

Chapter 6

Related Coaching Responsibilities

I. Safety Issues

A. Pool Rules

Every pool that your team will use, either for practices or meets, will have some of their own distinct rules. The depth of the pool, pool configuration, diving facilities, locker room setup, deck spacing, and many other factors will play a major role the determination of these rules and the safety concerns they address. Learn the rules, and know them well. Your job and continued financial well-being is dependent upon this knowledge. Many coaches have lost their jobs for failure to know and follow the pool safety rules.

The National Federation of State High School Associations puts out a rule book each year. Study the book, learn the specifications, and be safe. If your team is competing in another pool, and you notice a major pool safety violation, (i.e. the starting blocks are in water with a depth less than four feet) start your swimmers in the water. Use good judgment and protect your swimmers at all times and at all costs, (i.e. better to lose a meet than have a serious accident).

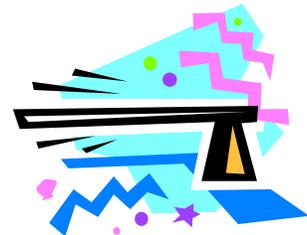
Sometimes you will have no control over the pool conditions, such as chemical conditions, water clarity, etc. If negative safety conditions exist, notify your athletic director in writing of these conditions, the hazard they present, and what should be done to the best of your knowledge. Keep a file copy of this notification as your record.



Finally, each pool should have an EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN. If your pool does, know it, and follow it. If it doesn't, talk to the responsible body about creating one. In the event of a tragic accident, having a plan is your best insurance that the staff and you will do a good job of dealing with it. It is also a significant legal back up for you.

B. Diving Rules

Try to have a certified diving coach on deck. Many facilities will not allow non-certified personnel to coach diving. If no one is certified, check with your athletic director concerning liability and the feasibility of having diving as a part of your program.



Make sure the water depth is adequate. At the present time there is a 12 foot minimum depth rule in regards to a one meter diving board. If your pool is less than 12 feet, check with your pool and school management; they must make the decision to use it, or drop diving.

During diving warm-ups, with a number of divers trying to get ready, problems can arise. Diving boards should be off limits until there is a qualified coach ready to supervise divers. Check the boards at all times for cracks, loose fulcrums, supports, hand rails, slick surface, etc. to prevent injury to the divers.

C. Pool Entries

Always have your swimmers enter the pool feet first.

D. Meet Warm-up

Designate specific lanes and times for general warm-up (pace 50's, kicking, etc.) At a specific time, open a couple of lanes to one way sprints using the blocks. Having staff members on deck to monitor meet warm-ups is very useful and a valuable safety consideration.

E. Lifeguards

Some states and pool managements require lifeguards to be on duty during practices and meets. This could be a significant expense, if you are responsible for the cost involved. Check the requirements at your pool and enforce the regulations. Enforce to your swimmers the importance of obeying and respecting the lifeguards.



F. Coaches Safety Training

You and your staff should be certified in first aid, CPR, and any other safety training possible. USA Swimming and the American Red Cross have created a good course called "Safety Training for Swimming Coaches" that is available through Red Cross Chapters nationwide.

G. Backstroke Flags

Have them in place during practice as well as meets as a safety measure to ensure swimmers know where the wall is when swimming backstroke.

H. Starting Blocks

Follow the National Federation rules concerning the positioning and height of the blocks. The requirements change all the time, so check the rule book every year. Also check the blocks for slipping, twisting, or excessive movement on a regular basis

If you expect your athletes to practice safe procedures, then you and your staff must teach and demonstrate safe practices. Remember, your job and your financial well-being is at stake if an accident occurs.

II. More on Gaining Publicity for Your Team

A. Within the School

Assign swimmers from your team to the feeder school of your high school. They can contact the principal and get permission to hang signs about try-outs for the swimming team in the halls. These swimmers could also conduct question and answer sessions with the students before and after school as well the lunch period.

Posters can be made up and placed in the halls with information of upcoming meets including the opponent, location, and the time they will be held. Have meets and meet results announced to the school during the daily announcements. Having team members dress up on the days of meets is another way to let the school know the swimming team is having a meet.

Contact the cheerleaders and pep club to ask for their help in decorating lockers, making signs for the halls, recognizing the team during pep assemblies, etc. If this does not work out, something else that can be used is forming your own club, call them “Aqua Maids”, “Sponsors”, or whatever you decide. This group can act as timers, sign makers, locker decorators, etc. Generally something simple such as a special T-shirt is all that people will require for their services. If there is room on the team bus, take a few of these people to an away meet; they will appreciate it.

