

## AQUA LYON

*A monthly newsletter on all things swimming*

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1 February 2011

Welcome back to the Aqua Lyon. With the craziness that was the holiday season, I was not able to get out the January version, so this one will be twice the fun! Our swimmers started off the month of January with amazing swims at the Classic. Thank you again to all the parents and family members who helped make this an amazing success. We closed out the month with meets at UIC and a travel meet to Indianapolis. Both groups of swimmers swam fantastic with numerous lifetime bests, and new regional and JO cuts. This month begins the Championship portion of the year with A and B conference the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> and Regionals the 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. We also have a very hectic Valentine's Day weekend with our swimmers in three different places at once. **One note on the St. Charles meet, the 12 & under sessions on Saturday and Sunday morning will take place at Marmion Academy. This is a location change. Visit <http://www.stcswim.com/> for more information.** It will be a challenge for all the swimmers, parents and staff, but Lyons will pull through with flying colors. Remember to use your directory to arrange car pools if necessary!

### ***From the Desk of Coach Hnatiuk***

The busiest time of the swimming year is upon us and along with that comes many questions from parents, rookies and veterans alike. I will use this space to answer what I feel are some commonly asked questions pertaining to our club.

### ***When does the season end for my swimmer?***

Typically the season ends when the swimmer has competed in their final competition. For Lyons, this can mean A conference, B conference, Regionals, JOs, Senior Champs or Junior Nationals.

### ***How does my swimmer qualify for "A" conference?***

A conference is taken on the basis of times. We, the staff, look at the best times, and typically will take the top three. There are occasions when a person has the fourth or fifth fastest time, but because someone above them is doing other events, they will be able to swim.

### ***When is "A" Conference Finalized?***

We will post a preliminary conference entry sheet. This entry is subject to change. This will give swimmers and parents an opportunity to see where they are in relation to their peers. The final meet entry will be posted on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

### ***What's the deal with JO Relays?***

The deal with JO relays is fairly simple. We combine the times of the four fastest swimmers, and if the combined time makes the JO cut, those four swimmers go. JO Relays will be posted the week of February 15<sup>th</sup>. Again, as with conference, they will be subject to change and will be finalized after Regionals.

### ***My swimmer qualified for Regionals, where is the sign-up?***

For Championship meets, there is no sign-up. I expect everyone who qualifies to go. If for some reason, you can't make it, please let me know. This includes A and B conference as well. Send an email if you will not make any of the championship meets.

### ***When does spring season start and how do I sign up for that?***

The spring season will begin April 4<sup>th</sup>. Just like last year, sign-ups will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign-ups will open in the beginning of March and there will be plenty of notice before they are opened.

These are just a few questions that I believe to be out there. If there are more, or I didn't answer a question pertaining specifically to you, please send me an email. I would also welcome any

comments, thoughts, criticisms, and opinions on the staff, on the club, anything that might be on your mind. If you have an issue, please contact me. If you have a compliment, please contact me. If you have any questions, please contact me.

To finish up, there are some great articles near the end of this newsletter that I feel should be read. I know this can be somewhat lengthy, but I believe it to be worth the time.

### *From the Desk of Coach Mel*

Meet entries are updated on the website for both the Hornets & St. Charles meet. Please check the website for specific information regarding entries, warm-ups, & locations.

Conference lineups will be posted shortly, continue to check the website. The 3 fastest entries per event will be entered into the A conference, all other swimmers are eligible to swim B conference. Specific info regarding both meets is linked to the website. Also, check for updates regarding regional qualifiers & age group state qualifiers. We have swimmers that have achieved cuts for both of these championship meets, well done swimmers! Eligibility reports will be available soon & both meet packets are available. The Regional meet is hosted by Homewood-Flossmoor Swim Club, & Age-Group State will be hosted by Wildkit Swim Organization & will take place at UIC.

Congrats to the athletes that participated at the TOPS meet at UIC, & at the Circle City Classic in Indianapolis. The swimmers represented Lyons well!

### *From the Desk of Coach Nelly*

With just two more meets to prepare for, we're working hard at practice to learn the final things that we need to get down before those last meets as we build endurance. Please consider sending your swimmers to practice as frequently as possible.

#### *White Team:*

White is doing an amazing job of stepping up their workouts from 25's and 50's to 50's and 100's! They're looking so strong! We are always working on technique, but adding

endurance now and the kids are handling it wonderfully. They are working on tighter, faster flip-turns and exploding off their walls in freestyle. In backstroke we are learned how to do a flip-turn! Many of the 8 & unders are doing 100 backstroke at Hornets and will need to do a backstroke flip-turn. I am very impressed with how quickly they are picking it up! We will continue to work on it in practice...remind your swimmers...slow hands, fast feet! The breaststroke continues to be our hardest stroke, legally, but I am excited to say most of team is now legal!! These last few weeks will be spent reinforcing good habits they have built up over the past 6 months, as well as building endurance, and just having a great time learning how to kick some butt in the water!

