

## **DID YOU KNOW...?**

### **There Are Several Kinds of Magic Dust**

As parents, we sometimes come across the child that seems to be the epitome of the natural athlete; a child that can shine at any physical activity. As we watch that child grow and develop, he/she seems to accomplish great athletic feats regardless of the sport. The timing always seems excellent; the eye/hand coordination is there. The mental attitude is great, telling the body what to do and when to do it. We often wonder if we have discovered a child that has been sprinkled with “magic dust” at birth. Some athletes use that magic dust and find a home in a sport where they pour all their attention and achieve great results; some athletes spread the magic dust too thin and end up wasting it.

There are children who are absolute klutzes but who listen well and, with a lot of hard work, accomplish decent goals. They learn how to work hard and stay focused. They keep trying; they keep working hard at perfecting their craft. They listen to their coach, and practice, practice, practice. We watch as they progress at a slower pace, but progress they do. And at some point in their physical development, body and mind catches up with each other; muscles start working in conjunction with mental efforts and the klutz of the past has turned into a well coordinated physical machine that can accomplish high goals. The “magic dust” has finally shown itself.

Then there are those athletes who look at swimming as a sport they enjoy. They are rarely at the top of the pack, even though they work hard at practice and listen to their coach. Sometimes they have significant breakthroughs and cut time. But mainly, they keep swimming for the personal improvement they have in their times and because it is what their friends do. They value the social aspect of swimming, the close camaraderie that develops from spending so much time in the water with their friends.

As parents, we sometimes begin to wonder where the “magic dust” is for these children. They work hard at perfecting their stroke technique, but LSC Championship cuts don't come; Zone age group cuts are not there; Sectional cuts don't happen. We ask ourselves if we should continue to encourage such effort in a sport that does not seem to have any payback. Where is the “magic dust” for these athletes?

It comes in a different form as they develop a life-long love of swimming. It shows up in the path their career takes because they have learned important life lessons of long-term goal setting, dedication, organizational skills, and commitment - lessons that turn these athletes into successful business people, doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and even coaches who teach others how to become Olympians. The “magic dust” finally shows up in their lives.

So parents, sit down, strap in, settle back, and enjoy the ride of watching the “magic dust” that has been sprinkled on your swimmers lives, whatever form that might take.