Use the marquees at school or businesses around the town to advertise meets. You will need to supply the responsible group with the information they need.



Many schools have a display case in the main entrance of the school. If this case is available to the clubs and organizations in the school, request a time during the season and have the team decorate the case for a one or two week period. Items that can be placed in the case may include: individual pictures of team members, schedule of meets, photographs from socials, meets, etc, team suits, caps, etc.

Have items that team members may wear to identify them as members of the swimming team; team polo shirts, T-shirts, jackets, caps, etc.

Check with restaurants and convenience stores within the community about the possibility of placing a team photo or shirt signed by the team members in their establishment.

B. At the Pool

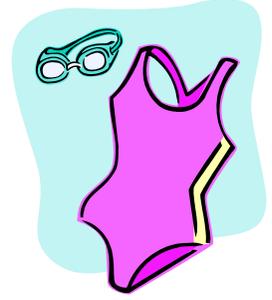
In addition to the record board and bulletin boards which have already been discussed, find a room or area at the pool which can be converted into a team room. It will probably require some fixing up, but it is great for building team unity and pride in the team. It will be something they have an investment in and will take very good care of.

III. Swim Equipment

A. Swim Goggles – Fit and Maintenance

FACT: Any goggle can be worn successfully if adjusted properly. The variations in style are available for personal preference and extra comfort in fitting.

In general, most swimmers prefer the low profile, low volume goggles like the Swedish goggles. Athletes who like larger eye-space use the TYR Racetech®, View Sniper®, or Speedo Vanquisher®.



Swimmers who are returning from the previous year will have a favorite they like to use. It is best to have samples available for others to try before ordering. If a swim supplier is close, refer the swimmers to them to get their goggles.

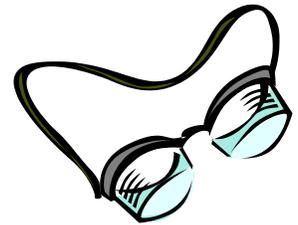
Neoprene Foam Seal vs. Silicone Seal:

Goggle gaskets serve to cushion the eye socket and create a water-tight seal. However, some people are allergic to the neoprene foam seal and need to choose a style with the silicone seal to keep from developing a red rash around the eyes.

Goggle Adjustments

Generally, the goggle-rule is to keep them tight enough to seal out water, but not so tight that a headache or dizziness results. No raccoon eyes, please.

It is important to adjust the nose piece to you own nose width; otherwise, the goggle may set too narrowly or too far apart on the face and cause leakage.



For proper fit the goggle strap should rest on the crown of the head at about a 45 degree angle. The strap should not run parallel to the ears. An angled strap will provide the proper pressure to prevent leakage.

Maintenance

To maintain the anti-fog capabilities of goggles, the lenses must be regularly cleaned. Every two to three weeks, use a window cleaner or anti-fog solution to clean the inside and outside of the lenses. You can help keep the lenses free from fog using the “universal solvent” (spit) on the inside of the lenses before putting them on.

B. Suit Sizing

Most swimmers will size down to a smaller suit size for competition. This serves two purposes:

1. A tighter suit helps reduce drag in the water
2. A tighter suit psychologically helps a swimmer psyche up for swimming fast because the feel is different from the everyday workout suit feeling. A tighter suit feels faster.

Lycra – Sizing of a Lycra suit depends a great deal on its use. For competition, Lycra suits should be sized down from a regular practice suit size. A smaller suit is not only more streamlining for competition, but should easily last through an entire season since it will be used for racing only. Each swimmer will have their preference as to a looser or tighter fit. How the suit feels to the swimmer should be the determining factor when selecting a size.

Body suits – Nearly all competitive swimwear companies also produce a bodysuit of a special fiber that repels water and further reduces drag for the swimmer. These suits are very expensive and worn only for championship meets. Use the manufacturers sizing chart when ordering these suits.

