, third in one. I mean, real-slow times. My brother had a 13-year-old boy go 200m IM in 2:12, and it would have been a close race between us, with my 200-yard freestyle time. Back in those days, so you how... when I was 14. It embarrasses me how my times were so slow—not enough to start training. [laughter]

But I think it is a bunch of things. And I really enjoy it. Like I said: I love practice. And I love the hard work they do. You need to know swimmers are the hardest working athletes in the world—there is no doubt about it. And I appreciate that.

Yes?

[audience member]: You tell us you do not like surprises and that you try not to have any, and do not plan for them, really. Can you filter what that means for your team in the sense of being unprepared in meets when they are surprised?

[Reese]: Okay, the question is about preparing for surprises. Generally speaking, if I am not prepared for surprises, I am average at that situation. I am not very good in a surprise situation, so, personally, I do a lot of scenarios that never can happen but some of them can happen. But you just want your team to have a purpose, and know that there are going to be bumps along the way. I do not think that you can prepare them for everything; it is part of the learning process. I almost wish that we could go to this relay meet, and they did not know that they were going to swim 13 or 14 relays. Just throw that at them; so I just surprised them early.

But I do not believe that that is not going to be one of our problems. Now if we get a relay disqualified at the NCAAs, then that is beyond surprise. That would bother me. But I have seen... and we have not had one yet [knock, knock, knock], knock on wood—and I am not even superstitious. But we have not had one. But I have seen other people, seen it happen to them, and they just keep right on rolling; and that is the way it is supposed to be.

Yes?

[audience member]: Do you ever have athletes arrive that are burned-out by the sport, and how do you handle that?

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[Reese]: Alright: *do you ever have athletes arrived that are burned out by the sport and how do you motivate those.* Since I get to choose my athletes more carefully than you do, not very often does that happen. Because most of the people I pick are on a pretty-fast or pretty-steep improvement curve. And I am a firm believer that burnout is not by... does not occur in practice, does not occur by what mom and dad says to them at home, it occurs when you do not go faster. That is what I see as *burnout*. Or someone who is dominant at 11+12, moves-up an Age Group; and they won everything at age 12. That is why I protect them, and define success as going *faster*, not by winning.

I talked to a group of people after the talk yesterday about... maybe the most important thing we can do is educate parents, because they have such a profound influence on the athlete when they come home. An athlete comes home and says *Oh the work... sits down, they are beat, oh, the workout was so hard.* And if the parent says *that's great, that's just what you need to get better* or they say *that's too bad, I'll go talk to the coach*; that athlete forms different opinions that they carry back with them. And we need all the help we can get.

The parent wants what we want from the athlete; they want them to go faster. It is real simple: they want them to be better. You have got to tell them how to help.

Any more? I see someone that wants to raise a hand.

[audience member]: Early on you were talking about individual meetings and setting goals. If it is unrealistic to try to help them with adjusting it or telling them what to do in order to reach that goal. For example, if you had a swimmer who wants to drop from a 1:50 to a 1:40 in the 200, what kind of things do you tell them they would have to do in practice in order to reach that goal?

[Reese]: There was a young man that came to our camp a number of years ago from a place where he went one-a-days, even in the summer. He was 55 for the 100 fly, 55 for the 100 back, yards, 1:51 for the 200 free. He got real excited about the sport, and he came to me and said: *what can I do to have a chance on one-a-days?* I said, "You've got to run three of those days, and get to where you can do sets of 50 push-ups." He had excellent strokes. Well, he went from 1:51 to 1:41; he went from 55 to 51; he dropped from 4:35 400 IM to 4:03. But he ran 3-5 miles, three days a week. Got to where he was doing... after each run, he was doing 400 push-ups in sets of 50.

So I do not want to mislead you by telling you that, or making it look like, everybody that says that they want

to go real-fast, super-fast, I talk them out of it; I do not. I am a dreamer, I am an optimist and I let them go. But I mean if somebody comes in at 1:42, they are 6'5", weigh 165, you can hold them up to a light and see their skeleton; for them to go fast, they have got to put on... they have got to eat right, they cannot sleep through.... (There is somebody in this room I told this to when they were in school.) They cannot sleep through breakfast Sunday morning; they cannot miss out on that 2500 calorie. They cannot just have two meals on Sunday; they have got to get up and eat and then go back to sleep. But there are a lot of things they can do to help them.