#### *Red Team:*

Red 1-3 has been working very hard on technique and adding strength to their strides. The goal is to have everyone in Red legal by the end of the season. They have spent a great deal of time on underwater pull-outs in breaststroke, legal breaststroke kick/pull, legal butterfly kick, as well as correct timing. Red 1-6 has been spending a great deal of time working on flip-turns in freestyle and backstroke, as well as open turns for breaststroke and butterfly. Ask your swimmer to demonstrate to you the "lawn mower/lightening bolt" turn on a wall! For the last month, Red 4-6 has enjoyed the "warden's wanted". Throughout a practice, all technical fouls or elementary mistakes are accrued per swimmer, and then each swimmer owes the coach a certain number of push-ups to pay for these fines. It is vital that the swimmers always practice perfect technique and are making good habits in practice. Red 4-6 has also been working on endurance training. They check this by the color of their faces when they train...I often ask them to be pink and red faced swimmers! They enjoyed checking each other to see how hard they are working. While at practice, I expect all swimmers to work hard. They can rest at home, but no matter the age, if they come to the pool, they need to work hard on **endurance and technique**.

White and Red have been looking great in the water, both at practice and the last meets. We

have seen them step up their training and it's paying off!

As many of you know, Fall Swim is over soon, but Spring Swim is just about to start. I am a huge advocate of Spring **AND** Summer swimming!! I did it my whole swimming career, along with my Gulf Club team. I highly recommend your child participating in both their summer pool club and Lyons...one is just for fun and the other is that **AND** amazing training! Please consider it. Truly, nothing compares to training year round, and nothing is more easily identifiable than a year round swimmer. The strength that comes from training year round, and in LT's 50 yard pool in the summer, will be well worth it! If you have any questions regarding Spring/Summer swim, please do not hesitate to email me.

### ***Friendly Reminders***

Please check the calendar regularly as it may change.

Please check the parent resource page on our website as we continue to add new things.

If you have a facebook page, become a fan of USA Swimming. They provide some interesting tidbits, facts and help for new and veteran families alike.

### ***ACSA Information***

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### ***Working WITH the Coach***

One of the most time consuming challenges a coach encounters is building a working relationship between himself, parents, and the Board of Directors. This is especially true when parents challenge the coaches' authority and ability to make coaching judgments.

From our vantage point of "hearing it from all sides" we have developed some thoughts for parents.

**Be educated.** Read all you can about swimming but remember, that there are usually many different ways to teach a skill, or plan a season, or set a race strategy, etc... Your coach may use tactics you have not read about and are not familiar with but are never-the-less absolutely sound. Some very gifted coaches may use techniques that aren't well documented but may be a superior method. Your coach may be a pioneer! We don't think all coaches should coach using the same methods and are anxious to hear from coaches having success with new found methods.

Where do you find information? Reputable websites like [www.swimmingcoach.org](http://www.swimmingcoach.org) and [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org) are a good place to start. There are many places on the web but keep in mind the source – look for articles by successful and respected coaches. Also, there are dozens of books and DVD's out there written by accomplished coaches. [www.GoSwim.tv](http://www.GoSwim.tv) and [www.Championshipproductions.com](http://www.Championshipproductions.com) are two good sources of DVD's and Human Kinetics publishes a number of excellent books. ASCA has selected a number of DVD's and books we feel are important and have placed them on our online store at [www.swimmingcoach.org](http://www.swimmingcoach.org). There is also the option to join ASCA as a non-coach member and receive the ASCA Magazine, ASCA Newsletter, and the Journal of Swimming Research.

**Think before you ask.** When you are concerned about a decision made by the coach it's fair to ask for an explanation but keep in mind two things. First, ask for an explanation at the proper time, preferably after practice or after the swimming meet. It is better to wait for a quieter time and it is better to think through your questions before approaching the coach.

Secondly, it is reasonable for a coach to give an explanation by simply saying, "I had a feeling it would work best this way." It's called intuition, and it is one of the most important ways a coach

makes a judgment call. Let's not take this away from coaches.

Consider relays – one of the most contentious judgment calls a coach makes. Who should be on the relay and what should the order be? There are many factors that go into setting a relay line up and the guiding philosophy of the coach might simply be that he or she "enters the relay in the best interest of the team." There should never be a specific relay policy that will prevent your coach from using his or her judgment.

