

# SWIMMING WORLD

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COVID-19  
LIFE & SPORTS  
IN TURMOIL

OLYMPIC  
WATER POLO  
A SILVER LINING?

BEFORE  
THE BEEP  
ASHLEY TWICHELL

TIMING IS  
EVERYTHING  
NAIA & NJCAA  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

**SR Smith**

PRESENTS

TAKEOFF TO TOKYO  
DARA TORRES &  
JENNY THOMPSON

**Speedo**

DAVE  
**DURDEN**  
LEADER OF MEN

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Everyone knows how important timing is—races can be won or lost by hundredths of a second. For swimmers competing at the NAIA and NJCAA Championships, the most important timing was measured in days. Both associations were able to complete their championship meets just before other major sports championships were being canceled due to the threat of coronavirus.

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**030 TAKEOFF TO TOKYO: T 'N' T—A FRIENDLY RIVALRY FOR A DYNAMITE DUO**

by John Lohn

During the Olympic campaign of 2000, Jenny Thompson and Dara Torres—complete opposites out of the pool, but with few differences as competitors—were engaged in a friendly, but not-so-easy rivalry—one that brought out the best in both swimmers.



**ON THE COVER** Dave Durden has been head coach at the University of California-Berkeley since the 2007-08 season, and in every year after his first two, Cal has finished first or second in the national rankings. Ten years straight. That is, until 2020, when circumstances derailed the Bears' opportunity to defend that championship. The COVID-19 pandemic also put a hold on the Olympics, but that hasn't dampened Durden's passion to prepare for the new challenges of 2021. Not only will he be getting his Bears ready to repeat as NCAA champions, but as the U.S. Olympic men's swimming team coach, he'll be working with his swimmers to do their best to uphold the American tradition of swimming excellence at the Olympic Games. (See feature, page 26.) [PHOTO PROVIDED BY SPEEDO USA]

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# DIVING IN DURING DIRE TIMES

BY JOHN LOHN

Times of global crisis are revealing. It is in these moments that a definitive line can be drawn between the proactive and understanding members of society and those who retreat, hoping the problem will simply go away. During the coronavirus pandemic that has swept the world, many individuals and organizations have shined. Others have huddled in a corner of inaction and weakness.

More than a million people worldwide have been struck by COVID-19. Families have lost loved ones, and due to social-distancing measures, have not been able to properly say goodbye. Others have lost jobs, or taken wage reductions, and been forced to cope with the corresponding financial struggles. Still more have been separated from family, as mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, sisters and brothers bravely stand on the front lines as medical professionals confronting this disease.

There is no other way to say it: The coronavirus is a monster—unrelenting, fast-moving, indiscriminate and heartless. Its impact on the world will be long felt.

During these tragic days, the swimming community has shown itself capable of comprehending the enormity of the situation—both for the world and for those who dedicated thousands of hours toward the lifelong goal of competing on the Olympic stage. As the International Olympic Committee dawdled along, claiming “the Games will go on,” many athletes had a firmer grasp of reality and the simple fact that an Olympiad would have been a slap in the face.

“I am deeply concerned by the IOC’s recent statement that they are essentially continuing with business as usual despite the growing evidence that COVID-19 will remain a massive threat for the foreseeable future,” wrote American backstroker Jacob Pebley on a social-media post. “How can we, members of Team USA and role models for hundreds of thousands of young athletes, attend Olympic Trials/the Olympics in good conscience? To do so would fly in the face of all emerging evidence and best practices for social distancing and protecting the health of vulnerable communities.”

Through his Instagram account, Pebley displayed courage and a willingness to step to the forefront of a discussion that should have been initiated by the Olympic governing bodies of various countries around the world. Instead, these organizations—such as the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee—did not exhibit leadership characteristics, but remained in lockstep with the IOC’s insistence that the Games would proceed.

By speaking out, Pebley initiated a call for right over wrong. On one hand, it was clear that equality was not present when it came to preparation for the Games or the various Trials that would allocate admission tickets. Some hopefuls had pools at their disposal. Others did not. How could a Games proceed with such an uneven playing field? But more important, as Pebley noted, was the arrogance of holding the biggest sporting competition in the world amid a pandemic that was claiming more and more lives with every passing hour.

Eventually, USA Swimming, Swimming Canada and Swimming Australia called for the Olympics to be postponed, and the IOC ultimately removed its head from the sand and announced Tokyo 2020 would not take place. The decision should have come earlier and without external pressure, but—as the adage goes—better late than never.

While Pebley’s bullet was critical in fast-forwarding the postponement process, questions remained. With the Olympics moved to 2021, some athletes had to consider whether they would stay active and put the next chapter in their lives on pause. For those not named Dressel, Ledecky or Sjöström, could they afford another year?

Then, International Swimming League founder Konstantin Grigorishin stepped forward as a savior of sorts. The billionaire announced he would fund the 320 members of the ISL, allowing them to continue training toward 2021 and without financial worries.

Leaders are defined by their willingness to speak out and act. So, as we begin a new countdown toward the Tokyo Olympics and pray for the end of this terrible pandemic, it’s worth celebrating men like Jacob Pebley and Konstantin Grigorishin. They are the types needed during dire times. ❖

## John Lohn

Associate Editor-in-Chief  
*Swimming World Magazine*



### PUBLISHING, CIRCULATION AND ACCOUNTING

www.SwimmingWorldMagazine.com

Publisher, CEO - Brent T. Rutemiller  
BrentR@SwimmingWorld.com

Editor-in-Chief - Craig Lord  
Lord@SwimmingWorld.com

Associate Editor-in-Chief - John Lohn  
Lohn@SwimmingWorld.com

Operations Manager - Laurie Marchwinski  
LaurieM@ishof.org

Marketing Director - Brandi West  
BrandiW@SwimmingWorld.com

Production Editor - Taylor Brien  
TaylorB@SwimmingWorld.com

Circulation/Membership - Ivonne Schmid  
ISchmid@ishof.org

Accounting - Marcia Meiners  
Marcia@ishof.org

### EDITORIAL, PRODUCTION, ADVERTISING, MARKETING AND MERCHANDISING OFFICE

2744 East Glenrosa Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85016  
Toll Free: 800-511-3029  
Phone: 602-522-0778 • Fax: 602-522-0744  
www.SwimmingWorldMagazine.com

### EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION

Editorial@SwimmingWorld.com

Senior Editor - Bob Ingram  
BobI@SwimmingWorld.com

Managing Editor - Dan D'Addona  
DanD@SwimmingWorld.com

Design Director - Joseph Johnson

Historian - Bruce Wigo

Staff Writers - Michael J. Stott, David Rieder,  
Shoshanna Rutemiller, Andy Ross,  
Michael Randazzo, Taylor Brien

Fitness Trainer - J.R. Rosania

Chief Photographer - Peter H. Bick

SwimmingWorldMagazine.com WebMaster:  
WebMaster@SwimmingWorld.com

### ADVERTISING, MARKETING AND MERCHANDISING

Advertising@SwimmingWorld.com

Marketing Assistant - Meg Keller-Marvin  
Meg@SwimmingWorld.com

Merchandising Manager - Lauren Serowik  
Lauren@ishof.org

### INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

Americas: Matthew De George (USA)

Africa: Chaker Belhadji (TUN)

Australia: Wayne Goldsmith, Ian Hanson

Europe: Norbert Agh (HUN), Liz Byrnes (GBR), Camillo Cametti (ITA),

Oene Rusticus (NED), Rokur Jakupsstovu (FAR)

Japan: Hideki Mochizuki

Middle East: Baruch "Buky" Chass, Ph.D. (ISR)

South Africa: Neville Smith (RSA)

South America: Jorge Aguado (ARG)

### PHOTOGRAPHERS/SWTV

Andy Ross (SWTV Producer)  
Peter H. Bick, USA Today Sports Images,  
Reuters, Getty Images

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2744 East Glenrosa Ave.  
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f.602.522.0744  
www.SwimmingWorldMagazine.com



# BEYOND THE YARDS

## MARK PINGER, ARENA NORTH AMERICA'S GENERAL MANAGER, REFLECTS ON TURBULENT TIMES

**T**he pace and severity of the impact of the global coronavirus pandemic has certainly been extraordinary for the nation and for the world. The swimming community has not been immune to this pandemic, and it bears the scars of the rapidly evolving battle against an unexpected and growing threat.

For many swimmers, the cancellation of the NCAA Championships at the start of March was the first big blow. The premier event for college athletes is undoubtedly one of the most competitive swim meets in the world, boasting an unrivaled breadth of U.S. and international talent. As one can imagine, it was a crushing blow for all those hoping to compete.

But as arena North America's General Manager Mark Pinger notes, the initial shock of the cancellation of the NAAs has been put in perspective by rapid implications to everyone's daily life in the fight against the coronavirus: "We went from being sad about not seeing the competition take place to being afraid for humanity, quite frankly. As a former NCAA competitor, I certainly feel for the athletes who were robbed of a chance to compete so close to the event—especially seniors—but now we are all simply hoping we can come out of this situation safe and sound, especially given the significant economic consequences."

The postponement of the Olympics was also an understandable decision in light of the global pandemic. Pinger, who twice won Olympic bronze in 1992 and 1996, supported the delay: "It's obviously been the right decision to move the Olympics, especially for anyone who has been training for the last four years for this pinnacle event. And it was great to see USA Swimming taking a leadership position in asking for a postponement." Pinger hopes the decision can put the athletes at ease so they can take a break and stay safe while under lockdown without worrying about how to find a pool for training.

The decision comes with pros and cons for different athletes.

"We know in the U.S. it is so competitive that there is likely to be new, young kids coming through who we might not have thought about for 2020, but might be ready next year to compete at the top level. And there'll be some people who might have seen 2020 as their last season of competition, so I truly hope that everyone who had the goal of going to Tokyo this year can remain competitive."

arena continues to support and engage with their elite swimmers, who are trying to keep fit in uniquely difficult circumstances. And it's certainly a challenging time for



arena's retail partners. There are a lot of small retailers serving local teams across the country who bring a lot of passion and have been part of swimming their whole lives.

"They work really hard and go to swim meets every weekend throughout the year—and we feel for these partners as this pandemic has had a huge impact on their business. We hope they all come through this. I think the interaction by our reps with retailers is what sets our company apart, and we are continuing to do this remotely." And it seems the retail partners appreciate staying in touch and getting updates—for many, it can even feel a little bit like group therapy!

In these turbulent times, Pinger remains optimistic about the long-term future of the sport: "Swimming is one of the greatest sports and a valuable life skill. It has so much going for it—from improving health to attracting new people who need to take up a low-impact sport for injury recovery." And the sport looks set to keep growing with the support of arena and USA Swimming, who are working hard to try to give everyone the opportunity to learn to swim at some point in their lives.

As the powerhouse of competitive swimming, Pinger is convinced the U.S. will continue to produce the best swimmers in the world, and the country will come through this crisis. "This unprecedented situation is bringing everyone together. We could never have imagined the impact of the coronavirus, but I'm sure together, we're going to beat this thing." 🐟

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# DRYSIDE TRAINING: STROKE STRENGTH SERIES: FREESTYLE

BY J.R. ROSANIA  
DEMONSTRATED BY NORIKO INADA • PHOTOS BY EMMI BRYTOWSKI

## Bring it home!

Those are three popular words when swimming the individual medley. After finishing three-quarters of the race, it's time for the freestyle leg and a fast finish.

In this final article of the stroke strength series, here's where that added strength from doing dryland becomes very helpful. Not only are you physically stronger, but you're mentally stronger, knowing that you worked hard in the weight room.

Now, you're ready to prove it.

The exercises in this month's article will get your shoulders and lats and core stronger for the drive to the finish line. Perform each exercise for three sets, working eight to 10 reps per set. Use resistance that forces you to push out a 90% effort on the third set. As always, discontinue these exercises two weeks away from a major competition.

Train hard...and bring it home strong.❖



### MEET THE TRAINER

J.R. Rosania, B.S., exercise science, is one of the nation's top performance enhancement coaches. He is the owner and CEO of Healthplex, LLC, in Phoenix. Check out Rosania's website at [www.jrhealthplex.net](http://www.jrhealthplex.net).

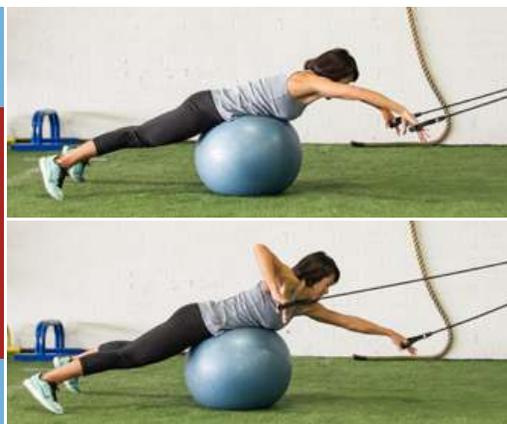


### MEET THE ATHLETE

Noriko Inada, 41, swam for Japan at the 1992, 2000 and 2004 Olympics. She now swims Masters for Phoenix Swim Club, and owns Masters world records in the women's 25-29, 30-34, 35-39 and 40-44 age groups.

## NOTICE

*All swimming and dryland training and instruction should be performed under the supervision of a qualified coach or instructor, and in circumstances that ensure the safety of participants.*



### [1] STABILITY BALL TUBE FREESTYLE STROKE

Lying on your stomach on a stability ball, grab tubing from a fixed position and begin freestyle stroke movements.



### [2] STABILITY BALL ALTERNATING DUMBBELL CHEST PRESS

Lying on your back on a stability ball and holding a lightweight dumbbell in each hand at your chest, press one dumbbell at a time vertically, leaving your shoulders on the ball. Alternate arms.



### [3] BENT-OVER ALTERNATING DUMBBELL ROW

While holding a lightweight dumbbell in each hand, stand in a bent-over position with your back parallel to the floor and your arms extended. Perform a single-arm row movement, then alternate with the other arm.



### [4] PLANK WITH ONE-ARM EXTENSION

Establish a plank position with your elbows under your shoulders. Lift one arm off the floor and point it forward, keeping the arm straight and parallel to the ground. Hold for five seconds, return to the starting position and alternate arms.



### [5] MEDICINE BALL RUSSIAN TWIST

Sitting on your glutes with your legs off the floor, use your shoulders to rotate a medicine ball from side to side for 20 reps.

# SWIMMING TECHNIQUE CONCEPTS:

BY ROD HAVRILUK

## THE VALUE OF HAND FORCE ANALYSIS: PART II—BACKSTROKE

Last month's article in this series (Part I—Butterfly) presented information about the value of using hand force analysis to improve specific technique elements in butterfly. This month's article includes more general information about force analysis with a backstroke example.

