

Coach Hans' Blog

January 1, 2022

I am so glad that Coach Endi has asked me to reprise my Blog. In one way or another, I get to share some of my thoughts, sometimes significant and other times, not so much with the membership. It is also a way to compartmentalize all my ramblings on deck in one place. Anyway, here are my thoughts, hope you can enjoy them as much as I do.

The First Four Months

The first four to six months of anything are critical, always. In the case of a restart, after all our countless covid delays AND a mostly new coaching staff, even more so.

Everything is good and we are looking to make the future even brighter.

Our Staff is AWESOME. We have some great professionals who love the sport of swimming and are dedicated to creating an environment that will bring out the best in all the swimmers and staff. It has been great working with my fellow coaches, exchanging ideas and helping each other and our swimmers thrive. The environment has been overwhelmingly positive, which makes swimmers feel like they can accomplish anything. This positivity creates enthusiasm and excitement! Look out world BTSC has made their choice and it is GREAT!

Time Standards

Some swimmers look at time standards the same way as we look at some of the restrictions that have been placed upon us during these times. The truth is that time standards are not arbitrary nor are they intended to be punitive. They are merely instruments that meet management uses to limit the size of meets to a manageable number and in some cases to ensure a fair and level competitive field. They are derived from a formula based on past competitions that will help them control the size of the meet including total numbers and session lengths.

Many swimmers look at the standards as if they are a be all and end all. They measure their success in the sport by those standards. This is not wise, especially in age group swimming where everyone develops at their own pace. One example I can give you was of a female swimmer I had coached who barely made provincials at age 13 in one event. As much as she pushed herself to make those times, she developed her other strokes as well. At the age of 18 she made the National team and at 19 won the National Championship in the 200 IM!

The truth is, that because Ontario has such a large population and an excellent age group swimming program, we are at a distinct disadvantage. Why is that you ask? Our provincial standards are often faster than or close to Junior National standards. That prevents many swimmers from having the experience of being in such a meet which is often really demotivating. Alberta and B.C. always have great senior swimmers yet because their population is so much less, the standards are far less stringent. Quebec, also with a large population, has three levels of Provincial Championships, A, AA, AAA. One of the smartest things we did in Ontario was to create another meet to run alongside Provincials, called the Youth and Junior Championships. This allows for more swimmers to have that experience of competing in a meaningful year end meet. They should probably create even another level of competition for those swimmers just below the Y&J level as well.

The best advice, never let a time standard tell you who you are or decide for you if you are good enough. With the right mindset and determination, you will figure that out for yourself. The important thing is that you always strive to be the best version of yourself that you can be at any given time.



Swimmer Commitment and Other Related Stuff

The best swimmers, in the long run, as it is with other things, are the most committed. When swimmers are young they learn their commitment from their parents. If the parents are all in, so will they be. As the swimmers get older, i.e., 12 and up, the ownership slowly shifts to the swimmer. A simple way to measure commitment is by attendance. While this is true, there are some other markers that I look for.

Punctuality - Often this is also driven by parents, but it does show that they want to be there and take part as soon as possible!

Lane Lines - getting engaged with mundane tasks such as this shows the swimmer is committed not only to themselves but their team!

Non- Mandatory Activities - Things like Christmas Parties, Food Drives, picnics etc show us that swimmers want to be involved with their team and want to be with their teammates away from the pool.

The best way to increase commitment? Have goals! Swimmers who have a reason to be there will be the most committed!