For example, the "fastest four" may not be the fastest four on THAT day. The coach may have an intuitive feeling that a given individual may perform faster than the "fastest four." There are also times the coach might feel that an individual needs the psychological boost of being on the "A" relay even though they are not one of the top 4, and if the meet is not of importance, may elect to move this swimmer to the "A" relay.

The point is, it is a coaches' call. She may make a judgment based on an intuitive feeling she has or other reasoning that you do not agree with or understand but it is within her area of authority to make the call and she needs the freedom to do it without undue critical challenges.

View the larger picture. There are three pictures, actually. One is the larger picture of the swimmer's swimming career. Early success (i.e. medals, ribbons, high point trophies, and national age group rankings) is not a requirement to career success. In fact, many times those successful early in their careers drop out before they have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Coaches are usually very patient with a swimmer's progress because they are able to see the larger picture. Try not to mistake a coaches' calm patience with non-caring.

Larger picture number two: "There's more to life than swimming." We're hopeful that all coaches and parents remember that the most important experiences gained in an individual's

swimming career have nothing to do with flip turns or butterfly technique. Making friends, being part of a team, learning self-discipline, learning responsibility, setting goals, and working toward goals are far greater experiences than medals, ribbons, high point awards, and national rankings. (Just ask a retired swimmer!)

Larger Picture number three: The team! Remember that you and your child are part of the team and have an opportunity to contribute to team strength, team growth, and team unity.

**Educate the coach.** Does your club have a "coaching education" item in its budget? We think you should and it might be used for any or all of the following:

- 1) People Skills Seminars. In our office we regularly receive bulletins announcing various "people skills" or "management skills" seminars in the area. On your team there are surely people who receive the same kind of bulletins at work. Ask your Board to send the coach to a seminar.
- 2) Coaches' clinics. There are many throughout the year and throughout the country. The ASCA World Coaches Clinic is the largest with over 1000 coaches in attendance.
- 3) Senior Nationals. If the team does not have senior national qualifiers, give the coach the option of attending the senior nationals in place of a clinic. It's a great place to receive an education.
- 4) Purchase books, magazines, and memberships for the coach. All of these things are an investment in your team's greatest asset, the coach.

**Recognize the coaches' experience and education.** Your children are precious and turning them over to a coach, who oftentimes is a young coach, is sometimes unsettling. Coaches, however, have hours upon hours of experience working with young swimmers just like your child and will try to make their best judgments in the best interest of your child's long term swimming development. In addition,

we're hopeful that your coach has attended clinics, frequently exchanges information with other coaches, and is involved with the ASCA certification and home study program.

**Try not to take it personally.** All parents want to see their children be successful; however some parents get emotionally involved in their children's successes and setbacks. Sometimes they love to win through their children, and they hate to lose. Let the child own their successes and failures while you are there simply to congratulate or console...

**Be aware of the overzealous, know-it-all, win at all costs, swim parent.** Unfortunately there are some parents who continually challenge the judgment of the coach. Frequently their opinions are based upon emotion, limited experience, and limited knowledge. Their motives are rarely in the interest of the team. They oftentimes try to gather support to change decisions and can wreck serious havoc in a program. What you can do is support the coach and Board of Directors, and try to educate the parent. One of the greatest untapped resources for parent education are the parents of children who have been through the age group program.

**Remember all the different people a coach must work with.** Be sensitive to the fact that a coach is under tremendous pressure to please as many people as possible while making decisions he knows not everyone will be happy about. A little support from a friendly parent can make a coaches' job far more pleasant than if he feels he is always alone.

Or not. Here is the time-saving, near effortless and low stress alternative for all of the above: simply look for your child to be happy and improving. Entrust the coach with the technical details. Accept the success and setbacks in stride. Provide emotional support for your child. Volunteer for team meets or other activities. And on your car pool day if you get stuck at practice, take a good book, and look up once in a while at your lovely child getting a great workout.

## **Setting Goals: The Parent, Coach, Athlete Relationship**

Setting goals and working toward those goals is one of the most important life skills our young swimmers learn. What are the benefits of goal setting? What is the goal setting process? What are the respective roles of parents and coaches?

In the American Swimming Coaches Association and USA Swimming's Foundations of Coaching Course these benefits of goal setting are listed:

1. Goals challenge swimmers, giving them something to work toward
2. Goals direct swimmers to develop their skills
3. Goals provide a means of evaluating a swimmer's progress and offer opportunities for success for the athlete.

Simply put, goals give direction and meaning to the day to day workout routine.

