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Dear Coaches,

Quote of the week:

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.”

~Helen Keller (1880-1968) American Writer

Spring Regional Coaches Conferences Now Taking Registrations

By USA Swimming and ASCA

USA Swimming's Club Development Division offers regional coaching clinics at a variety of sites throughout the year. These clinics are designed to help coaches at any level improve their knowledge skills without breaking the bank on travel! **The four Spring Clinics are filling up fast!**

For \$60 one coach can attend, or, for only \$120 an entire staff can attend the clinic.

Each of these Conferences will have a Club Leadership Business Management School with them. CLBMS's are Free!

[Click here for more information.](#)

Order Your SwimToday Kit

Did you know nearly 80% of parents don't consider continuing in the sport of swimming for their child after swim lessons. However, 95% say they have taken their child swimming for fun.

Join the SwimToday campaign where 10 industry partners are combining resources with the goal of increasing participation in the sport of swimming. The campaign will show the “fun” side and the benefits of swimming, encouraging parents to consider putting their child on a swim team.

The SwimToday campaign will launch the first week of May with an advertising campaign, television public service announcements, digital advertising, public relations outreach and more. Benefits to swim providers include:

- Be a part of the industry campaign
- Recruit swimmers to your programs
- Keep swimmers in the sport

In late April 2014, we will mail a free promotional kit to swim teams that apply. The kits will include:

- Promotional posters to hang in your facility
- Stickers for parents
- Silicone bracelets
- Towel cape clip to turn an ordinary pool towel into a superhero cape
- Bag Tags
- "Swim Hero" certificates to reward learn to swim grads or new members on your team
- Share cards for swimmers to share with friends
- Temporary Tattoos





Randy Julian

Sport Development
Consultant
Central Zone
USA Swimming

[719-866-3578](tel:719-866-3578) [719-866-3578](tel:719-866-3578) Direct

[719-440-2421](tel:719-440-2421) [719-440-2421](tel:719-440-2421) Cell
[719-866-4669](tel:719-866-4669) Fax

[719-866-4578](tel:719-866-4578) [719-866-4578](tel:719-866-4578) Office
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Spring, Colorado
80909
[email](mailto:randy.julian@usaswimming.org)

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Visit www.SwimToday.org to sign up now for a kit! **Supplies are limited so apply for the kit today.**

Need to watch the webinar? Visit www.SwimToday.org/welcomewebinar

Questions? swimtoday@usaswimming.org

Grit: Can It Be Developed Or Is It Innate?

By Dan McCarthy, USA Swimming High Performance Consultant

Do you know an athlete who not only never misses a workout, but never misses a yard of their training, or a rep in the weight room? No matter how tired or beat up they might be, they see their work through to the end. Despite the fact that they may not be the most talented on the team, aren't they usually one of the most successful? Is this sort of determination, or Grit, just how they are, or have they developed their grittiness over time? It's a good question.

What is Grit? Angela Duckworth, a Ph. D. in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, began studying Grit in 2005. She studied students, athletes, soldiers, CEOs, spelling bee competitors and many others and found that self-discipline scores were better predictors of success than IQ assessments, academic grades, physical fitness measurements and leadership testing. She described Grit as, "the tendency to sustain interest in and effort toward very long-term goals."

[Read more:](#)

The Chuck Wielgus Blog: Coach "K" - Master Teacher

London basketball (medium) Last week's Sports Illustrated had a wonderful article about Duke Coach, Mike Krzyzewski titled, "The Education of Jabari Parker." Parker is a freshman basketball player at Duke, who appears headed for a great career in the NBA. The education he is receiving at Duke perfectly reflects why Krzyzewski – or Coach K as he is more commonly known – is not only the best in the basketball business, but a role model for coaches in every sport.

