SST NEWS

PO Box 72301

Fairbanks, AK 99707

Phone: 970-689-1407

Email: coachjosh@outlook.com

Web: www.stingrayswim.org

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**ALPHABET OF PARENTING**

With so much going on in our lives, a reminder of what’s important can be helpful. This article was written for parents in general, but it can be applied to the ‘swim parent’ as well. With your swimmer’s challenges constantly changing, here are some suggestions for the ‘alphabet of parenting’.

**A** is for accountability. Hold your children accountable for their behavior. **B** is for boundaries. Set specific limits and make clear the repercussions if they’re exceeded.**C** is for consistency. Hold to the same principles and practices. **D** is for discipline. Never discipline in anger. **E** is for example. Set a good one.**F** is for forgiveness. Teach the importance of it. **G**is for giving. Teach the joy of it. **H** is for sense of humor. Promote laughter with your children. **I**is for imagination. Be creative, and play with your children.**J** is for justice. Be fair. **K** is for knowing your children’s friends and their parents as well as their teachers. **L** is for listening. Listen to your children. It will teach them how to listen to others. **M**is for morals. Be sure your own standard of conduct is sound.**N** is for no. Use it and mean it. **O** is for outdoors. Provide as much outdoor activity as possible. **P** is for pressure. Reduce the pressure on your children, but insist they maintain high standards. **Q** is for questions. Pay close attention to theirs. **R** is for respect. Show it, teach it and earn it. **S** is for source of strength. Share your own faith or beliefs with your children. **T** is for togetherness. Have special, designated times to be together-but know when to let go. **U**is for uniqueness. Let the child be who he or she is. **V** is for voice. Tone of voice can convey more than words spoken.**W** is for words. Keep your word.**X**is for examine. Examine constantly, and be aware. **Y** is for you. Take care of yourself. A happy parent helps a child to be happy.**Z**is for zowie! Who would have thought they would grow up so quickly?



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**THREE ESSENTIAL MINDSETS FOR ATHLETIC SUCCESS**

When we talk about mindset, we mean what is going on in your head just before you begin a competition, whether on the field, course, or in the pool. What happens in your mind during that oh-so-important period sets the stage for whether you perform to the best of your ability. Three mindsets have been show to work well, though there are others. Here are the three proven mindsets for athletic success:

**Aggressive**

When we talk about an aggressive mindset, we don’t mean that athletes should try to hurt their opponents. Rather, I think of aggressiveness as a mindset in which athletes are proactive, assertive, and forceful, for example, driving hard to the hoop in basketball, going for a risky shot in golf or tennis, or setting a fast pace in the pool.

This aggressive mindset is often needed for athletes to shift from solid performance to exceptional performance because it allows them to take their performances to the next level, particularly for those who aren’t naturally aggressive in how they perform.

An aggressive mindset can be developed in several ways. First, you’re more likely to perform aggressively if your body is amped up a bit more than usual. You can raise your physical intensity with more movement during practice, in your pre-competitive routines, and just before you begin to compete. Simply moving more and being more dynamic in your movements will help you shift to a more aggressive mindset.

Second, you can use high-energy self-talk to instill that aggressive mindset. You can see this practice used regularly in football locker rooms and before weightlifting competitions. Examples include: “Let’s go! Attack! Charge! Bring it!” What you notice is not only what you say, but how you say it.

Third, you can incorporate an aggressive mindset into mental imagery in which you see and feel yourself competing aggressively which, in turn, helps create more attacking thinking, focus, and feeling.

**Calm**

A calm mindset is typically best for athletes who get nervous before they compete. Throughout your pre-competitive preparations and when about to begin a competition, your primary goal is to settle down and relax, thus allowing your mind to let go of doubt and worry and your body to be free of nerves and tension. Additionally, a calm mindset can be valuable for athletes who are naturally aggressive and don’t need to take active steps to get into attack mode.

A calm mindset can be created in several ways. First, it’s difficult to have a calm mind if your body is anxious, so focusing on relaxing your body is a good start. Deep breathing and muscle relaxation are two good tools you can use to calm your body.

Second, you can use mental imagery in which you see and feel yourself being calm before a competition. This imagery has a direct physiologically relaxing effect on both your body and mind.