The goal setting process begins with a review of current achievements. What are the swimmer's best times? Next, what significant and attainable goals can be worked for over a reasonable time frame? Goals can be related to a time standard or to a competitive achievement. In general, younger swimmers should have a shorter time frame and the goals should be time based. Older swimmers may have the patience to set longer range goals that may be two, three, or four years away and often those goals are based more on a competitive result rather than a pure time.

Too often swimmer's concentrate only on the "outcome goal" and not enough on "performance goals." An outcome goal might be "to qualify for senior nationals in the 400 IM in the summer of 2011." Related performance goals might include: "Increase practice attendance to 9 times per week," "improve my 200 breaststroke time by three seconds," "lose 5 pounds by May 1<sup>st</sup> by eliminating empty carbohydrate snacks," and "increase my freestyle stroke rate from 1.3 seconds per stroke to 1.1 in the 400 IM." Some people refer to performance goals as "objectives."

Both outcome goals and performance goals should be specific and time framed. Specific means quantifiable – it can be measured. Time framed means there should be a target date for achieving the goal or objective. Goals should be flexible because stuff happens that we cannot predict and the course may need to be altered.

The positive role of parents is vital. The three elements of good parenting in the goal setting process are:

1. Parents encourage their children to set goals.
2. Parents ask their children what their children's goals are. (But do not set their goals for them.)
3. Parents ask their children how they are progressing toward their goals – especially performance goals.
3. Parents provide emotional support for their children as they pursue their goals.
4. Parents work with and support the coach for the interest of their children.

Coaches are the primary goal facilitators. They:

1. Guide the swimmer to set realistic but challenging goals.
2. Establish a timetable, or progression for reaching the goal.
3. Discuss split times or other technical strategies for achieving the goal.
4. Remind the swimmer of the relationship between workout performance and goal times at daily practices.
5. Evaluate progress toward goals with the swimmer.
6. Create team support for individual goals.

Case Study: What can go right and what can go wrong in the parent, coach, athlete relationship?

Jennifer had just started swimming on a year around program at age 11. Previously she was a summer league swimmer and swam only 25's and 50's. Her summer league coach was a student and never talked to Jennifer about goals. She was a big girl and quite a bit overweight. She had some natural speed in the freestyle but very poor endurance. On the new team she improved rapidly in the 50 free from a 32.0 to a

30.8 from September to February. An "A" time and the qualifying standard for the local JO's is a 29.89. The coach began talking to her about trying to make that time. The next week at a B meet Jennifer went a best time of 30.3 and the coach noticed Jennifer's dad looking at his stop watch and shaking his head in disappointment. After the swim Jennifer went directly to her dad to talk to him. Later the coach approached Jennifer's dad and said, "I noticed you were disappointed in her swim. What were you hoping she would do?" Jennifer's dad said he thought she should go a 28.5. That was a goal he and her had set. The coach pointed out that her 30.3 was a best time and that 28.5 was not a reasonable short term goal. Jennifer's dad became upset and said that he didn't need any help setting goals with his daughter. The coach became upset and said that goal setting was exclusively the role of the coach.

Mistakes by the coach: From the very start there should have been better parent education: an initial conference with the parents with one of the topics being goal setting and time standards. Some teams have a parent handbook that explains these issues. Later, the coach should have had a conference with Jennifer and together clearly identified 29.89 as a goal. He should have also talked to her about performance goals she would need to make in order to achieve her outcome goal. Some coaches work with the swimmer to fill out a goal sheet listing both performance goals and outcome goals. A copy of this sheet along with a copy of the JO qualifying times and National Time Standards can then be sent home with Jennifer for her parents. Later, in a moment after a practice or before a swimming meet the coach can have a brief chat with the parents about Jennifer's goals.

Mistakes by the parent: Jennifer's dad should not have helped Jennifer set such a difficult goal. His effort to have Jennifer be goal oriented was correct but his knowledge of the sport, of rates of improvement, and of Jennifer's abilities as a swimmer were not very good and this led him to make a poor judgment. It would have been better to approach the coach and ask

the coach what reasonable short term and long term goals are for his daughter.

Goal setting is one of the most profound skills we can help our children acquire. Parents who encourage their children to set goals, and who listen to the expert advice of the coach, and then cheer their children on can look forward to years of smiles.

***Learning to Prepare For Success***  
***By John Leonard***

As I write this in late December in Fort Lauderdale, the air temperature is a “balmy” 42 degrees...well, balmy if you’re from Green Bay, Wisconsin, maybe. Here in South Florida, that’s a cold wave. We swim outside, and the water temperature is 75 degrees as the heaters can’t keep up when the air is this cold. The wind-chill factor, according to Channel 7, is...well, we don’t want to know the wind-chill with a nice brisk 20 mile an hour wind coming off the Everglades.

