

Orinda Aquatics



Parent Registration Meeting
September 7th, 2010



Putting Character First

Welcome

- **Returning**
- **New**
- **Try-Out (Exemption)**

Agenda

- 1. Registration for 2010-11**
- 2. General Overview**
- 3. Group Meetings**
- 4. New Parent Q&A**

Registration Process

- **OA Registration - Stacy Ashby**
- **USA/Pacific Registration**
- **Parent Support**
 - **Host Meet – Julie Fuqua**
 - **General**
- **eScrip**
- **Merchandise**

Overview

- **Philosophy**
 - **Personal development**
 - **Swimming development**
 - **Coach commitment**
- **The Swimming “World”**
 - **Rec**
 - **Age-group**
 - **Senior**
 - **High School**
 - **College**
- **Structure**
 - **Junior Group**
 - **Senior Group**
- **Programs**
 - **Year-round**
 - **Fall/High School Pre-season/Clinics**
 - **Master’s**
- **Coaches**
 - **Senior: Ronnie/Donnie/Dave**
 - **Junior: Matt/Marc**

Policies

- **Attitude/behavior**
- **Attire (team and otherwise)**
- **Attendance**
- **Meets**
- **NIKE/Norcal**

Merchandise

- **Included: Team suit, two caps, T-shirt, mesh bag**
- **Warm-up (new)**
- **Team caps at workout**
- **Team attire at meets – all swimmers**
- **Equipment – See form**

Parent's role with swimmer

- Unconditional (positive) support
- Demand commitment, integrity, team commitment, academic focus, responsibility
- Communicate with coaches
- Always refer to the coach for *anything* swimming related

Parent's support for OA

- Help "us" in the process/Be a part of the team
 - Experience/Social
 - Team/Misc.
 - Host Meets

Communication

- Weekly email summaries and notifications
- www.orindaaquatics.com
- Coaches – email is best (through website), cell if needed:
 - Donnie: 510-410-7946
 - Ronnie: 510-508-7966
 - Matt: 510-375-1870
 - Marc: 925-899-2010

Handouts

- OA Structure
- Mission Statement
- Senior Mission Statement
- The Triangle
- Organizational Chart
- Goal Setting
- The Mental Side
- Quotes
- Year-round Swimming
- Myths
- New Parent Topics
- The OMPA Exemption
- National History
- Graduating Seniors
- "Team Letter"
- Swimmer letters
- The Race
- Until it Hurts
- The Apple
- Butterfly

Emphasis

- Overview
- Core philosophies
- Character First
- A "Team" approach
- Board, Committee, Staff
- Top down goal setting
- Mental focus
- Things to think about
- Overview
- The reality
- Transition topics
- An extended session
- OA success
- The student-athlete at its best
- Team character
- The journey that matters
- Perseverance
- Aggressive parents
- Selflessness
- Challenge creates growth





Orinda Aquatics

Year-Round Swimming, 100

Fall Polar Bear Program, 400

Soda Center,
Moraga

Sleepy Hollow,
Orinda

Springbrook,
Lafayette

**Character
Camp, 100**

**Spring
Clinics, 100**

High School Pre-Season, 100

Orinda Aquatics Masters, 100

Putting Character First

Orinda Aquatics Mission Statement



1. We believe the team should support swimmers of all abilities to pursue their long-term goals in the sport of swimming.
2. We believe the team should provide serious athletes with the opportunity to develop into competitive high school, collegiate, and national level swimmers.
3. We believe in an equal partnership between swimmers and coaches. The swimmers should make a commitment the process, the team, and the coaches, and they should act with the highest level of integrity, character, and respect. The coaches should commit to provide the best in technique and training that the sport has to offer. Additionally they should support the athletes in other areas such as personal growth and college pursuits. They should be role models in every capacity.
4. We believe above all that every member of the team should learn the lessons that sports has to offer; disciple, commitment, personal responsibility, accountability, sacrifice, goal setting, humility, as well as challenge and adversity.
5. We believe that every member of the team should be treated as people (individuals) first, and athletes second.
6. We believe strongly in a true team environment. The "team" includes swimmers, coaches, and parents. No one should be differentiated by ability or any other characteristic. Everyone contributes and is valuable to the process, the environment, and the experience.
7. We believe in a positive, open relationship between coaches and parents.
8. We believe that as the community supports our sport and our team, we should in turn be positive and contributing members of the community and help those in need.
9. We believe that the team should support, and follow, the policies and guidelines of our Zone, LSC, and the governing body of United States Swimming.
- 10. We firmly believe in a Character First environment, and adhere to it daily.**

The OA Way

Orinda Aquatics Senior Group

Character First Mission Statement



Overview

- *To be the premiere Senior (high school) Group in the nation*
- *To transcend the norms and stereotypes of youth/teen*
- *To embrace leadership, team, work ethic, sacrifice, and humility*

Individual

- *Character/integrity (do the right thing)*
- *Humility (no ego)*
- *Empathy (care)*
- *Academic focus (respect, embrace, and appreciate this life foundation)*
- *Anti-drug and alcohol attitude (rise above)*
- *Parental appreciation (know your true support base)*

Athlete

- *Team commitment – to the organization, standards, and future*
- *Work ethic/training focus – embrace work and challenge*
- *Technique focus – take pride in technique*
- *Positive attitude – at all times*
- *On time – a statement of commitment*
- *Travel - with impeccable behavior*

Swimmer

- *Know and care about teammates*
- *Know meet plan (yours and the teams)*
- *Know stroke keys/personal keys*
- *Be disciplined in workout – technique, turns, etc.*
- *Be supportive and positive in workout, at meets, and in the locker room*
- *Be a high-character athlete*
- *Be a high-character leader*

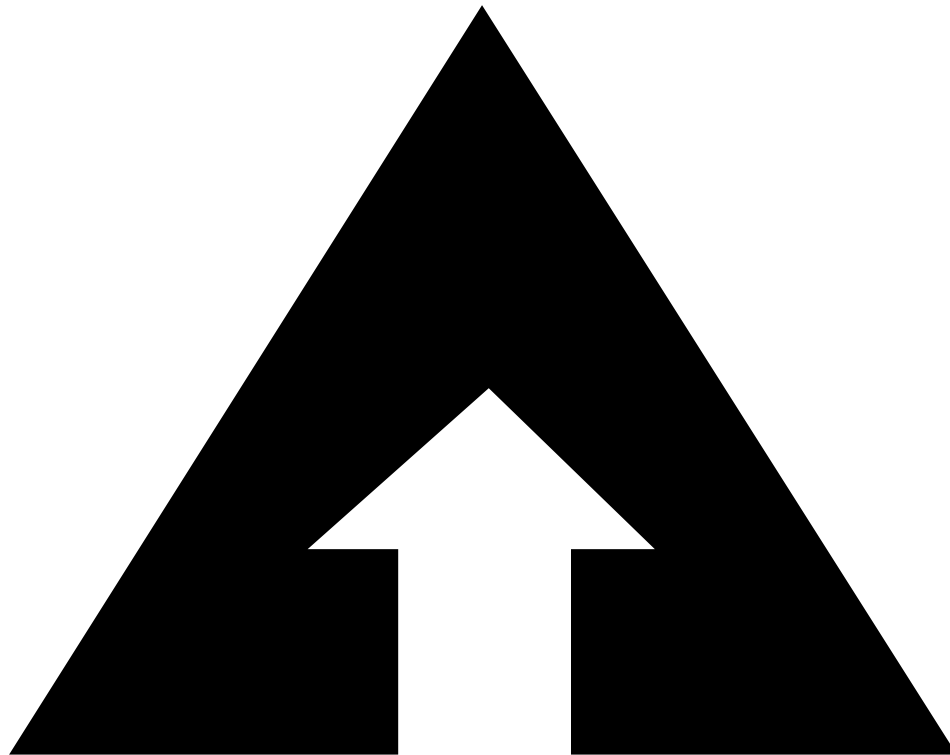
Character is a by-product; it is produced in the great manufacture of daily duty.

