

Best Week Ever!

We talk big too much nowadays. Best ever, greatest ever. That being said this was the best week of practice I have ever seen. I swam for 9 years and have coached for 10 years, and this was the best week of practice I have ever seen. Some individuals have had better weeks. Some groups have had better weeks. I have never seen an entire team do as well as this one did this week.

Every group worked a little harder. Every group listened a little better. Every group behaved a little better. Every group performed a little better.

I do believe that the Valdez meet, as well as some other things, led to this. People that qualified were more motivated to succeed. People that missed cuts were even more motivated. Never again would they just miss a qualification time.

We are not a Spring Will Come or Valentine's meet team. We will do ok at those meets. We will get new best times at those meets but we are not that type of team.

We are a championship meet team. At the biggest moments we will do our best. That is a good thing, but it also can sometimes be frustrating.

Over the next couple of months we have nothing but championship meets. That means it is our time to shine. That also means we have to be more focused than ever before.

Most people view championship season as a time to relax. It is true that we will not have as trying practices but they are even more important now. Some will have their hardest practices of the year in the next few weeks. Others will be resting. Keep your focus up. We have always done well at championships. Keep that in your mind as we progress. Some will be going through the same process that has worked many times already. Others will be going through this for the first time. Keep you focus and all will work out. Keep your focus and next newsletter I will be writing about how next week is the new **Best Week Ever!**

"No one will ever see me quit, because I simply won't. If I start something, I will finish it and do it well."

Banana Meet

Last weekend we traveled on a bus to Valdez. I liked this meet last year and liked it even more this year. I really think that when you spend that much time together you have no choice but to bond as a team. I saw it last year and I saw even more of that this year. We swam very well, earning the second most banana's. Some picked up new qualification times while others just missed.

What made this a great meet and why I liked it so much is not because of how well they swam. It is because of how great a team we were that weekend. Other coaches and the meet officials all told me how well they thought of us that weekend. How well they thought we behaved and how much of a team we looked like. People supported each other, they cheered each other, and they felt a bond to each other. That is something that parents or coaches cannot force. We cannot make it happen, as much as we may like to. It has to come from within the team because they really do care about one another.

I have qualified for some great meets. I have had swimmers qualify for some great meets. I have had some great groups of kids. It is very hard to have a great team. This was not the first step towards becoming a great team. We had already done that. This was a harder step. Great job and keep it up!

"Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."

Pigeonholed

As I looked through the results for the college swimmers I was struck by a couple of things. Biggest was that some, if not most, of them were swimming events they never swam in High School. The first thought that went through my head was, how good at that event could they have been?

A lot of times the kids, and parents, wonder why we make them train and swim certain events. The simplest answer is that we want them to be ready to swim anything. Every event has a cross-over with another event. Sometimes the effect is psychological.

They could never believe they could do the 200FL or 500FR, until they swim it.

Sometimes the effect is physical. They need the speed of the 50 to come home at the end of a race. They need the endurance of the 500 to take a race out fast.

This is one of the reasons why we push the IMX scores. You are forced to swim everything. I like the individual medley. It is my favorite race to watch. I also believe the best swimmers, regardless of what their best event is, can swim a great IM. The best IM'er I have ever had (senior national qualifier, ACC conference champion) did not become a great IM'er until she spent more time training for the 200BR. (She was also a senior national finalist in the 50FR & 100FR)

As I am looking at which events I will enter kids in for the upcoming championships these are some of the things I will keep in mind. We would rather the kids do events which are beneficial for them and place lower than swim events which they can place higher just so they can place higher.

"Courage is about doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared."

Water Bottles

As some of you may have noticed we did not permit swimmers to bring water bottles on deck last week. This was not some old school training method of withholding water. This was because the kids had been leaving water bottles on deck and in the locker rooms. We had spoke to the kids many times before about not leaving things; watterbottles, kickboards, fins, or anything else, on deck.

The coaching staff, as well as the pool staff, hopes that this reminder is enough that this will not happen again. The coaching staff also hopes that this will remind the swimmers how important water is during practice. With how well the kids did last week without water is a testament to them and what they can accomplish. We, the coaches, feel that they would have done even better if they had had water.

I would not call myself an environmentalist or some radical kind of person. Crazy maybe but not radical. I have spent most of the last year trying to simplify my life and how we do things. Those small disposable water bottles cost money and are bad for the environment. We have a bunch of MSST water bottles left over from a swim-a-thon from before I came here. We are going to give those out to kids without water bottles. We will be writing the names on each water bottle. That way we will know in the future who has left things on deck. That way when, or hopefully if, we find things left on deck we will know who is responsible. That way I can have fun in finding ways to punish them.

"For every person who doubts you, tells you you will fail, try twice as hard to prove them wrong."