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## Dear Coaches,

### Quote of the week:

**"Decide that you want it more than you are afraid of it."**  
~Bill Cosby

## President's Message

By Bruce Stratton, May 12, 2014

The "President's Message" is a continuing effort on Bruce's part to keep the members of USA Swimming informed about current happenings in our sport and our organization. Please feel free to share this message with others.

[Click here for the full message and details.](#)

## Safe Sport Literature

As adults who interact with children on a daily basis, there may come a time when a child turns to you for support for abuse that is taking place in their life. Child abuse can take many forms and while it does not always lead to injuries that you can see, it can result in severe emotional harm that can have long-lasting effects. Please refer to a handout from the Office for Victims of Crime for information about what to do should this happen. The handout is titled 'What Adults Need to Know about Child Abuse' and you can [access it here](#).

As trusted adults, we can have a very positive impact and be a huge support for children who are suffering.

## Are Your Turns Getting Faster?

By Katie Arnold, USA Swimming High Performance Consultant

As you may have guessed, many of the articles that we write come from questions we are frequently asked by the coaches and athletes we work with.

We have written a number of articles about turn technique in which we discuss things to look for and ways to improve your turns. The one thing we haven't talked about is how to measure improvement. It's one thing for a turn to look better (or faster), but without some sort of reference, how do we really know if we have made any real progress?

I started my research with freestyle, and specifically the 100, 200 and 400 events for men and women. I used the finals in each of these events from last year's World Championships and tracked turn time for each of the 8 swimmers within a final heat.

[Read more:](#)



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**Top Tips for Bone Health in Swimmers**  
By Chris Rosenbloom, PhD, RDN, CSSD

What do dried plums, the month of May and 3-time Olympian Natalie Coughlin have in common?

The answer is bone health, although it may not be obvious from the clues. May is National Osteoporosis Month, and dried plums have been shown to contain important nutrients to build bones. Natalie Coughlin is a spokesperson for the California Dried Plum Board, and as an athlete who swims 4 hours a day with an additional 2 hours of work in the gym as she trains for the 2016 Olympic games, she know the importance of good nutrition to swimming performance and to keeping her bones strong.

[Read more:](#)

**The Fat Fix**  
By Jill Castle, MS, RDN

Fat gets a bad rap in the world today, its consumption associated with heart disease and obesity. But, fat has a beneficial role for humans, and for the growing swimmer, it can be a useful and strategic tool to manage weight. Whether the young athlete is trying to gain weight or lose a few pounds, fat is the single nutrient to manipulate, and here's why: •Fat is a concentrated source of calories, offering 9 calories for every gram (versus 4 calories per gram in protein and carbohydrate). Whether you add it or subtract it from the diet, the impact will be on total calories.

- Add it to the diet and help the underweight swimmer gain a few pounds.
- Trim it out of the diet that contains too many calories (usually from too much fat or sugar) and help the swimmer slim down.
- Target fat in the diet, protecting the more important nutrients for young athletes: carbohydrate and protein. Sports nutrition experts recommend adjustments in fat intake for the growing swimmer, rather than cutting out carbohydrates (fruit, veggies, whole grains or dairy foods) or protein foods.

[Read more:](#)

**Focus on 3 Needs to Improve Team Performance**  
From: *Leading Effectively e-Newsletter*

Research shows that teams have three types of needs:

- Planning needs. Do we have a shared understanding of goals, roles and team norms? What's the strategy or plan to achieve the goals? What key actions are needed? What knowledge, information and skills do we have or can access?
- Execution needs. Are we clear about how our team communicates, coordinates, collaborates and monitors its effectiveness? How do we track progress, people, budgets and information? How do we prioritize? How do we give and receive feedback?
- Interpersonal needs. What's the level of trust on the team? How do we handle conflict constructively? Are we motivated to achieve our goals? Are we dealing with emotions that can strain the team?

When team leaders and team members know about these needs, they have a way to identify and discuss what is working well and what isn't.

When a team is underperforming, faltering or flat-out failing, look carefully at what's missing. What behaviors are required to meet team needs?

[Read more:](#)

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## **Are Athletes Really Getting Faster, Better, Stronger?**

**By David Epstein, Investigative reporter who covers the wide-open space where sports, science and medicine overlap. TED Talks, March 2014**

When you look at sporting achievements over the last decades, it seems like humans have gotten faster, better and stronger in nearly every way. Yet as David Epstein points out in this delightfully counter-intuitive talk, we might want to lay off the self-congratulation. Many factors are at play in shattering athletic records, and the development of our natural talents is just one of them.

Allow 15 minutes to watch.

[To watch:](#)

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## **Dr. Alan Goldberg-Sports Psychology for Athletes, Coaches & Parents**

Your goals and dreams should serve one purpose for you. They are meant to be a motivational tool to get you to work harder in practice. If you are using them to threaten yourself or to try to get a higher level of performance out of yourself then you are badly misusing them!

Remember, the "serious" in your sport should be relegated to how hard and how often you work. Your "serious" should drive your work ethic in training and NOTHING ELSE!!! Bring that same "serious" and "now it really counts" way of thinking to a competition with you and you will end of continuing to choke and slump!

[For more from Dr. Goldberg click here.](#)

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## **Surviving Tryout Season**

**Posted In Coaching, Tryouts, From Changing the Game Project**

Spring and early summer usually bring about an annual rite of passage in youth sports: TRYOUTS! They can be a time of great joy, or tremendous disappointment. Tryouts can be a time filled with pressure, stress, politics and many of the other unsavory aspects of youth sports. They can also be a time where a player sees years of hard work and dedication pay off.

Let me just say it: I hate tryouts! Tryouts were always my least favorite part of running elite-level soccer programs. It was always a time when many kids had their dreams shattered, were overcome with disappointment, and were ready to quit. As a coach I always dreaded making the selections, knowing how much it would devastate a young athlete. I knew I would get it wrong from time to time, and that usually someone was hurt in the process.

Tryouts can bring out all the good, and all the bad, that is youth sports. Today I want to share some advice about tryouts. If you are reading this, you probably know families and athletes who have gone through a tough time during tryout season, and perhaps even walked away from a sport because of it. Maybe it was even you or your family. This article is for everyone with a tryout story, both good and bad, and I want to start with one of my own that I share in my book *Changing the Game*.

This story is about a former player of mine, whom I will call Zach. Zach was a small yet exceedingly talented player, and he was devastated that he was put on the club's second tier team and not the top one at age 14. It was not an easy decision for the coaching staff, but we ultimately made it in the best long term interests of the player. That certainly did not make it any easier on Zach.

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Zach's parents asked me and his coach to meet with him, for he told them after tryouts he was ready to quit soccer. In the meeting, I explained to him that while he was technically and tactically ready to take the next step, I was worried that his physical stature would not allow him to use his skill and guile. I was worried that going from the top player on the second team to the sixteenth player on our "A" team was not the right move for him at that time. I explained to him that in one year he would be ready, for he would catch up physically, and then his ability would shine through.

[Read more at:](#)

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## **Hush! Let Your Customers Do the Talking**

**By Schuyler Richardson, Business2Community.com, Published May 9, 2014**

Yesterday, I was flipping through Dr. Liz Alexander's [#Thought Leadership Tweet book](#) and found a statement that really stuck out to me: "If you want to make a real impact with clients, constantly ask if your thought leadership is about them. Does it address their needs?" On one hand, that means making sure the content you produce is helpful and meaningful to your customer/client. On the other, it means being cognizant of their below-the-surface needs. In a marketing sense, that means looking at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and paying attention to the top layers labeled 'self-esteem' and 'self-actualization.'

[Read more:](#)