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## Dear Coaches,

### Quote of the week:

**"Double your rate of failure ... failure is a teacher – a harsh one, perhaps, but the best ..."**

~ Thomas Watson Sr., The founder of IBM

## The Chuck Wielgus Blog: #CoachesAre Mentors

Written by Frank Busch

Coaches play several roles in the lives of their athletes, involving responsibilities far beyond the pool deck.

Those coaches who have been able to help their athletes reach maximum performance are likely to be very familiar with the concept of mentoring.

A coach with effective leadership skills is often viewed by his or her athletes as a mentor, which is to say that the athletes view their coach as a wise and trusted counselor as well. In the mentoring process, a coach understands his or her own personality and is able to find the best path to relate on a very personal level to each individual athlete.

Coaches also benefit from having mentors. Early in my career, starting as a teenage summer league coach, I did not have coaching mentors. My substitute was watching how various club coaches handled their athletes and how various athletes responded to coaching styles and personalities. Those observations helped me become a better coach.

As my own style and confidence evolved as a college coach, I became especially interested in University of Texas head coach Eddie Reese. His methods were very appealing and I learned a lot of leadership traits from him. He was always able to put his athletes at ease and, as a result, they appeared to respect him and enjoy him.

As I watched him coach and asked him questions, Eddie helped me feel that I could trust my own leadership skills and be true to my own personality and strengths.

As I became a more experienced coach, I dedicated more time and effort to getting to know my athletes – their hopes and fears and unique motivations. Becoming a trusted source of counsel helped my athletes and me work together more smoothly in training and in competition.

At the same time, I always understood that coaching is not about being an athlete's closest friend. It is about establishing a culture and a structure of trust and reliable leadership.

Helping athletes overcome challenges in and out of the pool constitute some of the best memories I now have as a coach. I also draw great career satisfaction from the relationships that I built with other coaches, from seeking their mentorship and being a source of guidance as well.

## Lessons Learned at the 2015 National Junior Team Camp

By Katie Arnold, USA Swimming High Performance Consultant

Three weeks ago, we hosted our annual National Junior Team Camp here at the OTC in Colorado Springs, and with more than 80 athletes in attendance, this year's camp was our largest to date. Maintaining a focus on our "Awareness and Achievement" theme, we



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tried to expose these athletes to new ideas and experiences that they could then incorporate into their own personal journeys to success.

Reflecting back, the concepts below popped up frequently during the different presentations and activities, and are what I consider the main takeaways from camp. The common thread for these concepts is that neither is swimming-specific and each one can be applied to many different facets of life.

**Small Changes Make a Big Difference:** Making huge changes can often seem difficult and overwhelming, and many people quickly become discouraged and give up. The key here is to break down the desired result into small, manageable pieces. If you want to improve your dive, start with your set up on the block, then move on to the arm-pull initiation before refining the entry and underwater transition. If you want to have more consistent training, focus on improving your nutrition and recovery in order to allow you to train harder.

**Try Something New:** A common pitfall of early success is that many people get stuck in the mindset that whatever got them to that point is what they have to continue to do. I've heard countless coaches and athletes use the old cliché "if it isn't broken, don't fix it." Unfortunately, this mentality can place a ceiling on overall performance. Our best athletes are those who are willing to get outside their comfort zones and try new things. Whether you are incorporating a new style of dryland training, changing your stroke technique, or trying a new recovery tool, the important thing is to be willing to try new things and then have the patience to see them through.

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## Safe Sport Impact Award

We are accepting nominations for the Safe Sport Impact Award through June 7, 2015! The purpose of this award is to recognize significant contributions by an individual or group who has contributed to the fulfillment of the Safe Sport Committee mission: To safeguard all members of USA Swimming from sexual, psychological, emotional and physical abuse. This award is presented annually at the United States Aquatic Sports Convention. For further information about the eligibility and selection process and to access the nomination form [please go here](#).

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## Swim-A-Thon™ Funds Help Save Lives!

Not only does your club team get those new lane ropes they've been hoping for, but the 5% donated back to the USA Swimming Foundation helps save lives! USA Swimming Foundation uses the money donated back to give grant awards to our Make a Splash Local Partners to bring the lifesaving gift of free or low-cost swim lessons to children across the country! So when you host a Swim-a-Thon, you are not only raising funds to build a stronger team at home, you and your athletes are helping to give kids across the country the same great experience in the pool.

