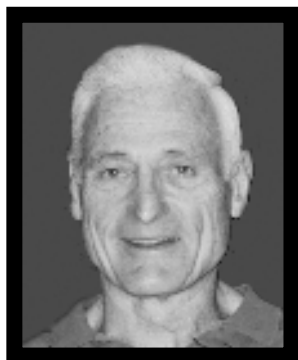


## A Look at the Development of Training by Dick Hannula



*Coach Dick Hannula is one of the most respected coaches in High School Swimming. He led his teams to many state championships and at one point had more than 200 consecutive wins. He has published many*

**W**e have all been challenged through our coaching careers to plan meaningful and beneficial training sessions for our team members.

Every training session should be an exciting and purposeful experience. Every swimmer should feel and be aware of the purpose of their training and the coach should reflect that same feeling. In a normal high school season, there might be close to 200 training sessions in a two session day program. If you coach in a year round program, the number of training sessions would be over 500 per year. This is a real challenge to your coaching. The most innovative coach can have an “off day” and a potentially great training session can become a “garbage day”. The goal is to plan and assure that every training session is making the best contribution to prepare every member of your team for the championship meet.

How much has changed in the last 50+ years of my coaching? When I swam in the 1940's and then started coaching in 1951, it was normal to have workouts that were a set number of lengths kicking, then pulling, then swimming, and finishing up with a few sprints. A warm up, then 500 kick, 500 pull, 500 swim, and sprints of 25 to 75 yards. A training session might only be 2500 to 3000 yards total. My workouts became much more extensive and innovative almost immediately in my first year of coaching.

The next major change in training was the addition of long slow distance training. The quantity of training was greatly increased. However the intensity was at a lower level. This came out of track coaching techniques. Substantial break through in swimming times were the result of this increased volume of training. The 1960's was the general time period that long slow distance became the most prevalent method. The distance swum and time in the water greatly increased.

The training zones are now well defined and provide a guide to coaches in planning the daily training session. Interval training and more intensive training became the accepted method.

We didn't have the training categories or zones fully defined until about 1980 or so . It seems that the recommendations that I used about 40 years ago still have application today.

These training zones are the definitions that I used. The definitions are simple and general and were shared with our swimmers.

1. Endurance training is primarily designed to improve endurance. Endurance training can be long continuous swims that we thought was one of the best methods to improve the capacity of the capillaries to accept blood and oxygen. The endurance training that was done in intervals was considered the better method of training to strengthen the heart for greater cardiac output.
2. Speed training is usually over distances short enough to allow the swimmer to swim faster than the speed of the distance of each swimmers major event. Repeats of 10, 12 ½, 15, 20, 25, 37 ½, 50, 75, and 100 yards were used to improve speed depending on the swimmer's event. Broken 50's and 100's were also excellent for speed training. These swims must be fast, at least race pace, and preferably faster. Running on the pool deck and diving into deep water from the run provided great speed for short distances. Swimming with fins, and pulling the swimmer on stretched surgical tubing provided additional speed training methods.
3. Race pace training can be short cross pool distances, or 25, 50, 75, 100, and 200 yard distances. It can be dive swims to attain "out" pace. It can be push swims to attain "back half" pace, or the middle segments pace. Broken swims can be used to attain most of the above.
4. Pain tolerance training is using "bomb" sets of maximum effort. In pain tolerance training, the swimmer is being trained to break through new pain or mental barriers. This type of training is used less frequently.
2. Stress your swimmers increasingly in your training program throughout the season. Overload your swimmers progressively. When swimmers are adapting, increase the repeats, or lower the send off time, or increase the speed.
3. Allow for recovery, or partial recovery, somewhere within the training routine. Allowing the body to rebound from an intensive training set will assure the adaptation necessary to attain higher stress levels. Changes in the type of training will allow some recovery.
4. Train to swim fast in meets. Don't lose sight of your goals. Training to swim fast in practice is only a means to an end.
5. Train all factors necessary for success. Endurance, speed, race pace, and pain tolerance training must all be considered and used. Strength, stroking tempo, starts, turns, tactics, and technique must also be included in your daily training plan.

Point your training to the areas most important for each event. The 50 free is obviously more concerned with strength, speed, starts, turns, and technique. The 100 distances and up become increasingly concerned with the endurance, race pace, and pain tolerance factors

"We've got a purpose! This is the most important aspect of any training program. Know where you are going, how you can best get there, and explain why the route you select is the best way to get there. The best coaches and swimmers must remind themselves occasionally of that purpose. We've got a purpose! This can be a battle cry to break a sluggish training session. How's the purpose in the breast stroke lane? How's the purpose in the sprint lanes? These questions shouted within the training session should render some loud and enthusiastic group responses, A swimmer

Planning training sessions should incorporate a number of general guidelines.

1. Gradually train your swimmers into condition. Build your training program to prepare the body for the intensive training sessions to come. Avoid too much too soon. Injuries can be the result of too fast a start.

once told me that “nothing is boring in our workouts, coach, everything has a purpose.” This swimmer made a lasting impression in my memory bank. We coaches have an obligation to provide purposeful training sessions that provide our swimmers with the best opportunity to succeed within their individual limits and based on the best training methods currently available.