

The JOURNAL

Official Publication of the
National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association of America, Inc.



Photo by Aleksandra Pramenko (Serbia) - "We Found Our Way" (Feb 2023)

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March - April 2023



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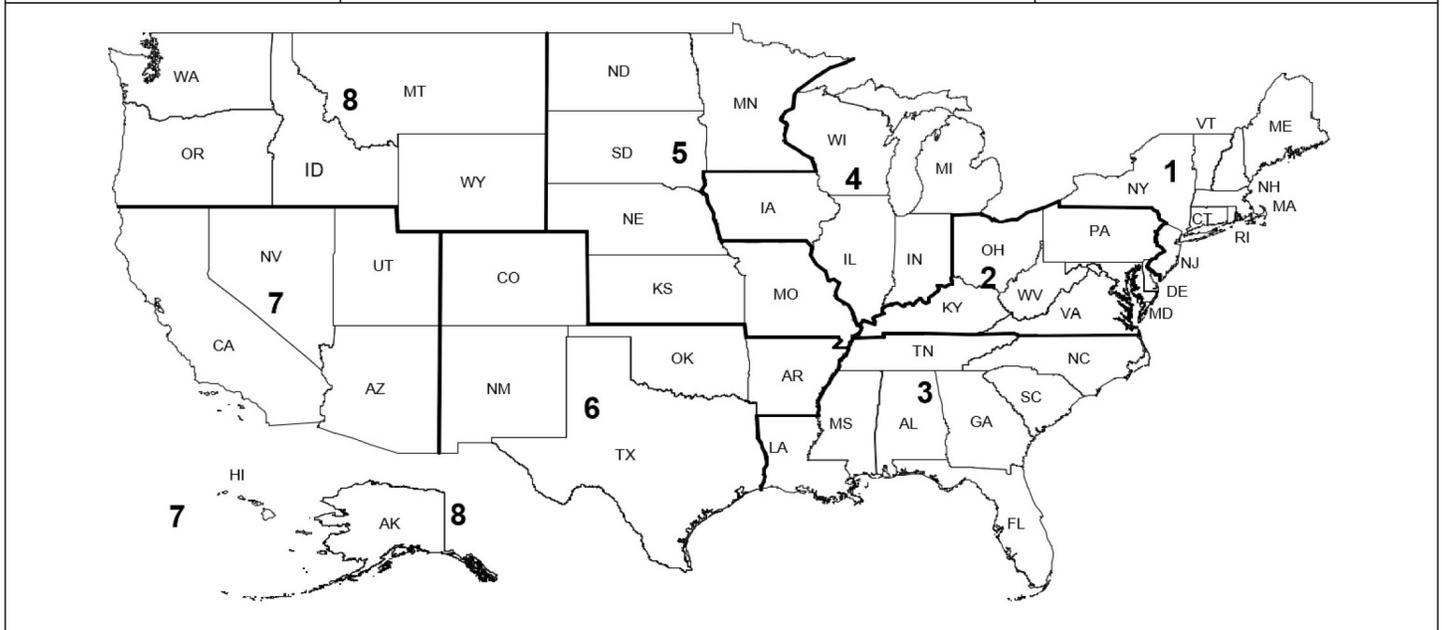
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Serbian artist **Aleksandra Pramenko** is from Novi Sad, Serbia. She started swimming at the age of 14, and won several competitions in Serbia, later becoming an assistant coach at one of the swimming clubs there. The photo is of a loaf of bread. During Covid restrictions in Serbia, she decided to make and paint bread with spices. Her first effort she named "Free Willy" after the movie of the same name. She writes: ***"At that time we were all denied the freedom to move freely and do what we love. Also, the swimming club where I held training sessions for children and adults closed down. Everything was different. The sequence of negative events motivated me to move things in a positive direction and I came up with something different to make the others and myself feel better. We should always keep 'swimming' in life. Swimming as a sport had a deeper connotation for me because it led me to continue 'swimming' in life no matter what obstacles were in front of me."***

[Please see additional comments from Aleksandra in the Editor's Letter on page 6.-Ed.]

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National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association of America
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Dear NISCA Membership,

This is my last letter as president of NISCA. At our annual conference in Knoxville, Mark Jedow will take over the reins of our great organization. Mark is a great leader for high school aquatics and I look forward to supporting him during his tenure.

I have a lousy memory, except when it comes to remembering things about my teams and my swimmers. My wife sometimes wonders how I can remember times from 30 years ago, but I forget what I was supposed to pick up at the grocery store. It doesn't usually go over well when I mention that I have better memory for things I am passionate about, like coaching. I clearly remember how kind the NISCA leadership team was back when I was a young coach and was reaching out with questions. The amount of time Paul Torno took to answer questions I had and to get to know me as a coach made a positive, lasting impression. I'm proud to say that every person on our letterhead has the same passion for helping coaches and athletes. Don't hesitate to contact us so we can support you in your coaching endeavors. Flip this page to see who I'm writing about.

I'm finishing this letter on a morning prior to coaching my last meet. I've always thought of myself as a reflective person, but knowing that this is my last year of teaching and coaching has led to more reflection than normal for me. What we do as coaches is to share our experiences with our athletes and try to lead them down a pathway towards success. The experience we share is made up of both our past failures and successes, and what we've learned along the way. We offer advice to our swimmers, we listen to them, and then we modify what we do based on what we believe will work best for them. We coach and we evolve and we share some more, not only with our swimmers, but with their parents and with our colleagues. The sharing with colleagues usually has the benefit of learning from our colleagues. What a great profession we are all in!

I'd be remiss if I did not thank all of you for your support during my term as president of NISCA. I have had the privilege to see first hand the commitment that coaches across the country have toward not only their own athletes, but making high school swimming, diving and water polo the best it can be locally and nationally. Our executive board at NISCA is just outstanding in their commitment to you and your athletes. Your involvement in our mission is crucial to the success of interscholastic aquatics in this country.

Best wishes for continued success in your coaching. Thank you for the opportunity to serve our coaching community.

Tim

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

There is a Facebook group called **Art For Swimmers**. I have been a group member and follower for almost 2-1/2 years. It is amazing what wonderful illustrations of various forms of enjoying and moving through the water have been shared by the creative artists posting there.

I happily encountered the wonderful photo on the front cover by a woman named Aleksandra Pramenko. I sent here a message through Facebook asking for permission to use her photo, and it was only in her replied approval for use that I learned the subject was a loaf of BREAD!

In a string of back-and-forth messages, I learned she was from Serbia, about 45 miles northwest of Belgrade, and had been a swimmer and a swim coach. She wrote that she had always loved to draw. Her profession is in the field of economics, and she says that art and swimming were her escapes from everyday life (or as we call it, the "rat race").

She mostly worked with groups for basic swimming techniques for non-swimmers, for non-competitive (recreational, everyday) swimmers from 5-16, as well as older ages and sometimes with competitive swimmers. The club she worked for includes competitive swimming as well as recreational swimming. Aleksandra says she is not yet a Masters swimmer, but that is her next goal.

I asked her, "Why use BREAD as an artistic medium?" Her reply was beautiful:

I come from Serbia. The traditions of my country have always given great importance to bread. The essence of bread serves as the basic food for sustaining human life on earth. For more than 6000 years, bread has united many people in the world. The production of bread was given to mankind by the Egyptians. Great civilizations were created with bread: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Asia Minor and Africa, Iran, India and Rome. [The] water symbol is also deeply connected with all cultures. Traditionally, water means life, change, regeneration, forgiveness and flexibility. Diving is a symbol of searching for the secret of life. Considering that, I found it interesting to connect bread, as a symbol of life survival, water as the source of life symbol, and two swimmers who found their way in their lives.

She concluded: *Thank you for encouraging art through this sport and for promoting unestablished artists and their talents. Art is about sharing beauty and joy. I have the wind at my back now!*

NISCA is delighted to welcome Aleksandra Pramenko to our growing group of artist-contributors and hope she will honor us with additional samples of her inspiring work!



Tiny Thought

Good thinking is expensive. Bad thinking costs a fortune.

One way to force yourself to think is to write. Good writing requires good thinking.

Forcing yourself to make your thinking visible gives poor thinking nowhere to hide. You can't simply take a few minutes here and there, get the gist of the problem, and expect to have clear writing. It doesn't work that way.

Good writing, like good thinking, takes time.



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Growing Your Assistant Coaches

Karl Hamouche, M.D.

Adapted from the book "Swimming Coach's Starter Guide", by K. Hamouche and M. Peterson

You have an opportunity to teach and mentor your assistant coaches. This can take a lot of extra effort that you are not necessarily expected to do or paid to do, but here are several reasons why you should do it:

1-Your assistant coaches are an extension of you and your coaching style. They can't read your mind, so if you never sit them down and explain how you like practice to be run, how you like freestyle taught, how you like to build team culture... they won't know.

2-By having a common language and set of drills throughout the entire team, you can help build team culture and a team identity everyone can relate to. If every coach is doing their own thing, it can feel like there are multiple teams that happen to train at the same pool.

