

# In The Dawg House



## Swimming Is An Investment

With time at a premium in the two-career family, many parents are now asking "Is it the sacrifice and expense of joining an age group program worth it?" Here are some thoughts on why it is from Coach Cindy Anderson, head age group coach of the Reno Aquatic Club in Reno, Nevada.

"Age group swimming is much more than just swimming back and forth, day in and day out - the occasional swim meet and winning ribbon. Of course the swimmer gains from the physical activity of swimming, by becoming more fit...and there is involvement in an after-school activity at a time when working parents can't be with their kids. But age group swimming is an investment in the health, fitness, and overall growth and development of the youngster.

From the physical standpoint, swimming helps improve cardiovascular fitness, strength, flexibility, and neuromuscular coordination. In addition, swimming is a lifelong fitness activity that is relatively easy to pursue, low in injury risk, and helps reduce stress. It can be enjoyed recreationally long after it has ceased competitively.

Beyond the physical benefits, swimming in both practice and meets contributes greatly to the psychological and emotional development of the young athlete. As an activity, swimming requires the development of specific and complex motor patterns. Swimming well requires not only hard physical work, but also intelligent application of learned skills and the ability to THINK while performing. From concentration on performing stroke skills correctly to executing race strategies, the athlete learns early to concentrate and perform under pressure. In addition nutrition education is an ongoing and essential part of the athlete's overall development and success.

Age group swimming also requires consistent dedication, discipline and long-term commitment to goals, learning the habit of persistent application of lifestyle

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### Announcements:

- Please make sure to sign up online for jobs for our home meets to help make each meet a success.
- If you have any questions, please contact the office at (219) 838-DAWG (3294) anytime between 9 am - 4 pm, Monday - Friday.



## Coaches Corner



Hey there—from Red Group Lanes 3 & 4!

Let us start off by saying that ALL of our kids have done amazing thus far this season. They're eagerness to learn and enthusiasm to be better swimmers is inspiring.

So far we have just been working on freestyle, back stroke, and butterfly, and as aforementioned, they are doing awesome.

Starting in December we will be continuing to work on butterfly but also starting to work on breaststroke and flip turns.

We can't say enough good things about "our kids". All we ask is that you, as parents, continue with the positive reinforcement! (Leave the nagging to us!)

As always, feel free to ask us anything. Keep up the good work swimmers!

*Submitted by Assistant Coach's Holly Laird & Sandy Ficek*



## Swimming Is An Investment (cont. from page 1)

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adaptations for goal achievement. Young swimmers also learn to accept success and failure with equal grace. In life as in swimming, one often fails several times on the way to a success, and it is an essential and difficult life-lesson to learn. The ups and downs of competition and training expose the young athlete to the realities of success and failure and force them to deal with the living experience.

Age group swimming, both directly and indirectly, teaches the athlete to develop: goal-setting strategies, time management skills, relaxation and imagery techniques, positive attitudes, and generally enhances the athletes overall self-image. Competitive swimming is both social and fun, and by virtue of the athletic nature of the activity, reinforces positive social values and beliefs. Athletes are taught to value their hard work in training and steer clear of drug and alcohol abuses.

To be an athlete is a very special and wonderful thing. To be a competitive swimmer is special, wonderful, and difficult; but the benefits of the persistent dedication and application of efforts, along with the benefits of facing and dealing with the emotional and psychological experiences associated with the demands of training and competing for success, are well worth whatever personal and/or financial investments are required.

Age group swimming is much more than it first appears.

## Aging Up

***“My Eight Year Old Was The Fastest Swimmer In The Zone Until He Turned Nine. Now He Is Continually Being Beaten Since He Is The Youngest In His Age Group. How Can I, As A Parent, Keep Him Getting Discouraged?”***

Answered by: Bill Thompson, Head Coach of the San Jose Aquatics, California.

Every age group swimmer goes through the trials and tribulations of “aging up”. It is difficult for a swimmer, who was the top of his age group, to readjust to swimming against older and faster swimmers. Often times, a child will have difficulties swimming in this new age bracket.

It is important to communicate with your child’s coach when a situation like this occurs. When you feel that your child is becoming discouraged, you should inform your child’s coach of your concern. Chances are the coach has sensed the discouragement also. It is a common response to “aging up”. Remember how you felt as a freshman in high school, worshipping the upper-classmen from afar?

After you have informed the coach of the problem, you and your child need to evaluate why he is participating in swimming. Your child probably became a swimmer because it was an activity where he was better than the average swimmer, he found it to be fun, and he could please you, the parent. He did not become a swimmer to win.

When your child is making the transition to an older age group, look for positive aspects, other than winning, such as improving his times, techniques and developing new skills. Changing age groups can mean the discovery of new talents, racing in different distances, new events and tougher competition.

Most importantly, no one in swimming has ever won all of his races. Only one swimmer can finish first in a race and sometimes we place too much importance on winning. A youngster is a winner when he can face a challenge, compete and try his best.

Swimmers win when they set a goal for themselves and make a commitment to work towards realizing that goal. A well-balanced individual needs to accept defeat and disappointment as graciously as victory. How can one savor the “thrill of victory” without the occasional “agony of defeat”?

Encourage your swimmer to have faith in himself and his coach and he will adjust with time. I think it can be very good for him to believe he can win again...someday. If winning is important to him in the months or years to come, he will work for it.



# Swimming Fast Under Pressure: Controlling Your Race Focus

BY DR. ALAN GOLDBERG//COMPETITIVEDGE.COM

WHY DO SOME SWIMMERS GO SLOWER IN RACES THAN THEY DO IN PRACTICE?