The importance of measuring the force variations within each stroke cycle was emphasized in a study on backstroke (Formosa, Mason & Burkett, 2009). The authors noted that the elite swimmers in their study each produced “distinctive propulsive force profiles” that identified technique limitations that could be further described with underwater video. They concluded that their study demonstrated the importance of force data synchronized with video. As displayed in the following example, the force data shows coach and swimmer exactly where to look on the video for technique limitations.

### ANALYSIS EXAMPLE

The backstroker in **Fig. 1** (below, on the left) increased her hand force on the pull phase. Her head, body and arm position at the pull-phase-to-push-phase transition (as the arm passes the shoulder) is almost as effective as the model (on the right). The upper arm is in line with the shoulders, and there is a 90-degree angle at the elbow. However, past this point in the stroke cycle, the force continues to increase for the model, but fails to increase for the swimmer.

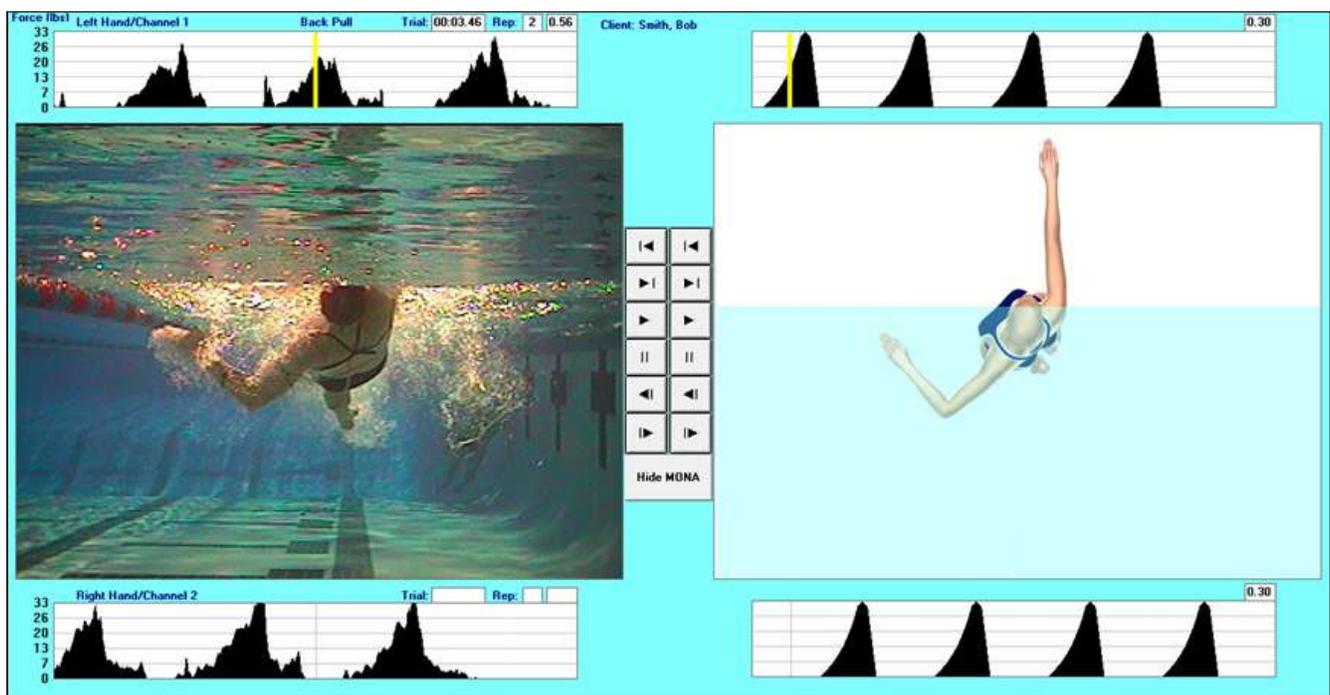
As the model in **Fig. 2** (on the right) pushes her hand back, her hand moves closer to the body into a stronger position. As the swimmer pushes her hand back, her hand stays farther away from the body in a weaker position. Consequently, the swimmer is unable to increase her force like the model.

Addressing this technique limitation is straightforward. As the swimmer pushes her hand back, she must change the angle at the shoulder and elbow to move the hand closer and closer to the body. If the arm moves into a stronger position, the swimmer will be able to increase force.

### IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE

A study on backstroke conducted by a coach exemplifies the magnitude of improvement that is possible in a short time, using feedback about hand force (Jefferies, Jefferies & Donohue, 2012). At the beginning of the week, each swimmer was pre-tested for his/her hand force. During the week, each swimmer had a 30-minute daily session in a flume with instruction and real-time feedback from video and force data.

At the end of the week, each swimmer was post-tested. The improvement in average force was 22%. The pre-test and post-test force curves for one swimmer are shown in **Fig. 3**. Her peak force on the post-test (right) is about double that measured in the pre-test



**FIG. 1** > The backstroker [on the left] increased her hand force throughout the pull phase, similar to the model [on the right]. [The vertical yellow lines on the force curves are synchronized with the video images.]

(left). Over this same week, her 100 meter backstroke time improved four seconds (5%).

The coach concluded that the combination of real-time video and force data helps coaches “see stroke limitations—such as subtle hand pitch changes—that would otherwise be extremely difficult to detect,” so swimmers can achieve “a more efficient stroke in a shorter time interval.”❖

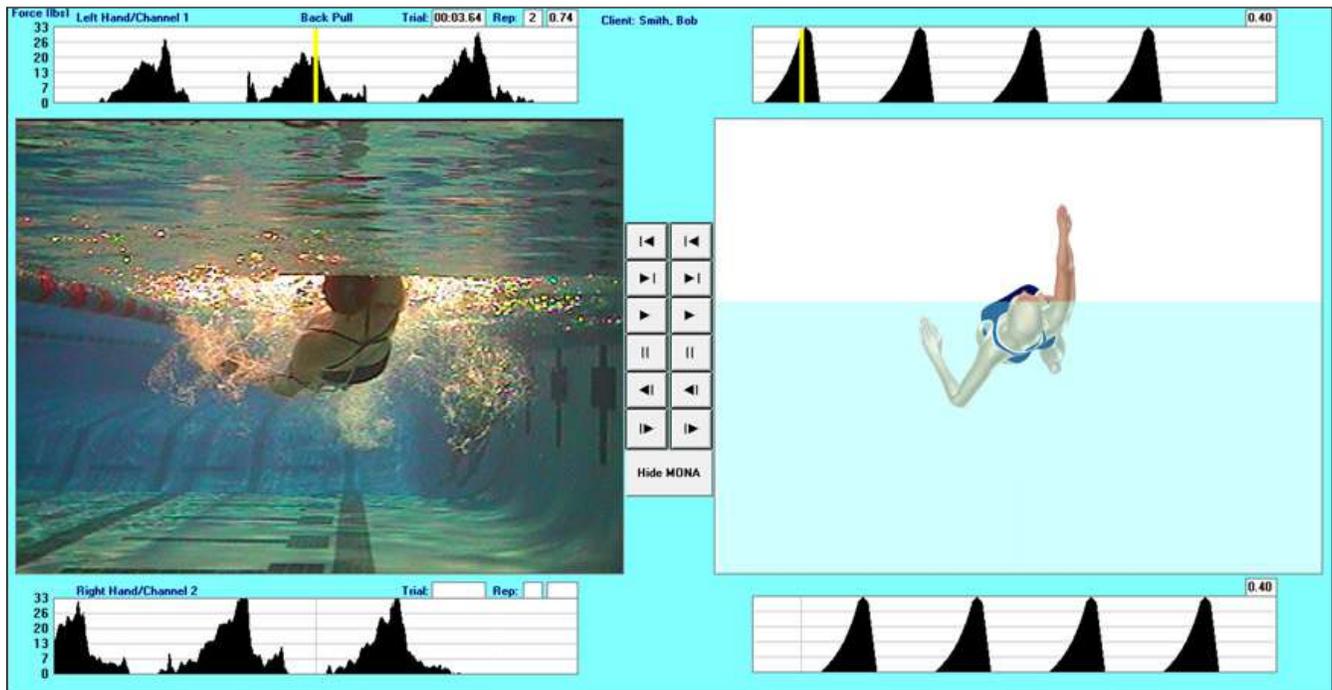
*Dr. Rod Havriluk captures and evaluates swimmers’ video and force data in technique-intensive camps and clinics worldwide. His new ebook, “Swimming Without Pain,” a comprehensive guide to preventing and rehabilitating shoulder injuries, is available at [swimmingtechnology.com](http://swimmingtechnology.com). Email Rod at [info@swimmingtechnology.com](mailto:info@swimmingtechnology.com). All scientific documentation relating to this article, including scientific principles, studies and research papers, can be provided upon demand.*

## SUMMARY

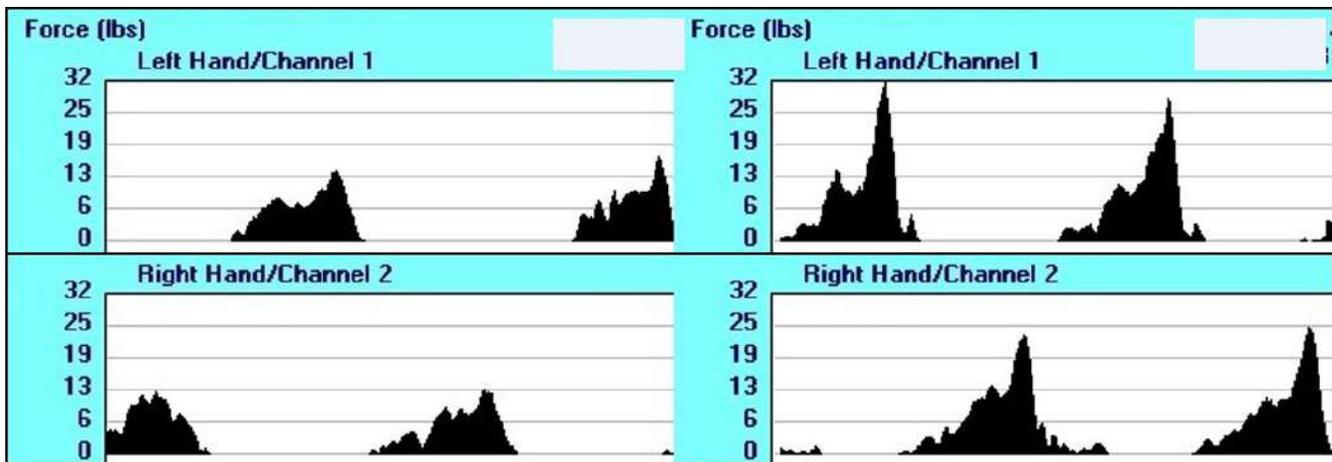
Synchronized video and hand force data is an essential tool for optimizing technique. A coach can use the force data to pinpoint limitations, refer to the corresponding video images to explain changes and monitor a swimmer’s progress in improving technique.



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**FIG. 2 >** As the swimmer [left] and model [right] push their hands back, the model’s hand force increases, but the swimmer’s hand force does not.



**FIG. 3 >** The graphs show two cycles of the backstroke hand force for one swimmer from the pre-test at the beginning of the week [left] and from the post-test at the end of the week [right].

# TOSSED INTO TURMOIL

The spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had a far-reaching impact not only on everyday life, but also on the sport of swimming across the globe.

BY DAN D'ADDONA

One by one, dreams were heartbreakingly dashed. For swimmers, it started with the NCAA Championships as college seniors saw their careers suddenly finished with an abrupt ending that left no conclusion.

But it also affected the dreams of every other athlete as nearly all sports throughout the world were postponed or canceled because of COVID-19 until even the Olympics were put on hold.

It was a devastating decision that also provided much relief to athletes who have not been able to train because of the coronavirus conditions. Pools and gyms around the world were closed for weeks—and many are still closed.

The International Olympic Committee rescheduled the Games for July 23-Aug. 8, 2021, citing the following considerations in making its decision:

- *To protect the health of the athletes and everyone involved;*
- *To support the containment of the COVID-19 virus;*
- *To safeguard the interests of the athletes and of Olympic sport;*
- *To keep in mind the global international sports calendar.*

CORONAVIRUS

There was also confirmation that athletes who had already qualified for Tokyo 2020 would retain their spots while quota places would be unaffected, with the capital of Japan remaining as host of the XXXII Olympiad.

## NCAAs CANCELED...

“Humankind currently finds itself in a dark tunnel,” said IOC President Thomas Bach. “These Olympic Games can be a light at the end of this tunnel.”

The world didn’t have that light when the outbreak first began to spread around the world at an alarming rate.

Sports, which is usually a form of distraction and a way to bring people together in times of crisis, was as paralyzed as the rest of the world. All of the major events in the United States were postponed as well as major sports circuits globally.

The first major blow to swimming came on March 12 when the NCAA announced the cancellation of this year’s NCAA Championships.

For Division I, numerous questions were left unanswered:

- *Would Stanford’s women have been able to shake the underdog*



“As an athlete who put her life ‘on hold’ to chase (the Olympic) dream, I feel slightly defeated. Regardless, I do not feel as though I can complain because I have my health, my family is healthy...and right now, that is the most important thing in my life. This has shaken up the world for everyone, and I just hope we can get it under control.” —Amy Bilquist (right, with Cal teammate Abbey Weitzel)

role and earn a four-peat?

- How exciting would the Cal-Texas men's showdown have been?
- How would seniors such as Abbey Weitzeil, Louise Hansson, Beata Nelson, Felix Aubock and Maxime Rooney finish their impressive careers?

Meanwhile, the Division II meet had already begun, but was halted before finals of the second day. Only one finals session and two prelims sessions had taken place.

"We had our bus turn around on our way to the finals session," said Coach Andy Boyce of Grand Valley State (Allendale, Mich.). "We had a meeting in the lobby of the hotel, got dinner, and headed home. It was a special testament to our seniors. They had great careers and were in tears."

### ...AND OLYMPICS POSTPONED

Soon after NAAs were canceled, discussion arose as to whether or not the Olympics might be canceled...or at the very least, postponed.

When the college season ended, at least the elite college swimmers had the hope of training for their country's respective Olympic Trials. But 12 days after they heard the news about NAAs, it became official on March 24: the Tokyo 2020 Olympics had been postponed.

That announcement changed everything.

College seniors—as well as the older veterans of the sport—were now faced with the question of whether or not to continue their swimming careers.

American national champion and Cal All-American Amy Bilquist shared, "I feel that deep down I knew this was coming. However, now that it is here, it feels so surreal. I am happy that the IOC took their time to gather the information they needed to make an educated decision. I am glad we are prioritizing the health of the greater masses while still trying to give athletes and spectators an Olympic Games, even if it is later.