3-Build redundancy and resiliency in your team. In case a coach is sick or can't make it to practice, it becomes much easier to fill the gaps between different coaches if everyone has the same goal, expectations, coaching style and language to keep training uninterrupted and focused.

4-By building effective and trustworthy coaches, you can send them out into the world to coach at clubs or summer teams in the local area and use those contacts to recruit swimmers for your middle school and high school teams. Think of it like local franchising where the person in charge was trained and educated by you! This gives your entire team more swimmers to compete with and more officials to help run meets.

5-You will eventually leave the team. Whether you retire or take a new job, your time on the team is limited. When you leave, you want to know you built something that will last. If you leave behind a group of inexperienced coaches who weren't pushed to be better, your old team will inevitably suffer and fail. Don't leave that kind of legacy behind, work to make the team resilient enough to work without you there.

Now that we have gone over the reasons why you should grow coaches, we can talk about how to do it in real life. Just like with your swimmers, you need to set aside time on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) to meet with you coaches. During this meeting, you should do three things:

- ◆ Gather information to find out how you can improve and educate. When gathering information, ask how the team is running on a day-to-day basis. Are there swimmer or parent complaints? Are practices running smoothly? etc.

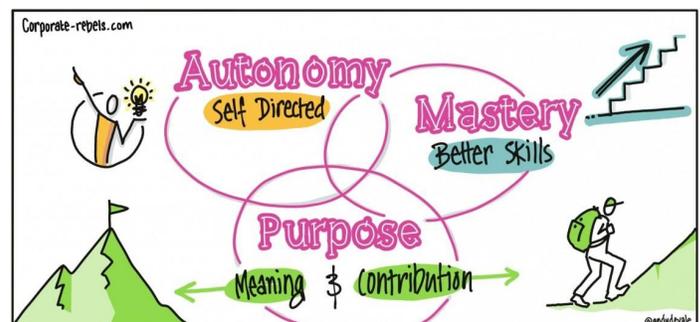
- ◆ Next, ask what you can do for your coaches. What do they need in order to do their jobs better? Show that you want to serve them and help them improve how they do their work.
- ◆ Take the time to educate them. Just like you do with your swimmers, find a subject you think your coaches generally struggle with and try to address it. With young new coaches, you can focus on how to teach the strokes or how to write workouts. As they progress, teach them how to build and manage a team, run practice, behave at meets.

Finally, work on their leadership skills and help them improve the way they develop their swimmers as people just like you are developing your coaches as people.

Let's say you want to teach your coaches how to improve their motivational skills. We must first start with finding a good resource and an authority to learn from. The book *Drive* by Daniel Pink is a great start. Although geared towards corporations and businesses, the findings of the book are widely applicable.

The premise of the book is that the old "carrot and stick" method of motivating employees by offering rewards for good work or punishment for bad work is outdated and de-motivating. These "extrinsic" motivators don't work in the 21st century.

Instead, Pink shows how research teaches us that there are three main components to building and maintaining motivation: Purpose, Autonomy and Mastery. As you teach these concepts to your coaches, you can have them read the book itself or you can teach them from it. Don't try to do too much at once, take your time and tackle each section on its own. In addition, always try to make or challenge your coaches to make real-life applicable changes for their swimmers using the concepts they learn.



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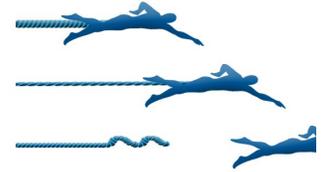


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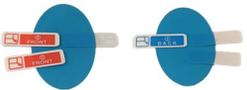
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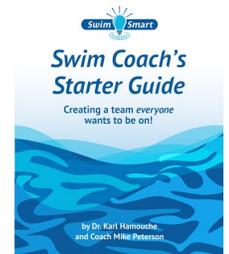
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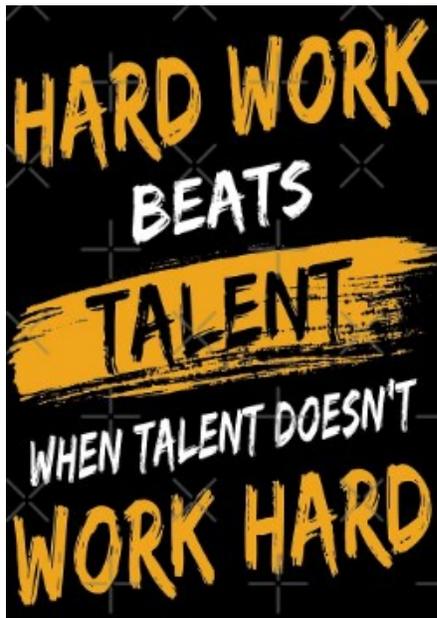
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Hard Work vs Talent: The Battle of the Ages

by Aimee Schmitt



There are many inspirational quotes that coaches can relate to, but few ring more true than this one on an everyday level: ***Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.***

As coaches, how often do we see true talent go nowhere because of a poor work ethic and an *I-don't-care* attitude?

It is tragic to see a young swimmer not reach their potential simply because they don't show up to practices, or when they do, they don't work very hard.

What can coaches do to foster a desire to work hard, especially when working hard is often painful and uncomfortable and doesn't show immediate results?

One method that can help get swimmers learn to have a work ethic, is to present them with reflection. In other words, inspire them to be accountable to themselves and not just their team or coach. Here are some ideas worth a try to jumpstart a culture of hard work mentality:

1. Have a meeting with a large whiteboard and have the team participate in the definition of hard work. Read the dictionary definition. Talk about why it's scary to some. What does it look like on a daily basis--in practice, at meets, in the classroom? Encourage all team members to add something to the definition. Is it just *"do what the coach says and turn off your mind?"* Remind the team that **the goal is engaged swimmers who are excited to be challenged, not afraid to fail.**

Revisit the "white board" meetings every month to re-inspire

the swimmers to stay on the path towards the goal.

2. Make a list of *"things that are difficult"* about swimming and practices, and then talk about why they are hard. Is it truly too hard or is it a problem of not trying? Remind them that the brain is naturally wired to find the path of least resistance in various tasks, and **the repetition of swimming can lead to mindless laps if not focused on being intentional.** Engage the team on how they personally can benefit from *intentional* hard work and wrestling with things that are perceived as *"too hard"*. List these benefits on the board. List what being intentional means.

3. Establish a picture of the season. Let the swimmers know how many practices make up the season. Break down the practices into segments that can be *"conquered"* as a group. Identify when there will be challenge sets. Drive home the point that working hard is a **good** thing and that the point of the training is to go through periods of challenges so they can level up. The equation has to include hard work. When swimmers begin to understand what the scope of practices look like, and how there is a plan for the season--they will recognize their role in the process and that they can level up in different ways in the training process.

4. As the coach, outline how and when hard work is expected. What does that look like in a practice? Does a swimmer need to give 110% on everything all the time, or are there specific places where hard work and pushing through discomfort are needed? For example, warm-up is **not** where 110% effort level is expected---but certain sets **will** need 80%, 90% or 100% effort. Let them know that this will be defined. Additionally, let them know that **there will always be certain non-negotiable items** like turns, finishes and push-offs that they need to focus on throughout the season. Effort level can be defined by intervals, breath control, turns and underwater kickouts, perfect strokes, or all-out efforts. Allowing the team to understand that perfectionism is not the goal at every practice, but that parts of each practice will provide focus on different areas makes the hard work expectation manageable.

5. What are the "non-negotiables"? Set up clear demarcations for what is expected as a team member. For example: number of practices expected, being on time, no bathroom breaks, effort level on sets, communication, etc.

6. Encourage your team to make inspirational posters for their locker room and pool area, or before meets. The action of putting things on paper will set them in the mind frame of success.

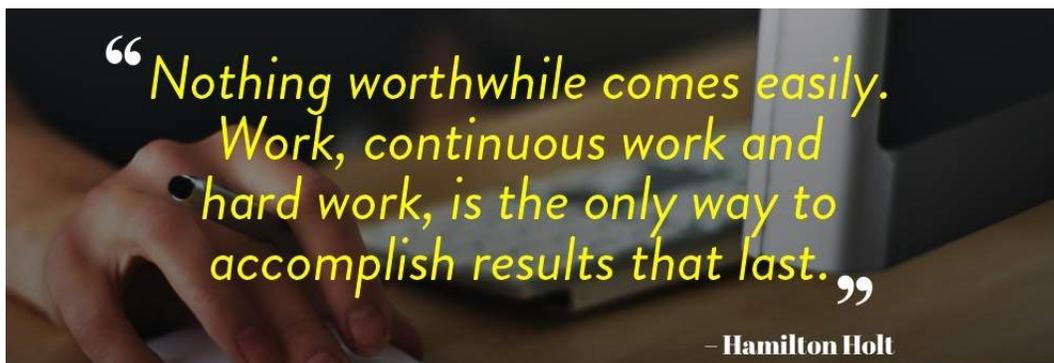
7. Invite your swimmers to "make a contract with themselves" by writing down their personal goals in a log book or goal sheet. This can be as simple as a statement of 3-4 specific items they promise to do for themselves this season to be a better swimmer. Examples include but are not limited to: *"I promise to be on time, have a good attitude, push through one hard thing each practice, focus on not breathing off of walls, cheer for my teammates, etc."* When someone has to formally write up an agreement, there is a seriousness about the commitment. **Sign and date and keep these** until the end of the season to review again.