My phone rings at 5 AM and a small voice on the other end asks plaintively, “*do we really have swim practice, Coach John?*” *Yes, we really do.*

“WHY?” Is the next question, which I wrestle with myself on the 15 minute drive to the pool.... Why put teenagers in the water on this cold and nasty morning when both they and I would prefer to stay snuggled in at home for another hour or hour and a half?

Now, I KNOW why, but can I express it to my swimmers? Yes, I’ll try. Everyone, on the day after the high school state meet, vows that “next year” they will A) make a final, B) Make the meet C) win an event or D) write in your own goal here.

It’s easy to vow to do something the day after, when you are excited, full of the promise of life and get up and go. It’s a lot harder to

REMEMBER what you wanted to do a couple months ago when it’s 5 AM and cold outside. Then it’s a lot harder and a lot easier to rationalize, “it’s just one workout.”

The problem is, when teenagers begin to learn to rationalize, they get really good at it really fast, and pretty soon, the ACTION required to fulfill the commitments to those goals, falls prey to the rationalization. And after you rationalize the decision you want to make the first time, it’s so much easier to do it the next time, and the time after that, and pretty soon, the goal is just a dream, because you’re rationalized yourself into thinking “I’d like to do that if everything could be perfect for me, and it would never be cold in the morning, or no social events would ever conflict with practice, and time with my friends always went the way I want it to. “

But things never go perfectly. The ONLY thing you can successfully predict is that obstacles to your goal WILL come up, and little or nothing will go smoothly. And that consistency in preparation is the only way to raise the percentages of the chance you will reach your goal.

Read that again... ”raise the percentages of the chance...” Not a guarantee. If it’s a good goal, there are no guarantees, EXCEPT that if you don’t prepare correctly, according to the plan, you won’t raise your chance of success, you’ll lower it.

So why go to practice at 5 AM in the cold? Because its part of the plan, and it raises your chance of success. But most of all, because you have told yourself that you will commit to doing it. And if you let yourself down, who won’t you let down? Prepare for a chance for success. And feel really good about doing that.

Because not very many people do.

All the Best, JL

***January Birthdays***

Andrew Balch M 17  
 Matthew Baldassarre M 15  
 Adam Cardone M 13  
 Henry Claesson M 11  
 Madeline Dixon F 11  
 Caroline Doyle F 9  
 Jenna Elliott F 11  
 John Gordon M 11  
 Caroline Higney F 11  
 Michael Hill M 14  
 Max Kagel M 10  
 Matthew Kappas M  
 Cole Kosanovich M  
 Anne Kunze F 19  
 Meredith Land F 15  
 John Linehan M 17  
 Maeve Lynch F 12  
 Kelly Macdonald F 12  
 Timothy Madigan M 12

Jane McGee F 10  
 Andrew McLean M 15  
 Sean McMahon M 16  
 Catherine Meehan F 10  
 Claire Molenda F 13  
 Catherine Newman F 9  
 Olivia O'Donnell F 11  
 Christopher Phillips M 13  
 Stephen Roe M 10  
 Louise Rudolph F 9  
 Zachary Schoneman M 18  
 John Siepman M 8  
 Abigail Tymick F 9  
 Adelaide Vear F 11  
 Madelyn Williams F 11  
 James Wing M 18

***February Birthdays***

Owen Arnold M 11  
 Grace Asleson F 7  
 Bryson Breitenbucher M 8  
 Claire Burriesci F 7  
 Colin Daly M 13  
 Cathleen Ganzel F 7  
 Joshua Hirt M 15  
 Cooper Hletko M 11  
 Louisa Hoffman F 15  
 Benjamin Johnston M 11  
 Katie Kuranty F 16  
 Charlotte Land F 7  
 Kathryn Madigan F 9  
 Grace McCormack F 7  
 Daniel Mohler M 16  
 Jane Molenda F 9  
 Leah Molenda F 9

Fiona Mullarkey F 8  
 Maciej Piwowarczyk M 12  
 Braden Rice M 10  
 Piper Robertson F 16  
 Rachael Schopp F 14  
 Elinor Sovcik F 12  
 Caroline Tabisz F 10  
 John Walls M 9  
 Charlotte Wolf F 8  
 Kristen Young F 13

***Contact***

For inquires pertaining to the newsletter,  
 questions or comments, please e-mail  
 Coach Casey at [cjhntiuk@hotmail.com](mailto:cjhntiuk@hotmail.com).