W. Wilson Find



We emphasize a true team philosophy. It extends to every member of this organization. We believe that a swimmers commitment to the team is really a family commitment to the team. It is our goal, desire, and ultimate vision that our parent support not be adequate but be extraordinary, as it is an integral part of our foundation. We have set very high standards within our program and truly hope that parents view their role and their support as a critical part of the teams overall success.

Swimmers



Coaches

Parents

- **Make the base/foundation as strong as possible**
- **Everything points to the ultimate experience and reward for the swimmers**
- **What is our vision?**

Orinda Aquatics, Inc., USA Swimming

Organizational Structure 2010

Executive Committee (3)

- Comprised of the Founding Board members and the Board President
- Will guide the Board of Directors, committee members and meetings

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Don Heidary | Co-Executive Director, Co-Head Coach |
| 2. Ron Heidary | Co-Executive Director, Co-Head Coach |
| 3. Stacy Ashby | Board President |

Corporate Officers (2)

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| • Don Heidary | President |
| • Ron Heidary | Treasurer, Secretary |

Board of Directors (9)

- Will focus on policy and governance issues and meet once a quarter
- Board members will hold a two-year term and can be nominated by the Board or the voted in by membership

Name	Position/Title/Emphasis	Elected/Appointed	Other
1. Don Heidary	Founding Board Member	Automatic	Team Macro
2. Ron Heidary	Founding Board Member	Automatic	Team Micro
3. Stacy Ashby	President	Appointed	Membership/Ex. Committee
4. Lynne Whyte	Vice President	Appointed	USS Experience
5. Jeff Jacobs	Treasurer	Appointed	Corporate/Finance
6. Cynthia Funai	Secretary	Appointed	Legal/Host Meet (Director)
7. Laurie Fuller	At large	Appointed	Finance/Social
8. Janet Brady	Master's Chair	Appointed	Web/IT
9. Matt Shieman	Business development	Appointed	Fall/OMPA/Host Meet

Key Swim Team Committee Positions

- A group responsible for ongoing operations, coach support, and swimmer experience
- Will hold a meeting once per quarter. All parents welcome.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Stacy Ashby | Committee chair, membership/registration |
| 2. Matt Ehrenberger | Junior Coach/Admin/Programs |
| 3. Donnie Heidary | Head Coach/Team Macro |
| 4. Fuqua/Larsen | Parent Coordinator |
| 5. Cynthia Funai | Meet Director |
| 6. Janet Herman | See's Candies |
| 7. Sarah Sivesind | Banquet/Summer Social |
| 8. Leslie Wright | eScrip |
| 9. Fred Stumph | TBD (travel/IT) |
| 10. TBD | Senior Social/Activities |
| 11. TBD | Junior Social/Activities |
| 12. TBD | Merchandise |
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Current/Potential Consulting and Strategic Planning Advisors

- *A group that may assist with organizational, visionary, strategic planning, and team development*

1. TBD	OMPA President
2. Christy Buck	LMYA/County President
3. Margot Woodward	College, special projects
4. Dr. Kirk Jensen	Water polo, injury prevention
5. Andrew Morris	Water Polo/Soda (local WP)
6. Steve Haufler	Masters Director, Rec, Former USA Coach, Swim school
7. Robin Bousquet	Physiology
8. Katie Irwin	Sports Psychology
9. TBD	Community support
10. Bill Krumm	USA Swim Western Zone Club Development

Orinda Aquatics Staff/Related Positions

Year-Round	Position	Related Activity
1. Ron Heidary	Co-Head Coach	Campolindo High School
2. Don Heidary	Co-Head Coach	Miramonte High School
3. Matt Ehrenberger	Head Junior Coach	Sleepy Hollow
4. Marc Cavallero	Assistant Junior Coach	LMYA, Acalanes High School
5. Dave Schurhoff	Senior Assistant, Dry Land	Campolindo High School, MCC
6. Matt Armanini	Volunteer Senior Assistant	Campolindo Cabana Club
7. Jon Behnke	Dry Land	

Fall/High School/Clinics

8. Matt Ehrenberger- Dir.	Sleepy Hollow Site Coach	Sleepy Hollow
9. Marc Cavallero	Springbrook Site Coach	LMYA, Acalanes High School
10. Tony Ravnik	Soda Site Coach	Sleepy Hollow, Campo JV
11. Christina Rizzo (PT)	Soda 8&U	MCC Learn-to-Swim
12. Kevin Honey (PT)	Sleepy Hollow Coach-PT	Sleepy Hollow Co-Head Coach
13. Allison Shasky	Springbrook Coach	Teacher
14. Anthony Estrada	Sleepy Hollow Coach	Sleepy Hollow Sr. Assistant
15. Deanna Chen	Soda 10&Under	MCC, Bentley High School
16. Peg Shasky	Springbrook 8&U	Soda Learn-to-Swim
17. Steve Haufler	OCC (operates independently)	OCC, Master's, Haufler School

Masters

18. Steve Haufler*	Head Coach/Director
19. Scott Mendelssohn	Assistant – Soda
20. Bill Aden	Assistant – Mid-Morning
21. Catherine O'Neal	Assistant - Morning

Orinda Aquatics Board Overview

Team Vision

- Be the best youth sports program in the area
- Be a team driven by character and integrity (a model)
- Continue to develop national and college level swimmers, and leaders
- To touch as many swimmers as possible in the Lamorinda area

Board Vision

- To be a team-oriented, high performance Board of Directors
- To understand the Mission Statement/team philosophy and communicate it when possible
- To lead a team and a parent group with vision and enthusiasm
- To create, motivate, and manage a parent committee group
- To continually look for opportunities to improve the team and the experience

Team Goals

- **Growth (size)**
 - **Grow to 150 (75 Senior/75 Junior)**
 - Fall Swimming 400, High School Pre-season 100, Clinics 100, Masters (100)
- **Success**
 - Remain regionally and nationally competitive (top five JO, FWC, top ten Sectionals)
 - Develop national and college swimmers
- **Environment**
 - Continue/preserve a positive, disciplined, high-character environment (*a national model*)

Orinda Aquatics Success 2009-2010

Team size ~100

Competitive

Nearly 50 Far Western qualifiers
40 Sectional Qualifiers
8 Junior National qualifiers
1 Olympic Trial qualifier/World Ranked
3 National Top 10 Age-Group swimmers
3 All-Time Top 100 swimmers (USA)
3 swimmers at North American Challenge Cup
1 swimmer at National Select Camp (at Olympic Training Center)
1 swimmer at Zone Select Camp (in Arizona)
15 High School All-America swimmers
Scholastic All-America athletes (USS)-TBD
High Academic All-America (High School)-TBD

Team

Orinda Aquatics hosted 1,300 swimmers at the Pacific Swimming Junior Olympics
USA Swimming Virtual Club Rankings

- 113 in the Nation
- 6th in Pacific Swimming
- X in the nation for teams under 150

Donnie spoke on an age-group panel at ASCA World Clinic in Fort Lauderdale
12th at Long Course Sectionals
Club Excellence Level (TBD)
Level One Club Recognition

Goal Setting and Competition:

Goals are critical to maintaining focus and direction, but goals should only be a **positive aspect** to sports and not introduce negative or self-defeating implications. Here is a broader perspective on Goal Setting.

1) Always begin with Big Picture Goals. They are the most significant part of goal setting and should include;

- *Attending practice and being on time*
- *Putting in extra time*
- *Training hard*
- *Training smart*
- *Being positive (even in challenging times)*
- *Being enthusiastic*
- *Supporting your teammates in achieving their goals*
- *Knowing the team goals*
- *Acting with integrity and humility*

2) Once you feel you have accomplished (are accomplishing) these goals, move on to more specific goals;

- *Work on starts*
- *Work on streamlines*
- *Work on turns*
- *Work on breathing patterns*
- *Know race strategies*

3) After you feel you have been successful with the broader goals, and are willing to commit to specific goals, you should then;

- *Assess your realistic potential, dedication, and commitment level*
- *Talk to your coach*
- *Set goal times (use time standards as and past performance as guidance)*

Remember, whether or not you achieve a goal or time will have virtually nothing to do with your ultimate success as a swimmer and will pale in comparison to your ability to be successful in achieving the bigger picture goals. The latter will earn the respect of your coaches and teammates, the former may earn you a medal. Stay focused on the big picture. Do the things necessary to promote a positive, long-term career. Learn the lessons of teamwork, hard work, focus, spirit, humility, perseverance, and enthusiasm. Many swimmers have gotten lost in the pursuit of a random time, a time standard, a record, or another person. Attitude and effort fuel your career, your team, the sport, and your life – not one swim, or even one record. The virtues of commitment, spirit, teamwork, attitude and effort will stay with you forever!