Building a culture of hard work is no small task. However, once the light bulb goes off for young swimmers they see how they can control their results and feel good about their journey.

Their accomplishments are the results of their efforts, and the hard work ethic becomes contagious and gets passed down as tradition each year.



Aimee Schmitt is the author of The Ultimate Swim Log and Goal Planner, and a former USA Swimming National Team Member, Stanford NCAA Championship team member, and avid believer in goal planning.



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The book cover is blue with a white spiral binding on the left. It features a swimmer in a pool. The title 'THE ULTIMATE SWIM LOG AND GOAL PLANNER' is written in white, and the author's name 'AIMEE SCHMITT' is at the bottom.

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Grant H -Gained over 55lb of lean weight, Top 10 in the country. Added nutrition age 14yr.

Mariah D.-Gained 25lb of lean, got leaner, Top 10 in the country. Added nutrition age 13yr.

Emma D-Got leaner. Won State! **HS**-13yr. Tired & barely improving to Rocking it at every meet, growing:



Muscle-Building IQ: *How much do you really know about protein?*

By Dawn Weatherwax, RD, LD, ATC, CSCS

Did you know?

The average adult after the age of 30 could lose up to two pounds of lean weight per year if they do not add some resistance training and proper nutrition to maintain it.

To build muscle even at a very young age the body needs certain nutrients at the right time to maximize its development.

Most of you would like your athletes to:

Gain lean weight!

Grow when they are supposed to grow!

Optimize their health, growth & athleticism!

Stay injury-free!

This Quiz is going to focus on **one main nutrient**. Let's test your muscle-building IQ.

1. What is the MOST important macronutrient to build muscle?

- A. Carbohydrate
- B. Fat
- C. Protein

C. Protein is a macro nutrient. It is one of the three nutrients found in food that the body needs in large amounts. Every cell in the human body contains protein. It is essential for the maintenance, repair, and building of your muscles, organs, and immune system since they are mostly made up of protein. The basic structure of protein is a chain of amino acids. You need protein in your diet to help your body repair cells and make new ones. Protein is also important for growth and development in children and teens. Proteins are made of small compounds called amino acids. These amino acids build, maintain, and replace the tissues in your body.

To know how much protein, carbohydrates and healthy fats you are consuming I highly recommend using a free app, the Cronometer (www.cronometer.com)

2. How *MUCH* protein is recommended to gain muscle?

- A. 10 grams of protein per pound of body weight
- B. 5 grams of protein per pound of body weight
- C. 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight

C: 1 gram per pound of lean bodyweight or .45g/kg

To know the minimum amount of protein needed, it is critical the person know their **lean weight**. Lean weight is everything but fat. At my office we have a Bod Pod™ that measures body composition. We go by 1g of protein minimally per pound of lean weight.

Example: 6'4", 250lb, 28% body fat, = 180lb (250 x 72%) of lean weight.

That means they need at least 180 grams of protein daily, **NOT** 250 grams. That is a big difference.

3. What is the OPTIMAL way to eat protein to gain lean weight?

- A. Whenever
- B. Breakfast & Supper
- C. Spread evenly throughout the day.

C. Spread evenly throughout the day. The muscle is like a sponge in that it can only absorb so much at a time. If an athlete skips breakfast and doubles the protein at lunch, the muscle cannot absorb it all. Therefore, they missed an opportunity.

Using previous example (6'4", 250lb, 28% body fat giving us 180lb of lean weight), if that athlete ate 5x/day (every 3-4 hours), $180g/5 = \sim 36g$ protein per meal, or about $\sim 5oz$ cooked.

4. What is the MOST important essential amino acid to build muscle?

- A. Isoleucine
- B. Leucine
- C. Valine

B: Leucine

The basic structure of protein is a chain of amino acids. Leucine is an amino acid, one of 20 building blocks that commonly show up in human protein structures. It is also one of nine essential amino acids (EAA), in that we can't make it in our body and must consume through food.

Leucine is also a branched chain amino acid (BCAA), meaning that unlike 17 of the 20 amino acids with a straight side chain, leucine is one of three where they have a side chain (A flash back to organic chemistry). One of leucine's main purposes is to turn on protein synthesis.

If the athlete is lacking this amino acid at the right times, they will not optimize growth, health and athleticism.

5. How MUCH leucine is ideal to build muscle?

- A. 0-1 gram of leucine per meal
- B. 1-2 grams of leucine per meal
- C. 2-3 grams of leucine per meal

C: 2-3 grams of leucine per meal



6. What foods have the LOWEST amount of leucine per serving?

- A. Nuts, peanuts, seeds
- B. Beans, chickpeas, lentils
- C. Beef, chicken, fish, yogurt

A. Nuts, peanuts, seeds

Nut/Peanuts/Seeds Avg: 0.3-0.5g

Beans/Peas/Lentils Avg 0.4-0.8g

Meat/Dairy Avg: 0.7-2.5g



7. Do you ADD more protein if you are not gaining weight/muscle?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C: Maybe

C: Maybe

The Quick rule is 1g of protein per pound of lean weight and 2-3g of leucine per meal.

If a young athlete is meeting these goals, then they need to add more fuel from carbohydrates and healthy fats, NOT protein!



8. Are protein powders safe for a healthy athlete under 18 years old?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C: Maybe

C: Maybe

As long as they are just protein, carbohydrates and fats and used in the right amounts.

To ensure the safety and quality go with NSF sports certified products or organic whenever possible, and avoid added non-food products such as glutamine, creatine, etc. Good additions are probiotic and enzyme sources.

If sweetened, stevia and monk fruit sweeteners are preferable. Other options are sugar alcohols, a type of carbohydrate used as low-cal sweeteners, although they don't actually contain sugar or alcohol. They occur naturally in fruits, vegetables, and even some grains, so can be derived from plants, but are often manufactured from simple carbs like glucose or starch.

SUMMARY

Protein along with leucine is powerful! It's vital for tissue growth, repair and maintenance - all important issues for athletes. It is important to know how much is needed and when to ensure getting enough to maximize development and training efforts.



About the **Cronometer** app mentioned earlier:

Cronometer is a comprehensive food and calorie tracker app that makes it easy to track diet and exercise habits. With an extensive database of over 1.2 million verified foods, users can easily log their meals and get a detailed breakdown of the food, calorie, macro and micronutrient intake they're consuming. The app also integrates with popular fitness tracking apps and devices, including Wear OS, Fitbit, and Samsung Health, so it's possible to track workouts and monitor one's progress over time.



Dawn Weatherwax is a Registered/Licensed Dietitian with a specialty in Sports Nutrition and is the Founder of **Sports Nutrition 2Go** and **Dawn Weatherwax's Sports Nutrition Academy**. She has been working with athletes for over 25 years. In addition, she is an Athletic Trainer with a Certification in Strength and Conditioning from The National Strength and Conditioning Association. Weatherwax brings a comprehensive and unique understanding of the athlete's body and its nutritional needs to those interested in achieving specific performance goals and optimal health. She is also the author of *The Official Snack Guide for Beleaguered Sports Parents*, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Sports Nutrition* and *The Sports Nutrition Guide for Young Athletes*. She has also been featured on television and in magazines including Good Morning America, MSNBC, Oxygen, Spark and Shape.



Leave it in the pool

Hour of Power™

Relay

Fellow NISCA Members,

Greetings from Texas! My name is Anthony "Tony" Plummer, and after a phone call with Tim Sirois, I have agreed to come on board as the new NISCA Hour of Power Coordinator. Let me start by encouraging all of you to take part in the Hour of Power each year. The 2022 17th Annual Ted Mullin "Hour of Power" flier and press release are included here, as well as, the Impact Report from the Foundation, so you can get a sense of what the Hour of Power is all about. It has proven to be a truly rewarding experience for our Aquatics community here in Northside ISD, San Antonio, and is on our calendar each year as a chance to bring our 13 HS teams, USAS Club, AAU/USAD Diving Club, and our USMS Masters Team together in support of an awesome cause.

I began coaching high school swimming in Texas (having grown up here) in 1992 and, after a few stops, finished teaching and coaching in Northside in 2015 when I became an Aquatics Coordinator with Northside. I became the Northside Aquatics Director in 2017 and still serve in this role. In 2015, during my first year as Coordinator, I lost my mother to cancer. I was searching for some way to honor her as one of the greatest swim moms ever. I had seen the flier for the Ted Mullins Hour of Power and it had been floating around in the back of my mind to bring forward to our coaches. With my mom's passing, I brought it forward to the Director and the other Coordinators, and proposed we do it as a District. The response from all of our staff and coaches was immediate and enthusiastic, and thus, the relationship with the Ted Mullin Fund and the Hour of Power and Northside ISD began.

