

Coach's Corner

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Why Train Mental Skills?
2. Age Group Happenings
3. Upcoming Important Dates
4. Safe Sport
5. November Swimmer of the Month

“To become a champion in the pool, to really reach your physical potential, you must begin to systematically train the mental dimension of your sport!”

- Dr. Alan Goldberg

Why Train Mental Skills?

From Coach Hembree

There is absolutely no question that swimming is an intensely physical and demanding sport. To excel you must not only have tremendous endurance, upper and lower body strength, quick reflexes and good flexibility, but also a willingness to constantly push the limits of your own capacities and a high tolerance for pain and fatigue of oxygen debt that comes with this pushing. In addition, you have to develop and fine tune the proper stroke techniques, starts and turns that will help you achieve success. Without CONSISTENT and proper training in all of these physical aspects of the sport you can NEVER become a champion. Unfortunately, too many swimmers in the sport today stop their training at this physical point. They make a critical mistake assuming that all you need to go fast and perform well are the above mentioned physical attributes. Consequently, they leave one of the MOST IMPORTANT parts of their training and performance to chance, THE MENTAL SIDE! (excerpt from *Smoke on the Water* by Dr. Alan Goldberg)

This season the coaching staff has made a commitment to bettering our athlete's mental skills when it comes to swimming and racing. This has led to many of our athletes listening to mental training clips as well as doing activities out of a workbook. Most people understand that the mental side of athletics is important if not more important than the physical side. But what I don't think most realize is that the mental skills needed to perform at a high level are the skills that have to be practiced just like your athletes practices stroke mechanics in the water. Weekly our athletes are being challenged to work on a different aspect of their mental training. Through the clips and the workbooks athletes are given different exercises to work on that will help strengthen their mental approach to swimming. The idea is by practicing these skills they will become second nature and our athletes will not have to focus on them, they will just happen.

With a new focus on training our mental skills, NASA can have some of the most mentally tough swimmers in Indiana by the end of this season!

Age Group Happenings

From Coach Dan

Distractions are defined as a thing that prevents someone from giving full attention to something else. Distractions are everywhere. In school, at home, and in the pool. The good news is, in our search for constant improvement distractions can be used for the positive. As long as we are AWARE.

Distractions won't stop, it is not realistic to think that you will swim in a pool by yourself all practice or meet or live in an environment where the people around you do not influence your mood or behavior. We have reached a point in the season where our swimmers are understanding concepts and focusing harder than ever. They are becoming more and more comfortable in the pool environment. Due to this increased awareness and comfort, they are getting better.

At the last meet I saw a great number of our NASA swimmers watching races of other swimmers and taking notes. This is a perfect example of being aware of distractions and using them to your advantage. This month our Age Group swimmers have been lining up better in practice, more focused on times, and are listening and responding to coaches on a whole new level, and I need to tell you, WE SEE YOU AND WE APPRECIATE IT. You are conquering your swimming.

In everything you do, there will be distractions. Awareness conquers distractions. If you see the distraction coming and aim to conquer it, it is a goal.

From Coach Andrew

In MS Blue, we are seeing a lot happen! We have a few individuals who are even closer to attaining their Divisional cut. At our last meet in Elkhart, we saw two of our Blue group members advance on to Finals! We have made a ton of progress with our swimming! In Dev. Blue, we are seeing improvement across the entire group. We are consistently working on body positioning in the water, getting stretched out, a strong kick, and breath control. We have also increased our daily yardage, made our workouts more intense, and we still are learning one to three new drills and skills every week!



Important Dates

1st - Last Day for Families to Declare for the FAST Mudsock Classic

2nd - NHS vs. Penn @ NHS

7th - NHS @ Hall of Fame Classic - Franklin Central High School

9th - NASA Board of Directors Meeting.

13th-15th - NASA Winter Classic

16th - NASA Christmas Party (Middle School and Developmental Groups)

17th - NHS vs. Concord/Memorial @ Elkhart Aquatic Center

19th - NHS vs. Mishawaka @ Mishawaka

21st - NHS vs. Northwood @ Northwood

25th - Christmas Day!

Safe Sport Corner

November Scenario - Discuss with your Athlete

You go into the locker room after practice and, while changing, are distracted by a group of swimmers behind you laughing and clapping loudly. You ignore it for a bit, but then they call your name to come and join them. You realize they are posing for pictures in front of the mirror, taking a picture and posting them as part of their streaks on Snapchat. You are told, "No worries - the pictures disappear!"

Proper Response

- Taking pictures in the locker room is against Safe Sport and NASA policy. Remind the group of swimmers of the teams policies and alert the coaches to what is going on. Coaches will then determine what action if any is needed.

December Scenario - Discuss with your Athlete

Your team swims at a public pool, and there are often other people using the locker rooms while your team is there. This is something you expect and is usually not a problem, but there's been an individual who's been making you and your teammates feel a little uncomfortable. The Individual sits in the locker room, sometimes with clothes on sometimes not, and tries to talk to the swimmers. Something about the situation doesn't feel right to you.

- What's going on here?
- What do you do?
- What other behaviors are not okay in the locker room?



"If it's possible for one person in the world to do something, then it's possible for you!"

- Dr. Alan Goldberg



November Swimmers of the Month

Developmental Blue

Part of why I choose Julia is because of her awesome attitude! She comes to practice every time with a smile and is ready to swim! She is very warming to her teammates and coaches. She always puts in the hard work and has come so far with her swimming skills. Keep up the great work!



Developmental Gold

Liam Hallberg. This young man has found merit and constant improvement in every practice this month. He has followed up on this by discussing his findings with his coach after practice (while he is putting his or other teammate's equipment away). When he returns the following day he often shows up early to watch the older kids swim and take notes on the things they are doing so he can set more goals for himself for his practice to come. These qualities are the same as the best athletes in the world, these are great habits for our November swimmer of the month.



Middle School Blue

Grace has come a long way since she began swimming with NASA, her focus and attitude for swimming is outstanding. Over the past month, Grace has demonstrated toughness and merit in each practice. She is not afraid to push her limits in the water. She also shows respect for her teammates and others during practice and at meets. I looking forward to see where Grace goes as a swimmer.



Middle School Gold

This was a highly contested month when the group as a whole is sporting an over 90% attendance rate and improving it seems just as fast as I can throw sets at them. Everyone is showing leadership in their own way, the group is showing purpose in each step they take toward their goals to earn their form of Merit. Carigan Tabor is November's swimmer of the month, for extreme selflessness, awareness, and toughness. It is in the hardest sets we can find our true capacity, and I applaud her discovering her abilities this month and look forward to her seeing what she can do next.



Senior/Elite/National

Reagan was selected as swimmer of the month for her updated approach to training and swimming in general. Reagan has come back this season with a whole new attitude and it is paying off in a big way. I am watching an athlete who is much more focused on what she is doing than what she was in the past. She is also pushing herself and those around her outside of their comfort zones so real improvement can begin. This new attitude and approach has caught the eyes of the coaching staff and we are excited to see where Reagan goes this year.