“Goal” for it!

The Mental Side: Attitude and Inspiration in workout

This will be the most important aspect of your training and will make the most difference in your ultimate success and fulfillment.

- BE FOCUSED** Come to practice with a purpose every day and a commitment to improve your strokes. *Strive to be better in some way than you were before.*
- PRIDE** Develop a pride in your effort and workout performance. Strive to be the best workout swimmer in practice or in your lane.
- BE POSITIVE** Help create a positive environment in practice, in the locker room, and at meets. You can make a positive or negative difference. It's your choice.
- AGGRESSIVE** Be aggressive about getting better. Swim and compete with a passion to improve and reach your goals.
- REMEMBER** "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect."
- SUPPORT** Care about your teammates. Don't be selfish. It will make a difference for them, and they will care about you. Go the extra mile:
- *Support them in practice when they are tired.*
 - *Get excited for them if they make a hard set.*
 - *Encourage them if they feel like giving up.*
 - *Cheer for them at meets (not just your friends).*
 - *Be happy for them if they improve their time even if you do not.*
 - *Remember - Teamwork is created by you, not for you!*
- BE TOUGH!**
- *"He who is good at making excuses is seldom good at anything else."*
 - *"Don't mistake activity for achievement."*
 - *"Pain is temporary. Pride lasts forever."*
 - *"If you don't find the time to do it right, you will find the time to do it over."*
 - *Work-ethic will not guarantee success but it will guarantee character.*
 - *Without sacrifice, neither success nor failure will matter much.*
 - *Discipline as an athlete carries over into the rest of your life and visa versa.*
 - *The better you train, the better the lane trains, the workout trains, and the team trains.*
 - *Working smart is as important as working hard. So is working positive.*

What the following represents

- **Discipline:** a statement of character
- **Technique:** a statement of efficiency and focus
- **Punctuality:** a statement of commitment to the process
- **Team attire:** a statement of pride and unity
- **Humility:** a statement of equality and selflessness

Quotes, Attitude, & Inspiration

The following quotes and sayings apply to swimming, to sports in general, and to life. We have tried to make these a part of our coaching philosophy and hope that you also find wisdom in them and benefit from them.

- Never give up on what you really want. The person with big dreams is more powerful than the one with all the facts.
- Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know.
- Commit yourself to constant self-improvement.
- Don't waste time grieving over mistakes. Learn from them and move on.
- Be a good loser. Be a good winner.
- Be modest. A lot was accomplished before you were born.
- Don't whine.
- Remember that overnight success usually takes several years.
- Improve your performance by improving your attitude.
- Be enthusiastic about the success of others.
- "Thoughts lead to feelings. Feelings lead to actions. Actions lead to results."
- "How you do anything is how you do everything."
- "Where attention goes, energy flows, and result shows."
- "If you are willing to do what is easy, life will be hard. If you are willing to do what is hard, life will be easy."
- "The most pathetic person in the world is the person who has sight but has no vision." Helen Keller
- "Being average means you are just as close to bottom as the top."
- If the going is real easy, beware, you may be headed down hill. – unknown
- The heights by great men reached and kept were not obtained by sudden flight. But they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night. Thomas S. Monson
- Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goals. – unknown
- A big shot is a little shot that kept shooting. – unknown
- Problems are only opportunities in work clothes. - Henry J. Kaiser
- No dreamer is ever too small; no dream is ever too big. – unknown
- Failure is only the opportunity to begin again, this time more wisely. – unknown
- Great changes may not happen right away, but with effort even the difficult may become easy. - Bill Blackman
- Don't ask for a light load, but rather ask for a strong back. – unknown
- To reach a port we must sail, sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it. But we must not drift or lie at anchor. - Oliver Wendell Holmes
- He who seeks rest finds boredom. He who seeks work finds rest. – unknown
- Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail. - Emerson

"People make teams. Teams make people."

Year-round Swimming and Orinda Aquatics

It is the sincere desire of Orinda Aquatics that participation in year-round swimming be a positive experience for each swimmer and that swimmers join for the right reasons. The environment at Orinda Aquatics is a smaller, more intimate setting and we expect all members to be positive, team-oriented individuals. As such, the coaching staff will meet with each prospective member and a parent to discuss the nature of the program and the reasons for joining. After that meeting, swimmers are offered a two-week tryout (please find the **Try-Out form** in the documents section of the website) to experience the schedule, the commute, the workouts, the team, and the coaches. After that period, if both parties feel that it is the right decision, the family will register.

Because of the prevalence of summer league swimming, and the Orinda Aquatics Fall program, we generally do not encourage swimmers under the age of ten to train year-round. Through rec and Fall swimming, younger swimmers can experience a very positive, social, team environment while learning proper technique and developing an understanding and comfort with competition. In terms of progression in the sport, the coaches have extensive experience in guiding swimmers through the progression of summer league, Fall Swimming, year-round swimming, into high school programs, and on to collegiate swimming.

Regarding "who" should swim year-round, there are many myths (see below). Year-round swimming is not strictly for "stars". To the contrary, it is less about ability and more about desire. The vast majority of Orinda Aquatics swimmers, and USA swimmers across the country, begin from a novice or intermediate background. And because of their desire to swim, most develop to higher levels. While summer league swimming is the best introduction to the sport, there are many swimmers that need other things. Advanced swimmers may need to move on to higher levels of training and competition, while some swimmers may be more "distance" oriented as opposed to the sprint nature of rec swimming. Additionally, swimming has been a compliment to the sport of Water Polo for many athletes. Year-round swimming adds conditioning, speed, and technique, all valuable for serious water polo players. Feel free to contact a coach either through email or a phone call to discuss year-round swimming. Or OMPA swimmers, the "Exemption" may be a consideration for 10-14 year old swimmers.

Objectives of Orinda Aquatics

- To serve the swimming needs of the community through various programs
- To be a model program nationally
- To develop high-character athletes
- To develop a positive, high character team environment
- To create collegiate opportunities for all swimmers
- To provide the best coaching available anywhere
- To assist local teams and parents in developing summer programs and staffs

Orinda Aquatics Themes

- "It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters, in the end."
Le Guin
- "Prepare the child for the path not the path for the child."
- **Character first**

Myths of Year-Round Swimming

You have to be “fast”

Over one third of OA swimmers are at the novice to intermediate level

It is too hard

Our program is based on technique and “efficient” training for the long term, and not yardage. Our objective is to develop swimmers in a positive environment and not “burn them out”.

It is too serious/It is not fun

We want this to be a positive life experience. We try to position every aspect of the program with that in mind. However, discipline does breed very positive byproducts and life skills. Most of our swimmers view their teammates as family, and greatly value being a part of a positive, high-character, athletic group.

The coaches only care about the “fast” swimmers

The coaches care about everyone that is sincere and cares about the team and the integrity of the program. Times have nothing to do with it.

I am a water polo player

Many OA swimmers have played water polo. Elite athletes like Peter Varellas (MTSC, Campo, Stanford, Olympic Team) and Michael Sharf (OPP, Miramonte, CAL, US National Team), Max Parrague (SH, MHS, UC Irvine), and now Tor Jensen found year-round swimming and OA a positive and constructive addition to their training. We encourage water polo players to consider themselves as “aquatic athletes”.