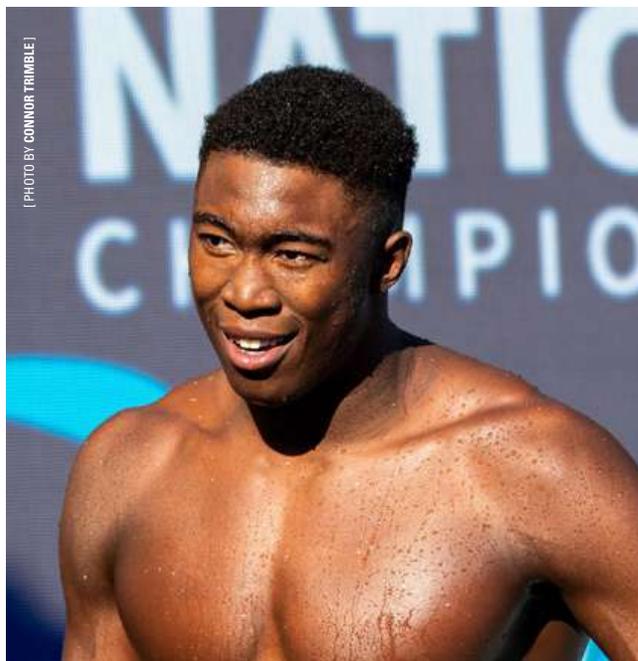
"However, as an athlete who put her life 'on hold' to chase this dream, I feel slightly defeated and like this is another road block. Regardless, I do not feel as though I can complain because I have my health, my family is healthy...and right now, that is the most important thing in my life.

"This has shaken up the world for everyone, and I just hope we can get it under control. Even though some may not be able to empathize or even sympathize with athletes' current situations, I think there needs to be some space given to the athletes so they can truly comprehend what is happening, re-evaluate their plans and focus on the positive of this being a postponement and not a cancellation."

Before the decision to postpone the Olympics became official, Canada told the IOC it would not send any athletes to Tokyo if the Games were held on the originally scheduled dates of July 24-Aug. 9, 2020. Other countries said the same thing. Many of the planned events leading up to the Olympic Games were being canceled, including Olympic Trials.

"Thinking about 2021, it is definitely crazy," 2016 Canadian Olympian Taylor Ruck told *Swimming World*, "but it is definitely the right decision. It lessens the mental stress being put on all of the athletes right now. No one could really train, so that would have impacted the Games.

"But it is still a hard decision. (In just a matter of weeks), it is insane how things have changed. You might see movies like this, but this is real life. I am just glad everyone is hanging in there and holding on to hope. That is really important."



"Part of what is celebrated (at the Olympic Games) alongside pushing the boundaries of athletic performance is fairness. If the Olympics were to continue as planned, fairness would be completely tossed out the door. Competition and whatever economic benefit produced by it should definitely step aside for the sake of the world's overall health." —Reece Whitley

### A TIME FOR HEALING

The sports world is holding onto that hope, but it hasn't been easy, especially with the impact of the virus having spread to all levels.

Students were sent home for online classes or were told their semesters had ended prematurely. Club teams couldn't practice. Places to train were closed. With no training or use of facilities for an extended period of time, clubs began losing money and were forced to make cuts. Some clubs might not even be able to recover.

The NCAA also took a huge hit monetarily without the TV revenue for basketball's March Madness and its championship events in all of the remaining winter and spring sports. Other sports—not to mention the global economy—were experiencing a similar fate.

Historically, though, sports have often been a collective way to help the world move on from devastation. The return of sports, especially the Olympics, will be monumental for a world trying to heal. The Tokyo Games should be a part of that healing.

"Part of what is celebrated (at the Olympic Games) alongside pushing the boundaries of athletic performance is fairness," says U.S. national champion and Cal sophomore Reece Whitley. "If the Olympics were to continue as planned, fairness would be completely tossed out the door. Competition and whatever economic benefit produced by it should definitely step aside for the sake of the world's overall health."

For the Olympics, that will now happen beginning July 23, 2021.

It seems so far away, but the one-year postponement will seem to arrive rapidly as the world slowly re-emerges from the cloud of coronavirus. ❖

>> Even if you counted the number of fingers pointed in the air by all these victorious Indian River State College swimmers after sweeping the women's and men's NJCAA Championships, it wouldn't add up to the combined 84 consecutive team titles the IRSC women's and men's teams have won—38 for the women and 46 for the men!

PHOTO BY MOLLY BARTELS / INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

# TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Everyone knows how important timing is—races can be won or lost by hundredths of a second. For swimmers competing at the NAIA and NJCAA Championships, the most important timing was measured in days. Both organizations were able to complete their championship meets just before other major sports championships were being canceled due to the threat of coronavirus.

BY DAVID RIEDER

## NAIA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Allan Jones Aquatic Center  
Knoxville, Tenn.  
March 4-7

### Women's Team Champions:

Savannah College of Art and Design

### Men's Team Champions:

Keiser University

The Savannah College of Art and Design won its third straight women's NAIA title, finishing as the all-around superior team in every facet of the meet by winning six out of 13 individual swimming events and all three free relays. SCAD scored 767.5 points to clobber the 624 of runner-up Keiser. University of the Cumberlands (386), Olivet Nazarene (286) and Life University (219) rounded out the top five.

Isabella Song was the top point scorer for SCAD, winning the 200 yard IM (2:02.75) and 200 breast (2:19.71) and taking second in the 100 breast (1:03.71). Teammates Anna Kate McGinty (50 free, 23.27), Spencer Sheridan (200 free, 1:50.79), Allie Rassenfoss (200 back, 2:03.25) and Lydia Reinhardt (200 fly, 2:03.47) also won individual titles.

In other individual events, University of the Cumberlands' Mendy De Rooi was the only three-event winner, sweeping the 500 free (4:58.51), 100 fly (53.99) and 100 free (50.45). Olivet Nazarene's Karla Islas won the 400 IM (4:26.80) and 1650 free

(17:19.24) to go along with a second-place finish in the 500 free (5:00.37), while St. Ambrose' Andrea Adam won both the 1- and 3-meter diving events.

Keiser's Ori Freibach won the 100 breast (1:03.24), and her teammate Emma Sophia Augustsson took first in the 100 back. Keiser also won both the 200 (1:43.06) and 400 (3:45.52) medley relays.

\* \* \*

In the men's meet, Keiser also won its third straight NAIA championship—in just its fourth year with a swim team. In a much closer finish, Keiser scored 743 points to beat out SCAD's 681, with Lindsey Wilson College (267), Midland University (255) and College of Idaho (237) completing the top five.

For Keiser, Marcel Nagy was the team's top performer, winning individual victories in the 50 free (20.06), 100 fly (48.09) and 100 free (44.75) and leading his teammates to victory in four relays: the 200 free (1:19.77), 400 medley (3:16.29), 200 medley (1:28.66) and 400 free (2:59.44). Keiser also had four other swimmers capture individual titles: Lucas Macek in the 200 IM (1:48.75), Pol Roch in the 400 IM (3:52.02), Jan Suchan in the 200 back (1:46.17) and Miles Kredich in the 200 fly (1:49.29).

SCAD's Joel Thatcher put together an impressive meet as he won both the 500 free (4:22.37) and 1650 free (15:29.63) and helped his team to a victory in the 800 free relay (6:33.05). SCAD teammate Gio Zachar won the 100 back (48.56), while Lindsey



[PHOTO BY BILL INGRAM, KEISER UNIVERSITY]

>> Marcel Nagy repeated as the men's NAIA Swimmer of the Year. The senior from Essen, Germany helped Keiser University win its third straight national title—in just its fourth year with a swim team—by claiming three individual victories and contributing to four winning relays.



[PHOTO BY UNIVERSITY OF THE CUMBERLANDS SPORTS INFORMATION]

>> For the second straight year, Cumberland's Mendy De Raai won the 100-500 free and 100 fly and was named the Female NAIA Swimmer of the Year. The junior swimmer from Lelystad, Netherlands also received the NAIA Swim of the Meet award for her 100 fly [53.99]—just as she did in 2019 [54.41].



[PHOTO BY MOLLY BARTELS, INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE]

>> There was a three-way tie for NJCAA Female Swimmer of the Year among [from left] Indian River's Emma Colvin, Savanna Best and Hannah Kiely. All three swimmers won four individual events.

Wilson College's Calvin Coetzee won the 200 free (1:37.00), West Virginia Tech's Paulo Dias Ignacio Jr. won the 100 breast (54.00) and Midland's Tyler Penney won the 200 breast (1:59.10). College of Idaho's Nic Carrier won both the 1- and 3-meter diving events.

**NJCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Anne Wilder Aquatic Complex  
Indian River State College  
Fort Pierce, Fla.  
March 4-7

**Women's and Men's Team Champions:**

Indian River State College

Another year, two more team titles for Indian River State College at the NJCAA Swimming and Diving Championships. The winning streaks for both Pioneer teams are legendary: now 38 years for the women's team and 46 years for the men. IRSC won the women's meet with 1,262 points, more than doubling any other team. Barton Community College finished second with 623, followed by Southwestern Oregon (545), Iowa Central (515) and South Georgia (493).

Indian River's women actually won every single event at the meet! Savanna Best took victories in the 50 breast (28.91), 400 IM (4:26.44), 100 breast (1:03.95) and 200 breast (2:17.39), while Hannah Kiely won the 200 IM (2:03.38), 50 back (26.12), 100 back (56.45) and 200 back (2:03.98). Emma Colvin also won four events, the 50 free (23.42), 100 fly (55.09), 100 IM (59.15) and 50 fly (24.85), and Victoria Ortiz won three, the 1000 (10:10.93), 200 (1:52.01) and 500 free (4:57.17).

Charlise Oberholzer won the 1650 free (17:05.76), Camryn Hudson won both the 200 fly (2:02.55) and 100 free (52.25), and Gabby Tolento won both the 1-meter and 3-meter diving events. Best, Oberholzer, Hudson, Ortiz, Kiely and Colvin combined to win all five relays.

\*\*\*

As for the men, Indian River won by merely 301 points, with 1,112.5. Barton finished second with 811.5, and the top five also included Iowa Central (797.5), Southwestern Oregon (582) and Monroe (224).

For Indian River, Jarryd Baxter captured victories in the 200 IM (1:48.65), 200 free (1:40.22) and 100 IM (49.94), and teammate Elias Contogonas swept the 1000 (9:27.22), 500 (4:32.59) and 1650 free (15:43.59). Jack Oliver won both the 100 (50.55) and 200 back (1:49.06), and Olle Williamson took first in both the 100 (54.31) and 200 breast (1:57.10). Also for IRSC, Aramis Rivera won the 400 IM (3:55.68), and Brennan Hammond won the 200 fly (1:47.82), and the team captured victories in the 800 free (6:48.06) and 400 medley relays (3:18.11).

Iowa Central's Billy Cruz Zuniga also had a monster meet, winning the 50 (19.57) and 100 free (43.71) as well as the 100 fly (47.44) and leading his team to victories in both free relays, the 200 (1:20.61) and 400 (3:01.65).

Elsewhere, Barton's Ryan Downing won the 50 breast (25.12), and teammate Aidan Gantenbein took first in the 50 back (23.17). The two led Barton to a win in the 200 medley relay (1:31.04). Southwest Oregon's James Camp won the 50 fly (21.87), and Corey Neas swept 1- and 3-meter diving. ❖



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# SILVER LINING COULD TURN TO GOLD

The Olympic postponement was hardly perceived as a positive, but it could lead to hope and opportunity for any men's or women's water polo team that aspires to Olympic competition—including the United States' national teams.

BY MICHAEL RANDAZZO

Now that new dates have been set for the Tokyo Games, the question becomes: Who will show up for the delayed Olympic party? The March pronouncement that the 2020 Olympics will take place in summer 2021 will definitely have its challenges. For starters, the task of scheduling that leads up to Tokyo 2021 is monumental.

The coronavirus outbreak has disrupted all national teams' calibrated preparation, and the final qualifiers for the men's and women's brackets have yet to be determined. Three spots remain unfilled for the men and two for the women.

There are myriad FINA polo events and professional play to be rescheduled when competition resumes. The LEN Champions League has suspended play until further notice, it's unlikely teams will get back in the water before July, and there's the question of when—and where—the Final Eight tournament, originally scheduled for June in Genoa, Italy, will occur.

And while the rescheduling assures the Olympics a coronavirus-proof date, there's the matter of the 2021 FINA World Aquatics Championships, currently planned for July 16-Aug. 1 in Fukuoka, Japan. The most important aquatics competition besides the Games—and a substantial source of funding for international federations—cannot be held simultaneously with the Olympics, slated for July 23-Aug. 8.

The question is: when will FINA Worlds take place, and how might that impact athletes' preparation? Already, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) has postponed its championship until 2022.

As of early April, "FINA is working with organizers of 2021 World Championships in Fukuoka to find the best solution to reschedule Championships, considering the interests of all stakeholders," explained Mark Koganov, vice chairman of FINA's Technical Water Polo Committee. "Very soon, we will have new dates for one of the biggest sport events outside of the Olympic Games."

Until that happens, this is a significant—and potentially disruptive—loose end.

## AGE WILL BE A FACTOR

Given that there's almost a year-and-a-half to prepare, scheduling is hardly the only worry for the top men's and women's



PHOTO BY MARCEL TER BALS, ORANGE PICTURES/COURTESY USA WATER POLO

"When the time comes to resume training, our new dream will entail being a small part of what we hope will be a historic event that brings the world together—in a display of peace, unity and compassion for humanity. The priority for all of us at this moment should simply be to make sure we continue to do our part to help fight this virus and support those who are so courageously on the front lines." —Adam Krikorian, USA women's head water polo coach

polo programs.

For a dominant Serbian men's squad seeking back-to-back Olympic gold, the biggest barrier to a repeat may be Father Time. With an average age of 30 at the 2020 European Championships—and more than half the team older than that—a delay of at least a year brings mainstays Filip Filipovic (33 years old) and Milan Aleksic (34) that much closer to retirement.

Croatia, silver medalists at the 2016 Rio Games, lost captain Sandro Sukno to retirement last year. Andro Buslje, the team's new captain, is 34, significantly past the squad's average age of 29. Croatia has yet to qualify, and Croat coach Ivica Tucak could be hard-pressed to keep his team competitive for what may be a final run to the Olympic medal round.

Hungary has twentysomethings Peter Manhercz and Gergo Zalanki, two of the better young players in the world. But Head Coach Tomas Marcz' leading players—Denes Varga (33) and Norbert Hosnyánszky (36)—are aging and no longer a lock for Tokyo.

The Spaniards, who have captured silver in the last three major championships—the 2018 and 2020 European Championships and last year's World Championships—appeared to be peaking at the

right moment. But with goalie Daniel López Pinedo turning 41 next year, and captain Felipe Perrone turning 35, Head Coach David Martin may struggle to coax them back to prime form.

