



NEWSLETTER May – 2013

ISSUE #14

Hello Rapids

What a great first half of the season we've had. Our season which started back on April 1st has really begun to pick up steam. This past weekend saw some real good swims from some of our seniors swimmers at a senior meet at Wesleyan, while other Rapids swam an intersquad meet at home at Masuk. I must say that Coach's Allison, Stacie, Lisa and myself were very pleased with how well all of our newer swimmers swam and how even how well the newer parents timed – GREAT JOB by everyone. Intersquad results can be seen under news on our website.

Over the first part of the season we've also participated in some great meets. Swimming at Yale, in Westchester at one of my favorite pools, and in Farmington which was a fantastic 10/under meet. These meets saw some great improvements from the swimmers.

We now enter an important part of the season, not only do we have many, meets that come up in June but it is also the end of school which means a lot of activities that may take away from swimming. While we do understand the need for the graduation parties, concerts and all other end of school year activities I do know many swimmers with goals so please try to make as many practices as possible.

A couple of notes as the season progresses:

1. If you know you cannot attend a meet please e-mail me so the coaches on deck at the meet are not waiting around for a swimmer.
2. Please be on deck 15 minutes prior to the start of warm up so coaches can take attendance.
3. To the parents of swimmers in the developmental group. Please don't be afraid to "hustle" up your swimmer after practice – especially

dads with boys. Stick your head in the locker room just to let them know you are waiting for them.

World Class Parents

"So, you want to offer your child the opportunity to be a world-class athlete...."

By John Leonard

If the above sentence doesn't scare the bejeezus out of you as a coach reading it, good for you!

The fact is, a number of parents DO, without being raging lunatics, wish to offer their child the best possible chance to be a great athlete....in the same way that they'd like to offer them the chance to attend the most prestigious University, visit the best doctors, be a world-class musician or artist, etc. etc. etc.

The key word is "OFFER". Not "force". Not "Make". Offer. The issue, if you take the words "world class" out of there....is that MOST parents want to "de-limit" their children and "offer them the chance for the best opportunities in life.". Put that way, it doesn't sound so bad. In fact, it sounds like "most of us".

As every coach knows, the devil is in the execution (or the details, if you prefer).

I was asked this question twice on a recent trip to Africa.....where the topic came up because of the perception that African children who aspire to be swimmers are considerably limited on their continent. Overall, I thought it a fair



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question. Here's my answer....I'd love to hear other people's thoughts.

#1. *It's all about the coaching.* Led by the great researcher, Dr. Anders Ericsson, we know that expertise comes from 10,000 hours of focused, purposeful practice, guided by a "coach" of skill, knowledge and understanding of the learning process providing top quality feedback. So the number one task of the parent on the track of great opportunities....do your homework, research the coaches available to your child, spend time in conversation with them, reach a mutually satisfying understanding of "who is doing what" and then get out of the way, and TRUST THEM to do right with your child. You can "oversee the process" but let the coach, Coach.

That's answer 1, 1A and 1B.....nothing else comes close in importance. Here are a few other ideas, however.

#2. *It's about RESILIENCE!* Your child, all children, are going to hit some rough patches in their development. Teach them to persevere, don't get the roadblocks out of their way FOR them, let them learn to struggle with it and overcome. Everyone gets knocked back/down. The child has to get good at getting back up...ON THEIR OWN.

"Curling parents" are those rushing down the path ahead of the child, trying to clear every obstacle out of the way for them.....and never letting the child gain the satisfaction of overcoming challenges. Don't be one.

"Helicopter parents" are those who hover over their child at every moment, so intent on making sure the child "gets it" that they become the biggest distraction to the child ever "getting it". Go sit down. Relax. Read a paper. When the child's done, love them, don't make

them replay every moment of practice for you. Don't be one.

#3. *It's about personal responsibility.* Make sure you teach your child that "if it's to be, it's up to me." If they want to be a world class athlete, only their effort will take them there. Effort. Not talent. Tons of people have talent to achieve great things. Few do. Often because their proud parents forgot that effort is the only way to achieve. Teach effort.

#4. *Be a Motivation Machine.* As the great swimmer Michael Phelps was on his steady, effortful rise to the top of the swimming world, his coach Bob Bowman described Michael as a "Motivation Machine". Something good happens, he got up the next morning with the mind-set, "I want more of that." And he went off to practice (not staying in bed congratulating himself. I earned some more sleep this morning...I'll sleep in."). When something bad happened, Michael got up and went to practice with the mindset "I'm NEVER letting that happen again" (not staying in bed and having a mini-pity-party). One of the greatest things I have ever heard that separates a great individual from the rest of us....Be a Motivation Machine.