I am not fast enough to swim in college

There is a college team for virtually every swimmer. From Division I to Division III, we have helped 90% of our graduating swimmers find great academic and swimming fits. Please see the College tab on the website for a listed of school/teams that OA swimmers have been a part of.

If you’re not a successful rec swimmer, you cannot have a successful swimming career (speed vs. endurance, talent vs. training)

We have had many “mid-level” rec swimmers develop into very competitive high school and college swimmers. Some were not suited for the speed orientation of rec. swimming but adapted well to mid-distance races.

Year-round swimming is too time consuming/takes time away from academics

To the contrary, year-round swimming has proven to enhance academic performance through the self-discipline, time management, and collegiate focus that swimmers develop.

Orinda Aquatics New Parent Topics

- Rec vs. Year-Round
- Short-term vs. long term
- Parent commitments
- The parents role with the child
- The parents role with the coach
- The swimmers role with the coach
- Goals: team, individuals, athletes, swimmer
- Training
 - Attendance/resistance
 - Dry land
 - Equipment
 - General development
- Technique (habits/responsibility)
 - Fundamental development
 - Specific focus
 - Distance per stroke
 - Turns/streamlining
- Competition
 - How often/why
 - Expectations
 - Events
- Goals/Expectations
- Times/Development
- Plateau's
- High School
- College

General Development/Progression

1. Love of swimming/desire to swim (attendance)
2. Love of training/desire to train (work ethic)
3. Focus on technique (efficiency)
4. Embrace team philosophy as swimmers mature (character/team)
5. Prepare for high school swimming (high school development)
6. Prepare for college swimming (collegiate experience/assistance)

ORINDA-MORAGA POOLS ASSOCIATION

Year-Round Exemption (extended)

Date: December 10, 2007
To: OMPA Member Pools
From: OMPA Board of Directors
Re: Temporary Addendum to Rules and Regulations Effective January 1, 2008

This is to notify all OMPA member pools that the OMPA Board of Directors has voted to temporarily modify its Rules and Regulations to allow a swimmer a one-time exemption to train with and compete for a USA Swim team from January 1st through the last day of competition of the Far Western Short Course Championship swim meet (usually the last weekend in March or the first weekend in April) of that same calendar year.

This addendum only applies to those swimmers that will be competing in the 11&12 and the 13&14 age groups for the same calendar year's OMPA swim season (i.e. a swimmer who is 14 years old through this exemption period but turns 15 before June 15th of the same calendar year would not be eligible.) These swimmers may not have previously trained with or competed for a USA swim team during any period of time from January 1st through August 15th.

Swimmers that elect to exercise this one-time exemption will retain their OMPA eligibility for that calendar year swim season but will not be eligible for County. The Exemption will be considered "used" for any swimmer that continues to train with a USA Swim team during the period regardless of the length of time (i.e. one day or 3 months).

Please note that this addendum is intended to allow swimmers who are seriously interested in swimming year round a "one-time" opportunity to try USA Swimming for up to 6 or 7 months to see if that type of program is right for the swimmer without having to give up their OMPA team if it is not. It is not intended to be used for additional training opportunity for swimmers competing in the OMPA with no serious interest in swimming for a USA Swim team.

The OMPA Board of Directors requests that any swimmer considering using this onetime exemption have a meeting with the swimmer, parents, OMPA team coach and USA team coach to discuss what is best for the swimmer. This addendum does not permit or allow any OMPA member club to organize and/or offer any workout during this Exemption Period, as this would violate Section 1.01(d).

This addendum precludes any OMPA member club from organizing their own (or jointly organizing) USA Swim Club to offer training for their member swimmers. As with all OMPA Rules and Regulations, it is the responsibility of the OMPA member club coaching staff and the OMPA families to make sure all swimmer eligibility rules are complied with.

This temporary addendum will expire with the end of the OMPA swim season 2010.

Please notify your team members of this addendum to the OMPA Rules and Regulations. Any questions can be addressed to the OMPA Board through your team representative.

A Strong History of National Development and Academic Success

Olympians

1. Kim Vandenberg–UCLA/Campo/MTSC (800 Free Relay, 2008-Bronze Medal)
2. Peter Varellas–Stanford/Campo/MTSC (Men’s Water Polo, 2008-Silver Medal)

Olympic Trial Qualifiers

1. Amy Thurman – UCLA/Meadow
2. Scott Lathrope – Stanford/MCC
3. Heather White – CAL/Miramonte HS
4. Tyler Angelo – Notre Dame/WC
5. Kristen Lewis – UCLA (current Cal asst)/MCC
6. Katie Arnold – UCLA/Springbrook
7. McCall Dorr – SMU/Las Lomas
8. Lauren Beaudreau – Richmond/Springbrook
9. John Dorr – USC Post-grad/Las Lomas
10. Lindsay Hart – Harvard/WC
11. Artemis Daphnis – Arizona/Sleepy Hollow
12. Katie Ure – UCSB/Sleepy Hollow
13. Lindsey Sharp – Washington/Sleepy Hollow
14. Zach Disbrow – West Point/Sleepy Hollow
15. Steven Stumph – OA current



National Qualifiers

1. Justin Chiles – Princeton/MTSC
2. Scott Metcalf – Harvard/MTSC
3. Jillian Ochs – UCLA/Las Trompas
4. Jessie Krompier – Stanford/WC
5. Bob Stinson – Arizona/Dewing Park
6. Tyler Schlenker -USC/Miramonte rec
7. Matt Lyon – CAL/Oakland
8. Taylor Dahl – UCLA/Springbrook
9. Aphrodite Daphnis – UCLA/Sleepy Hollow
10. Quinn Fitzgerald – Yale/Oakland
11. Megan Baumgartner – Stanford/Marin
12. Elyse Corwin – Maryland/MCC

US Open Qualifiers

1. Maggie Bever – Washington/Montclair
2. Hope Thurman – UCLA/Meadow
3. Kelsey Lewis – UCSB/WC
4. Marisa Chang – Washington/OPP
5. Chelsea Pfohl – NYU/Miramonte rec
6. Sarah Heath – Tufts/Springbrook
7. Chris Peterson – UCSB/Pinole
8. Dustin Luchini – UC Irvine/Rodeo

Junior National Qualifiers

1. Eric Tang – Columbia/Mira rec
2. Darren Pagan – Columbia/Oakland
3. Joe Unruh – Naval Academy/SHST
4. Shane Tutass - Columbia
5. Kellen Ranahan – Cal Poly
6. Peter Varellas – Stanford (WP)
7. Allison Shasky – UOP/Rancho
8. Marc Cavallero – UCSB/MTSC
9. Megan Kelly – Pepperdine/SHST
10. Jenny Lyons – UCSB/SHST
11. Mark Shveyd – DVC/SHST
12. Tanner Burke – Penn/LMYA
13. Alex Stuart – Ohio State/MCC
14. Caroline Lukins – OA/OCC
15. Jill Jones – OA
16. Andrea Ward – OA/San Leandro
17. Courtney White – OA current
18. Chris Leon – OA current
19. Andrew Schneider – USC/Las Trompas
20. Sophy Levy – UCSD/Oakland
21. Lindsey Vance – UCSB/MCC
22. Suzy Bagg – UCSB/MCC
23. Peter Conte – CAL (WP)/Meadow
24. Bryan Zenoni - DVC/MTSC
25. Dani Lachowicz- Dartmouth/Meadow
26. Heather Prince – Colorado/MVP
27. James McLaughlin–W. Point/Marin
28. Jessica Ivry – Emory/Meadow
29. Max Parrague – UC Irvine/Sleepy Hollow
30. Kris Kao – UC San Diego/OPP
31. Sean Haufler – OA/OCC
32. Chris Chuck – OA/Las Trompas
33. Shelbi Luchini – OA/Rodeo
34. Tommy Dowley – Cal/Rancho
35. Sven Campbell – OA current/Montclair
36. Jeffrey Strausser – OA current/Springbrook

Collegiate Team Captains (so far)

1. Justin Chiles – Princeton
2. Kristen Lewis – UCLA
3. Annie Reding – Columbia/OPP
4. Suzy Bagg – UCSB
5. Maggie Bever – Washington
6. Lindsay Hart – Harvard
7. Kent Holland – Brown (WP)
8. Lauren Beaudreau – Richmond/Spring.
9. Zach Disbrow – West Point
10. Peter Varellas – Stanford (WP)
11. Marc Cavallero – UCSB
12. Becca Reingold – Middlebury
13. Colin Scott – Boston College
14. Dustin Luchini – UC Irvine
15. Megan Lynn – Carleton

Orinda Aquatics

Acknowledges our graduating class of 2010,
and all of our swimmers for putting...