Now, being in Texas, we do everything bigger. We set aside time in our Swim Center each year and have all of our teams going all out at the same time for our Hour of Power. This year, on November 8th, 2022, we had 550+ athletes hitting the pool, swimming and diving for an amazing hour of effort. Working with the Ted Mullin Fund, we set up a link for all of the parents to donate online in the weeks leading up to the event, and for a period of time after the event. Your Hour of Power need not be as involved as all of this, however. I am just sharing what we do to get your wheels turning. As NISCA HoP Coordinator, I want to be a resource for you, as coaches, if you are thinking about participating. I would be happy to be a sounding board for you to help you tailor the experience to your team, your community, and

your facility. What is really great is that teams can participate at any time throughout the year. We have held ours at different times over the years depending on how the water polo and swimming seasons and facility events have lined up and all have met with success.

Here is the link to the Carleton Swim Team "Hour of Power" web page where coaches can find information on registration and other pertinent resources. Registration for this year's 17th Hour of Power is still open, so teams can register and be involved in this year's event in every way that is possible - participation, fundraising and generating awareness of sarcoma!

I look forward to working with you all and thank you for what you do for your athletes. Feel free to contact me by email at tedfund@niscaonline.org, or by phone at (210) 397-8988 (office) if I can be of service to you.

Tony Plummer

NISCA HoP Coordinator



THE
TED
MULLIN FUND™
Fighting To Beat Sarcoma



THE TEDTM
MULLIN FUND
Fighting To Beat Sarcoma

Each year, thousands of athletes from collegiate, high school, and club teams across the nation and abroad join together to celebrate the Annual Ted Mullin "Leave it in the Pool" Hour of Power Relay for Sarcoma Research, sponsored by Carleton College swimming and diving teams.

The Hour of Power event honors those who are fighting or have succumbed to cancer, including former Carleton swimmer Edward H. "Ted" Mullin, who passed away from synovial sarcoma, a rare soft-tissue cancer, in September 2006. The annual swim relay, which now includes land-sports teams as well, has grown from 15 teams in its first year to well over 100 teams and thousands of athletes across the nation and the world in recent years. Participating swim teams engage in continuous relays of any stroke for a full hour of all-out swimming. Land-sports teams engage in their particular sport non-stop for a full hour.

In the event's first 16 years, participating teams have raised \$970,000 for the Ted Mullin Fund to support research at the University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital into the causes and treatment of sarcoma and other rare pediatric cancers. From all sources, the Ted Mullin Fund has now raised more than \$1.5 million.

The funds have been used for a variety of projects that evaluate the genetic basis of sarcomas, the identification of novel markers of disease diagnosis or progression, and the development of new small molecule and cell therapies for resistant disease. It has also supported the addition of sarcoma to an international pediatric clinical cancer data base to facilitate research. Each summer, the University also hosts Ted Mullin Fund scholars, offering four Hour of Power collegiate participants an opportunity to advance their interest in science and cancer biology by spending 10 weeks in a laboratory under the mentorship of a pediatric cancer physician/researcher within the Section of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at the University of Chicago Medicine.

As of the morning of November 8, 2022, 133 teams including an estimated 5,600 athletes have registered for the 2022-23 Ted Mullin Hour of Power Relay. Registration is still underway and more teams are expected to take part. Interested collegiate, high school and club teams are invited to register for the 2022-23 Hour of Power and find more information at <http://go.carleton.edu/HourOfPower>. You can also contact Carleton College head coach Andy Clark at aclark@carleton.edu or Rick Mullin at rmullin@tedmullinfund.org.

Leave it in the pool
Hour of PowerTM
Relay

High School Phenom to Olympian

By Michael J. Stott

Courtesy Swimming World Magazine (originally published January 2, 2012)

This month NISCA Journal continues its series of profiling Olympic athletes for whom the high swimming experience had special meaning.

Back in the day, defined here as the early 1960's, an aquatic rocket named Steve Clark was one of the nation's premier high school swimmers.

As a senior at Los Altos High School in Los Altos, California he won two events at the senior AAU short course nationals in New Haven, Connecticut, the 220 yard freestyle in 2:00.0 and the 100 freestyle in 46.8 – both American records. He was the national public school record holder in the 50 (21.8) – with a 21.6 his senior year in an All-Star meet -- and 100 yard frees (47.7) and an All-American in the three other individual events, the 200 free (3rd, 1:48.6), 100 fly (4th, 53.9), 100 back (14th, 58.8). Clark also anchored a national record 200 free relay (1:30.7) with Bob Benson, Don Moore and Bill Birch and an eighth ranked All-American 200 medley relay (1:44.2) with Bert Desmond, Dick Schaible and Benson. In four years at Los Altos he garnered 22 All-American citations.

Following the 1961 season Walter Cryer, editor of the high school section in the Official Collegiate- Scholastic Swimming Guide, noted that times were dropping so precipitously that "many of the boys performing so well now have a place on the 1964 Olympic Team within their grasp if they but continue to practice as diligently as they have to secure their present outstanding times."

Ten of those 1961 All-Americans made the 1964 Olympic team earning 15 medals, 12 of them gold. Four, Dave Lyons, Richard McGeagh, Ed Townsend and Mike Wall received medals as a result of relay swims in prelims for U.S. teams that won finals. [Author's correction: It wasn't until 1984 that prelim swimmers were granted medals if the finalists finished first, second or third.]

Four others, Clark (3), Fred Schmidt (1), Gary Ilman (2) and Roy Saari (1), won gold for occupying eight of 12 winning relay spots. Saari also claimed silver in the 400 IM (4:47.1); Schmidt took bronze in the 200 fly (2:09.3) while Bob Bennett grabbed third in the 200 back (2:13.1).

While Clark was blessed with natural speed he also benefitted

from outstanding coaching throughout his career. All three of his primary coaches, George Haines, Nort Thornton and Phil Moriarty have been inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

A multi-sport athlete into his freshmen year in high school Clark was introduced to swimming in the fall of 1952 at age nine when his parents took him to Haines. "I had been swimming in a summer league at Los Altos Country Club and coach Al Voketitus suggested to my parents that Haines and his newly created Santa Clara Swim Club might make me into a good swimmer if I swam six or seven months a year. Haines told my parents that it would take about five years to figure out if I was going to be any good," says Clark. "And that's about how long it took before I started taking an occasional first place in age group swim meets rather than seconds and thirds and fourths. Haines' first national caliber swimmer was Carol Tait, who won a couple of national championships in the 400 meter free, and just missed the 1956 Olympics by a place or two.

"From 1956 through 1960 I was swimming with the first group of Olympian women/girls coached by Haines, i.e. Chris von Saltza, Lynn Burke, Ann Warner. I was Haines's first age group male swimmer to place at nationals. I made the Pan-American Games team in 1959 and was an alternate on the 4 x 200 free relay at the Olympics in Rome in 1960," Clark says.

"Haines probably had the best intuitive 'feel' for the sport regarding conditioning/workouts, stroke technique and psychological preparation of any of my three major coaches -- although each was damn good at all three factors. I don't think Haines studied or read much about swimming – unlike Nort Thornton or Doc Councilman – but he just observed, thought and felt it," observes Clark. "All three coaches treated their swimmers, including me, individually and flexibly, not en masse. I remember Haines helping me as a 17-year-old high school junior overcome my disappointment at not making the 100 meter freestyle final in 1960 Olympic Trials at Detroit after I had qualified first from the heats into the semis. I eventually came back to finish fourth or fifth in the 200 free to make the team as an alternate.

"Although he coached both me and Don Schollander in the 100 meter freestyle from 1962 through 1964, I always felt that he

was trying to make me swim as fast as I could at the same time doing the exact same thing for Schollander. I trusted him for that," he says.

While maturing as a swimmer under Haines, Clark didn't begin year-round swimming until his freshmen year at Los Altos where he encountered a second year coach and recent graduate of San Jose State. "Steve Clark was the guy who made me think I could coach," says Nort Thornton who went on to win national junior college titles at Foothill Junior College, two NCAA titles at Cal (1988, 1989), placing tens of athletes (Matt Biondi among them) on U.S. Olympic teams.

"At first Nort was more a water polo coach than a swimming coach. I swam with Nort during the high school swimming season from about March 15 through May 30 and also played fall water polo for four years. "I'm not sure he would admit it, but Nort knew what he was doing," says Clark. "Nort's workouts compared with those of Haines, so I didn't miss any conditioning by staying at Los Altos. During the high school season I would ordinarily work out on Saturdays with Haines at Santa Clara," says the swimmer.

"Nort was more a student of the sport observing other coaches and swimmers. He taught us how to do Murray Rose's open turn at a time when open turns were still being used for distance races. He also had us do dryland exercises focusing on stretch cords and other exercises aimed at the swimming stroke."

Says Thornton, "I was in the right place at the right time. It was my first job and my first team and to have them be that successful was pretty special. There were a number of age group programs around and I inherited a lot of that talent. We had great kids including Bob Benson, the first high school swimmer to go under 4:00 in the 400 yard free (3:57.3). Of Thornton's six high school All-Americans "Steve was pretty much the leader," says Thornton. "He was lean (5'11-1/2"), had long arms and legs and big hands and feet. He was just real quick. He was an extremely hard worker to the point where I would worry about him," says the coach.