### DELAY COULD BE AN ADVANTAGE FOR U.S.

“There will be advantage for some teams and disadvantage for others,” said Dragan Jovanovic, executive director for the World Water Polo Coaches Association. “But...the Olympics are not the same competition as any other. It’s special.... And I believe the U.S. has really good potential to perform, both men and women.”

Two years ago, McQuin Baron and Alex Roelse quit the U.S. men’s squad, causing Head Coach Dejan Udovicic to scramble to fill a roster that had already suffered the retirements of Olympians Tony Azevedo, Bret Bonnani, John Mann and Merrill Moses from his Rio squad.

Jovanovic, who has known Udovicic for decades through involvement with the Serbian national team, said, “The last six, seven years, pretty much whatever could, went wrong for the U.S.”

But the American coach believes his young team—average age 25—is resilient, even when there’s an unprecedented Olympic delay.

“Our team had already gotten closer after what happened in South Korea last summer,” Udovicic said, referencing a tragic accident at FINA Worlds last summer in Gwangju, South Korea, where members of the U.S. men’s and women’s teams sustained injuries. “We remain a close group through that time and through today’s news” of Olympic postponement.

With one of the world’s youngest rosters, Team USA now has an abundance of time to prepare for Tokyo. Hannes Daube (20), Alex Wolf (23), Luca Cupido (25) and Ben Hallock (23) expect to be that much better in 2021, and if Tyler Abramson grows into the lefty that the Americans have been missing, prospects for a first U.S. men’s medal since 2008 will improve greatly.

Given their success, the American women—two-time defending Olympic champions—are in an entirely different position from the men. Head Coach Adam Krikorian’s squad is both young and experienced—with an average age of 25 and as many as nine returning players from the 2016 Games. Captain Maggie Steffens and Melissa Seidemann will be looking for their third straight Olympic gold.

Of all the contenders to topple Krikorian’s squad, perhaps the Dutch, with emerging stars Maude Megens (24) and Iris Wolves (26) and proven scorer Sabrina van der Sloot, will develop enough over the next year to challenge an American squad that has lost just twice in the past two years (73-2). But first, The Netherlands has to qualify. Its last Olympics was in 2008—a gold medal-winning effort at the Beijing Games.

Like their men, the Spanish women have enjoyed success, capturing silver at the 2019 FINA Worlds and 2020 European Championships. Head Coach Miki Oka has built a squad, led by Roser Tarrago and Anni Espar, capable of beating any team in the world—except the Americans. With Aria and Makenzie Fischer, Rachel Fattal, Ashleigh Johnson, Kiley Neushul, Seidemann and Steffens, the U.S. remains by far the world’s best. They haven’t lost to Spain since 2013—a span of 17 matches.

### HOPE IN THE SEASON OF PLAGUE

Udovicic, currently the world’s senior water polo coach, having



[PHOTO BY MARCEL TER BALS. ORANGE PICTURES/COURTESY USA WATER POLO]

“We know there are things much bigger than sports in life right now. Health and safety must take priority. We look forward to the Olympic Games, whenever they take place. Our team will be ready.” —Dejan Udovicic, USA men’s head water polo coach

taken teams to three Olympics—and guaranteed a fourth, thanks to the U.S. qualification at the 2019 Pan Am Games—addressed the enormous health challenges the world faces.

“We know there are things much bigger than sports in life right now. Health and safety must take priority.”

And emphasizing what may be a rallying cry for a young American squad, Udovicic added, “We look forward to the Olympic Games, whenever they take place. Our team will be ready.”

His colleague on the women’s side was reflective in response to Bach’s announcement: “When the time comes to resume training, our new dream will entail being a small part of what we hope will be a historic event that brings the world together—in a display of peace, unity and compassion for humanity,” Krikorian said.

“The priority for all of us at this moment,” he added, “should simply be to make sure we continue to do our part to help fight this virus and support those who are so courageously on the front lines.” ❖

*Michael Randazzo is a free-lance contributor to Swimming World, focusing on water polo. Besides SW, he covers polo for other publications, including the Collegiate Water Polo Association, Skip Shot, The New York Times, Total Water Polo and Water Polo Planet. Randazzo would also like to thank Chip Brenner for his help with this story. Brenner is a freelance copy editor based in Brooklyn, N.Y.*



[PHOTO BY PETER HUBICKI]

# BEFORE THE BEEP

## WITH ASHLEY TWICHELL

BY SHOSHANNA RUTEMILLER

USA Swimming’s Ashley Twichell has been chasing the Olympic dream for over a decade. Last summer at the 2019 World Championships in Gwangju, South Korea, she finally earned her place on the Olympic team by finishing sixth overall in the 10-kilometer open water event. Twichell was over the moon about qualifying! Her family flew in to witness the big race and cheer her on, even though it was halfway across the world.

In the wake of her accomplishment, Twichell started ramping up her preparation—both mentally and physically—for competition on the world stage. And then the COVID-19 global pandemic struck, and the Tokyo 2020 Olympics were postponed more than a year to July 2021. Twichell and several of her teammates were at the Olympic Training Center when the news hit and were told that they all had to head home and cut their training short.

“Things started to evolve pretty quickly at the Olympic Training Center,” she shared. “The situation was changing day to day. When we learned the Olympics would be postponed, I was disappointed. I was looking forward to retiring at the end of the Olympics.”

Disappointment is a good word to describe the world’s feelings right now. However, Twichell chose not to wallow in her emotions, but instead to look at the extra year as a gift. She now has the opportunity to spend another year competing in the sport that she loves.

“It’s easy now to say, ‘Oh, there’s 16 months between now and the Olympics—I don’t have to sleep as much, and I can eat what I want,’” says Twichell. “But sleep really helps to regulate your mood, and maintaining a daily structure is so important.”

Currently, many Olympic qualifiers and hopefuls have lost access to the pools in which they train daily. Twichell admits that it’s easy to feel lost as an athlete and wonder about your purpose if you can’t train. Instead, many athletes are relying heavily on dryland training to keep active. Twichell herself has started using her Peloton bike’s virtual classes—really pushing herself because she doesn’t have to worry about being sore in the pool afterward!

Twichell’s current positive mental outlook comes down to years of practice and an evolving outlook on herself as a competitor. Having the ability to focus on the immediate and not worry about

the things she cannot control have not only helped her through this global pandemic, but helped her earn a spot representing Team USA at the 2021 Olympic Games. Read on to learn how Twichell excels at each stage of competition.

### HOTEL

“My routine the night before a race changed a lot over the course of my career,” says Twichell. “I have a different plan now compared to three, four, even eight years ago.” While swimming for Duke University (Class of 2011), Twichell had a bad habit of getting in her own head before big competitions. She would have a successful season, then fall flat at NCAA Championships. In a way, she focused all of her energy on the importance of the race instead of the pieces that went into making her race successful.

“Eventually, I talked to a sports psychologist who helped me realize I needed to treat my big competitions just like the small ones. I’m best when I’m relaxed, especially when I can physically be with my family. If they can’t be with me, I’m FaceTiming them.”

Everything seemed to play out perfectly for Twichell at the 2019 World Championships. Her husband and family were there to cheer her on, and she saw them the morning of the race. Twichell talks about how this helped her calm her nerves—that, and putting her iPhone away: social media is a no-no on race day.

“I used to tell myself, ‘OK, this (race) is really important. You have to do your best.’ In reality, I already know how important it is. I don’t need to say that. Now, I try to have fun with it—in both the pool and open water. I tell myself it’s all going to work out, especially when things can change so easily.”

### WARM-UP

Twichell’s 10K World Championship Olympic qualifier was an early 8 a.m. start. Unlike pool competitions, where swimmers are spoiled with a nicely heated 78-degree pool, open water competitions are cold. Because of that, Twichell doesn’t do a typical warm-up swim. Instead, she prepares mentally and physically the night before.

The morning of her qualifying race, Twichell got up, ate her breakfast—“I love eggs...if eggs are available, I’ll eat that and lots of carbs about two-and-a-half hours before the race”—and walked over to the venue.

Then comes the open water swimmer’s routine that’s reminiscent of going into battle:



>> Ashley Twichell [right]

- Pull your suit on (like a typical tech suit, but able to go all the way to the ankle);
- Put Vaseline under your shoulder straps and armpits to prevent chafing in salt water;
- Put on two swim caps and duct tape them to your forehead;
- Attach a tagging chip to each wrist and then duct tape those down.

As if getting prepared to go into the water wasn't enough, after all of that, you have to now swim 6.2 miles in rough water, jostling for position and taking elbows to the face!

### READY ROOM

For Twichell, the ready room is all about staying relaxed. "I'll try to sit near people I know to stay in a relaxed state. It's the same for me whether it's a pool competition or open water. I find someone to chat with and keep things light."

While she admits that sometimes she brings music with her to the ready room, she rarely ends up listening to it—especially if she's preparing for a 10K! "Honestly, I'm worried about having whatever last song I listened to stuck in my head for the next two hours."

### BEHIND THE BLOCKS

Twichell's behind-the-blocks self-talk has evolved considerably over the years. In her college days, she would easily work herself up over the importance of the race. Today, Twichell's philosophy is to have fun with the race and trust her preparation.

"I used to tell myself, 'OK, this is really important, you have to do your best.' In reality, I already know how important it is. I don't need to say that. Now, I try to have fun with it—in both the pool and open water.

I tell myself it's all going to work out, especially when things can change so easily."

That always-looking-forward attitude has helped Twichell stay focused in more than just swimming competitions. Yes, Twichell overcame heartbreak at narrowly missing the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, but more than that, her attitude is helping her stay focused in a challenging time for athletes all over the world.

"Be kind to yourself," says Twichell. "You'll have some good and some not-so-good days. There will be tough workouts, tough meets and tough years, but be kind to yourself.

"One of the hardest things is not knowing the end date (of the impact of COVID-19). It would be a lot easier to get through it with an end date. But we just have to take it day by day. What we do have is time on our side." ❖

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# IMPACTING LIVES THROUGH COACHING

DAVE DURDEN, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND U.S. NATIONAL TEAM COACH, SIMPLY REFERS TO HIMSELF AS A SWIM COACH. BUT HE'S ALSO A LEADER, AN EXPERT AT MAXIMIZING PERFORMANCE, REMOVING DOUBT, INSTILLING CONFIDENCE AND NAVIGATING YOUNG MEN THROUGH DEMANDING SITUATIONS.

BY DAVID RIEDER

[PHOTO BY CHUCKARELEI STUDIO/PROVIDED BY CAL COMMUNICATIONS]

The entire four-day event was a Golden Bear showcase, a dominant performance as California won the 2019 NCAA men's swimming and diving championship, the program's fourth team title in nine years, but its first since 2014. The all-around dominant effort included a virtuoso performance from senior Andrew Seliskar, who fulfilled years of potential to win three national titles, the first of his career, and legions of Cal fans and alumni roared their approval of the Bears' swims session after session.

But the enduring image of the meet came in a typically quiet moment, when Cal sophomore Daniel Carr had an opportunity to reswim the 100 back. He swam by himself in lane one, directly in front of his team cheering section, and he threw down a lifetime best by more than a half second to claim the fourth seed overall for the final.

As Cal men's coach Dave Durden watched Carr touch the wall, he screamed in excitement—and lost his footing on the slippery pool deck. Durden ended up on his knees, still celebrating the performance as if nothing had gone wrong. But other than that one very literal slip-up, the Golden Bears were impeccable.

That's the Cal *modus operandi*: always perform at or above full strength at the NCAA Championships. Durden has been at Cal since the 2007-08 season, and in every year after his first two, Cal has finished first or second in the national rankings. Ten years straight. That is, until 2020, when circumstances derailed the Bears' opportunity to defend that championship.

## MAINTAINING PERSPECTIVE

The COVID-19 pandemic that has crippled life throughout the United States and the entire world claimed the NCAA Swimming Championships as an early casualty. When the news of the cancellation broke, about two weeks before the meet, Durden spoke to his team about their "social and moral responsibilities" to the world, which would require putting their athletic responsibilities on hold.

"Our top 12 guys, we felt, were as good or better than anyone else in the country, and we felt good about going into NCAAs and

showing that," Durden said. "I think like any 18-to-22-year-old athlete, they're going to take that moment as a disappointment, but they're able to redirect very quickly. We're a pretty nimble group. We're a pretty active group. We can handle some adaptation pretty quickly, and we're ready to adapt to the next thing."

So instead of sulking around and feeling sorry for themselves, the Cal team maintained perspective on the situation as a whole. Sure, they had every right to be disappointed to lose out on NCAAs, but they appreciated the process that had put them in position to be successful and moved on. That's a maturity so valuable in swimming, a sport that requires grueling dedication, but even more patience.

"That's more a characteristic of the campus than it is our team particularly, and I think we try to embody that," he said. "There's a level that they have of calmness in these situations as a group or as individuals or as a team that we're going to work through it and figure it out."

Great teams succeed and excel and win, and they also handle difficult situations with poise and aplomb. But all teams take on the identity of their leader. How the Cal men's team handled losing the opportunity to defend their NCAA championship tells us all we need to know about Durden, perhaps more than the 10 consecutive top-two NCAA finishes of the last 10 Marches. Becoming one of the country's premier swim coaches has involved much more than coaxing lifetime bests out of college-aged men.

## A SWIM COACH

Ask for a short list of the top coaches in the United States or even the world, and Durden is a sure bet to make the cut. Cal-trained athletes coming up big at the most significant meets has become the norm, even internationally. Think Ryan Murphy, who swept the backstroke events at the 2016 Olympics, or Nathan Adrian, who has swum with Durden since 2008 and is one of the premier sprinters in American history. U.S. national teams team with swimmers Durden has coached, and those Cal swimmers share some key traits: remarkably similar butterfly technique, an acute confidence and full

trust in Durden.

Durden speaks often about building relationships with his swimmers and growing those relationships over the course of their college careers and beyond as they transition into adult life or remain at Cal as professional athletes. But in his own eyes, he's not first and foremost a mentor or a teacher or anything of that sort.

"I'm a swim coach. That's the thing I identify with," he said. "That may encapsulate teacher, mentor, etc., but, man, I'm a swim coach. My knowledge base is surrounded in this sport.... I spend a lot of time coaching swimming, and that's what I know, and that's what I want to know. That's what I want to do. That's what I want to do really well."

As with most coaches, Durden has training tactics that he regularly employs during pool time, including sets and drills that he likes, but he often thinks outside the box for skills that might give his athletes an edge. For instance, Durden previously enlisted sports psychologist Ken Ravizza to speak with his team several times a year, and Durden and his swimmers named Ravizza as a key component of the program's success.

Ravizza, who worked with athletes across several different sports before he died in 2018, brought a different perspective to the pool deck. Durden wanted his swimmers to learn the same skills that basketball players use when they miss a free throw and have to instantly shake it off and get ready for the next play—except because swimming races happen so quickly, swimmers would have

to apply that mindset ahead of time. Ravizza helped these swimmers build their edge and develop resiliency.