Character First



These swimmers represent the best of:

Student-athletes

Character in sports and in life

Young adults making positive life choices

Leadership in the fight against drugs and alcohol

Humility, discipline, respect, and compassion, everyday

2010 Graduating Class (average GPA – 3.8)

Brooke Woodward©- *OCC, Emory*-swimming

Andrea Ward©-*UC Santa Barbara*-swimming

Rachel Cleak©-*Campo Cabana, Cal Poly*-swimming

Ben Smith©-*Miramonte, Chapman* - swimming club

Micaela Hahn-*Carleton College*-swimming

Katy Yeh-*Miramonte, Lewis & Clark* - swimming

Lindsey Mascheroni-*MTSC, LMU* - swimming

Lauren McGill-*Sleepy Hollow, Cal Poly*

Lizzie Peiros-*MCC, Stanford*-Water Polo*

Christy Tormey-*Springbrook, Duke*

Jill Jones©-*Cal Poly*-swimming

Aly Levine-*Williams*-swimming

Amanda Schlenker-*Miramonte, UOP*-swimming

Stephen Kingery-*MCC, Johns Hopkins* -WP

Delia Salomon - *Grinnell* - swimming

Jenny Hu-*Tufts* - swimming

Hayley Russell-*Meadow, University of Texas*

Alanna Hulburd-*Round Hill, Georgetown*-swim*

©-Captain, * OA summer only

We could not be more proud of the young men and women that you have become.

**"Character is that which reveals moral purpose,
exposing the class of things a man chooses and avoids." Aristotle**

"The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."

William Wordsworth

A Letter to the Senior Group from Donnie & Ronnie

Following possibly the strongest year of swimming development in the team's history, Ronnie and I wanted to give an update on the team's progress and standing, as well as talk about the extraordinary group that we are privileged to work with.

"The Big Picture"

As time and years go on, we become more convinced that what can and should be gained from sports, is truly invaluable and can be life-changing. For the countless hours committed, the physical, emotional, and financial commitment, and the sacrifices made, there has to be more than a time at the end of this process. Every time we see a youth sports team, from t-ball to collegiate athletics, we wonder what will be the *real* reward from all of this. After thirty years, we have no doubt that sports does have the ability to effect extraordinarily positive changes in an athlete's life. From a general youth perspective, you can walk through any mall, high school campus, or pool deck for that matter and see foundations of character and integrity slipping away. In swimming, we see too many careers unravel from overzealous parents and kids obsessed with times or ego. Both miss the big picture and they ultimately lose out in the broader areas of personal development and team environment. Energy and effort seems to flow into areas that actually break down a career rather than support its longevity. We see this all too often in rec swimming with the emotional overload and even in USA swimming with training overload. Parents ask their kids who they beat in practice rather than who they helped in practice and seem to care more about their kid's time and place rather than their effort and attitude. There was an article in a national newspaper recently about the fundamentals in AAU (youth) basketball disintegrating due to the drive to be a "star." And one of the main reasons cited was the NBA, the pinnacle of basketball. No one wants to be a character role model, let alone fundamentally sound. The process is getting lost and with it, so are the virtues of team commitment, work ethic, sacrifice, and on and on. Regarding respect and discipline, we talk to coaches regularly about how they are "losing the battle" with kids. The pull of apathy, self-indulgence, drugs, alcohol, insecurity, and bravado seem to trump integrity, service, humility, and discipline. Too many sports teams are dominated by ego over humility, selfishness over selflessness, disrespect over respect, and doing the minimum rather than embracing work ethic. It is not simply that there are a few problematic athletes on a team, but rather there may only be a few true character leaders, which brings us to your children and our team.

Our Mission as Coaches

We would first though, like to reiterate our mission, philosophy, and intent, with regard to Orinda Aquatics, our coaching careers, and what we want to be doing with our lives. It is our intention and desire to be more than coaches, but rather partners with our swimmers on their athletic journey, and to a greater extent, partners on their life journey. Our ultimate goal is that four or eight years from now they are swimming at their very best, loving the sport, are leaders on their team, and are better people. And there is no one meet on that path that will define it more than the process reflected in the quote below, "*it is produced in the great manufacture of daily duty.*" We have always wanted this team and the environment to be different and to stand apart from the norm. The best and first way to achieve this is to care "intensely" about people and their well-being first and swimming second. We do not and have never viewed our relationship or support ending when practice ends or when we leave a meet. It is the least we can do for their commitment to swimming, to Orinda Aquatics, and to us. In short, your children have our unconditional support in the pool and out.

"Prepare the child for the path, not the path for the child."

Our Team

We would like to attempt to describe the team environment and try to do justice to this group. This has been unequivocally the greatest "character group" we have seen in thirty years. It may sound redundant as we praise them often, but we really do believe that this group sets a standard that is unmatched by any high school athletic group in the country. As we see teen trends drift in troubling directions, this group is doing the opposite. Our swimmers, your children, demonstrate not *some* of the qualities, but *all* of the qualities you would hope to find in the finest person, let alone athlete.

They possess humility rarely seen in young adults, or actually anyone. It is humility almost to a fault, and to a person. Whether new to the group, a four-year veteran, a beginning swimmer or a national qualifier, there is

no self-promotion, no spotlight, *no* ego. Attention and praise is always deflected. On too many teams one can tell the success of a swimmer by the way in which they carry themselves. On Orinda Aquatics, it almost seems to be a race to be the most humble as apposed to being the most celebrated.

As kids today are challenged with academic pressure, social pressure, and athletic demands, your children find balance, find a way to make it work, and succeed. They respect academics and embrace it as a foundation of their life. They are the community example, if not the national example of the quintessential student/athlete. While many can excel in one area, few can have the self-discipline to set an alarm at 4:45 in the morning, take pool covers off in the wind and rain, push themselves physically and emotionally every day (of the year), sacrifice countless opportunities, and simultaneously commit to the highest academic standards. It takes a special person to be a great student, a great athlete, and a great person in this day and yes, in this community.

Additionally, they could not be more respectful, helpful, supportive, and sincere. How many coaches, teachers, administrators, could walk away from fifty teenagers with *complete* confidence that there would be no drop-off in activity, effort, or focus, and that the thought of doing less would not enter anyone's mind? How many coaches can have a fifty meter pool set up for every workout without ever asking anyone to do anything? There is never a "why me" or a "do I have to" attitude. It is incredibly refreshing and a great source of pride to see even the least glamorous parts of swimming treated with such respect, and with a positive attitude. How many coaches can take forty athletes (of any sport) on a four day travel trip and have absolute assurance that their behavior would be impeccable - from everyone? Our team continues to rebuff the notion that kids need to be chaperoned. To the contrary, mature, caring, respectful, young adults do not. Oversight is always a character issue and not an age issue. They clearly prove that. Whether it is an activity at the pool or a cross-country trip, their character does not change and neither does the respect or behavior. We honestly feel sorry for teams, coaches, and parents that do not get to experience this. Most teams look for "leaders" or high character kids with a team captain-like mentality, that special one or two that might improve the environment and make the team better. College coaches want "good, positive, kids". That is our team. Not one, two, or five, but fifty.