A very special THANK YOU to the following clubs for donating more than 5% of their fundraising dollars to the USA Swimming Foundation in 2014:

- Academy at the Lakes Badger
- Aquatics Club Boonville
- Aquatic Dolphins
- Broadlands CSL Piranhas
- Cedar Rapids Aquatics Assoc.
- Chicago South Swim Club
- Colorado Athletic Club
- Cornwall Sea Dragons
- East Aurora Swim Team
- Falls Aquatic Swim Team
- Friends' Central Aquatics
- Huntsville Nadadores Swim Club
- King Aquatic Club

- Lakewood Aquatics
- Leesburg Aquatics Club
- Longmont Swim Club
- Malibu Seawolves
- Oak Forest Swim Assoc.
- Portage Porpoise Swim Club
- Rolla Fins Swim Club
- Shoreline Lightning Swim Club
- Team YES! Aquatics of Houston
- Wiregrass Ranch High School

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## The Role of Parents in Athletics

By Bruce Brown, Proactive Coaching.com

"Coaches and parents... First, teach them to love the game. Second, teach them how to play it. Third, teach them how to compete in that sport. If you get these out of order or rush the process, it is very likely you will have one of the 70% of kids in this nation that drop out of sport by age 13."

[Watch this excellent 45 minute video:](#)

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## A Modern Approach to Traditional Sponsorship Agreements

By Scott R. Branam, Athletic Business, April 2015

The sports industry continues to grow exponentially in the United States, and with that growth comes an increased interest for local and national businesses and organizations to affiliate with sports teams through sponsorship relationships. As this trend continues, the nature of the relationship between a sports property and a business will continue to evolve. For years, businesses were satisfied with simply having their name associated with a sports property, but today, businesses are demanding more return on the sponsorship relationship. They want to know how the sponsorship relationship will benefit their brand.

As such, it is important for sports properties to understand this shift in dynamics surrounding the sponsorship relationship. When entering into sponsorship contracts with a business, sports properties should keep the following considerations in mind.

[Read more:](#)

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## A Growth Mindset Workshop

By Train Ugly.com, April 23, 2015

My mom is awesome. My mom is also a PE teacher and she spent the last two weeks doing a growth mindset workshop with her students. The before and after results were pretty amazing!

Before the workshop started she gave each student a short 'growth mindset checkup.' This is a series of questions that helps to measure our mindsets. The checkup gives students a score between 8-48.

Lower scores between 8-24 = a fixed mindset  
Mid-range scores between 25-32 = a neutral mindset  
High scores between 33-48 = a growth mindset

She then spent a couple of weeks teaching the students about the growth mindset. She showed them Eduardo Briceño's TED talk, discussed Carol Dweck's studies, had them watch our V-Essay on learning, printed off our 'values' posters, and let Seth Godin

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preach to them about being 'thirsty.' We've put ALL of these resources together in what we call The [Growth Mindset Playbook](#). It's still a work in progress but I think it's a nice collection/roadmap to help create a growth mindset within yourself and others.

At the end of the workshop she administered the checkup once again. Check out the results!

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## **How To Control Someone Else's Arm With Your Brain**

**By Greg Gage, TedTalk, April 28, 2015**

With Neural learning being a hot topic I thought you might enjoy this talk by Greg Gage who is on a mission to make brain science accessible to all. In this fun, kind of creepy demo, the neuroscientist and TED Senior Fellow uses a simple, inexpensive DIY kit to take away the free will of an audience member. It's not a parlor trick; it actually works.

[You have to see it to believe it.](#) Only 6 minutes!

How will this change coaching in the future?

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## **Five Reasons Athletes Don't Do Mental Training**

**By Dr. Jim Taylor, April 28, 2015**

Over the many years that I've been working in the field of sport psychology, I have championed the benefits of mental training for sports to thousands of athletes. This work has ranged from talks to junior programs to ongoing consulting with individual athletes and teams.

As many of you know from my [dozens of articles](#) on this subject, I emphasize a practical approach that likens mental preparation to the physical conditioning and technical and tactical work that is also required for sports success. This focus stresses that, like the physical and on-field (or course or court) aspects of sports, the only way athletes can benefit from mental training is when it is used in an organized and consistent way.

My work offers athletes easy-to-understand and practical tools, such as mental imagery, breathing, routines, and keywords, that can be incorporated readily into every part of your overall training program.

[Read more here:](#)

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