"It was interesting to have those conversations with him," Durden said. "It just really helped me provide a proper framework in communicating to our guys either individually or as a group."

Durden coaches each individual a bit differently, based on the relationship with a particular athlete and their shared experiences as a coach-swimmer duo. When a swimmer is struggling, there's no one-size-fits-all strategy for helping them rebound. Maybe it's working to build their confidence or maybe it's honing in on a particular skill.

The one simple piece is the common ambition of all swimmers, from the 18-year-olds arriving at Berkeley's campus each September to the 31-year-old sprinter aiming for his fourth Olympics.

"It's wanting to swim a best time," he said. "It's something that they've done hundreds of times. There's comfort and confidence that you can take."

That's why Durden coaches: to help athletes push the right buttons to achieve speed they never have touched and, thus, reach the intimately familiar and welcoming feeling of a lifetime best—also, of course, because of the lives he gets to impact along the way.

"Working with these guys in this particular age group, it's just an absolute blast," he said. "I enjoy the conversations I have with our guys when they're 18 as freshmen. I enjoy it when they're 24, 25, 26, and they're out in the working world, and they come back to campus. I just enjoy what I'm doing so much, and it's because of the people that are in it."

Continued on 28 >



**"I'M A SWIM COACH. THAT'S THE THING I IDENTIFY WITH. THAT MAY ENCAPSULATE TEACHER, MENTOR, ETC., BUT, MAN, I'M A SWIM COACH. MY KNOWLEDGE BASE IS SURROUNDED IN THIS SPORT.... I SPEND A LOT OF TIME COACHING SWIMMING, AND THAT'S WHAT I KNOW, AND THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW. THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO. THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO REALLY WELL."**

PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK



>> That's why Durden coaches: to help athletes push the right buttons to achieve speed they never have touched and, thus, reach the intimately familiar and welcoming feeling of a lifetime best—also, of course, because of the lives he gets to impact along the way. [Pictured: Dave Durden, left, receiving the 2019 NCAA Coach of the Year trophy—the fifth time he's won the award since 2010]

## READY FOR THE (NEW) CHALLENGE

The first time Dave Durden helmed a senior U.S. national team as men's head coach, the results were far from exceptional. The American men won just two gold medals at the 2015 World Championships in Kazan. Two years later, Durden had again been named head coach for the 2017 World Championships, and he joked, "Well in 2015, we had a terrible head coach for the men... screwed up every relay. He's going to get that right in 2017."

Indeed, those Budapest Worlds turned out to be a dominant performance for the Americans, who won 18 gold medals and 38 medals overall in the pool. After that all-around drubbing of the rest of the world and given their swimmers' continued excellent performances, it was a *fait accompli* in December 2018 when Durden and Greg Meehan were named head coaches for the U.S. men and women, respectively, for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

Well, make that 2021.

With the Olympics postponed, Durden said, "I'm going to be the longest named Olympic coach in the history of our sport today. I probably could be wrong with that, but I'm going to be coming up on the better part of three years by the time we get to August 2021."

When considering his Olympic appointment, Durden reflected to his first memory of watching U.S. swimmers in the Olympics, back during the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, when he first became a fan of American swimming. The newest challenge to the Olympic

appointment is one he never envisioned even a few months earlier, before the COVID-19 crisis, of having to put preparations for 2020 on hold and re-channel that energy for 2021. But Durden's voice still dripped with passion for the task ahead.

"It's a challenge, and I understand that like any professional challenge, you're going to come out of that better. It may not be fun at the time," he said. "Still, I am as invigorated by that challenge now as I was 12 months ago. I'm excited for this, I'm ready for this, but I also understand that it's a challenge. Both Greg and I are going to rely upon our country, the numerous great coaches that we have in this country, to prepare their athletes, to get them ready to go, to allow them to perform (at Trials) in Omaha and allow them to perform in Tokyo."

It won't be until late June 2021, when the Olympic team is finally assembled, that Durden will take on his responsibilities in full. That's when he will have to take a group of men from across the country—many of them his own swimmers, but many from other coaches who have beaten Cal swimmers—and galvanize them into a team. He will have to push the right buttons, similar to his day job at Cal, but in a more condensed period, in hopes of upholding the American tradition of swimming excellence at the Olympic Games.

And Durden will have the group of U.S. swimmers prepared and ready to compete. ❖

# TAKEOFF TO TOKYO



[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

## A FRIENDLY RIVALRY FOR A DYNAMITE DUO

During the Olympic campaign of 2000, Jenny Thompson and Dara Torres—complete opposites out of the pool, but with few differences as competitors—were engaged in a friendly, but not-so-easy rivalry—one that brought out the best in both swimmers.

BY JOHN LOHN

Like many rivalry stories, the tale of Jenny Thompson and Dara Torres is about opposites. Thompson was raised by a single mom where financial struggles were common. Torres was raised in Beverly Hills, money never an issue. Thompson is quiet and reserved, preferring to go unnoticed. Torres seeks out the spotlight, never one to pass up the chance to promote her brand. Thompson went into the medical profession after her swimming days. Torres' post-pool

endeavors included broadcasting and modeling.

But in the water, there were few differences. They both moved through the water with world-class speed. They raced the same events. They possessed high-intensity levels and aimed for lofty goals. And in the Olympic campaign of 2000, Thompson and Torres duelled in spectacular fashion—in and out of the water—and provided the sport with an all-time rivalry.

### TORRES, A TEENAGE SENSATION

Torres fits the mold of one of those teenage sensations who frequently emerge in the swimming world. As a 14-year-old on April 9, 1982, Torres announced her presence in a major way by winning the national title in the 50 yard freestyle, a crown that required her to defeat Olympian Jill Sterkel. In a little more than 20 seconds, Torres made it known she would be a factor in the sprints. What couldn't be predicted was the longevity she would eventually display.

Behind an equally efficient and powerful stroke, Torres punched her first Olympic ticket to a home Olympiad in Los Angeles in 1984. At those Games, where she was surrounded by veterans such as Mary T. Meagher, Rowdy Gaines and Tracy Caulkins, Torres garnered the first Olympic medal of her career, as the United States prevailed in the 400 meter freestyle relay.

Over the next four years, the success continued for Torres, who became an NCAA and Southeastern Conference champion for the University of Florida and earned her second Olympic nod for the 1988 Games in Seoul. At those Games, Torres won silver and bronze medals in relay action and finished seventh in the 100 free.

[ PHOTO BY DAN HELMS ]



### THE EMERGENCE OF THOMPSON

Just after Seoul, Thompson started to emerge as a future hope for the United States, an identity claimed through three medals at the 1989 edition of the Pan Pacific Championships. In Tokyo, Thompson won gold in the 50 freestyle and 400 freestyle relay, and took silver in the 100 freestyle to strengthen the American sprinting contingent.

It wasn't until 1992, however, that Thompson and Torres competed at the same Olympics, albeit without crossing paths as competitors. While Thompson won the silver medal in the 100 free and was fifth in the 50, she joined Torres on the victorious 400 freestyle relay. But with Thompson recognized as one of the world's rising stars as a 19-year-old, Torres was ready to retire at the age of 25, and any potential rivalry was impossible to foresee.

With Torres gone and Thompson recovered from nagging injuries that hampered her 1994 season, she again put her name on the global radar in 1995 by medaling in three Pan Pacs events, including a gold in the 100 free.

On the road to her second Olympic Games, Thompson appeared poised to strike in Atlanta: "I'm pleased with how everything went," Thompson said at the time. "I think this was a good stepping stone toward the Olympics."

The 1996 Olympic Trials were supposed to be a formality for Thompson. Entered in four events, she was expected to hop into the pool, take care of business and look ahead to the Games in Atlanta, where she could claim a fistful of medals. Instead, there was no way to describe Thompson's performance in Indianapolis other than with one of the most-hated words in sports: "choke." The pressure got to Thompson, and when she struggled early on, a snowball of negativity became an avalanche of doubt.

Thompson entered her first event, the 100 free, as the American record holder and heavy favorite to win. But a third-place finish left Thompson with only relay duty in Atlanta and, more damning, damaged her psyche. She followed with a seventh-place finish in the 200 free and a fourth-place effort in the 100 butterfly, and by the time the 50 free arrived as her last event, Thompson was done. Her third-place finish in that event was, simply, a last kick to the gut.

"People automatically assumed I would make the Olympic team," Thompson recalled. "I was a basket case. At those Trials, my mind was all over the place. Maybe I wanted something so bad, I lost my focus."

Although Thompson qualified for the Atlanta Games in the 400 free relay, the



[ PHOTO BY TIM MORSE PHOTOGRAPHY ]

>> Torres (left, 1982 nationals in Gainesville) won her first U.S. title as a 14-year-old, upsetting Olympian Jill Sterkel in the 50 yard free. Thompson (right) made her first Olympic team in 1992 at the age of 19, taking silver in the 100 free and joining Torres on the victorious 400 free relay (pictured in 1992 with her club coach, Mike Parratto, Seacoast Swimming, Dover, N.H.)

coaching staff also used her on the 400 medley relay and 800 free relay, allowing Thompson to win three gold medals. More, she served as a mentor to the younger athletes on the Team USA roster, imparting her wisdom from previous international meets.

### REBOUNDING FROM DISAPPOINTMENT

By rallying from a disastrous Olympic Trials to perform admirably at the Olympic Games revealed a toughness in Thompson that hadn't been seen before. Her story was one of perseverance and making the best of a situation—and doing so in a fish bowl. Not surprising, Thompson's tale was a major storyline of that summer.

"I've been proud of her in a lot of things, but the way she handled the disappointment of how she finished at the Olympic Trials and the way she prepared for the Games, I think has taken an enormous amount of character," said her coach, Richard Quick.

"I really admire her because she hasn't looked at the short side of things. She's looked at the long side. It's a tremendous honor to be on the Olympic team. It's a tremendous honor to be on two Olympic teams. This is her second one. It carries a responsibility with it that Jenny recognizes. And she's accepted that responsibility.

"She knows the best way to prepare is to race all these races as if she were swimming all her events. Instead of feeling sorry for herself,

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[ PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK ]



>> Not only is Dara Torres the first swimmer to represent the United States in five Olympic Games [1984, 1988, 1992, 2000 and 2008], but she also became the oldest swimmer in history to medal at the Olympics at the age of 41. Her career total of 12 medals is tied with Jenny Thompson, Ryan Lochte and Natalie Coughlin as the second-most decorated swimmers in Olympic history—behind Michael Phelps with 28. (Pictured at 2008 Olympics)

she has been ready to do anything she can for the U.S. as a relay member.”

The disappointment of 1996 did not linger with Thompson, whose next three years were nothing short of remarkable. Between the 1997 and 1999 Pan Pacific Championships, Thompson totaled 12 medals, 11 of which were gold. At the 1999 version of the event in Sydney, where she won three solo golds and six overall titles, Thompson took down Mary T. Meagher’s 18-year-old world record in the 100 butterfly.

In between Pan Pacs, at the 1998 World Championships, Thompson was the dominant athlete. In addition to claiming World titles in the 100 free and 100 fly, Thompson powered a pair of American relays to gold medals, and helped another relay to silver. The three years that followed her 1996 struggles clearly proved she had moved forward.

“It was probably the worst meet of my life,” Thompson said of the 1996 Olympic Trials. “I definitely would not be here today if I’d had the dream Olympics I wanted to have in Atlanta.”

## THE START OF A RIVALRY

As Thompson roared into the Olympic campaign with momentum

from Pan Pacs, Torres embarked on her first comeback, putting an end to a seven-year absence from the sport. During her hiatus, Torres was not out of the spotlight, having done broadcasting work for several stations and appearing in commercials for the Tae Bo fitness program.

When Torres announced her comeback and reached out to Quick to seek his guidance on the road to Sydney, Thompson welcomed the opportunity to train with another world-class sprinter. The initial belief was that Thompson and Torres would push each other during practice and reap the benefits at the 2000 Olympic Games. It was a setup that worked at the Phoenix Swim Club, where Gary Hall Jr. and Anthony Ervin trained together under the watch of Mike Bottom.

But not long after they began sharing the same water, it was clear Thompson and Torres needed to be separated. The practices became too intense and instead of each athlete focusing on fine-tuning their strokes and meeting Quick’s expectations, Thompson and Torres were more concerned with beating one another. Consequently, Quick split them up, opting to train Torres at another time.

“If you are training for the same event, every day, twice a day, both going after the same thing and only one is going to get there, it can be very intense,” Torres said. “We’re friends. We’re not like enemies. I just think, in a way, it’s better to keep us apart so there wouldn’t be as much intensity in the workouts.”

The separation of Thompson and Torres added to the hype of the Olympic Trials, as they were scheduled to clash in three events: the 50 freestyle, 100 freestyle and 100 butterfly. Journalists were eager to tell the tale of two women, opposites in personality, who couldn’t co-exist in the same pool. The rivalry made for good copy.

For his part, Quick didn’t try to sugarcoat the tension that built when they trained together. He was open and honest about the situation, and to his credit, Quick did a fine job of preparing both women to excel at the Olympic Trials.

“Every day in practice was like an Olympic final. I had to train them separately,” Quick said. “I just made the decision as a coach to have them train at different times. There was a kind of chemistry situation that needed to be addressed. They deserved individual attention, and I wanted to give it to them. They deserved it, and they somewhat demanded it. When dealing with athletes who compete in the same events, that’s not so unusual.”

Once the Olympic Trials rolled around, Thompson and Torres engaged in their expected showdown, with Thompson coming out on top in the 100 free and 100 fly. Torres, meanwhile, finished first in the 50 free. Although they were foes chasing the same hardware in Sydney, Thompson and Torres were teammates again, as was the case at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

In Sydney, Thompson and Torres partnered toward a pair of gold medals, as they made up half of the United States’ 400 freestyle relay and 400 medley relay. Torres got the best of Thompson in the 100 butterfly, winning bronze while her rival was fifth, and also took bronze in the 50 freestyle. But it is what transpired in the 100 freestyle that is only believable because it is logged in the history books.

Placing behind the Netherlands’ Inge de Bruijn and Sweden’s Therese Alshammar in the 100 free, Torres and Thompson tied for the bronze medal, thanks to matching times of 54.63. It was a fitting outcome and one that Torres called ironic based on the leadup to Sydney.

“There are three (things) to describe why I am where I am right now: hard work, dedication and sacrifice,” Torres said. “I feel I’ve done everything I possibly can the right way to get where I am. I know it seems a little amazing because I’m 33, and I was out seven years. But for some reason, this was supposed to happen, and I’m just enjoying the ride.”

## SEPARATE PATHS TO THE END OF TWO BRILLIANT CAREERS

Following the 2000 Games, Torres opted for her second retirement while Thompson began her medical school studies at Columbia University. After a year, Thompson returned to the pool and put together superb performances at the 2002 Pan Pacific Championships and 2003 World Championships. Thompson won the 50 free at Pan Pacs to go with bronze medals in the 100 free and 100 fly, and followed a year later by winning five medals at the World Champs, including gold in the 100 fly.