A freshman boy climbs out of the pool asking to talk after he struggles through a hard set. Rather than making an excuse or complain because the interval or set was too hard, he apologizes for not doing better and vows to do better next time. A swimmer gives up a relay spot at a championship meet because he is "not at his best" and the relay goes on to win (and he had the fastest time of any swimmer in consideration). A swimmer, who when asked if she wanted to swim in college, replies, "I could not imagine my life without swimming," swimmers stand in the wind and rain for a "meeting" during workout without complaining, swimmers persevere through injury - with a positive attitude, seniors fix broken lanes lines, and swimmers thank *us* everyday for the practice. And the random acts of kindness and respect are too numerous to mention. They are daily occurrences. As an example of self-discipline, earlier this season Ronnie could not be at a few workouts due to a conflict. I asked if he needed me to oversee his group. He said they would be fine and he would email them the workout. I watched in awe everyday at their focus, maturity, and punishing work ethic as they painstakingly went through every detail of the workout, with no "supervision".

And this group rebuffs more myths than teen supervision. In a rec dominated community which that is sure that year-round swimming will only lead to "burn-out" and deficient academics, they again prove the opposite - that by doing something positive that you enjoy can actually be a good thing, and that strength in academics is really more about self-discipline than free time.

Another very unique characteristic on this team is the extraordinary maturity of our freshman (and eighth grade) group. They clearly swam incredibly well in league meets and North Coast, but more significantly they have demonstrated poise, respect, and sincerity that usually takes years to develop. Our freshmen could be team captains on any high school team. It is a testament to their character but also to the steady and uncompromising leadership of our upperclassmen. While it is common to haze, "initiate", delegate to, or keep freshman on a lower level, our team and our seniors see everyone as an equal, and see the value in creating our future (leaders) today.

The drug and alcohol epidemic or crisis is not going to change or mitigate without inspirational young adults making an intelligent and conscious choice for a better, healthier, and more productive way of life. They are our hope. Your children represent much more than swimming. Regarding "life lessons", they are life lessons and will be life's leaders. They are inspirational stories, individually and collectively. While they will be successful, it will be their humility, character, and work ethic that drive their lives and impact others. We thank them for putting "character (and the team) first" and thank you for sharing them with us and allowing them to represent this team as the pinnacle of youth sports and young adults. And we want to thank you again for your support and hope that you share in the pride of this great organization.

Donnie & Ronnie

To the past, present, and future Orinda Aquatics swimmers and families,

You are so lucky to cross paths with Orinda Aquatics. No quote, story, or video could ever fully explain the feeling and deep connection that this team provides its swimmers. Through commitment to this team we learn pride and purpose, sacrifice and discipline, and love and passion.

It is extremely hard to write this letter because I am not ready to leave the team that has been my backbone through the past six years. Reflecting on my Orinda Aquatics swimming career, I will never remember my times, the grueling sets, or any important meets. Instead, I will always cherish the lifelong relationships that I built over my years on the team and how they have changed me.

In life, we gradually shape our identities through our reactions to the people and environments that surround us, so we truly become that to which we are most exposed. For this reason, every Orinda Aquatics swimmer is incredibly lucky to be influenced by the team's philosophy, have access to the coaches' wisdom, and have the constant support of extraordinary teammates.

Orinda Aquatics is not a regular team. The pool environment is a haven where passion, dedication, unity, and character thrive. Our team truly lives its mission statement. Some outsiders may call it cultish, but it is hard not to be extremely close with those with whom you share morals, goals, and a lifestyle. In a community where drug and alcohol use increasingly threaten teenagers, Orinda Aquatics is a sanctuary that encourages us to pursue athletics, academics, and personal growth at the highest level. When the academic, athletic, and social pressures of high school hit, I found myself splitting my time between studying and training at the pool. Where schoolwork often seemed tedious, swimming became the exact opposite. This team has taught me how to live a life of value and leadership, but as much as I have grown from my years on Orinda Aquatics, it may be an even greater privilege to watch how the team has changed the life of many individual team members.

Ronnie and Donnie: you are blessings to our team, our families, and our community. No amount of description could truly do you justice. You are the cornerstone of the true purpose of athletics. Thank you for passionately showing us life's most important lessons and changing our lives selflessly and humbly. Thank you for teaching us humility, integrity, compassion, respect, honesty, work ethic, and commitment. Although you convey your wisdom through talks, quotes, stories and videos, we learn the most from watching how you live your daily lives. I could not have asked for better mentors, role models, and coaches, and I know my friendships with you will last forever.

As my last summer weeks pass by, it's hard not to wish for a few more days, weeks, or even years to spend with the team. My largest fear as I head off to college is that I will not find a group of people who matches my Orinda Aquatics family. However, I know that the relationships formed on this team are ones which will last a lifetime and my class graduating means another fresh group of swimmers who are lucky enough to spend their high school swimming career with Orinda Aquatics.

To the teams past swimmers: thank you for being the framework for an incredible program and setting the standard for the years to come. To the team's present swimmers: enjoy the time you have left on Orinda Aquatics, soak up the lessons there are to learn, love everything for what it is and how it can help you as a person, and remember that your swimming career is not defined by your time on the scoreboard. To the team's future swimmers: I envy that you are just beginning your Orinda Aquatics journey and I wish you the best, continue to set the standard for the years to come.

Thank you Orinda Aquatics. From the bottom of my heart, my daily life will not be the same without you, but your message will always guide me. I will miss you. *Love, Brooke Woodward*

Dear Orinda Aquatics /Coaches,

I was a pretty shy and timid kid when I first joined OA and I honestly had no idea the impact that a single program would have on my life. I originally joined the program to improve my times and nothing more. I am pretty sure that I didn't even know what "character" was. Orinda ended up creating a family away from home for me. This was something that I cherished and something I could always count on. When things at school or home weren't going well, I always knew my teammates would be a constant in my life.

The first year on the team was difficult for me because I didn't really know anyone and the workouts were something completely new to me. When I became a part of the senior group, I really began to fit in. I remember after one of my first morning practices one of the seniors came right up to me and introduced himself and even offered me some stroke advice. This was probably one of my most memorable moments from the team. A senior who barely knew my name was coming over and introducing himself to me. I learned that this was characteristic of every person on the team. By the end of that first year I started to get the whole character first aspect of the team. I began to realize that Orinda Aquatics was not just a swim team. I began to notice that every single swimmer I had met embodied the "Character First" motto. After that first year I began to train harder, I learned to push myself through sets, to be more positive, to support others more, to be grateful for what I had been given, and to really bond and connect with my teammates.

Orinda Aquatics gave me not only incredible coaching, but offered me so many other skills that I would not have acquired anywhere else; confidence, team commitment, leadership. I built lifelong relationships with people on the team and with the coaches. In general, I learned incredible life skills. Looking back on my swimming career it is incredible to see what you can accomplish if you are physically and mentally disciplined. I think one of the reasons that swimmers on Orinda are able to work and train so hard, is because of the intense focus on the TEAM. No one swims races or does sets for themselves. Everything is done for the good of the whole. The emphasis of Orinda is not on how well you do individually but how you help your teammates.

After just finishing what may quite possibly have been my last OA meet (I am writing this after JOs) I know that I am leaving the team in great hands. This feeling is due to the fact that I personally feel a connection with every swimmer on the team and I truly do feel that each and every person is capable of doing great things both in and out of the water, and each person is capable of being a strong leader. I will miss the coaches, this incredible team, the travel trips, the great camaraderie, the life long bonds, and even the tough workouts. I think the thing that I will miss the most is walking on the pool deck each day and knowing that no matter what I had going on in my life I would always have someone to talk to and I always felt at home.

Thank you to everyone for making my Orinda Aquatics experience such an incredibly memorable one. I will sincerely miss everyone on the team as well as all the great parents that help so much and of course the coaches. Thanks, and I hope to stay in touch with everyone.

Donnie, I also want to thank you personally. Over the past seven years it has been difficult at times not having a father in my life. I honestly feel so incredibly fortunate that I joined Orinda Aquatics and that you have played an incredible role in my life that you probably don't even know. Like many people have said before me, the coaches are the ones who create and foster this great program. We have the best coaches in the entire nation, so I would assume that means we have the best team too. Orinda Aquatics has single handedly shaped my life more so than any other program I have been in during my high school years.