"The last couple years of high school we were aware of New Trier High School (Winnetka, Illinois) being our main competitor for the fastest high school team in the country," notes Clark. "We knew the names Fred Schmidt, Dave Lyons, Roger Goettsche, Dale Kiefer, Dave Robertson and Ray Essick. We followed swimming and Nort would remind us that it was us and New Trier for the mythical national championship. We had an advantage because new Trier's season was in the winter and ours was in the spring so that we could aim at their records after they had finished. Ironically, Lyons, Goettsche and Kiefer

all ended up at Yale like I did, and we swam on a lot of national championship-winning or -placing relays together."

At Yale Clark joined six other Bulldogs who became members of the Olympic team that went to Tokyo. "I learned to be independent while swimming at Yale to the credit of coach Moriarty. Before that I was probably too dependent on Haines. Phil and I became friends and had a trusted coach/swimmer relationship.

"During the last swim meet of my college life, the 1965 AAU short course nationals at New Haven, he persuaded me to act honorably and not to scratch the 200 free (because I didn't want to get second to Schollander again, which I did). Based on my friendship and respect for him -- and before the 100 yard free final -- I told him that I wouldn't accept a medal from anyone other than him if I won the race. I won in an American record (45.6) and I remember the New Haven audience filling the exhibition pool arena applauding when Phil gave me that medal. That was one of my greatest sports moments," he recalls.

After receiving a B.A. in Political Science from Yale, Clark entered Harvard Law School, earned a J.D. and embarked on a 25-year San Francisco-based legal career with emphasis on civil law and business transactions. In 1996 he joined CSI Capital Management, Inc. and the law firm of Taylor and Faust doing general business contracts law and providing transactional and financial management services for professional athletes.

He also never abandoned aquatic pursuits. In 1965 and 1966, before law school, he served as coach for the Peruvian National team. As a competitor he says "I was one of the few Olympic swimmers who still enjoyed and loved the sport when I retired in 1965. Most of my friends had burned out. It was a very difficult transition from being 90 percent a swimmer and 10 percent human being. It took 10 or 15 years before I felt like a normal human being and not a competitive swimmer. Some lessons from swimming held true and others did not as I headed toward a legal career."

Though Clark retains his membership in San Francisco's Olympic Club and has worked out and swum in Masters competitions off and on over the years, he vowed never to get in the same kind of conditioning he had in his last few years of serious swimming. "I have kept that promise and generally contented myself with seconds, thirds and fourths in Masters meets. These days I enjoy rough water distance swimming more than pool events, mainly because I don't have to compare my pool times to the good old days. And, frankly, I don't care if I finish 580nd (or whatever) out of 900 swimmers at the annual Waikiki rough water swim just so long as I finish.

"In 2011 we put together a second "Clark Clunkers" Tahoe relay. The first was about six years ago. Six of us, my wife Betsy, daughter Nicki (he has three daughters), son-in-law Mike and two other barely moving swimmers swam 11.5 miles across Tahoe in 60° water – no wetsuits. Swimming legs of 30 and 15 minutes we were dead last, in 176th place. Meet organizers were removing the last final turn buoy as we headed for the finish line. I was proud of our effort."

At age 68* Clark is at peace with his life and the role swimming plays in it. George Haines died in 2006. Thornton remains a frequent dinner partner and Clark still travels to Fort Pierce, Fla. to see the 97-year-old Moriarty. We talk frequently on the phone about swimming, Yale, family and friends."

What conversations those must be.

**As of this publication, Steve Clark is approaching his 80th birthday this summer.*

Also: Steve Clark was the first swimmer in the world to break 21 seconds in the 50yd free, 46 in the 100yd free, 53 in the 100m free, 1:50 in the 200yd free, and 2:00 in 200m free. Wow.



Steve Clark was a USA Olympic gold medalist, winning three gold medals at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, and setting a world record of 52.9 for the 100-meter freestyle. He won five NCAA individual championships swimming for Yale University.

Photo Courtesy Marin (CA) Independent Journal



Steve Clark with Yale Coach Phil Moriarty - Courtesy International Swimming Hall of Fame

Off-Season Training for High School Swimmers

Charlie Hoolihan, *ASCA Swimming Strength and Conditioning Specialist (SSCS)*

High school swimming seasons throughout the country are either finished or winding down. Coaches and athletes are headed towards well-deserved breaks, but soon thoughts will turn towards the 2023-24 school year.

While some swimmers will continue with their club teams, others will move to other sports, apply for after-school or summer jobs, focus on studies, or (sadly) vegetate in front of some screen or another.

One thing the high school coach can do with their non-club swimmers is to set them up on an "off-season" training routine which can prepare them for the school-year strength training program leading up to the season.

This can be accomplished in several ways depending on the circumstances of the coach, swimmers, and the facilities available to both.

Two to three days of off-season training per week can be set up utilizing a combination of strength training, cardio conditioning in the form of low-intensity steady duration and high-intensity interval training, stability training, and a small amount of power training.

We mentioned various cardio conditioning options in the Jan-Feb NISCA journal article on providing training options for teams with limited pool time.

The strength training can be set up into a full-body, peripheral heart rate training (PHRT) configuration, also mentioned in the same article. To review, PHRT consists of alternating exercises for different body parts to allow for constant movement from exercise to exercise.

An example of a circuit is in the chart below.

Exercise	Goal or target
Step-ups	Leg strength for kick, starts and turns
Dumbbell (DB) press	Upper body strength for pulling and pushing
DB Deadlifts	Stability, posture muscles and posterior leg muscles for kicking strength
DB rows	Posterior upper body and balanced muscle strength
DB Goblet squats	Leg strength for kick, starts and turns
DB Triceps extension from plank	Final push of stroke, stability and platform strength
Medicine ball push-press	Leg and upper body strength and explosive power
Band T-Y-Ws	Shoulder stability and posterior muscle development
Shoulder press	Shoulder strength
Broad jump	Explosive power

The athlete performs each exercise in succession for the first set, then flows through the same circuit for the second and third.

First set is a preliminary set at a lower weight for technique and movement mobility. The second set is a transition to peak strength to determine how the athlete feels on a given day, and the third is the peak strength if the athlete's physical condition is ready.

Two to three sets of 5 to 10 repetitions of each exercise are sufficient to develop and maintain strength.

One to two other similar exercise circuits using identical muscle groups but different exercises should be included for variety and also to avoid repetitive use issues involving the same exercises throughout a planning period.

Check out the Facebook ASCA Swimming Strength and Conditioning Specialist page for multiple exercises and technical recommendations.

If facilities and time are limited, setting the swimmers up on a program with bands and lighter dumbbells can be sufficient to develop and maintain strength. Using bands effectively adds more resistance to an exercise in a biomechanically sound manner. If set up correctly, the band itself or attached to a dumbbell, barbell or exercise machine provides the most resistance when the most muscles are involved.

For example, the pressing motion shown in the article has the least resistance when the elbows are lower than the body position. The front shoulder muscle groups are the primary drivers initiating the movement in this position. *[please see next page]*

As the dumbbells move upward, the resistance increases, but the chest muscles join the shoulders in applying force; then, finally, at the finish and peak resistance, triceps muscles are added in.

Using the band helps keep the shoulders safer in their most vulnerable position of the exercise and progressively adds more resistance as the other muscle groups become more involved.

(Other exercises pictured in the article are examples of using dumbbells and bands for deadlifts, step-ups, and rowing. Samples with and without dumbbells are shown.)

With the rows and deadlifts, the athlete stands in the middle of the band with both feet and grabs each end in each hand. If dumbbells are being used, loop the band around the dumbbell and secure it with the hand. Both exercises start with bending the hips with a relatively straight and neutral spine while looking down. The deadlift moves from this position to standing. The row position remains bent over while pulling the band up to the body's midsection.

The step-up is performed by placing one foot on a band's end and the other around the neck and upper pack. The athlete then steps up onto the box and then down without taking the foot of the working leg off the box. A dumbbell can be held in hand opposite the working leg.

A big note of caution when placing the band under the feet, make sure the athlete puts it under the midfoot and is careful to avoid raising or moving the foot in a manner that could release the band in the middle of the peak point of an exercise.

In the pressing motion above, the athlete grabs an end of the band with each hand and then brings the band behind the back and underneath the elbows to provide a stable pressing platform.

The bands can be obtained by searching for "pull-up resistance bands," Several brands with sets of color-coded resistances will appear. Most high school athletes will only need light to medium resistance for their needs.

An athlete can progress through the various band resistances and add 10 to 20 lb. dumbbells as needed making a poolside or home "gym" adequate for off-season strength gains – all for under \$100.

Banded exercises are also featured on the ASCA FB page.

If the coach's time is limited during the season's end and summer, providing their athletes with programming recommendations before summer break after a short strength and conditioning workshop may help their athletes focus a bit on improving their strength for the upcoming season.