Parents, you can teach that to your child and it will be a life-gift of importance.

#5. *ENJOY THE RIDE!* The Chinese have a saying..."most of life is about Chop Wood, Haul Water". Mundane tasks that are essential to our progress in life. Life is not always wildly exciting and "fun". Mostly, it's steady mundane effort and work. So learn (both as a parent, and teach to the child...) to enjoy and be very "satisfied" with the day to day tasks that, like water impacting the rock, make up our journey towards a special result. Chop Wood, Haul Water. Learn to value and enjoy it.



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Those are my top 5 recommendations. Please add your own and let me know what they are.

All the Best, John Leonard

[Nutrition Tip of the Month for Swimmers & families](#)

HOW TO GET YOUNG SWIMMERS TO EAT WELL

BY JILL CASTLE, MS, RD

Parents and coaches want their swimmers to feel good, eat well and perform to their best ability. But that’s not always easy to accomplish when you have growing bodies, different food preferences and developmental influences to consider.

At a recent swim meet, I heard a variety of food complaints from parents:

“Sarah didn’t eat at all during the meet!”

“Every time I saw Sam, he was at the concession stand eating fruit snacks. He had at least 3 bags this afternoon!”

“Emily had a stomachache all morning. I think she ate too much for breakfast.”

Parents are up against a wide variety of eating challenges as their swimmers grow. For example, 8-year-old Josh is a selective eater. He wants the same thing to eat every day, and it’s often a processed food item.

Fourteen-year-old Kate is hungry all the time, and prefers snacks to meals. And 17 year-old Max drives through the fast-food establishment several days each week on the

way home from practice.

Knowing what to feed a swimmer is challenging enough, but even when all the nutrition ducks are in a row, getting a swimmer to make the right food choices is a whole different battle.

So how can swimmers be encouraged to eat well?

Set up a Healthy Food Environment: Parents are the “nutritional gatekeepers.” That is, they control the majority of food that gets purchased, stocked and prepared in the home. They also control how frequently the family eats together, dines out, visits fast food joints, and the purse strings (the money). As swimmers age, parents have less control over these factors, which is why it’s important to establish a nutritious food environment early on. If healthy foods are available at home, the swimmer will be more likely to eat them.

Encourage Fueling: Swimmers who want to perform their best need to have nutrition on board. It makes a difference! Swimming on an empty stomach, a tummy full of sugar or fried foods, or an overly full stomach will impact pace, comfort level and endurance. Find the right amount and type of food to best suit the body, whether a banana on the morning of competition, or a bagel with peanut butter.

Tap into Developmental Stage: Each developmental milestone is different. For example, during the school-age years, kids are interested in learning new skills. Teaching them how to cook and the basics of nutrition is not only developmentally appropriate, it allows a natural way to explore food and learn. During the teen years, the mind is more capable of understanding complex nutrition topics, like how the body uses food during



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exercise, and explaining these topics will help to build ownership and responsibility with caring for nutritional needs. Remember, though, teens are also risk-takers and love to experiment with new things (even unproductive dieting!), so keep the conversation about healthy nutrition going.

SWIMMERS SPOTLIGHT

FRESHMEN GROUP

Caitlin McGuire

Set the Water Rules: During competition weekends, set a “no junk food” policy (no candy, no chips, etc). This can be a team or family rule and sets the tone and manner of competition. Consider a training diet rule as well, such as “indulgences on the weekends only.”



Stick with a Plan: Eating tends to fall apart when there is no plan. When swimmers come to a meet without any snacks, they go to the concession stand. When they don’t have water, they go to the vending machine. When pre-competition meals aren’t planned, swimmers may not get a good balance of everything they need. While it may seem hard to get a plan going, the reality is a plan makes everything easier.

Age: 12

Jill Castle, MS, RD is a registered dietitian and child nutrition expert. She is the co-author of Fearless Feeding: How to Raise Healthy Eaters from High Chair to High School (April 22, 2013), and creator of Just The Right Byte, a child and family nutrition blog. She lives with her husband and four children (two swimmers!) in New Canaan, CT. Have questions? Contact Jill at Jill@JillCastle.com.

Group: Junior

Favorite Stroke: Freestyle

Favorite Event(s): 50 Free

Favorite Food: mashed potatoes

Best Swimming Memory: When I swam the Free in 28sec during a relay.

Future Goal: teacher

Favorite Movie: The Hobbit

Favorite Book: Girl with the Pearl Earring

The Best Thing About Swimming Is: hanging out with friends

The Best Thing About Swimming Is : Being in the water!