

Swim Parent Tip: Seeing the Big Picture and Trusting the Coach

Courtesy of [Elizabeth Wickham](#)

I remember when my daughter had just moved up into the senior group as a 13-year-old. It was September, the first meet of the season, and we had a new head coach. He put her and other swimmers in hard, killer events. The 400 IM, 1650, 200 fly, etc.

The group she had just moved up from swam fun stuff. 50 free, 100 free, 100 fly.

At the time, my daughter felt life was unfair.

Her coach had many years of experience and entered his senior kids in these tough events for a reason. Probably for several reasons. He was getting a baseline. This would help him all season long in planning their training. The swimmers were also learning what they were made of. I'm sure there were more reasons than I fully understand.

He was questioned by more than one parent during the meet:

“Why is my swimmer in all these hard events?” or “It’s the beginning of the season. My swimmer isn’t going to do well.”

Looking back with 20-20 vision, I see more positives than negatives from that one swim meet. My daughter and her fellow swimmers survived. No, they didn’t get all best times, but they rose to the challenge and swam to the best of their abilities.

Parent Tip:

Parents need to step back and let our kid’s coach do his or her job. Let’s not second guess them.

At AA and JO meets, my daughter balked at having to swim the mile and 200 fly back to back. When she complained, one of her coaches – a former distance swimmer – said, “Get used to it. That’s life as a distance swimmer.” At first, it was a mountain she didn’t want to climb. After a few times, my daughter embraced it and felt a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Fast forward to college and she’s swimming either the 1000 or 1650 plus the 500 free at every dual meet – in a time period often under two hours. You bet she thinks of her coaches from when she was 13 – who always put her in tough events. She’s probably even thanking them.