People who know me know I'm a basketball junkie, so when I received an invitation to sit through a practice session of the USA Men's Basketball Team at the 2012 London Olympic Games I couldn't say "yes" fast enough. Along with Assistant Executive Director, Mike Unger; President, Bruce Stratton; National Team Director, Frank Busch and our Women's Swim Team Head Coach, Teri McKeever, we visited the basketball practice facility the day following the end of the swimming competition.

The practice session was closed to the media and the public, but our small contingent was directed to sit in the bleachers that were immediately adjacent to the court. We sat 20 feet from the basket where Kobe Bryant and LeBron James were shooting three pointers.

While the assistant coaches put Kevin Durant, Carmelo Anthony and others through drills and a controlled scrimmage, Coach K was seated at a table in front of a lap top computer. He was meeting one-on-one with players. Russell Westbrook was with Coach K for at least 20 minutes looking at the computer screen while Coach K talked and pointed at the screen.

When the practice ended, we were invited to meet with Coach K. I thought he was simply being courteous; that we'd meet, shake hands and that would be it. But that's not what happened.

We ended up having a 40-minute conversation about coaching and leadership. Coach K was curious about how USA Swimming brought together and created team unity with 45 swimmers, each of whom was coming from a different background. We talked about the importance of our National Team culture, and how USA Swimming works hard to perpetuate that culture with its athletes and coaches well in advance of the Olympic

Games.

When the opportunity presented itself, I asked Coach K about his one-on-one meetings with some of the athletes. He said the purpose of these meetings was to review the previous night's game and to point out places where the player should have reacted differently. In the case of Westbrook, Coach K said there were several instances in the game when he thought Russell could have driven to the basket instead of passing.

As we nodded our heads, he continued. "These guys love to be taught, but you have to do it privately so as not to put them in an awkward situation with their all-star teammates." It made perfect sense. These players had mostly been pampered and told how great they were since high school. They were eating up the teaching that Coach K was providing because they knew he was telling them the truth; and he was smart enough to know that it wouldn't be wise to criticize any of these players in front of others.

The two-page foldout spread at the start of the Sports Illustrated article shows Jabari Parker sitting with Coach K in front of a theatre video screen. I thought back to that session in London, and I was reminded about just how good a teacher Coach K is in helping athletes improve. He communicates in a way that is most effective for the athlete; he shows them respect; and he challenges them with constructive criticism for how they can improve.

Coach K is well-recognized as a great leader, but he's also a lifelong learner and a great teacher. Watching him work one-on-one with athletes caused me to think that this is exactly what good swimming coaches do. They work with the entire team, but the really good coaches also understand the importance of helping athletes individually.

Every four years when we assemble the U.S. Olympic Swim Team, we are challenging our top coaches to transition from leading their own team to becoming part of another team. This is exactly what Coach K is doing as the National Team Head Coach for USA Basketball. This is why team culture is so important, and why Coach K showed such great interest in how our Olympic Team comes together. We're all learning from each other.

Above all, coaches are teachers and the lessons they impart go far beyond just teaching the skills necessary to succeed in any sport. The best teachers are lifelong learners themselves, and they transmit life-lessons to their athletes. And after all, it's those life-lessons that are the most important things as their impact goes well beyond the court and the pool.

[Chuck Wielgus](#) All of his blogs are archived at www.usaswimming.org; click on "News" and then click on "Org News & Blogs"

Dolphin Kicking Data Case Study

From The Swimming Science Web site

Take Home Points on the Dolphin Kicking Data Case Study
Kick tempo variability does exist requiring individualized recommendations.

Implementing data is highly specific. Unfortunately, it is easy to put your body in an elite swimmers and expect the same outcomes. I'll never forget playing basketball in my driveway as a youngster and imagining I was Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway. I'd imagine shooting, dribbling, and scoring just like him, unfortunately I was a scrawny, short white kid, not a 6'7" NBA all-star.

[Read more:](#)

The Only Six Words Parents Need to Say to Their Kids About Sports—Or Any Performance

By Brad M. Griffin

I'll be honest: I kind of hate a lot about kids' sports. It's one area where Kara and I hold different opinions. I'm the wet blanket in the office about everything from little league to major sporting events.