It was a perfect setup to Thompson's final Olympics, the 2004 Games in Athens. At 31 years old, she was seventh in the 50 free and fifth in the 100 fly. Yet, she added the final two Olympic medals of her career as the United States won silver in the 400 free relay and 400 medley relay. Afterward, it was back to medical school, with the knowledge she had finished her career on her terms.

"What keeps me going is finding out how far I can push myself," she said. "How fast can I be? How long can I stay on top? That striving for excellence, that feeling of knowing you have trained till you don't have one drop of energy left—that's what keeps me happy."

The retirement of Thompson figured to put an end to the days of America's T 'n' T tandem, until Torres made a second—and improbable comeback—in 2007. Upon returning for a second time, Torres didn't waste time emphasizing the seriousness of her comeback. She won national titles in the 50 and 100 free in 2007, then followed a year later—as a 41-year-old—with berths to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing in both sprint freestyle events, an American record defining her win in the 50 free.

At the 2008 Games, Torres captured three silver medals, two of them earned in a 35-minute span on the final night of action. A silver already claimed in the 400 freestyle relay from earlier in the meet, Torres was the runner-up in the 50 free and as a member of the 400 medley relay. Her second-place finish in the 50 was by the slimmest of margins, as Germany's Britta Steffen beat Torres, 24.06-24.07, a poor finish by Torres denying her the first solo gold of her



(PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK)

>> At 31 years old, Jenny Thompson competed in her final Olympics, the 2004 Games in Athens. She won two silver medals, as the United States finished second in the 400 medley and 400 freestyle relays. Afterward, it was back to medical school, with the knowledge she had finished her career on her terms. [Pictured at 2016 Olympic Trials]

Olympic career.

At 41, Torres became the oldest swimmer in history to medal at the Olympics, and by raising her career total to 12 medals, she tied Thompson as the second-most decorated swimmer in Olympic history—behind Michael Phelps. (Since then, Natalie Coughlin and Ryan Lochte have also won 12 medals.)

Torres also became an inspiration to women around the world, proving that age does not have to be a hindrance.

"If it helps anyone else out there who is in their middle-aged years and they put off something they thought they couldn't do because they were too old or maybe thought that because they have children they can't balance what they want to do and be a parent, then I'm absolutely thrilled," she said.

The first five-time Olympian for USA Swimming, Torres made another run at an

Olympic bid in 2012, but finished fourth in the 50 freestyle at 45 years old. The sheer improbability of what Torres accomplished has been appreciated in many circles, but has been questioned in others. Despite offering to be additionally tested, Torres was accused of benefiting from performance-enhancing drugs.

"It's too bad," Torres said of the doping speculation. "Why do people have to emphasize drugs because someone does something really fast? I don't have words to describe it. It infuriates me. People think that because drugs are used so much in sport. Everyone has a conscience. For me, I know I've done everything I can do to get where I am the right way."

The shortcoming shared by the Hall of Fame inductees is the lack of an individual gold medal on either woman's ledger. But what Thompson and Torres achieved over a combined nine Olympiads outweighs the missing achievement. More, they gave the sport—and each other—something to follow in the Olympic campaign of 2000.

"We're both very competitive," Thompson said at the height of the rivalry. "We're friendly when it comes down to it, but it hasn't always been easy. We make the best of it. The rivalry definitely has pushed me to be better. It put me out of my comfort zone and made me have to step it up." ❖

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# A DUKE, A MERMAID, A WAR AND THE FLU

BY BRUCE WIGO | PHOTOS BY INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING HALL OF FAME

COVID-19 isn't the first pandemic disease to have brought the world of competitive swimming to a halt, and the 2020 Olympic Games are not the first to be postponed or canceled. This is the story of the years between 1914 and 1918, when the world was suddenly and unexpectedly turned upside down by events not so different from what our sport is experiencing today. (Pictured: 1916 Olympic Swimming Stadium, Berlin)



On the 28th of June 1914, Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip assassinated Austria's heir to the crown, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophia, in Sarajevo. Back then, the world was just as unsuspecting and as unprepared for war as the world has been surprised and unprepared for the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

## EAGER ANTICIPATION FOR 1916 GAMES IN BERLIN

Two years earlier, the "Sunshine Olympics," as the 1912 Stockholm Games were known, had been a great success, and the world of amateur sports looked anxiously forward to the VI Olympiad in Berlin...with good reason.

Already by the summer of 1913, all of Berlin's Olympic venues had been completed and the Olympic stadium consecrated. It was a spectacular improvement over the stadium in Stockholm. The magnificent swimming tank, built within the stadium on the outside of the track oval, measured 100 meters long by 25 meters wide, with a permanent diving tower at one end and seating for nearly 4,000 spectators. It promised to be a spectacular showcase for the aquatic sports, and Germany wanted their athletes to stand atop the podium in all events.

At the opening of the *Deutsches Stadion*, Kaiser Wilhelm II announced a government subsidy for the preparation and support of his country's Olympic athletes. Hearing this challenge to American athletic supremacy, James E. Sullivan, America's czar of amateur sports, proposed raising the annual membership dues of the Amateur Athletic Union from 25 cents to 50 cents. With 18,000 registered athletes, this would raise more than \$4,500 annually for the Olympic fund.

"I do not believe that we should be forced to beg for money to send teams abroad to win the highest athletic honors in the world," said Sullivan. "This increase would amount to a considerable sum every four years, and with revenue from our tryout games, we would not be compelled to ask the public to subscribe."

## AMERICAN WOMEN DENIED CHANCE TO COMPETE

No group of athletes looked more forward to the Berlin Games than America's women swimmers. At the Games in Stockholm, three women's swimming events had been added to the Olympic program at the 11th hour: 100 and 300 meter freestyle and a 4 x 100 freestyle relay. But the U.S. sent no women because the male-controlled AAU did not recognize any women's sports.

When Sullivan arrived at the International Olympic Congress in Lyons, France two weeks before the Archduke's assassination, he said it was with "a mandate from the AAU to oppose the eligibility of women swimmers." But according to several AAU members, this was something of his own making: "Jim took the snuff and his AAU did the sneezing." Before the vote, they said, Sullivan expressed himself as being "forcibly" opposed to women's swimming meets on account of "improper and immodest attire," and the vote went accordingly.

While Turkey, Japan, France and Italy supported Sullivan's misogynistic objection, the other 28 progressive members of the IOC supported the German proposal. Then, when Sullivan died unexpectedly in September of 1914, it looked certain that the U.S. would send women to compete at the Olympics for the first time.

At first, the athletic world hoped that the War would end quickly, and the Germans were insistent that the Games would go on as scheduled. It would be up to each nation to decide whether they

wanted to send athletes or not. There was talk of moving the Games to Switzerland or the USA, but in a "history-almost-repeats-itself" scenario of today, the IOC delayed making any decision until April 11, 1916. It was just three months before the Games were scheduled to begin that the IOC canceled the Games and announced that no further action would be taken until the War ended.

While the cancellation of the Games dealt a blow to all swimmers, it was the women swimmers who suffered most. Most of the best American male swimmers



>> Harold "Stubby" Kruger (far left), Clarence Lane (second from right) and Duke Kahanamoku (far right) set out on a six-month-long exhibition tour of the mainland in 1918, organized by the Red Cross, to raise money for the War effort. Here, in Portland, Ore., the famous Hawaiians make it a point to buy a few War Savings Stamps, as they did in each town on their record-breaking tour.



>> Olga Dorfner, the fastest woman freestyle swimmer in the world in 1916, would lose her Olympic dream not only to the War, but to the Spanish flu. Back then, she won the first-ever, AAU-sanctioned U.S. national championship ever awarded to a female athlete in any sport. The prize for winning—a vase with Olga’s picture—stands on display today in the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

of 1916, including Harry Hebner, Michael McDermott, Perry MacGillivray and the most famous swimmer in the world, Duke Kahanamoku, had experienced the Olympic Games in Stockholm—and the up and comers would have another shot in 1920.

### THE PHILADELPHIA MERMAID

But the fastest woman freestyle swimmer in the world in 1916 would lose her Olympic dream not only to the War, but to the Spanish flu, also known as the 1918 flu pandemic. Her name was Olga Dorfner, “the Philadelphia Mermaid,” and in 1916, she won the first-ever, AAU-sanctioned U.S. national championship ever awarded to a female athlete in any sport.

The prize for winning stands on display today in the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Fort Lauderdale. A few years back, an appraiser from the Smithsonian called it the most valuable object in the ISHOF museum. “There are a lot of Olympic medals, but only one Olga Dorfner Vase,” he said.

After dominating distances from 50 yards to 200 meters for three years, Olga fell victim in October 2018 to the deadly influenza pandemic that lasted from January 1918 to December 1920, infecting about a quarter of the world’s population at the time. While she eventually recovered, she never returned to form and retired from swimming after marrying her solidier husband in 1919.

Of course, swimming was a different sport then. Swimmers were not on a four-year training cycle, and the Olympic Games did not have the same allure and financial incentives as it has today. But the War and the flu did her in.

### THE DUKE

The other great swimmer of the day to fall victim to the flu was Duke Kahanamoku, the 1912 100 meter freestyle Olympic champion. In 1916, he was 24 years old, at the peak of his career... and unbeatable.

When America entered the War in April of 1917, Duke had originally been deferred as the sole supporter of his mother and younger siblings. But by the next year, he was determined to join Uncle Sam’s Navy as an aviator.

In April, along with fellow Hawaiians Harold “Stubby” Kruger (the world’s best backstroker) and Clarence Lane (second only to Duke in the sprints), they set out on a six-month-long exhibition tour of the mainland, organized by the Red Cross, to raise money for the War effort. Their highly publicized tour would end at Pelham Bay Naval Camp in the Bronx, N.Y., with their enlistment in the Navy.

But before they got there, all three were hospitalized—like Olga Dorfner—with the H1N1 flu virus of 1918. Misidentified as the Spanish flu, most historians point to smoke from a burning manure pile at a Kansas Army base in March of 1918 as the point of origin for a disease that infected one-third of the world’s population and killed at least 50 million people globally. Many of the soldiers infected by the smoke at the camp were shipped by train to the East coast and then off to the European War, spreading the sickness along their route.

By October, the cities of New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. were especially hit hard, and it brought all sporting events to a complete halt. It was in the nation’s capital where Duke and his companions became acquainted with the flu, and it nearly cost him his life.

“I was weighing 200 pounds when the ‘flu’ knocked me out, and they took me to the emergency room,” recalled Duke. “When I got out 10 days later, my weight had been reduced to 175 pounds. I really thought it was goodbye Hawaii for me.”

While Lane and Kruger suffered relatively minor symptoms and continued on to Pelham, Duke’s virus turned into pneumonia, and when released from the hospital, he was sent back to Hawaii to recuperate. By the time he recovered, the War was over—and almost as suddenly as the pandemic appeared, it vanished.

Duke went on to win gold again in the 100 freestyle at the 1920 Games in Antwerp and silver in the 100 at Paris in 1924 at the age of 32. He is remembered as one of the greatest swimmers of all time, but surfers remember him best as the “father” of their sport.

### SMALL WORLD

Olga Dorfner’s name resurfaced recently as a 2020 nominee for the Philadelphia Sports Hall of Fame. They’re a little late in recognizing her—she was inducted into the ISHOF 50 years ago.

When swimming for the Philadelphia Turngemeinde over 100 years ago, under Hall of Fame coach Fred Cady, she was a teammate of Margaret Majer, who became the first female instructor of physical education at the University of Pennsylvania. Margaret married Olympic rowing champion John B. Kelly. They became the parents of John B. “Jack” Kelly Jr., who served as president of the ISHOF in the early 1980s before becoming president of the USOC in 1984.

When the Kelly’s more famous daughter, Grace Kelly, married Prince Ranier of Monaco in 1956, Olga Dorfner Shoenhut attended the wedding as Margaret Kelly’s guest. Many years later, Grace’s son, Prince Albert, received ISHOF’s Gold Medallion Award. Small world, indeed. ❖

*Bruce Wigo, historian and senior consultant at the International Swimming Hall of Fame, served as president/CEO of ISHOF from 2005-17.*

# DID YOU KNOW

FUN FACTS OF AQUATICS FROM ISHOF

BY BRUCE WIGO

PHOTO BY INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING HALL OF FAME

**1920 was the first time America sent women athletes to the Olympic Games. And they were all swimmers and divers.**

The VII Olympiad in Antwerp took place a little more than a year after the Treaty of Versailles ended the “Great War” that left 10 million dead, 20 million wounded and more than \$300 billion in damages.

Yet, at the insistence of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the 1920 Olympic Games were held in the most cruelly damaged nation, Belgium, which was grievously unprepared to host them. Nor were any of the world’s other nation’s prepared to fund teams to participate in this revived “festival of youth.”

And it was not until November of 1919 that the American

Olympic Committee announced its intention to send a team. But to do so required raising \$200,000, an enormous sum in 1920. The AOC was not only desperately short of money, but it also had no way to transport the athletes to Europe because all of the private steamship companies were completely booked.

With no place else to turn, the AOC persuaded Congress to provide two military transport ships by persuasively arguing that their help would “enable our fine young men and women to carry our flag to victory over there on the battlefields of peace, just as they carried our flag to victory on the battlefields of war.”

The AOC approved them sending only one group of women athletes to the Games. It was only through the efforts of Charlotte Epstein and the famed Women’s Swimming Association of New York that the women’s swimming/diving team ensured its participation—by being the only team to raise 100% of the funds necessary to defray its own expenses to Antwerp.

The water in the Antwerp canal, where the swimming events were held, was so icy cold that coaches refused to let Hawaii’s 15-year old Helen Moses compete and put her health at risk. But the rest of the team, being more used to swimming in cold water, dominated.

Although there were only three swimming events on the Olympic program, the American women swept the 100 and 300 meter freestyle races, and took gold in the 4 x 100 free relay. Ethelda Bleibtrey was the outstanding swimmer, winning the gold medal in all three events.

In diving, 14-year-old Aileen Riggan—just five feet tall and weighing less than 80 pounds—won gold in the 3-meter springboard event. ❖



>> Members of the 1920 U.S. Olympic swimming and diving teams prepare to board the U.S.S. Fredrick to compete in the VII Olympiad in Antwerp, Belgium. (From left): Charlotte Boyle (New York), Ethelda Bleibtrey (New York), Helen Moses (Honolulu), Eleanor Uhl (Philadelphia), Aileen Riggan (New York), Helen Wainwright (New York), Alice Lord (New York), Margaret Woodbridge (Detroit), Helen Meany (New York), Irene Guest (Philadelphia) and Francis Cowells Schroth (San Francisco). Not pictured: Thelma Payne (Portland) and Betty Grimes (Minneapolis).