Third, calming and reassuring self-talk can ease your tension, for example, “Easy does it. Cool, calm, and collected. Relaxing self-talk can take the edge off of your nerves giving you the comfort and confidence to perform your best.

**Clear**

A clear mind involves having basically nothing related to performing going on in your mind before a competition. The athletes who use a clear mindset are those you see before a competition talking to coaches, teammates, or even their competition. They are often smiling, dancing around, chatting it up, or singing to themselves. These athletes can use a clear mindset because they are incredibly talented natural athletes and have years of experience that allow them to trust their bodies completely to perform their best without any interference from their minds.

A clear mind is most suited for athletes who are intuitive, free spirited, and experienced.

You create a calm mindset by thinking about anything except your sport. Talking to others around you, thinking about someone or something that makes you feel good, and listening to music in your head are several ways you can keep your mind clear, thus preventing it from getting in the way of your body performing its best.

**How to use your mindset**

Mindset, like all mental states, requires several steps to instill and master. First, you have to experiment to figure out which mindset will work best for you. Second, you need to make a commitment to adopting an ideal mindset. Third, you must focus on your desired mindset in practice and competitions to create that mindset. And, finally, you need repetition in practice and competitions to ingrain your ideal mindset so deeply that, when you begin the most important competition of your life, that mindset just clicks on and it enables you to perform your very best.

**HOW TO STAY CONNECTED**

One of our main focuses this season is communication, and we need your help to reach this goal. Communication between coaches, swimmers, parents, and board members is vital to our team’s success. We have worked hard to improve our communication by adding ways for you to stay connected. Please use these communication tools often, and as always, feel free to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns. Our main communication tools are:

**Stingray Website (**[**www.stingrayswim.org**](www.stingrayswim.org)**)**

Our main communication tool is our website. We update our website with news, recognition, meet information, and upcoming events. There is contact information for our coaches and board members, and your personal account is available to see your billing information and swimmer’s times. Please be sure to visit our team website often.

**Email**

Another vital communication tool is email. With nearly 90 swimmers, email is the most effective way to reach our members with important information, schedule changes, and recognition. We try not to overrun your inbox with emails, but the emails we do send out are important. Please take the time to read each Stingray email and add us to your contact list.

**Phone**

While we do not make a large number of phone calls due to work schedules, we do call our members on occasion. We will also answer our phones or respond to messages from any

****member, so please feel free to call us. We can also send text messages with important, time sensitive information (such as meet start times or practice changes) if you have set up your text message feature on our website. To do this, log into your personal account of our team website and click ‘ADD SMS’ in the top right corner. Once this is set up, we will be able to send text messages to your cell phone. We will only use this feature for important information, so please set up your ‘SMS’ today.

**Facebook (**[**https://www.facebook.com/groups/319403354904480/**](https://www.facebook.com/groups/319403354904480/)**)**

Information posted on our website is also posted on our team Facebook Group. With the growing popularity of social media, this has become a great communication tool for our team. If you have not done so, please request to join our closed Facebook group. This closed group will keep strangers from seeing your swimmer’s news, pictures, videos, and events. The protection of a closed group is important for our young swimmers and is a strong recommendation from USA Swimming.

**YouTube (**[**https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkQV\_UZ\_wcfHWT4kaZFDpoA**](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkQV_UZ_wcfHWT4kaZFDpoA)**)**

Our team YouTube page allows us to post swimmer’s videos for you/them to watch anytime you like. We have begun using underwater video as a teaching tool, and we will continue to use video more often. You will also find videos to proper stroke technique and turns. If you have not done so, please subscribe to our team YouTube page.

**OnDeck App (**[**http://www.teamunify.com/\_\_corp\_\_/ondeck/**](http://www.teamunify.com/__corp__/ondeck/)**)**

The TeamUnify OnDeck App allows you to use our team website from your mobile device. This is very helpful in checking your swimmer’s times, upcoming meets, news, qualification standards, and your personal billing information. The OnDeck App can be downloaded for free in your App Store or from the TeamUnify website at

**Deck Pass (**[**http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2151&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en**](http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2151&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en)**)**

Deck Pass is a USA Swimming function on their website, and there is also a mobil app. Deck Pass allows you to see your swimmer’s ranking around Fairbanks, Alaska, and the country. It also lets our coaches give swimmers ‘vitrual patches’, which is a great motivation and recognition tool. Your Deck Pass can be set up on the USA Swimming website and downloaded from your App Store.