Mainly I get concerned about the ways our culture obsesses about kids' performance. All kinds of parental anxiety and dysfunction plays out on the sidelines and in the bleachers, and you only need walk to your local park to catch a glimpse for yourself. Sports have such potential to build character, perseverance, and skill. Sometimes they succeed, and other times coaches, parents, and mobs of hot-or-cold fans burn out or puff up kids in quite damaging ways.

All that aside, my son's getting ready to play T-ball this spring. I say getting ready, because after sign-ups we were informed that "spring training" would begin immediately this week. I didn't sign up for that. They want kids there four nights a week, pre-season, to build skills prior to being placed on teams.

[See more at:](#)

Study Finds Swimming Grows Minds

By Nate Traylor, Pool and Spa News February 28 2014

Trying to sell a pool to a family that isn't quite convinced? Hit 'em with this fact: Kids who swim are smarter.

According to a recent Australian study, children who participate in swim lessons at an early age reach significant developmental milestones earlier than their non-swimming peers. They score higher in tests and are generally better coordinated.

The research was conducted over the course of three years to validate or refute the popular belief in the aquatics industry that young, competent swimmers appear to be more confident, articulate and intellectual.

Now data is available to back up those claims.

[Read more:](#)

Nine Ways to Be a Great Team Member

By Jon Gordon, Author, Motivational Speaker

While watching the Oscars I noticed that almost every award winner said they couldn't have done it without their team, family, and the support of others. The fact is no one achieves success alone. We all need a great team to accomplish great things. We are at our best when we are surrounded by those who want the best for us and when we are bringing out the best in others. In this spirit I want to share 9 ways to be a great team member.

1. Set the Example – Instead of worrying about the lack of performance, productivity and commitment of others you simply decide to set the example and show your team members what hard work, passion and commitment looks like. Focus on being your best every day. When you do this you'll raise the standards and performance of everyone around you.

2. Use Your Strengths to Help the Team – The most powerful way you can contribute to your team is to use your gifts and talents to contribute to the team's vision and goals. Without your effort, focus, talent and growth the team won't accomplish its mission. This means you have an obligation to improve so you can improve your team. You are meant to develop your strengths to make a stronger team. Be selfish by developing you and unselfish by making sure your strengths serve the team.

3. Share Positive Contagious Energy – Research shows emotions are contagious and

each day you are infecting your team with either positive energy or negative energy. You can be a germ or a big dose a Vitamin C. When you share positive energy you infectiously enhance the mood, morale and performance of your team. Remember, negativity is toxic. Energy Vampires sabotage teams and complaining is like vomiting. Afterwards you feel better but everyone around you feels sick.

4. Know and Live the Magic Ratio – High performing teams have more positive interactions than negative interactions. 3:1 is the ratio to remember. Teams that experience interactions at a ratio equal or greater than 3:1 are more productive and higher performing than those with a ratio of less than 3:1. Teams that have a ratio of 2:1, 1:1 or more negative interactions than positive interactions become stagnant and unproductive. This means you can be a great team member by being a 3 to 1'er. Create more positive interactions. Praise more. Encourage more. Appreciate more. Smile more. High-five more. Recognize more. Energize more. Read more about this at www.FeedthePositiveDog.com

5. Put the Team First – Great team players always put the team first. They work hard for the team. They develop themselves for the team. They serve the team. Their motto is whatever it takes to make the team better. They don't take credit. They give credit to the team. To be a great team member your ego must be subservient to the mission and purpose of the team. It's a challenge to keep our ego in check. It's something most of us struggle with because we have our own goals and desires. But if we monitor our ego and put the team first we'll make the team better and our servant approach will make us better.