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## MOTIVATING SWIMMERS TO NEW HEIGHTS

Memorable are the sporting events where an athlete or team is “on fire.” *Swimming World* checks in with two high school and two age group coaches for insight into how that happens. **Spoiler alert:** the common denominator is “buy-in” from athletes who connect with a coach.

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

In February, the Richmond, Va.-based St. Christopher’s boys and St. Catherine’s girls teams won the Virginia Independent State Athletic Association swimming titles through inspired above-seed swimming. Second-place Woodberry Forest boys did the same, scoring an impressive 51.5 points above seed while achieving a NISCA All-America and state record time (1:33.09) in the 200 yard medley relay.

### THE WOODBERRY FOREST APPROACH

Greg Guldin, in his 11th year as WFS coach, offers his athletes a very precise, measured season plan that starts with an emphasis on a “mental and physical taper” beginning the first day of September practice.

“To me, taper is more art than science. I tell the boys taper is not magic, but is directly related to the entire season. I do not care about winning or losing a meet in-season. We don’t rest mid-year. Every meet is a sprint practice, and I push them as hard as I absolutely can,” he says.

The Tigers take an annual post-Christmas training trip featuring the traditional rigors (weights, dryland, volume, meets) of hard work. In mid-January, Guldin initiates a gradual drop in daily yardage from 7,000 yards to 2,800 two days before the state meet. After the conference meet and two weeks before the state competition, he turns off pace clocks, stops reading out times and asks the boys to swim sets by energy percent while helping them to refine strokes.

Guldin counsels his swimmers on good decision-making in

respect to diet, sleep, academics, stretching and the like. He also engages an active alumni community. “We regularly get emails from past swimmers who share memories and excitement about the meet,” he says.

Visualization is a constant. But the most galvanizing event is the Tigers’ “I Believe Day,” held the Tuesday before States. “Here every member of the team, state qualifier or not, writes an inspirational quote on a bed sheet that travels with us to States. Competing swimmers include their individual event goal times. Each person reads to the group what they wrote and what it means. It is a pretty emotional time—in an uplifting spiritual sort of way,” he says. A shaving ritual follows.

“There seems to be a self-propagated mystique that happens around mid-January each year,” Guldin says. “We can all feel it. We cannot wait to see the psych sheet. It is all we really think or talk about once it is published. By this time, our boys are confident in all they have done, and yet we are all more nervous than any of us is willing to admit. It is a remarkable time to be a Tiger.

“I am humbled to have seen our boys year after year pull through when it matters. They do so because they believe in the history of the Tigers, their training and, beyond anything else, believe in their teammates who went through it all with them.”

### HOW THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

Drake “Bucka” Watson is the head coach at two private schools in Richmond, Va.—Saint Christopher’s (boys) and its sister school, St. Catherine’s (girls). Watson knows a thing or two about motivation and winning: he has been a swimmer (Collegiate School) or coach (Collegiate, St. Catherine’s, St. Christopher’s) on seven state championship teams since 2007. In addition, his summer league teams (Westwood Club Waves) have won the last six James River Aquatic Club championship meets.

“It all starts with a positive and cohesive team culture,” he says. “This can be hard to manage with high school swim teams as so many of the athletes swim for year-round clubs and are not on the pool deck with the high school team on a daily basis. The key, then,

>> **PICTURED ABOVE:** Virginia’s Woodberry Forest School brings new meaning to the term, “psych sheet.” On the Tuesday before States (“I Believe Day”), Coach Greg Guldin’s swimmers write an inspirational quote—along with their individual event goal times—on an actual bed sheet! At the meet, “each person reads to the group what they wrote and what it means,” says Guldin. “It is a pretty emotional time—in an uplifting spiritual sort of way.”



>> St. Christopher's boys and St. Catherine's girls teams won the Virginia Independent State Athletic Association swimming titles in February. Pictured [from left] are Coach Proctor Trivette, senior captain Russell Richards, head coach Bucka Watson and senior captains Gray Broaddus [diving], Harry Farley and Miles West. Inset [from left]: girls' senior captains Tess Deyerle and Chandler Kerkam [diving]. #OTOG on Kerkam's left cheek stands for "One Team One Goal."

to success at big meets is getting all swimmers to buy in and to care about the team. Having team leadership that buys into a team-first mentality trickles down to everyone else and breeds confidence," he says.

"Ultimately, the swimmers must want to swim for each other, buy in to the team culture and the team goal. And team culture is often a direct reflection of leadership," he notes. "This year, our captains came up with a hashtag #OTOG—"One Team One Goal." It became a rallying cry for the rest of the season. It was a tremendously simple, tangible reminder of what we are all about. No question the power of swimming for something greater than yourself brings out the best results. It's not surprising that many of our year-round swimmers achieve lifetime bests at States."

Watson's 14-week plan includes early-season technique instruction, fitness emphasis, repeats of valuable test sets, taper and fine-tuning. He uses test sets to assess progress and help swimmers finish—something his teams do exceedingly well.

One set consists of 4 x 50 descend followed by 6 x 50 all-out on a choice stroke, descending interval. "The all-out fast 50s on the descending interval really help our athletes finish strong even when exhausted:

- 4 x 50 descend to all-out @ 1:30
- 50 all-out @ 1:20
- 50 all-out @ 1:10
- 50 all-out @ 1:00
- 50 all-out @ :50
- 50 all-out @ :40
- 50 all-out

"We also work weekly with resistance bands to effect explosiveness. For most of the season, it's just resistance training. Then, before States, we introduce assisted swimming. We find the added speed is a real psychological lift. The swimmers always get so excited for those practices," he says.



"The key is to make peace with the fact that you're going into battle and committing fully to the experience. Just keep it simple, go out and fight, every time—nothing more, nothing less. Learning to fight is what we do." —Megan Oesting, owner/head coach, Eastern Iowa Swimming Federation

## A CALL TO ARMS

Megan Oesting is owner/head coach of the Eastern Iowa Swimming Federation. A former UCLA All-America swimmer and champion water polo player, she was also the 2019 national age group coach of the year.

"I do motivation differently than most coaches," she says. "For me, it is not about adding a new goal, target or direction, but rather about removing barriers so swimmers have the freedom to put themselves out there and try.

"My values in practice and meets boil down to ENGAGEMENT. It might look different in practice, depending on what the focus is, but at meets, it usually means that it's OK to go into battle and see what happens. That's after we have had a great deal of conversation on the plan or techniques involved. I want my swimmers to trust what we've practiced and to know enough to make good decisions in the heat of battle," says Oesting.

"We emphasize effort through engagement. We permit mistakes, but admonish lack of response and disengagement. We want swimmers to try hard, to take risks and be vulnerable. On our team, racing is nothing other than full engagement and the willingness to respond to the race. Those traits need no physical talent. Accepting a challenge means leaning over the edge because next time, you may find the edge is farther out than you thought, thus allowing you to

Continued on 40 >



“With my 11-12s, I expect swimmers to be able to complete specific sets with high intensity. If they can, then they have the tools and confidence to swim ANY lineup for prelims and finals—and be successful.” —Sarah Dawson, corporate relations director and former division director, 11-12 age group, Mission Viejo Nadadores

lean out farther and find out you can do so much more. So...go race and find out.

“The key is to make peace with the fact that you’re going into battle and committing fully to the experience. Focus on the battle, not the potential parade or the potential disappointment that may or may not follow. Deal with all that later. Just keep it simple, go out and fight, every time—nothing more, nothing less. Learning to fight is what we do,” Oesting says.

### A CASE STUDY IN MOTIVATION

Sarah Dawson is currently corporate relations director for the Mission Viejo Nadadores. She has been a division director for MVN’s 11-12 age group, a Southern California age group coach of the year and has a master’s degree in physical education with an emphasis in sports psychology.

She motivates her charges by preparing them for virtually any competitive encounter. “With my 11-12s, we constantly DISCUSS event lineups. In daily practice, we always do the 200 IM or 200 free, a distance event (400 meter or 500 yard free) and a smattering of 50s and 100s of strokes. In competition, I have my athletes swim max events in a typical three-hour meet. To prepare, our daily practice yardage—usually 6,200 yards in 120 minutes—breaks down as follows:

- Meet lineup (example): 200 IM, 100 free, 100 breast, 500 free = 900 SCY total
- With warm-up and cool-downs: 1,700 SCY primary warm-up + 500 (warm-up/cool-down of 200 IM) + 400 (warm-up/cool-down of 100 free) + 300 (warm-up/cool-down of 100 breast) + 400 (warm-up of 500) + 500 cool-down of 500 = 3800

“So, if I’m asking someone to swim that (plus finals), we train to overcome that kind of volume at meets.

“I expect swimmers to be able to complete specific sets with high intensity at this practice yardage. If they can, then they have the tools and confidence to swim ANY lineup for prelims and finals—and be successful.

## DAWSON’S TIPS TO SUCCESSFUL MOTIVATION

**COMMUNICATION** is key. Talk to the athletes and allow them to voice their fears, needs and end game. Communicate to the parents about the “PLAN.” Involving them only increases your chances for success—yours and the athletes.

**GOAL SETTING.** Be collaborative. The swimmer’s job is to voice what they want to achieve. Your job as a coach is to **GUIDE** them through realistic steps to achieve that goal successfully.

**SEASON PLANNING.** Give them a season plan, which acts as a road map for their training and meet schedule. Arm them with information that shows daily, weekly, monthly and season plans.

**CONSISTENCY.** Be consistent in your message to your athletes. Flip-flopping all over the place leads to confusion and lack of confidence in them and in you as a coach.

**ENCOURAGE and CONSTRUCTIVELY CORRECT.** A successful coach cannot criticize and expect a successful outcome for the athlete. A coach needs to encourage and correct the athletes and lead them down their paths without force. ❖

“I once gave our 9-10-year-old entry level kids—on a Friday night practice—a 400 SCY IM to complete for a fun challenge set, after a week of technique-based IM work. The 400 IM was an accumulation of a week’s worth of hard work and was used as a reward and prize for what the swimmers had learned during that week,” says Dawson.

“I communicated the ‘prize’ throughout the week, and we talked repeatedly about the strategy of how to swim four laps of each stroke without a breakdown of technique. We talked about the third 25 and how it may hurt and where they may want to stop, hold onto the lane line and quit.

“We discussed perseverance, fear, what focus points to review when tired to ensure the maintenance of their strokes and for a successful completion of the 400. After one of my highest recorded attendance workout weeks, followed by the highest attended Friday afternoon practice that I had had all year, I had 28 9-10 bronze-level kids beautifully complete a full 400 SCY IM. Legally.

“I was chastised by the head coach, who said that it was too much yardage and that I shouldn’t have given 9-10s a swim like that to complete and possibly fail. I told him, ‘Don’t ever underestimate the power or motivation of an educated kid.’ This one incident happened almost 20 years ago and defined my philosophy in coaching,” she says. ❖

*Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach whose Collegiate School (Richmond, Va.) teams won nine state high school championships. A member of that school’s Athletic Hall of Fame, he is also a recipient of NISCA’s Outstanding Service Award.*

## CHANGE-OF-PACE

# Fun

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

Swim training at its best requires a respite from black-line fever. When done right, the variation can reveal insights into athlete personality, motivation and often a dynamic that can leverage team energy down the road.

Several years ago, one Mid-Atlantic high school coach decided to alter practice with a water polo game. He formed coed teams, and some girls immediately assumed subordinate roles. One girl, a heretofore undistinguished freestyler, asserted herself befitting an Eastern European male player. She attacked the boys, dunking them with extraordinary upper body strength and earning the undying admiration of male and female teammates alike.

The coaches, surprised at the girl's physical prowess, later learned she was a nationally-ranked rock climber. In time, she became an accomplished butterflyer.

Following are some favorite change-of-pace exercises from USA Swimming master coach consultant Bob Steele that are designed to insert spice and fun into in-season training. His coaching philosophy regarding these exercises is: "If it's fun to watch, it's fun to do."

### ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

Split groups into two teams of five for all lanes at each end of the pool. The first swimmer on each team starts from their end and races until they meet the person from the other team at mid-pool, and they play "rock, paper, scissors."

The winner sprints to the opposite end, and the loser goes back to their team's line. The second swimmer on the losing team sprints to stop the winner and does "R, P, S" with the same outcome. Continue with all the swimmers until one relay team touches the opposite end of the pool. Restart when a team wins.

### CELEBRATIONS

At the end of practice, have the swimmers line up behind the backstroke pennants in a straight line. One at a time, swimmers sprint in with a beautiful touch, followed by a spectacular celebration. Each celebration must be different, with the winner receiving a prize.

### BUCKET O' BLOOD

Swimmers kick a 25 holding a pull buoy on the kickboard. At the 25, they drop the kickboard and use the pull buoy. At the next 25, they drop the pull buoy and swim. That is ONE "Bucket O' Blood."

Prescribe three to six "Buckets o' Blood" for the warm-up.

### DEMOLITION DERBY

Divide the team into four squads and place one squad on each corner of the pool. If it's a large pool, start two squads at mid-pool. Swimmers start five seconds apart. The object is to get the entire team across the pool and seated on the opposite corner. The



>> Bob Steele, author of *GAMES-GIMMICKS-CHALLENGES for Swimming Coaches*

first team across the pool and seated wins. Anything goes in the middle, except big people cannot hold little people underwater. (The coaches must supervise!)

### BROKEN RELAYS

This is a great way to excite swimmers toward the end of the season when speed and tapering are important. Have the 200 relays swim with 10 seconds rest at the 25s and relay exchanges at each 50. The coach yells out split times at the 25s and 50s for everyone to hear. Teams cheer. Pit teams against each other or send a slower team second...and they'll "kill" to beat the first team.

### CENTIPEDE RELAYS

Set up teams of equal ability with swimmers on both ends. The only instructions are to complete the designated distance with all swimmers linked hands to ankles. Swimmers may swim with one arm during the 25-yard portions of the race. Swimmers are responsible for creating a legal method of changing direction. The object is to get the entire team down the pool and turn, with the last swimmer in line touching the wall with his/her feet. Keep score. Athletes are quite creative.

### ANIMAL BALL

Divide the team in half with a team on each end of the pool. The coach throws a water polo ball to mid-pool. When it hits the water, swimmers sprint from both ends and work in an anything-goes environment to advance the ball to the other team's gutter. To score one point, they must hold the ball in the gutter for three seconds by the coach's count.

### T-SHIRT RELAYS

The ever popular T-shirt relay requires swimmers to switch T-shirts before continuing the relay. Kids need to know the switching technique. Keep elbows straight, head down and hands clasped as fellow team members stand on the sides and pull the waist of the shirt up and off over one swimmer and down onto the next.