This guy that was 1:42, very logically said he wanted to go 1:39 this year. Came in the next year, said he wanted to break 1:37, he did not: he went 1:37-flat. He was out too fast; he got in a race, put his feet on the wall in 46.2—he looked like me on the last 50. *Tired Boy* is his title now, because when he gets tired, he has got long arms, he has not got the strength to keep them moving when he gets real fatigued.

It takes time to get there. 1:50 to 1:42, if the person has got a good stroke, is reasonable. That is a jump that can be made. It happens all over.

Yes?

[audience member]: Conversely, we have also taught people that had whole different levels, cannot go back and bring new blood.

[Reese]: Right. Like when we had somebody from Mississippi come to school and had no clue. He was 54 butterfly and ended up at 47. That is true.

I think that is all the time I have got. Thank you very much.



# Becoming a Profession Coach: show me the money!

by Wayne Goldsmith, *Australia*

Coaching can be enjoyable, challenging, rewarding and fulfilling. The opportunity to work with swimmers who are committed and determined and who are passionate about realizing their potential is a very positive life experience. Some coaches may choose to pursue this positive experience full time by becoming a professional swimming coach.

Whilst following this coaching dream can be highly rewarding—both personally and professionally—there are some problems and pitfalls to overcome in your pursuit of full time coaching. In addition, the “fitness” coaching market is more competitive than ever before. The “fitness-coach” industry is growing rapidly with numerous institutions offering short courses in fitness development—including the concepts, principles and practices of endurance training, speed and sprint development and swimming technique for the general fitness market.

Whilst these “fitness-gurus” may lack the specialist coaching expertise of a well-trained, experienced swimming coach, most fitness industry courses also include learning modules on business development, client management and marketing. You may be able to “out-coach” them, but they may have superior skills and training in marketing, social media management and client servicing. Regardless of your level of swimming expertise, your clients (i.e. swimmers), particularly those searching for coaching services via the internet, may choose the services of a fitness professional over an accredited swimming coach based on perceptions of expertise from professional image, program marketing and online presence.

The aim therefore is to help professional swimming coaches to grow their market by incorporating some basic good business practices in their coaching. This article aims to raise some of the problems and pitfalls of professional swimming coaching, and provide coaches with some practical solutions and simple processes to ensure that their transition into the world of professional coaching is successful.

## #1 - More than the money

Being a professional coach is not just about receiving money for your coaching services. It's about the overall standards of your coaching and the quality of the coaching services that you can provide for your swimmers (i.e. your clients). Simply doing what you do now and charging money for it may not be enough to establish and grow a financially viable professional

coaching business. Increasingly, sporting clients are becoming more discerning about the professional coaching marketplace, and are demanding higher standards from the people they pay for coaching advice, programs and guidance. It is not enough to merely offer training programs, as these are freely available on the internet for little or no cost.

As a professional coach, clearly understand what it is you are offering as professional coaching services, and package and promote these services to be attractive and of tangible value to paying clients. Do some research! Ask your current clients what it is they are looking for from your coaching. Develop a questionnaire about coaching services and invite people to talk about their coaching needs. By listening to the market and paying attention to your clients and potential clients, you can potentially build a very successful professional coaching business.

## #2 - Value yourself and your time appropriately

Pick up a piece of paper and a pen. Write down in large numbers how much you feel your coaching is worth per session, per week and per month. Now look at the numbers you've written down and... DOUBLE THEM. The majority of coaches in Swimming under-charge their clients considerably, while at the same time other professionals working with the swimmers charge their full professional rates. Decide what your time, experience and skills are worth and charge your clients accordingly.

## #3 - Show me the money

Coaches love to talk. They can talk about speed. They can talk about technique. They can talk about skills. But many coaches find it difficult to talk about money. Before a swimmer starts training in your program, tell them up-front what your costs will be, when their coaching payments are due and how you prefer to be paid.

## #4 - Be clear about your fees and charges

Once you've decided on your fees and charges, be up front and clear about them. Advertise your coaching fees on your web site, blog and social media sites. Have them printed up on a sheet and hand them to every swimmer who wants to join your program.

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**#5 - It's business. It's fun. It's sport. It's all about the swimmers. But it's a business.**

Ask yourself this question: Why do I coach? Every coach gets into coaching for the right reasons—and mostly those reasons revolve around helping swimmers to realize their potential, achieve a performance goal or reach a seemingly impossible Olympic dream. However, as a professional coach, these ostensibly ethereal and philosophical reasons for coaching have to be balanced with an understanding that coaching is also a business. In many of the Olympic sports, “traditionalist” coaches still feel their sport should be committed to the ideals of amateurism. However, across the world, professional swimmers, sports administrators, sports scientists, sports medicine professionals, strength and conditioning specialists, and equipment manufacturers all receive payment for their professional services. Why shouldn't you be paid for your coaching knowledge, expertise, experience and skills?