6. Build Relationships – Relationships are the foundation upon which winning teams are built and great team members take the time to connect, communicate and care to build strong bonds and relationships with all their team members. You can be the smartest person in the room but if you don't connect with others you will fail as a team member. (Tweet This) It's important to take the time to get to know your team members. Listen to them. Eat with them. Learn about them. Know what inspires them and show them you care about them.

7. Trust and Be Trusted - You can't have a strong team without strong relationships. And you can't have strong relationships without trust. Great team members trust their teammates and most of all their team members trust them. Trust is earned through integrity, consistency, honesty, transparency, vulnerability and dependability. If you can't be trusted you can't be a great team member. Trust is everything.

8. Hold Them Accountable – Sometimes our team members fall short of the team's expectations. Sometimes they make mistakes. Sometimes they need a little tough love. Great team members hold each other accountable. They push, challenge and stretch each other to be their best. Don't be afraid to hold your team members accountable. But remember to be effective you must built trust and a relationship with your team members. If they know you care about them, they will allow you to challenge them and hold them accountable. Tough love works when love comes first. Love tough.

9. Be Humble - Great team members are humble. They are willing to learn, improve and get better. They are open to their team member's feedback and suggestions and don't let their ego get in the way of their growth or the team's growth. I learned the power of being humble in my marriage. My wife had some criticism for me one day and instead of being defensive and prideful, I simply said, "Make me better. I'm open. Tell me how I can improve." Saying this diffused the tension and the conversation was a game changer. If we're not humble we won't allow ourselves to be held accountable. We won't grow. We won't build strong relationships and we won't put the team first. There's tremendous power in humility that makes us and our team better.

In addition here are a few of my favorite sayings about being a great team member.

Your team doesn't care if you are a superstar. They care if you are a super team member. (Tweet)

You have to work as hard to be a great teammate as you do to be a great player. (Tweet)

Many teams communicate but the great ones connect. Great teams form bonds of trust that strengthen relationships and the team. (Tweet)

What did I miss? What would you add to this list? I value your input and suggestions. Share your suggestions for being a great team member by leaving a comment below, or on Facebook, or Twitter.

How To Focus Under Pressure

By Annie Murphy Paul, Author, Journalist, Consultant, Speaker, Monday, March 3, 2014

If there's any time when we should be paying close attention to what we're doing, it's when we're under pressure to perform, whether on a test like the SAT or on a deadline at work. But too often, our minds wander even in these crucial moments, distracted by a ticking clock or consumed with worries about how well we're doing

[Read More:](#)

The Fine Line Between Commitment And Obsession

By Tim Elmore, Speaker, Author, Consultant, Monday, March 3, 2014

Let's start a conversation about one of the most controversial issues today—at least for coaches, teachers and parents of young performers.

First, let me introduce you to Megan. Megan is a gymnast. Or, should I say, was a gymnast. She's been into gymnastics since she was four years old. Like many who are gifted in the sport, it became her obsession. Partly due to the coaching she got, and partly due to extreme parents—she overdid it. After thirteen years of balance beams, floor routines and uneven bars, she quit. She became overwhelmed, over-committed, over-extended and burned out. Nearly every adult around her tried to persuade her to keep going. They told her she had what it took to compete at the highest level, but she was spent.

I bet you know someone like Megan. A kid who becomes completely absorbed in something—performing on stage, on the field, on a court, you name it—until finally they wilt emotionally. We live in a society that pushes us to be obsessive:

- Sports seasons have gotten longer since I was a kid.
- Travel teams and multiple seasons are now available.
- We can watch cable television channels for food, golf, baseball, you name it.
- Go online, and you'll find websites and videos targeted as specific topics.
- Netflix has all kinds of genres and series that keep playing until you say stop.
- Commercials constantly harass us to be dissatisfied with our current reality.
- Facebook and other social media sites allow for intrusive, focused messages.

[Read more:](#)

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Growing Leaders 270 Scientific Drive NW Suite 10 Atlanta, Ga 30092 USA