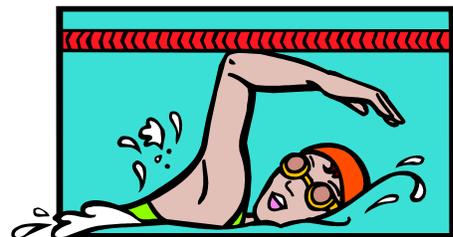


Here are a couple of suggestions to consider before ordering team suits:

1. Most suppliers will furnish you with a sizing kit of suits for the swimmers to try on to help determine their size.
3. Or a few extra suits of the most popular sizes. There will always be some swimmers who order the wrong size and are going to need a different size. Unused suits can be returned to the manufacturer.
4. Some suit manufacturers will custom make suits for your team. This process may require more time than “off the rack” suits. Plan accordingly; you want the team suits to be available for the first meet of the season.
5. When ordering from a supplier, furnish them with a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice of suits. The availability of suits is always a question when ordering. Just because they are in the catalog, doesn't necessarily mean they are available.

C. Caps

Girls will generally wear caps anytime they are in the water. For meets it is up to the coach to decide whether or not the entire team will wear caps. Latex is the most popular swim cap, but Lycra and silicone caps are also available.



In high school swimming the only imprint allowed on the cap is the team logo and/or the swimmers name. If anything else is on the cap, the swimmer will need to turn it inside-out before competing in a meet.

To keep the latex swim cap from sticking together, the swimmer can lightly dust it with baby powder after each use. Allowing the cap to dry in a well ventilated area will also help prolong its life. Just like suits, caps do not like spending cold, damp nights in the bottom of a swim bag or rolled up in a towel.

IV. Coaching Professionalism

A. Rules

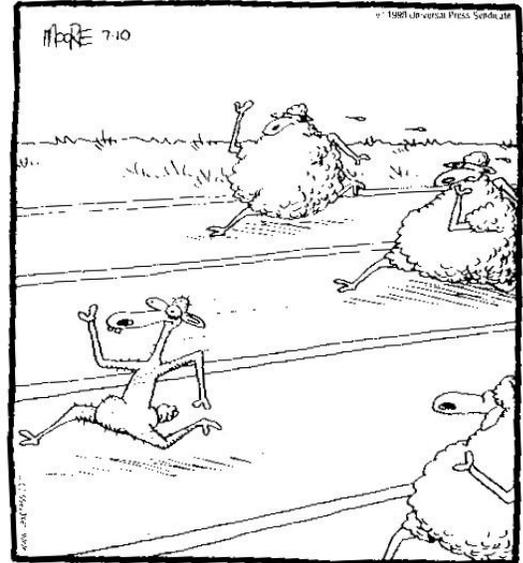
1. The National Federation publishes the high school Swimming, Diving, and Water Polo rule book each year. This publication is the high school coach's "bible." Most states adhere to the rules and regulations set forth in this book, so it is vital for all coaches to have this book.



- a. The rule book is generally available by October each year. Get this book from your Athletic Director.
 - b. The first couple of pages are very important. These contain the major rule changes for the upcoming year. Read this section very carefully!!!
 - c. There is also a page regarding "Communicable Disease Procedures." This page is also very important to read and understand.
 - d. The rule book "Table of Contents" outlines the various divisions within the book. Each section is important. Use a "highlighter" to emphasize the areas that are new or important to YOU.
 - e. Remember the high school rules may vary slightly from NCAA, USA Swimming, YMCA, or FINA; so you'll need to advise your swimmers of any variations from other programs they may have participated in. *(Recent rule changes have brought most of rules in line with each organization, but there are still procedural differences.)*
 - f. It is important to know the duties of each official. By knowing this information you will know who to go to if you have a question. It's also important to know which official disqualified a swimmer to make sure it was within their jurisdiction to make that call.
 - g. Be sure to read the "Situations and Rulings" that accompany the rules. This will give you a handle on actual meet situations and rulings.
 - h. Throughout the rule book are highlighted areas. These areas indicate rule changes that are new. Give special attention to these sections.
2. Be aware of any "waiver" a school may have regarding the pool they use for competition. All waivers should be in the hands of your Athletic Director BEFORE the season begins.



3. Most local officials' organizations set the required dives prior to the start of the season. Get this list, it will help you and your divers prepare and save time on meet days.
4. Familiarize yourself with any "special" conditions at pools where your team will compete (maybe the lanes are narrow, poor lane lines or wall markings, low or no starting platforms, etc.)
5. A major rule in the high school is the "4 event" rule. Simply put, it states that a swimmer can compete in 4 events: either 2 individuals and 2 relays, or 1 individual and 3 relays. A swimmer is not allowed to compete in 3 individual events. Using a specific form for your entries greatly reduces the chance of making mistakes when filling out your meet lineup.
6. Know the president of the officials association who will be working your meets. Sometimes regions / conferences have special rules that apply for only region or conference meets.
7. Pay close attention to the rule book regarding "championship meets." The rules for entries here will vary from those for regular dual meets.
8. New coaches should seek-out veteran coaches. Use them as a valuable source of information regarding the rules.



