

Speaking Up to Grow Up

By Coach Bryan Davis

Your swimmer has a multitude of things that they could improve technically to get just a little faster. You know it, your swimmer knows it and your child's coach knows it. The coach however knows which techniques are the priorities at any given time. The swimmer should have a pretty good understanding of what they are supposed to be working on. Although, your swimmer will not know what the coach has possibly not brought to the swimmers attention yet. The coach may omit technical corrections if there is a technical focus of high priority at the time. It may be that the swimmer is struggling with another high priority focus, then the coach may feel the need to not overload the swimmer with too many technical corrections.

If there is something specific that your swimmer does not understand, is struggling with or just curious about, you should encourage your swimmer to ask the coach to explain it better or for extra attention in that area. When a parent brings the request straight to the coach outside of the presence of the swimmer, it cuts the responsibility of the swimmer out of the equation. The goal of the coach is to get their swimmers to need the coach as little as possible. This frees up more time for the coach to focus on the finer details of your swimmer as an athlete. If you want to help your swimmer become more self-sufficient, then encourage your child to take the responsibility of approaching the coach personally on all aspects of the sport. If you know your swimmer is apprehensive about this type of interaction with the coach. Please stand there with your swimmer and support them as they speak with the coach. With this approach the swimmer will be practicing the skill of speaking up for oneself. The sooner your child takes the wheel the better.

Remember, youth sports are about personal growth competitively but also for growing up in general, not always just about getting a little faster.