The secret to swimming fast when it counts the most is to maintain control of your concentration during your **entire** race. Far too many swimmers allow their race concentration to drift away from what they are **DOING** during the race and go to **THINKING** about how they feel, how fast they may or may not be going or where their competitors are. **Every stroke you take during a race where your focus is on THOUGHTS is a slow, inefficient stroke.** Contrast that to what happens when these same swimmers practice, and you will see an entirely different focus of concentration. In training, these athletes focus on the **FEEL** of what they are doing, one stroke at a time and have little to no thinking going on! **Consistently swimming fast under pressure is all about learning to keep your race focus on this kind of FEEL!**

WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO FOCUS ON FEEL?

Every swimmer is different and focusing on feel varies depending upon the individual athlete and the stroke that they're swimming.

- One breaststroker I worked with knew he was going fast because he could feel a burning sensation in his arms with each stroke. Whenever he wanted to go fast, he would shift his concentration to feeling this burn.
- A flyer I worked with would concentrate on the feeling of pressing down the water with her chest just the right amount, and whenever she did that, her stroke was fast and efficient.
- A freestyler learned that he would go fast whenever he could feel his stroke be long and smooth. Using this, he trained himself to concentrate on the feeling of the stretch under his arm with each stroke he took.

**Having a race focus on feel is what I call the “gas pedal,” because whenever you concentrate on feel, you'll always go fast!**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOCUS ON “THINKING” AS YOU RACE?

Many swimmers unknowingly allow their concentration to be preoccupied with thoughts while they race.

- If someone passes you and you hear in your head, “I can't let her do that! I've got to pick it up or she'll beat me! I need to go faster,” then your focus for those strokes has left your body and “feel,” and gone into your head to thoughts.
- If you turn into the last 50 of a 200 and you notice that your arms and legs are starting to feel heavy and you hear, “Oh no! I'm getting tired! I'm really hurting and starting to slow down,” then your concentration has shifted to thinking.
- If in the middle of your race, you notice a teammate whom you regularly outswim in practice starting to pull away from you and you think, “Here we go again! How is this possible? I always work harder than him, why does this always happen to me,” your race focus is now focused on thinking.

**Having a race focus on thoughts as you swim is what I call the “brake pedal,” because it will always slow you down!**

HOW DO I DETERMINE WHAT SPECIFIC “FEEL” FOCUS I SHOULD USE?

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You can work with your coach to have him/her help you figure out what specific focus you should use for your races.

- Your “feel” focus may vary throughout a swim and be directly related to your race strategy, where you take it out at one pace, build in the middle and then push it even harder the last 50.
- Your focus may be one specific thing your coach wants you to do to keep your stroke mechanically correct.
- You may also want to try experimenting in practice by noticing what you're feeling in your body whenever you're going fast.

**Keep in mind that focusing on “feel” does not involve telling yourself, “I feel good,” or “I feel bad.” That's thinking about how you feel!**

#### WHAT DO I DO IF I CAN'T STOP MYSELF FROM THINKING WHENEVER I SWIM?

Keep in mind that thinking is absolutely normal and everyone does it. Furthermore, you can't really stop yourself from thinking. The instant you tell yourself, “don't think,” you are thinking!

- You want to become aware the instant your focus drifts towards thinking, and then quickly return your focus to the “feel” of what you're doing.
- If more thoughts bubble up 30 seconds later, no worries. Quickly return your focus to feel.
- Stay aware throughout practice, and every time thinking pops up, let it be, but immediately “change the channel” and switch your focus back to feel!”

This is how you practice swimming fast under pressure. In practice, deliberately make a point of having a “feel focus.” Whenever you train, spend a good part of your set concentrating on the feel of what you're doing, in your body and whenever thoughts intrude, quickly bring yourself back to feel. In this way, you will train yourself to immediately notice when you've lost your focus and gotten distracted by thinking, and then instinctively bring yourself back to where it needs to be, on the FEEL of what you're doing!

*For more FREE mental toughness tips and swim articles, go to Dr. Goldberg's website, [www.competitivedge.com](http://www.competitivedge.com) and click on “choose your sport” and then “swimming.” Questions? I hope you'll feel free to contact Dr. Goldberg at [Goldberg@competitivedge.com](mailto:Goldberg@competitivedge.com) or call directly (413) 549-1085.*

## TOP DOGS for the Meets

Highland Invitational - **Andrew Gianfermi** - 8.78 second average time drop. 50% team best times.

CPSC Fall SYOA Invitational - **Nathan Wendorf** - 13.4 second average time drop. 62.39% team best times

CPSC vs UTSC Dual - **Nori Gubbins** - 7.36 second average time drop. 45.75% team best times.

**AWESOME JOB DAWGS!!!!!!**



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**Commitment, Pride, Sportsmanship, Character**

[www.crownpointswimclub.org](http://www.crownpointswimclub.org)

**Mission Statement**

The Crown Point Swim Club is an aquatics program established to provide opportunities for our community through the sport of swimming. We are a USA Swimming and Indiana Swimming member committed to building excellence in athletes through the sport of swimming at the highest levels of competition. We are dedicated to the members of our not-for-profit organization to help provide our services at very little cost to all.

**Vision Statement**

Building the future of the community through safety in the water, healthy lifestyles, and physical development while achieving excellence in swimming, academics, and life.

**Philosophy**

*Commitment, Pride, Sportsmanship, Character*

We stress being committed to excellence both athletically and academically. We take pride in our organization, our athletes, and their families. We teach sportsmanship both in and out of the pool at all times. We build character through life lessons that will take our swimmers past their athletic ca-

## 2014 Club Sponsors

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