Sincerely, Ben Smith

It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end." (Le Guin)

As I prepare to leave for college, I have an opportunity to reflect on the "Orinda Aquatics Journey" that has shaped me and laid the foundation for the rest of my life. At 9 years old I stepped onto the pool deck of (what I thought to be) just another swim team. However, I soon began to realize a uniqueness that could only be found on deck at the Soda Center with Orinda Aquatics. Not a single person was treated better or worse than another; everyone was considered an equal asset to the team. Even my little sister, who was the youngest on the team at that time, became the only member of the "Cub" group. Everyone was given an opportunity to do the sport they loved and a chance to improve despite their ability.

Over the years I have learned to place my trust in the coaches. It wasn't easy to trust Matt when he told me at 11 years old that I was swimming the 1650 at the next meet. Little did I know that while I swam the mile ten times over the next 2 years, Matt had been looking at the bigger picture. He knew that if I was able to handle the mile, I would be mentally tough enough to handle any obstacle or race that would come my way.

Similarly, two years ago it wasn't easy to trust Ronnie when he told me to sign up for the 400IM. I believed myself to be a sprinter and presumed he was joking. As fate would have it, the 400IM is now one of my best events. You were right Ronnie!

OA coaches have dedicated their lives to every single swimmer. I encourage you all to trust the coaches wholeheartedly; they know your potential and how to get you there. Orinda Aquatics has successfully prepared me for my future and every challenge I may face. Through both success and failure I have learned how to be humble and confident, how to be a leader and a follower, and most importantly, how to apply the team motto "Character First" to every aspect of my life. Being a swimmer isn't everything; in fact, our weekly group meetings usually consisted of an inspirational article rarely pertaining to swimming. Because of their interest in us as swimmers *and* people, Ronnie and Donnie harnessed every opportunity to make a difference in our lives.

Not only have the coaches taught me valuable lessons, but my teammates also have significantly influenced my life. I was fortunate enough to have excellent role models like Shelbi, Molly, and Caroline, all of whom inspired me to represent nothing but excellence as I took on a "Senior Leadership" role. I am inspired daily by my teammate's dedication and hard work. This one-of-a-kind team would not have been possible without the incredible people that define Orinda Aquatics.

My journey is far from over because Orinda will forever be a part of my life. The valuable lessons I have learned and the friendships I have made will never be forgotten. I have spent half my life with this team and will forever consider myself to be an ambassador of Orinda Aquatics.

Marc- Thank you for your unfailing support and positive post-race feedback.

Matt- Thank you for believing in me and for always helping me through the hard times. You not only helped me grow as a swimmer but also as a person, and I cannot thank you enough for that.

Donnie- Thank you for never losing sight of the bigger picture and finding the positives in everything. Your dedication and passion for this team is contagious.

Ronnie- Thank you for reminding me to look at the glass as half full, for pouring your life into this team, for caring about me as person and a swimmer, and for always supporting me. And don't you worry, my sassiness will live on in Shannon and Courtney. They're all over it.

Mom & Dad- Thank you for waking up early to drive me to practices, driving me across the Bay Area for swim meets, all of your support throughout my swimming career, and the countless hours you have worked so that I could be a part of such an amazing program.

My teammates- Thank you for inspiring me daily. You have no idea how big of an impact you have made in my life. Thank you for supporting me; nothing makes me want to swim faster than swimming into the screaming "Red Wall." If you ever need anything (except maybe a date), I'm always here for you.

Much Love, Jill Jones

The Race

Whenever I start to hang my head in front of failure's face, my downward fall is broken by the memory of a race. A children's race, young boys, young men; how I remember well, excitement sure, but also fear, it wasn't hard to tell. They all lined up so full of hope, each thought to win that race or tie for first, or if not that, at least take second place. Their parents watched from off the side, each cheering for their son, and each boy hoped to show his folks that he would be the one.

The whistle blew and off they flew, like chariots of fire, to win, to be the hero there, was each young boy's desire. One boy in particular, whose dad was in the crowd, was running in the lead and thought "My dad will be so proud." But as he speeded down the field and crossed a shallow dip, the little boy who thought he'd win, lost his step and slipped. Trying hard to catch himself, his arms flew everywhere, and midst the laughter of the crowd he fell flat on his face. As he fell, his hope fell too; he couldn't win it now. Humiliated, he just wished to disappear somehow.

But as he fell his dad stood up and showed his anxious face, which to the boy so clearly said, "Get up and win that race!" He quickly rose, no damage done, behind a bit that's all, and ran with all his mind and might to make up for his fall. So anxious to restore himself, to catch up and to win, his mind went faster than his legs. He slipped and fell again. He wished that he had quit before with only one disgrace. "I'm hopeless as a runner now, I shouldn't try to race."

But through the laughing crowd he searched and found his father's face with a steady look that said again, "Get up and win that race!" So he jumped up to try again, ten yards behind the last. "If I'm to gain those yards," he thought, "I've got to run real fast!" Exceeding everything he had, he regained eight, then ten... but trying hard to catch the lead, he slipped and fell again. Defeat! He lay there silently. A tear dropped from his eye. "There's no sense running anymore! Three strikes I'm out! Why try? I've lost, so what's the use?" he thought. "I'll live with my disgrace." But then he thought about his dad, who soon he'd have to face.

"Get up," an echo sounded low, "you haven't lost at all, for all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall. Get up!" the echo urged him on, "Get up and take your place! You were not meant for failure here! Get up and win that race!" So, up he rose to run once more, refusing to forfeit, and he resolved that win or lose, at least he wouldn't quit. So far behind the others now, the most he'd ever been, still he gave it all he had and ran like he could win. Three times he'd fallen stumbling, three times he rose again. Too far behind to hope to win, he still ran to the end.

They cheered another boy who crossed the line and won first place, head high and proud and happy -- no falling, no disgrace. But, when the fallen youngster crossed the line, in last place, the crowd gave him a greater cheer for finishing the race. And even though he came in last with head bowed low, unproud, you would have thought he'd won the race, to listen to the crowd. And to his dad he sadly said, "I didn't do so well." "To me, you won," his father said. "You rose each time you fell." And now when things seem dark and bleak and difficult to face, the memory of that little boy helps me in my own race. For all of life is like that race, with ups and downs and all. And all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall. And when depression and despair shout loudly in my face, another voice within me says, "Get up and win that race!"

Steward: 'Until It Hurts' strikes painful chord for parents

By Carl Steward 04/23/2009

THERE ARE at least a dozen books available on the subject of youth sports and the problems and dangers of adult overindulgence in kids' games. I often wonder how many of them are read, let alone heeded.

Having been a youth sports parent/coach myself for the better part of a decade, I'll be frank: I don't see them having enough impact. More kids than ever are being pushed harder in sports at earlier ages. They're specializing in particular sports before puberty with fathers and mothers meticulously monitoring their development. They are competing year-round on club and travel teams, with parents investing absurd amounts of money in personal coaching and training. Along the way, there's more work and pressure to succeed and a whole lot less fun.

Disturbing, but there's always the hope a book will come along that might sound a more resonant alarm bell, and perhaps it finally has been written. It's called "Until It Hurts: America's Obsession With Youth Sports and How It Harms Our Kids

The mere title of the book may put off many parents and coaches who believe they are overseeing their kids' sports regimens in a proper way. But as a unique approach to a compendium of personal stories and professional observations about adult abuses in youth sports, Hyman interweaves his own guilt. He confesses to abusing his own son's baseball life. Hyman's son Ben was a good young pitcher whose promise tweaked his father just enough that visions of grandeur clouded common sense. As a parent and coach, Hyman overtaxed his son's arm. The result was that Ben developed shoulder problems at age 14 and ultimately required reconstructive elbow surgery at 18.

Hyman ultimately learned the hard way that his son probably wouldn't have been good enough to earn a college athletic scholarship — the carrot that entices and deludes so many families — and wanted to write a book that reached out to otherwise educated, rational and loving parents who might be smitten by the same skewed fantasies.