Need help? Contact me: charliehoolihan@gmail.com



Charlie Hoolihan is the Swimming Strength and Conditioning Specialist Certification Coordinator for the American Swim Coaches Association and has been strength training swimmers since 1990. He's also a presenter and writer for numerous national fitness organizations and publications.



(L) Deadlift Start



(R) Deadlift Finish



Step-ups w/ and w/o weights

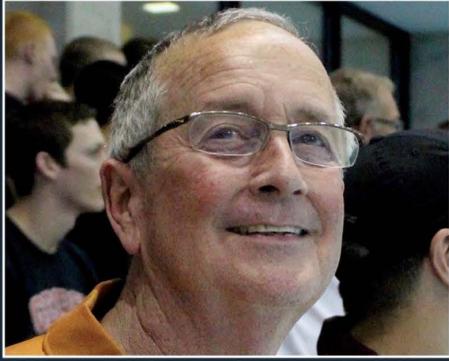


Rowing w/ and w/o weights



At left: Pressing w/ and w/o weights





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TEACHING LIFE**

**BY CHUCK WARNER
WITH DANA ABBOTT**

[Adapted excerpt from book, on *Competitiveness*]

“Personally, I try to get better at everything I do every year.”

Science says that the entire cellular makeup of a human being is replaced every seven years. As our time on earth passes, we have the choice to strive for personal growth mentally and physically, or not. Like all of us, Eddie Reese isn't physically the same person he was years ago, yet he makes sure that his mind continues to grow. And as he will gladly admit, with that passing of time perhaps a little of his internal fire has been traded for a more philosophical view of competition. In an interview in 2018, he had this to say:

Now when we compete, we're still as competitive as can be when that gun goes off, but afterward you shake hands and are happy for the winner. I heard something years ago, “At the end of the contest you should not be able to tell the winners from the losers.” I realize that might be impossible. But it sure sounds good.

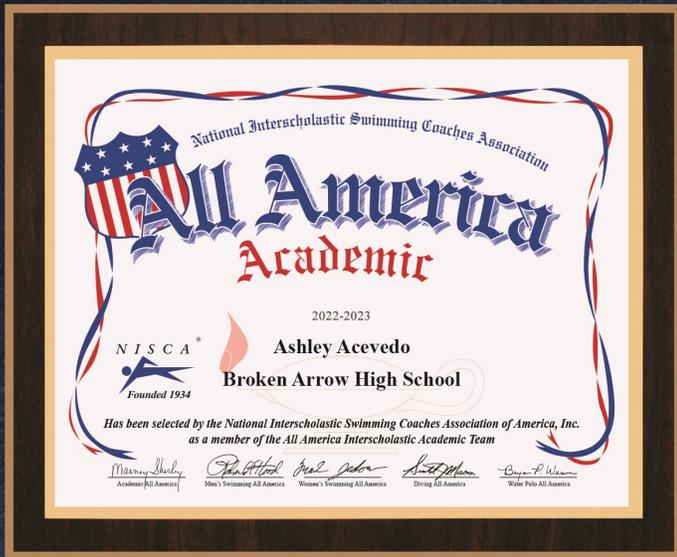
***No printed word, nor spoken plea can teach young minds what they should be.
Not all the books on all the shelves - but what the teachers are themselves.***

-Rudyard Kipling

PLAQUES

\$49.95 / PQ-NISFAC

Wood plaque displays the All-American certificate printed on a clear acrylic overlay so it's waterproof. It measures 10½" x 13" and comes individually boxed for presentation. Available in Water Polo, Diving, Academic, Team Scholar Award and Swimming.



\$79.95 / PQ-NISLAM

Laminated certificate plaque displays actual All-American certificate laminated on a wood plaque. It measures 10½" x 13" and comes individually boxed for presentation. Available in Water Polo, Diving, Academic, Team Scholar Award and Swimming.

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Engraved certificate plaque depicts the All-American certificate laser engraved directly into a black brass plate. It measures 10½" x 13" and comes individually boxed for presentation. Available in Water Polo, Diving, Academic, Team Scholar Award and Swimming.



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MINDSET IS EVERYTHING



Life Lessons Learned From John Wooden's Pyramid of Success

Kevin Pierce, *NISCA Coaches Education Chair*

While it was originally designed for athletes, its principles are relevant to anyone seeking to improve themselves and achieve their goals.

John Wooden's *Pyramid of Success* is a timeless model for achieving success in any area of life. While it was originally designed for athletes, its principles are relevant to anyone seeking to improve themselves and achieve their goals. Here are some life lessons that can be learned from Wooden's Pyramid of Success:

Success is built on a foundation of hard work and diligence.

At the base of Wooden's pyramid is industriousness, the principle of working hard and putting in the effort necessary to achieve success. Without a strong work ethic and commitment to excellence, success is unlikely to be sustained.

Character and integrity are essential to long-term success.

Wooden believed that success without character and integrity was ultimately hollow and unsustainable. The blocks of the pyramid related to honesty, loyalty, and faith demonstrate the importance of maintaining strong moral principles and staying true to one's values.

Embrace the pursuit of continual learning and improvement.

Wooden emphasized the importance of self-improvement and the pursuit of knowledge throughout one's life. The blocks of

the pyramid related to enthusiasm, self-control, and alertness demonstrate the value of being open to new experiences, learning from mistakes, and maintaining a growth mindset.

Teamwork and collaboration are necessary for success.

The upper portion of Wooden's pyramid is focused on qualities that relate to working with others, such as cooperation, friendship, and loyalty. Wooden believed that working collaboratively with others was essential to achieving success and that individuals who focus solely on their own success are ultimately limited in their potential.

Success is about more than winning.

For Wooden, success was not solely defined by winning on the court or field. Instead, he believed that true success was achieved through striving to be the best one can be, regardless of the outcome. The top block of the pyramid, poise, exemplifies this principle, emphasizing the importance of staying calm and centered in the face of adversity and maintaining a sense of perspective.

The life lessons learned from John Wooden's Pyramid of Success extend far beyond the world of sports. By focusing on hard work, character, continual learning, collaboration, and a holistic approach to success, individuals can achieve their goals while also maintaining strong values and a sense of purpose in their lives.

“ IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO DO IT RIGHT,
WHEN WILL YOU HAVE TIME TO DO IT OVER? ”
- JOHN WOODEN



CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS: Proposed Amendment to Bylaws

As per the NISCA Bylaws, Article VII "Amendment":

The Bylaws of this Association may be amended only at the Annual General Meeting of the Association by a majority vote of a quorum, provided that notification in writing of said amendment and meeting has been sent to all voting members at least three (3) weeks in advance of the meeting.

Proposed amendments to the Bylaws must be submitted in writing to the Secretary by the originator of said proposed amendments at least 24 hours prior to the last General Meeting of the Regular Membership.

A Proposal:

Proposed Addition to the NISCA Professional Awards (NISCA By-Laws, Article V "Professional Awards", Section 2 "Awards and recognition"); insert after current subsection [f] "HONORARY MEMBERSHIP AWARD" as subsection [g], relabel subsequent subsections [g] through [l] as [h] through [m]:

Award for Excellence in Media Coverage of Interscholastic Aquatic Sports. Work nominated for the award displays creative, in-depth and innovative coverage of high school aquatic sports—especially larger issues and trends related to interscholastic levels of athletic competition.

The award is intended to recognize work by daily and weekly newspapers and periodical magazines, local and national television news broadcasts and national news organizations. Work by multimedia and online news outlets is eligible as well.

Nomination deadline shall be Jan 31 of the current year. Nominations should include work completed or continuing in the calendar year preceding the Jan. 31 deadline. Both individuals and media organizations are eligible for the award. Anyone may submit an entry to the NISCA Professional Awards Committee Chair on behalf of an individual or organization.

There are no application forms. Each entry must be accompanied by a letter describing the nature and result of the work and by the relevant aired or published material and/or other necessary documentation. To facilitate judging, please provide electronic copies of work or links to the work, with the cover letter contextualizing the entry.

Rationale: NISCA recognizes coaches and athletes in interscholastic aquatic sports and adding an award recognizing the contributions by various media in promoting and celebrating the accomplishments, achievements, or newsworthy coverage relating to them would be in accordance with the Association's objectives in the Constitution, Article II, Section 1.e.: *To promote interscholastic aquatic sports locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally*



THE DAILY COACH

The season is over, you pause (maybe) to catch your breath, but something's missing, maybe you're feeling a little down?

It could be you've got a case of the **Post-Show Blues**.

The post-show blues refers to the feelings that come with the end of a period of exhausting work, when we feel both emotionally drained but also nostalgic for the shared experiences of the past weeks or even months.

For many of us as coaches and executives, the end of a season or hectic business cycle leaves us feeling empty and without a cause — as so many of us have been entirely consumed with our work for an extended period.

While these feelings are perfectly normal and a reflection that we were truly all-in on our product, allowing them to fester for too long can be counterproductive and detrimental to our own mental health.

So, what are some strategies to navigate the post-show blues?

1. Take at least a couple of days to relax

So much of our identity for the past few months has been tied to our work, and having more time on our hands can leave us feeling a bit directionless. It's important once it's over, though, to not overwhelm ourselves by immediately adding other tedious assignments. Taking a few days to do something fun and enjoyable is often the first step to getting back on track.