At the very next track meet, all the other sprinters sheared their bodies to cut down on drag.

B. Attending Clinics

One of the best ways to grow and improve as a coach is to attend coaching clinics. NISCA, ASCA, and many state coaching associations hold clinics each year, and at any time of the year, you can find a coaching clinic near you. The following is a list of places to contact when looking for a clinic.

1. American Swimming Coaches Association – Call 1-800-356-2722 for an up to date list of clinics across the USA.
2. Check with your state high school association.
3. Contact your local high school coaches association.
4. Ask other coaches in your area what clinics they attend.
5. Contact local college coaches. They will often be glad to come to your pool or have you bring your team to them for a clinic.

6. NISCA hosts a terrific clinic each year at its annual convention in March held in conjunction with the Men's NCAA Division I Championships. Make arrangements with your school administration to attend. You'll have the opportunity to see many of the top swimmers in the "world's fastest meet" as well as spending personal time with many of the finest high school coaches in the country.



The big advantage of attending clinics is that you get to ask questions and conduct a dialogue with other coaches.

C. Home Study Courses

ASCA offers over a dozen home study courses on various coaching topics. If you have difficulty attending as many clinics as you would like; visit the ASCA website or call 1-800-356-2722 to receive home study courses or transcripts of the talks presented at their world clinic each year.

D. Professional Organizations and Dues

Coaching organizations you should join include: NISCA, ASCA, and the National Federation Coaches Association. The fees and dues should be paid by the school, or booster group, as a necessary professional expense. The legal protection afforded by membership in professional education organizations alone is worth the minimal dollar investment by the organization.



E. Swimming Periodicals

Periodicals should be available to you and to students through the school library. Stay abreast of new written and video education, and ask the school to carry such materials.

The American Swimming Coaches Association magazine, NISCA Journal, and Splash are sent to members of coaching associations. Swimming World is offered to members at a discounted subscription rate. All of these periodicals will give you ideas to improve your swimmers and your program.



NISCA is your professional high school coaches association. NISCA offers coaching education specific to high school, rules interpretation, clinics, leadership opportunities, and publications. There is a vast array of recognition opportunities for coaches, and the ALL-AMERICAN program for swimmers and divers. NISCA also has Zone Directors and State Delegates available to help and provide you with information specific to your area. Membership applications and information on Coaches Education are available at our website: www.nisca.net.

Resources

Section 6-1

Swimmer Self Evaluation Form

Name _____ Date _____

Scoring: 1=Low, 2=Average, 3=Good, 4=High (circle the appropriate#)

Stroke:	Fly	Back	Breast	Free
Pull	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Kick	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Timing	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Breathing	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Streamlining	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Dist./Stroke(DPS)	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Starts:	Fly	Back	Breast	Free
Stance/Position	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Reaction	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Flight	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Entry	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Streamline	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
First Stroke	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Breakout	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Relay Start	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Turns:	Fly	Back	Breast	Free
Approach	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Quickness(. 8-1.4)	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Power Push	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Streamline	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
First Stroke	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Breakout	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Finish:	Fly	Back	Breast	Free
Timing	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Breathing	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Workouts:	Meets:
Attendance	Mental Preparation
Completes Sets	Rest
Practice Effort	Attendance
Endurance	Strategy Preparation
Sprint Ability	Nutrition

Mental Factors

Focused - want to swim	1 2 3 4
Drive - desire to improve	1 2 3 4
Drive - desire to win	1 2 3 4
Self-confidence - optimistic	1 2 3 4
Aggressiveness - asserts oneself	1 2 3 4
Coachability - accepts coaching	1 2 3 4
Determination - sticks with it	1 2 3 4
Emotions - handles feelings well	1 2 3 4
Conscience development - do it right	1 2 3 4
Responsibility - accepts blame	1 2 3 4
Leadership - can take charge	1 2 3 4
Toughness - handles loss/negatives	1 2 3 4
Self-motivation - drive from within	1 2 3 4

Team Spirit

Positive	1 2 3 4
Attends team functions	1 2 3 4
Wears team attire	1 2 3 4
Supports teammates	1 2 3 4
Leadership - talk	1 2 3 4
Leadership - example	1 2 3 4

List your Top 3 target events:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List your Top 3 target meets:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