**Twitter and Instagram (**[**https://twitter.com/StingraySwimAK**](https://twitter.com/StingraySwimAK)**)**

We do have a team Twitter account that is updated with news and information. After researching the use of our Twitter account, there are few members using Twitter. We will

continue to update our Twitter account, but we are in the process of developing a team Instagram account as well. We hope to see more use in our Instagram account once that is set up.

Regardless of your perfered communication platform, it is critical for our improved communication goal that you check one (or all) of the above tools daily. If there is another tool we are not using, please feel free to let us know. We are here for YOU, and we will do whatever we can to make your Stingray experience more enjoyable. Please contact our coaches/board members with any questions, comments, and/or concerns.

**SWIMMERS OF THE MONTH IN NOVEMBER**

To be selected as the Swimmers of the Month, athletes must show their dedication to our team through their hard work, attendance, desire to improve, teamwork, and ability to listen to instruction. We are proud to look back at November’s Stingray Swimmers of the Month.

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**Ellie Lovely**

Ellie joined the Stingrays in August, 2013 and has shown great improvement over the past year. She has moved her way up to the Platinum Group and listens very well. Her hard work has paid off in her technique and speed. She posted two best times during this year’s Halloween Meet, breaking the one minute barrier in the 50 breast and closing in on the 40 second barrier in the 50 free. She is a pleasure to coach, is adored by her teammates, and will continue to improve this season. Congratulations Ellie on being November’s Stingray Swimmer of the Month!

**Kyan Harnum**

Kyan began his swimming career with the Stingrays in November, 2012. As a long time Stingray, he has improved his speed, technique, and work ethic. He has also improved his listening skills and is seeing the benefits of harder training. Not only is he one of the fastest 10&Under boys on the team, he has also qualified in 6 events for the Age Group Championships in Juneau and 2 events for the Alaska Junior Olympic Championships in Anchorage. He posted six best times during this year’s Wishbone Invite, including an impressive 33.3 in the 50 free. Congratulations Kyan on being November’s Stingray Swimmer of the Month!

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**DECEMBER AT A GLANCE**

* **December 3 – SST Christmas Party**
* December 3 – Makenna Beshears’ Birthday
* **December 6 – Coach Robb Coady Novice Invite**
* December 8 – Lauren Hite’s Birthday
* **December 9 – Board of Director Meeting**
  + **Location: Polar Fuel**
  + **Time: 6:30pm**
  + **All members are welcome to attend**
* December 12 – Cassidy Meyer’s Birthday
* **December 13 – Candy Cane Meet**
  + **Location: Wescott Pool in North Pole**
  + **Time: Warm-up at 8:00am, meet starts at 9:00am**
* **December 19 – Patty Pool Closed**
* December 20 – Annaka O’Donoghue’s Birthday
* December 20 – Tanner Sprankle’s Birthday
* December 21 – Cassidy Heaton’s Birthday
* December 22 – Travis Chiu’s Birthday
* **December 23-January 5 – Patty Pool Closed**
* **December 24-26 – NO PRACTICE ALL GROUPS**
* December 27 – Ava Longwell’s Birthday
* December 31 – Sophia Benson’s Birthday

**SST 2014-2015 Meet Schedule**

Fall Equinox Meet September 20 – Wescott Pool

Warm ups: 8:00 am

Halloween Meet October 18 – Patty Pool

Warm ups: 2:30 pm

Wishbone Invite November 14-16 – Hamme Pool

Prelim/Final Meet

Coach Robb Coady Novice Invite December 6 – Hamme Pool

Warm ups: 8:00 am

Candy Cane Swim Meet December 13 – Wescott Pool

Warm ups: 8:00 am

Spring Will Come Meet January 10 – Hamme Pool

Warm ups: 8:00 am

Valentine’s Day Meet January 31 (scheduled to change) – Patty Pool

Warm ups: 8:00 am

AK Age Group Championships February 13-15

Juneau, AK

Region XII Championships March 5-8

Gresham, OR

St. Patrick’s Day Meet March 14 – Wescott Pool

Warm ups: 8:00 am

Northern Area Championships March 27-29 – Hamme Pool

Prelim/Final Meet

AK Junior Olympics April 23-26 - Bartlett Pool

Anchorage, AK