2. Catch up on what you've missed

Our hard work has likely come with some tradeoffs. We may have neglected other work duties, time with family or friends, or completing some other project. View the new free time as an opportunity to get up to speed on what we may have missed out on.

3. Evaluate what you've learned

It can be difficult to think clearly in the days after a major production as emotions continue to run high. But in the weeks to come, we'd be wise to consider the greater lessons of our recent experiences and think about how these may serve us long term. If all we think about is how hard we worked and how the project is now over, we're likely missing some real opportunities for reflection and long-term growth.

4. Stay in contact with those you shared the experience with

There's a good chance if we're a little down or directionless, other team members may have the same sentiments. Keep in contact with them, re-live some of the highlights and laughs of the journey, and continue to build relationships that go beyond our work.

5. Find the next mountain to climb

Many complete a challenge and then struggle to find an identity after. But the truly elite don't become satisfied with their accomplishments or cling to what they've just done. They instead seek the next opportunity while looking for ways to further improve their skillsets.

Ultimately, strategies will vary from person to person on how to navigate the physical and emotional exhaustion that comes with the end of a production cycle.

But formulating a tangible plan and coming up with some practical action strategies moving forward can help get us back on track sooner rather than later.

When the curtain closes, the show may be over. But with the right mentality, we can make the next production even more impressive.



The Daily Coach

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“Two kinds of people are good at foreseeing danger: those who have learned at their own expense, and the clever people who learn a great deal at the expense of others.”



“Nothing can make our life, or the lives of other people, more beautiful than perpetual kindness.” - Leo Tolstoy



"I've always had this view that success is not a straight line up. If you read the stories of successful people, almost every successful person has had to deal with some degree of hardship, whether that hardship is personal hardship, health-related hardship, or a business issue. I've always had the view that how successful you are is really a function of how you deal with failure. If you deal with failure well and you persist, you have a high probability of being successful." - Bill Ackman



Why do some people seem to make constant progress in their professional and personal lives while others repeat the same mistakes?

[Part] of the answer is how they approach problems. It comes down to **mindset**.

Over time, the person who approaches life with an openness to being wrong and a willingness to learn outperforms the person who doesn't.

How you respond to anomalies is a good indicator of your open-mindedness.

Anomalies are like a glitch in the matrix. You can identify these moments when you find something surprising, missing, or strange.

Anomalies indicate the world doesn't work the way you thought it did. These moments can be worth their weight in gold if you pay attention.

Closed-minded people tend to ignore or gloss over anomalies. Open-minded people want to dive in and understand. Of course, diving in is hard as it may require you to discard your ideas and beliefs.



“One sign that determination matters more than talent: there are lots of talented people who never achieve anything, but not that many determined people who don't.”

Paul Graham



The Three Types of Listening:

Listening to win is, 'Let me make the problem go away by telling you, you don't have a problem.'

Listening to learn is getting underneath what's being said and reflecting back to the person.

And listening to fix is, 'Let me take your problem and solve it for you, or help you solve it.'"



“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

— Atticus Finch (TKAM)



Tiny Thought

To win, you have to avoid losing.

The first thing chess masters do after an opponent makes a move isn't to think about strategy or winning but rather to ask themselves: what's the threat?

Avoid stupidity before seeking brilliance.



Insight

“Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it, because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.”

— Frederick Buechner, *Now and Then: A Memoir of Vocation*

The Fine Art of In-Meet Coaching

Michael J. Stott

You want smoke on the water, excitement in aquatics? Just put longtime coaches in the same room. For starters invite Jack Bauerle, Don Gambriel, Frank Comfort, Bob Boettner or the departed Don Easterling and Ray Bussard. The subject is dual meets. Sit back and watch the fireworks.

"It appears dual meets today aren't as important as they once were. They were much more important back then," says Comfort, University of North Carolina coach from 1977-2006. Former Olympian, Alabama swimmer and head coach Jonty Skinner agrees. Dual meets today don't "come close to rivaling some we had in the 1970's." In Burt Kanner's new book *Don Gambriel: A Coach with a Heart*, Skinner says "They were all dog-eat-dog affairs and we didn't back down from throwing it down before the meet. That's not to denigrate today's contests, but those dual meets resembled armies that clashed in the early centuries. There was a lot of facial and physical intimidation going on in the pool during the warm ups, and there was no end of screaming and gesturing across from each other before the battle started," Skinner avers.

"In some ways swimming is going the way of track and field – invitationals," laments Comfort. "An enormous amount of time was spent on lineups. I had a book on every team and their swimmers that I was really concerned about," he says. "There was strategy and enthusiasm. I loved that part of the game."

Pre-internet, information on opponents was less accessible sometimes necessitating in-person scouting of opponents – something Comfort often did. But not to the extent done by one Middle Atlantic high school coach who showed up at a rival's dual meet, responded to a call for timers and ended up timing swimmers in the fastest lane.

"Today there is more information available than we need," says Bauerle. "Back then changing lineups in-meet was a constant – less so today," he says. Often opponents did not send their meet results (even when asked) to teams in advance. "That meant much of the homework and in-meet flow often fell to the assistants," says Bauerle's longtime sidekick Harvey Humphries. "Joe Hendee (Tennessee), Kris Kubik (Texas), Greg Rhodenbaugh (Arizona) really knew the opposition, followed meet scores and put things together."

"Much was done long before the meet," says Comfort. "We had a Plan A and went to Plan B if necessary. You had the opportunity to be frustrated when the opposing coach made a good

move." One Hall of Fame coach, and nemesis, was NC State head man Easterling, a master planner who entered every meet with a Plan C. Unlike today when meet lineups are submitted in advance in earlier times coaches submitted swimmer names just before a given event. To keep his options open Easterling prepared three entry cards. "It was a lot more fun that way," said the curmudgeonly coach.

"Our freaking dual meets were classics," says Comfort. "I was hired to beat him and he was hired to beat me. He hated anything that was blue." So intense was the rivalry "we thought about each other all the time," says Comfort. "We got to swim them four times each year and I remember those meets down to the last detail."

Bauerle's squads swam more than 738 dual meets during his 40+ year career at Georgia, compiling a 253-97-2 (.722) men's and 342-42-2 (.889) women's mark. His lifetime record in Athens was 595-139-4 (.809). "Dual meets are fun and toughen teams up," he says. "Against some opponents you walked in and you knew you were in a war and had better have your chin straps on. "Dallas November 1998, we swam against Steve Collins' SMU squad with Martina Moracova (25x CSCAA A-A) and Lia Oberstar (19x). It was close and every race for fourth and fifth was close. It was one of the best dual meets I've ever been a part of. It was fun – everything a dual meet should be. Tense, hard fought. We lost and it got my girls attention. It was the best thing that have ever happened to us. It set us on the path to our first NCAA championship the following March."

Loose Cannons

While some coaches seemed to play their lineups straight up (Gregg Troy, Frank Busch come to mind) others opted for a more fluid approach. In the 1970's and '80's the SEC, ACC and the like were a home to gamesmanship, shenanigans, egos and more. Many a visiting coach to Tuscaloosa shivered with his team in front of open doors guarded only by the wintry outside and the Alabama offensive line. Or in distance events watched as home team lap counters counted down rather than up.

Elsewhere overflowing hostile audiences created a persistent cacophony. Frequently finish judge cards disagreed with watch times creating unfair outcomes. And at Tennessee, recalls Humphries, "Bussard would do anything to win." Chances are your lineup cards would be inspected, graded and occasionally a swimmer disqualified for some supposed indiscretion by the

host coach.

Sometimes even the best of strategists had to resort to underhanded methods – or trickery. In the mid-80's Bauerle took his ranked team to face powerful Clemson for a clash of the titans. "A hated rival. There was no love lost. I thought we had a 20 percent chance to win," he says. "I knew if coach Boettner had all his best swimmers for the final relay the Tigers would win." So inspired Bauerle sent his best Bulldogs, parkas, goggles and all to the blocks to stretch for the opening medley relay. Ever alert Boettner countered with his best. At the last second the actual Georgia quartet assembled and swam. Come 400 free relay time Clemson had only two of their four best available allowing Georgia to win the race and the meet.

In another sleight of hand and short-handed, Easterling used only three swimmers for the 400 free relay against Bill Campbell's Maryland team. Surreptitiously, his leadoff wore a red cap and then reappeared for the anchor leg wearing a white cap allowing State to win the race and the meet.

How Great Thou Art

Self-importance and self-confidence were never in short supply in the earlier days of Gambriel, Bussard, Sam Freas, Randy Reese, et al. "There were a lot of egos involved back then. It was an entertaining time," says Humphries.

"Ray Bussard was the utter master as a meet planner," says Comfort. "I learned from him. I loved the guy. I'm sure all the people who competed against him would say something similar. His dual meet record was unbelievable (178-20, .899). He knew every aspect of a meet."

