



### Developing Role Models

Not only are coaches role models for the athletes with whom they work, coaches must also many times teach their athletes to be role models. This is especially important for the senior coaches. The older and more elite athletes are always going to be admired by the younger athletes. How those older athletes choose to behave can help shape the future of our swim club.

If the athletes choose to be responsible and set a good example, that will become the standard for “what’s cool”, and the others will be more likely to toe the line. If the athletes are disrespectful, defiant, or lazy, that also can become the standard for “what’s cool”, and can be disruptive to the swim club.

Many swimmers with great potential to be leaders don’t instinctively know how to lead or behave to set the right example for their younger teammates. Coaches can guide them through this by giving them the opportunity to work with the younger groups of swimmers at practice....teaching them stroke drills, starts, turns, relay exchanges, team cheers and how to get checked in and find their heats/lanes at meets.

Our Coaches must impress upon the older swimmers what is expected of them in terms of their behavior, dress, and language. As the older swimmers see the eager faces of the younger swimmers, they quickly learn just how strongly they might affect the younger ones. It’s a great thing to watch....the novice kids become even more motivated, and the coach gets to see a visible change/improvement in the senior swimmers.

Swimming is an exceptional sport. Swimmers are National Honor Society members, class presidents, Eagle Scouts, and youth leaders in drama, music, and religion. Participation in swimming can develop leadership skills and opportunities to be a role model. Being a role model is a good thing....it’s a responsibility to be embraced, and can be truly rewarding.