**#6 - Understand your real costs and expenses**

One area to think about is your costs and expenses. Some coaches might charge a small fee for an actual face-to-face training session, but fail to factor in all the time, energy, expertise and effort that's been committed to:

- a. planning training sessions;
- b. reviewing training data;
- c. purchasing training equipment, software and related technologies;
- d. travel to and from training sessions;
- e. phone calls with clients;
- f. emails and texts with clients;
- g. time spent researching the sport, the latest results, seeking information about upcoming events and evaluating the latest thinking on sports science and technique;
- h. swimming industry related costs—memberships, affiliations, insurances etc.;
- i. travel costs to and from competitions;
- j. food and drink at competitions;
- k. doing accounts, checking bank statements and completing tax requirements;
- l. paying tax.

And a thousand other things.

Charging a small squad of swimmers a few dollars per session might seem like a good business decision but when you take into consideration the real costs of being a coach in the sport and the actual time, energy and commitment it takes to coach effectively as a professional, you may reconsider your fee structures.

**#7 - You're in a competitive coaching market.**

**What's your POD?**

There are a lot of “keyboard” coaches on the internet, all promising great performance results. There are programs to improve speed. There are programs to improve endurance. There are technique analysis programs available on the internet where swimmers can upload a short video of themselves swimming and the “keyboard coach” comes back with a list of drills and skills work to do to improve swimming technique. In this competitive coaching market, what's your *point of difference* (POD)? What are you offering in your professional coaching business that distinguishes you from the rest? Why would a swimmer come to you for coaching when there are so many affordable and easy to access training programs and tips available in the palm of their hand on their smart-phone?

**#8 - What's your market**

One of the keys to establishing and growing a successful business is understanding what your market is. For example, you may like working one-on-one with high performance distance swimmers, but there's little or no financial reward for coaches coaching in this environment. However, your skills as a coach may allow you to coach a large group of triathletes twice a week as part of your “Swimming for Beginner Triathletes” program. Or you could use your knowledge and expertise in swimming to help a local school students to prepare for their school swimming meet. Or you could approach a local health club or fitness center and take “Swimming for Health and Fitness” classes.

If your aim is to become a professional and develop a financially sustainable business model, then look wider than just within the sport for business opportunities. Schools need quality coaching in their swimming, water polo and physical education programs. Triathletes are always on the lookout for good coaches who can improve their swimming speed, technique and endurance. Define your market, then build your business around delivering quality coaching services for your market.

**#9 - Getting known: growing your coaching business**

Facebook, Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn, Instagram and other social media and connection tools will not go away. Use them to tell people where you are, what you do and all about your program, your coaching skills, your experience and your coaching expertise.

Keep it simple: start with a Facebook account and start posting a weekly coaching tip. Maybe add a Twitter account and write a weekly comments about improving technique. Take some images of your swimmers

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training and post them to Instagram to demonstrate your technical expertise. Ask your swimmers to comment, to “like” and to share your ideas, posts, images and “tweets”, and within a short time you’ll have a thriving online community of people all learning about you and following your coaching program.

### **#10 - Thinking differently**

Coaching in many parts of the world is a respected profession where athletes and the general sporting community value the role and expertise of hard working, committed coaches. How you and your coaching are perceived is your decision. Think differently. There is no reason why your program cannot only produce great results, but also be a successful, thriving and profitable business. The key is learning to balance your passion for swimming performance and your commitment to the sport, with your desire to build a sustainably successful coaching business.

### Summary

1. **Becoming a professional coach is for many coaches a dream: something they think about while working 9-5 in an office or a factory or in another workplace.** But it can be a dream that comes true for coaches who are prepared to think differently about swimming coaching.
2. **Try to think like a client.** Why would someone come to *you* for coaching advice? The internet is full of “keyboard coaches” and cheap training programs for swimmers of all ages and levels of ability. What is it about you, and your coaching, that represents good value and high quality in the swimming coaching market?
3. **You can’t expect clients to value your coaching if you don’t value yourself.** Develop a schedule of professional fees which represents your true coaching value and feel comfortable with charging your clients appropriately for your time and expertise.

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