The Long View

Regardless of the fun and games in season most coaches retained a greater seasonal perspective. "We did not rest for dual meets and sacrifice year-end goals to win dual meets," says Bauerle. "We kept our eyes on the SEC and NCAA championships. One of the reasons we didn't rest was we reasoned that if you swam great when you were tired you were going to swim great at the end."

Denison's ten-time NCAA D-III coach of the year Gregg Parini echoes those thoughts. "The decision on how to manage a dual meet always has to be balanced against the long term season goals for the program, the team and the individuals involved. For us, dual meets serve as preparation for championships and determines how we will approach the meet. Winning a dual meet may be a good thing, but doing so at the expense of advancing a team's learning curve in preparation for championships may actually impede the team's development. Understanding how the meet fits into the big picture is critical and

informs any decision we may or may not make.

"There have been occasions when winning a particular dual meet was deemed important and we made adjustments throughout the meet to maximize scoring potential. Such wins can go a long way to developing a team's/program's confidence. By contrast, there have been many more occasions when winning the meet wasn't nearly as important as advancing the team and athlete learning curves. In these situations, we stayed the course, did not make line up adjustments and asked athletes to find a way to succeed. Exposing our athletes to these pressure-packed moments shows confidence in their ability to adjust to the competition so they're better prepared for the bigger swims that come at championships.

"There are obvious risks associated with both decisions," Parini says. "Adjusting a lineup may result in a team win but it may also rob a developing swimmer of an opportunity to learn how to handle a pressured swim leaving them less well-equipped at season's end. Likewise, exposing a developing swimmer to a pressured swim runs the risk of damaging his/her confidence if the swim doesn't go well. Mitigating these risks comes when the coach helps the athlete frame the win/loss so as to advance them towards their long term goals.

"Over my career, there are very few dual meets that I actually remember. Then again, I remember pretty much every championship meet I've coached. That said, we always play the long game when it comes to managing any particular dual meet," he says.

High School Perspectives

In recent times two high schools in Wisconsin have dominated their state championships. In November Arrowhead girls bested Brookfield East 338.5 to 285.5 for the Division 1 crown after finishing just behind East the three previous years.

"Over the last four years, we have had some great dual, sectional and state meet competitions with Arrowhead," says Brookfield East coach Michael Rose, NFHS 2022 girls swimming Coach of the Year. "Our schools are only about 10 miles apart and two of Arrowhead's better swimmers Campbell Stoll (Texas commit) and Haley Johnson swim at Elmbrook Swim Club with Maggie Wanezek (Wisconsin), Lucy Thomas (Stanford) and crew. Our teams get along really well and are very supportive of each other even during intense competition.

"Generally, for dual meets," says Rose, "we pick the matchups we want to see and let the chips fall where they may. Winning is the preference but not the most important consideration. I look at relay matchups especially because our relays have been so close. For state, we talk about what events will have the

best potential to maximize our points but ultimately I want the kids to be in the events they most want to swim.

"I have not made changes to relay lineups during the meet because I really want to trust the kids to understand and do what needs to be done. For example, at the 2020 state meet I chose to keep Abby Wanezek (state record holder in the 50 free) on the 200 medley relay though we were seeded first by quite a bit. Our 200 free relay was seeded 5th. I really believed the kids we had in the 200 free relay could win without Abby and win all three relays. We went 1:38.3 in the medley making a run at the national record. We also won the 200 free relay and set a record in the 400 free relay. I always want the kids to believe in their abilities, work to build that belief early and maintain it throughout the season.

"I always see dual and conference meets as developmental. Wins are great but we are looking for experience in those meets and never make them a priority. Recently we have teamed with Arrowhead and Madison Edgewood (seven state division 2 titles) for a double dual meet to compete against the best in Wisconsin. It was a great meet this year but both teams beat us," says Rose. "To compete against the best athletes in the state is a great opportunity no matter the outcome."

Arrowhead's Ruth Ann Ahnen seconds that emotion. "Mike Rose and I have had a healthy rivalry. For the double dual meets I went to a great deal of planning and positioning of swimmers versus what I thought Brookfield East would do. I used our dual meet and the tri-meet to test my hypotheses in advance of the state meet.

"Because of the fast paced nature of high school dual meets and with all the other switches that routinely take place due to illness etc. switching line ups for points is something I have rarely, if ever, done. Recently we've had the luxury of dual meets not being close in our conference," says Ahnen. (Note: Arrowhead is in the Class 8 Conference; Brookfield East is in Greater Metro Conference). "However, in the years when Arrowhead and Waukesha South were ultra-competitive I would change relays around, but not individual events." Happily for Ahnen, with her loaded 2022 state championship squad, no last minute changes were required this past year.

While dual meets may not be quite as important or prevalent as in days of yore, the competitive ones still make the blood boil and the room temperature rise – making for fond memories and hot times.



2020 Iowa Girls State Meet at Marshalltown YMCA-Photo by Liz Martin, Cedar Rapids Gazette

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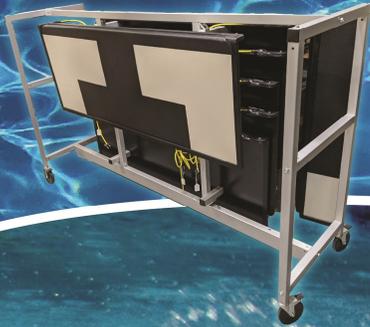
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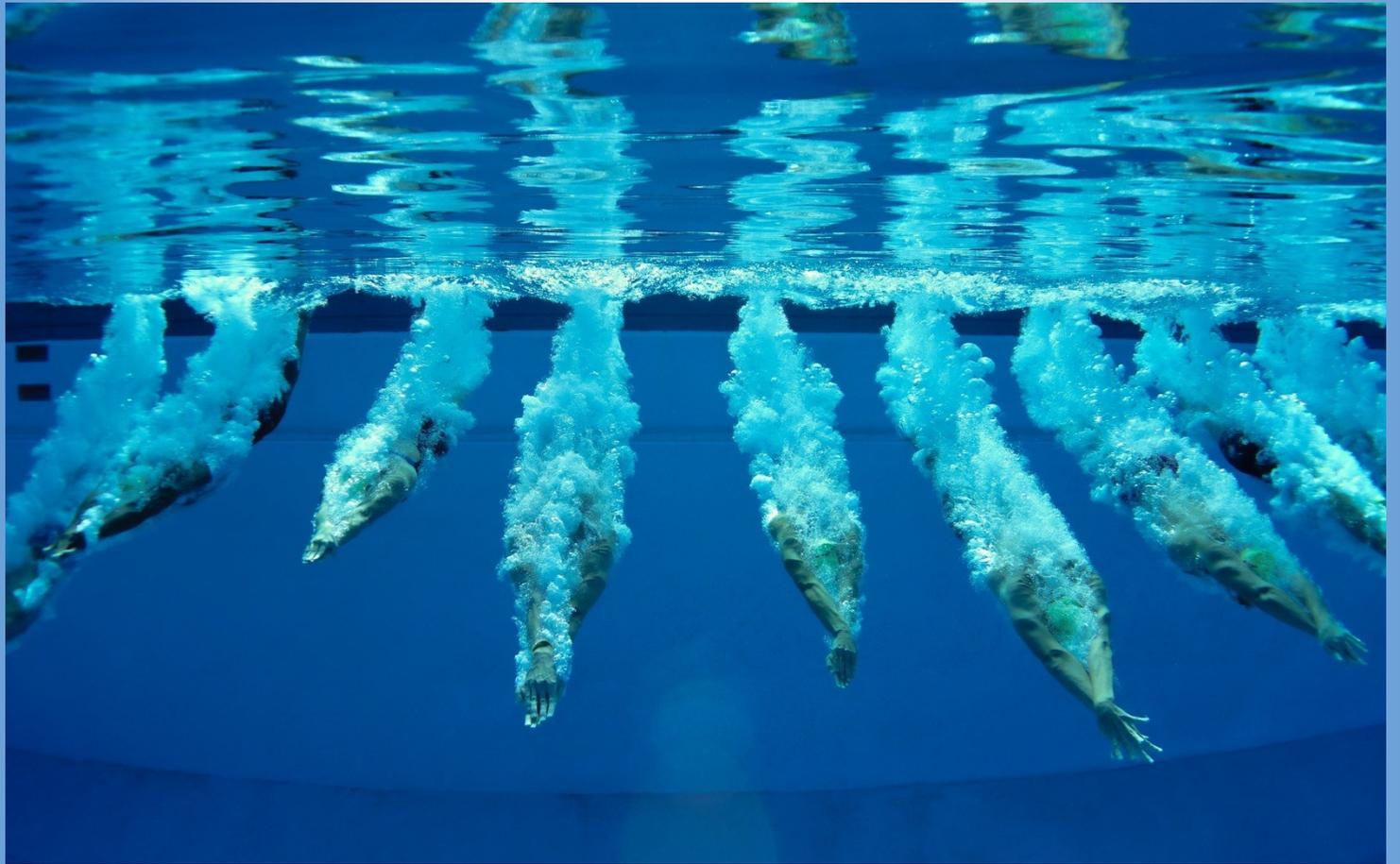


Photo by Glenn Mills, *GoSwim*