"I think you're particularly vulnerable when your kids are in that 9-13 age, when you're uncertain what their future in sports might be," Hyman said. "You're particularly ambitious, because you really don't know what the limits are for them. I was in that very vulnerable ambitious period when my son was striking everybody out, and I thought he would always be striking everybody out. It disarmed me."

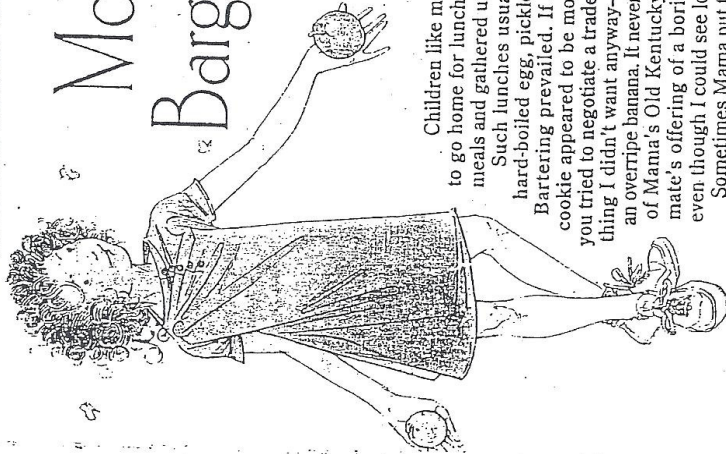
"I'm not expecting to change the world," he said. "My thought was to write a book that speaks from a parent's perspective to other parents, but also do it as a journalist. I don't believe there are bad parents. Every parent I spoke with loved their children. We're not debating that. We're talking about changing attitudes about what's appropriate for kids, what their physical limits might be and how we can respect that."

Hyman's book offers thought-provoking answers, but it's the personal ones that really hit home.

What Stella offered went beyond fair trade

More Than I Bargained For

by Jean Bell Mosley
Cape Girardeau, Missouri



It was an ordinary school day. I was in the fifth grade. Children like me who didn't live close enough to go home for lunch brought their paper-wrapped meals and gathered under the shade of a tree.

Such lunches usually consisted of a sandwich, hard-boiled egg, pickle, cookie and a piece of fruit. Bartering prevailed. If a schoolmate's sandwich or cookie appeared to be more appetizing than your own, you tried to negotiate a trade. I always tried to trade something I didn't want anyway—a mashed-bean sandwich or an overripe banana. It never occurred to me to trade a slice of Mama's Old Kentucky walnut cake for my schoolmate's offering of a boring-looking molasses cookie, even though I could see longing in the barterer's eyes.

Sometimes Mama put two pieces of fruit in my lunch package, one to be eaten at morning recess if I was hungry. Quite often, though, I saved that piece of fruit as my bargaining chip to trade for a sugary doughnut or fried apple pie.

Unabashedly, I always examined the looks and quality of my fruit to see which piece was best and then offered my classmate the poorer, less-attractive piece. I felt no pangs of selfishness. It was just good trading sense.

That autumn day after the lunch-bringers had eaten their food, disposed of the wrappings and dispersed to various parts of the playground, I lingered under the shade of a maple, watching monarch butterflies drifting lazily southward. I was still hungry and Mama had put no fruit in my lunch that day.

I saw my classmate Stella Downing coming up a path. She was returning from her home, one of the lucky ones who lived near the school. The sunshine glistened on Stella's black curly hair. Her blue dress matched the color of her eyes. We had something in each hand. When she drew closer I saw she was

holding apples.

Stella noticed my interest and asked, "Want one?"

"Yes," I replied, simply and truly. "But I've already eaten," I added, to indicate I had nothing to trade.

Stella held up the two apples, much as I would have done to appraise my trading fruit. One was perfectly shaped, red and shiny, stem intact. No flaws. The other one was smaller, slightly shriveled and dented on one side.

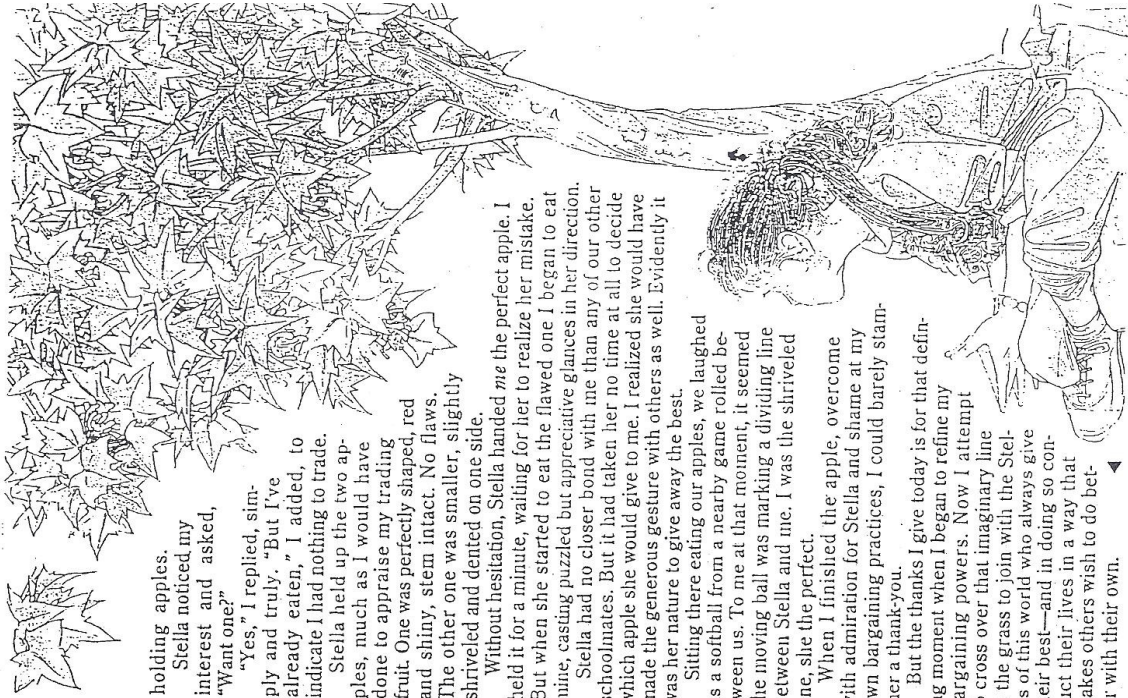
Without hesitation, Stella handed me the perfect apple. I held it for a minute, waiting for her to realize her mistake. But when she started to eat the flawed one I began to eat mine, casting puzzled but appreciative glances in her direction.

Stella had no closer bond with me than any of our other schoolmates. But it had taken her no time at all to decide which apple she would give to me. I realized she would have made the generous gesture with others as well. Evidently it was her nature to give away the best.

Sitting there eating our apples, we laughed as a softball from a nearby game rolled between us. To me at that moment, it seemed the moving ball was marking a dividing line between Stella and me. I was the shriveled one, she the perfect.

When I finished the apple, overcome with admiration for Stella and shame at my own bargaining practices, I could barely stammer a thank-you.

But the thanks I give today is for that defining moment when I began to refine my bargaining powers. Now I attempt to cross over that imaginary line in the grass to join with the Stellas of this world who always give their best—and in doing so conduct their lives in a way that makes others wish to do better with their own. ◀





Butterfly

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly
One day a small opening appeared
He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to squeeze its
body through the tiny hole
Then it stopped as if it could go no further

So the man decided to help the butterfly
He took a pair of scissors and snipped the remaining bits of cocoon
The butterfly emerged easily but it had a swollen body and shriveled wings

The man continued to watch it expecting that at any minute the wings would
enlarge and expand enough to support the body. Neither happened
In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around
It was never able to fly

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand:
The restricting cocoon and the struggle required the butterfly to get through the
opening was a way of forcing fluid from the body into the wings so that it would
be ready for flight once that was achieved

Sometimes, struggles are exactly what we need in our lives
Going through life without obstacles would cripple us
We will not be as strong as we could have been and we would never learn to fly



Let's go!