### CRAZY STROKES RELAY

This involves four swimmers in a 100 yard relay. Prior to starting, the coach yells out one stroke pull with a different stroke kick for the first swimmer. Coach continues to call out different combinations as the relay progresses. Always finish with the ever-popular corkscrew relay.

### CATCH-UP RELAY

Divide teams into groups of three or more swimmers per team. Send one-half of the team to the other end of the pool. Teams in

even lanes start from the starting end first, and swimmers in the odd-numbered lanes start from the opposite end. The objective is to make up 25 yards and outtouch the team next to you. So, it could be 1 vs. 2, 3 vs. 4 and 5 vs. 6...or just divide the team in half and do it.

### STEELER'S KICKIN'

The goal is to kick 20 x 25 @ :20 sendoff. Swimmer kicks until they fail on 20, and they get 20 seconds rest, so the lane leaders are leaving on the 0 - :20 - or :40. However, if a swimmer fails on the fourth 25, they have 16 remaining—but they must add one for the one they missed; therefore, they would have 17 left to do. This continues until every swimmer on the team makes 20 @ 20-second sendoff.

### DESCENDING DISTANCE, FAST-FEET PACE SET

The coach gives his time to the distance group through this whole set by yelling out the 25-yard pace at every stop and the 100 time on every 100 as the set progresses. This exercise must fit your personnel and their abilities; however, this is a great set to get a swimmer ready to race distance events—especially if they don't like distance training. Start with distances they can handle, holding desired race pace for whatever the distance...and gradually move 'em up! They MUST get faster as the set goes!

- Warm-up of about 1,000
- 66 x 25 @ 20-sec. sendoff (give every 25 and 100 for the leaders); hold 53s
- Pull 800 (2, 4, 6, 8/50) using paddles and a tube only
- 40 x 25 @ 20-sec. sendoff (same); hold 52s
- Pull 800 (2, 4, 6, 8/50) using paddles and a tube only
- 20 x 25 @ 20-sec. sendoff (same); hold 51s
- Pull 800 (2, 4, 6, 8/50) using paddles and a tube only
- 8 x 25 @ 20-sec. sendoff (same); hold 49s
- Pull 800 (warm-down)

*ALL 25s are done to a FAST foot-touch.*

### PHELPS 50s KICKING

Swimmers use a board and pick three sendoffs five seconds apart with the first being easy, the second moderate and the last difficult to make. Athletes should start with what they can make for 5 x 50 on the fastest sendoff possible. Different swimmers have different sendoffs. Put them in lanes together by ability for motivation and encouragement. The first time through the set goes as follows, and swimmers move down to a slower lane when they fail to make the FAST sendoff:

EZ	Moderate	Fast	
1	1	1	
1	1	2	
1	1	3	
1	1	4	
1	1	5	...and so on?

The coach decides how many need to be done fast...and may switch to 100s for a real test.

### 2:01 SET OR BEAT THE CLOCK

Swimmers start their first 100 swim when the second hand hits 45 seconds on the clock. They must finish the 100 before the hand hits 60 for the second time. They then start again on 2:01 after starting the first swim (46) and must finish the 100 before the 60 again. This continues with one less second of rest throughout the set

and ALWAYS finishing the 100 before the 60.

If a swimmer cannot hear the coach say DONE, they're done with the set and either cheer for the remaining swimmers or swim the remaining 100s and not make the 60.

It's a killer at the end for everyone really trying to stay in the contest. Our team record was make 48 and miss on 47.

### GOAL

1. Record the number of 100s made BEFORE missing 60 seconds.
2. When a swimmer misses the 60, they skip ONE swim and then resume 100s and cannot rejoin.
3. When there are four swimmers still making the 60, EVERYONE gets out and cheers the last four.
4. Swimmers may only fail while swimming, not hanging on the wall. **THEY MUST DIE TRYING!**
5. The following chart indicates the number of swims, elapsed time and speed of swim:

Swim #	Clock time	Interval
1	:45	1:15
2	:46	1:14
3	:47	1:13
4	:48	1:12
5	:49	1:11
6	:50	1:10
7	:51	1:09
8	:52	1:08
9	:53	1:07
10	:54	1:06
11	:55	1:05
12	:56	1:04
13	:57	1:03
14	:58	1:02
15	:59	1:01
16	:60	1:00
17	1:01	:59
18	1:02	:58
19	1:03	:57
20	1:04	:56
21	1:05	:55
22	1:06	:54
23	1:07	:53
24	1:08	:52
25	1:09	:51
26	1:10	:50
27	1:11	:49
28	1:12	:48
29	1:13	:47
30	1:14	:46

The preceding games can be found in Bob Steele's *GAMES-GIMMICKS-CHALLENGES for Swimming Coaches*, available through [www.gamesgimmickschallenges.com](http://www.gamesgimmickschallenges.com) or Amazon or eBay.

For coaches interested in receiving the video, Olympian Celebrations, from the last two Games, email [fastswimmin@gmail.com](mailto:fastswimmin@gmail.com). ❖

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*Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach whose Collegiate School (Richmond, Va.) teams won nine state high school championships. A member of that school's Athletic Hall of Fame, he is also a recipient of NISCA's Outstanding Service Award.*

## FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP, FUN

During this competition hiatus, we asked officials with varying levels of experience from around the country three questions about their work as officials.

### 1. *What makes you continue to officiate?*

- Swimming taught my son powerful life lessons and gave him strong friendships and a sense of accomplishment. I am honored to give back to this sport because of what it provided him. Also, I value my amazing friendships with fellow officials.
- The way 1,000 volunteers, athletes, coaches and spectators come together for a weeklong “family” reunion.
- Swimming represents family. My husband swam and now coaches, my kids swim, and officiating is my contribution. My dedication helps the athletes achieve their goals in fair competition. The friendships I’ve made through officiating is an added bonus. I am grateful for those who have encouraged and mentored me. Support, encouragement, friendship—it’s all there.
- Being a swim official is in my blood! I love to see my swimming family. I consider them my brothers and sisters. It is fun to see “students” I have trained and mentored perform on deck as stroke and turn judges, chief judges, starters, deck referees, admin referees and even meet referees.

### 2. *What are the top three traits or talents that you see as important?*

- Have patience, enjoy people, have a healthy sense of humor.
- Be honest, be professional, and don’t have an ego. I think it is important to treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Be flexible and positive through challenging situations. Be able to work on—and contribute to—a team. Have a willingness to never stop learning.
- Be willing to put in time to prepare, be ready to laugh, and smile hugely.

### 3. *What would you say to someone who is just starting out as an official?*

- Ask questions. Take suggestions from other officials and incorporate them into your practice. Smile, learn and enjoy those on your team and the journey you’re on together.
- Get two pairs of very comfortable shoes, learn from as many experienced officials as you can, and don’t be afraid to apply to higher-level meets.
- Be ready to be amazed by the fun you’re going to have meeting other officials, athletes, coaches and volunteers. Before you know it, 20 years will have flown by!
- You will enjoy being an official so much that you should become a lifetime member of USA Swimming. It will be cheaper in the long run.

Although we all come from different places, there are so many common themes: family, friendship, fun. We hope that everyone can feel the joy and pride we bring to the pool deck. Come join us! ❖



## EXCELLENCE AWARD

## DEAN SCHEELER

Dean Scheeler has been a stroke and turn official for the Fargo Moorhead Gators for just over 10 years. Throughout that time, he has developed into a leader within the North Dakota LSC, becoming a top trainer and mentoring dozens of new officials. The apprentices who train under him have had nothing but rave reviews



for his patience and wealth of knowledge. Scheeler began officiating when his children were involved in USA swimming, but he has continued to volunteer his time, officiating meets even after his children were no longer involved in the sport. He always offers to work in any position on the deck and is willing to lend a hand wherever needed. Even though Dean could have chosen to work his way up through the ranks of officiating, he chose to perfect the craft of a stroke and turn official. Scheeler is a joy to be around on deck and won the “Official’s Dance-Off” at a swim meet in 2016. In 2018, he was named North Dakota’s Official of the Year. North Dakota Swimming is thankful for all of his hard work and dedication to swimming.

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# DOUG FONDER

Coach of swimmers, builder of programs, founder of Virginia Commonwealth Games, the President/CEO of the International Swim Coaches Association, Wisconsin native Doug Fonder has left his imprint on competitive swimming for more than 50 years.

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

**Q. SWIMMING WORLD:** How did you get into swimming in the first place?

**A. COACH DOUG FONDER:** At the end of this summer, I will have coached year-round swimming for 53 years. As a child in Green Bay, Wis., I swam summer league. In graduate school, I took a pool manager job in Illinois. Three weeks into the season, the swim coach was fired, and I was offered the position. Thankfully, no one drowned because I didn't know a thing about what I was doing. I coached it like it was a football squad.

**SW:** You have an impressive track record of startups and growing programs—for example, Quantico Devil Dolphins, Briarwood and Virginia Gators come to mind.

**DF:** I was working for Fairfax County (Virginia) government after graduate school. The chairman of the board knew I had coached swimming and was hoping to start a competitive swim team at Marine Corps Base Quantico for his grandchildren. The good news was both the swimmers and I were beginners, so we learned together.

The base had a 50-meter outdoor pool and a 25-meter, 8-lane indoor facility used for Marine training. Pool time was readily available. In short order, we put together a pretty impressive team. The swimmers from the military families in the area were quite committed and knew how to follow instructions. The Quantico team became a dominant age group team in Virginia for about 10 years running.

Two doctors who were connected with the Quantico Devil Dolphins offered me a third share if I agreed to be managing partner and swim coach of Briarwood Swim and Racquet Club in Richmond. We turned it into a financial success and one of the best swim teams on the East Coast. We constantly placed high at both junior and senior nationals, and had many swimmers who set NAG records and who had outstanding college careers. One, Greg Burgess, ultimately finished second in the 200 meter IM at the 1992 Olympics.

Virginia governor Jerry Baliles hired me as executive director of Sports for Virginia based in Roanoke. Our first project was the Virginia Commonwealth Games in 1990, which is still going strong today. Since its inception, the Games have had more than 250,000 participants. About the same time, I had two children active in competitive swimming, so I started the Virginia Gators. We began at a local fitness center and then built our own 8-lane indoor pool. We have been consistently competitive, and in 2019, we ranked 25th in the USA Swimming Club Excellence program.

**SW:** You founded the NASA and the International Swim Coaches Association.

**DF:** The National Age Group Swimming Association (NASA) has morphed into the International Swim Coaches Association (ISCA). The idea behind ISCA events is to create fun and exciting competitions like our dual-coast Elite Showcase Classics, a single age group meet for 9 and under, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14-year-olds. We strongly believe that kids should be able to swim against competitors their same age.

Our International Junior Cup is for senior swimmers 18 and under who are looking for a championship-level meet. We also conduct an annual science and technology-based coaches clinic. ISCA has

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## Q & A



Coach Doug Fonder

Head Coach/CEO  
Virginia Gators  
Roanoke, Virginia

- University of Miami, B.A., 1970
- Head coach/CEO, Virginia Gators, 1988-present
- Executive director of sports, Commonwealth of Virginia, 1988-92
- Head coach, Briarwood Swim and Racquet Club, 1980-88
- Founder/head coach, Quantico Devil Dolphins, 1972-80
- Founder/executive director, International Swim Coaches Association, 2011
- Founder, National Age Group Association (NASA), 2010

Fonder was honored as Virginia Coach of the Year 10 times. He also was a two-time YMCA National Swim Coach of the Year.

# OLIVIA BRAY

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

[PHOTO BY USA SWIMMING]



**PROGRESSION OF TIMES**

SCY	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>100 Fly</b>	52.92	51.48	51.38	50.19

National junior team member Olivia Bray has quite a résumé. Ranked by CollegeSwimming.com as the No. 1 female swimmer in Virginia and 11th nationally in the Class of 2020, Bray will start her collegiate career at the University of Texas. She is the 17-18 NAG record holder in the 100 yard butterfly (50.19), and her 58.38 LC fly ranks third all-time for 17-18 girls behind Regan Smith’s 57.34 and Katie McLaughlin’s 57.87.

Bray is also part of three 15-16 NAG relay record squads with teammates Caroline Kulp, Emma Muzzy and Whitney Hamilton. In 2017, the quartet set short course standards in the 200 yard free relay (1:30.99) as well as the 200 and 400 medley relays (1:39.21, 3:36.53). She also swam with Collin Myburgh, Shelby Stanley and Noah Bowers to set a 17-18 NAG 400 meter mixed medley relay record (3:58.88).

A Virginia Gator swimmer, Bray passed up high school competition to focus on excelling on the national stages. She currently holds Olympic Trials cuts in the 100 and 200 butterflies, and she has a plethora of summer national and junior national cuts, especially in the 200-400 free, back and IMs.

The last two years, she has lit up the ISCA national meets, recording eight first places in 2019 and seven in 2018 in her signature events. Based on her upward trajectory, Fonder feels confident in noting that Bray is on track for a successful second Olympic Trials meet, albeit now more than a year away. “We are hoping for big things,” he says.

**SAMPLE LONG COURSE SET**

July 4, 2019

- 30 x 100 LC @ 1:30 (odd: smooth freestyle; even: 2nd half pace for 200 fly)

*Bray held the first 10 100 butterflies at 1:05s from a push, and never went over 1:08 for the entire set.*

**SAMPLE SHORT COURSE SET**

3x the following:

- 20 x 25 fly @ :20
- 10 x 25 fly @ :18
- 6 x 25 fly @ :15
- 1:00 rest
- 4 x 50 fly @ :50
- 1:00 rest
- 1 x 100 fly ❖

[PHOTO BY BLENDED LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY]



grown rapidly over the last 10 years, and we hope to be a major player in both the U.S. and foreign countries within the sport of swimming.

**SW:** You have coached beginning age groupers to Olympians. Any memorable athletes?

**DF:** Early on, I learned that swimmers who become Olympians have a totally different mindset than other participants. Jeff Rouse, a two time Olympian and backstroke gold medalist, started with the Quantico team when he was 8 years old. At 10, he was a student of the sport and listened and followed instructions to a T. He also had very supportive and caring parents.

I learned that you need a perfect triangle of swimmer, parent and coach to reach ultimate success. What I most appreciate about competitive swimming is that an athlete gets out of it exactly what he/she puts in. The saying, "Work works," is spot-on.

**SW:** On the training continuum of volume to USRPT, where are you in terms of workout design?

**DF:** I used to be a real high-volume yardage coach. Now I'm more of a high-quality, hard-kicking, turning and stroke-proficient coach

who still believes that work works.

We train about 7,500 to 8,000 yards for our short course workouts with maybe a single 10,000-plus workout a week. We go three mornings every week, with half of each two-hour session being weights and the other half in the pool. We run five afternoon practices for approximately two hours each, and then we go a three-hour session on Saturday mornings.

Our summer program is long course in the morning and short course in the afternoon. With the season being so short, we go five mornings and four afternoons along with Saturday morning workouts.

**SW:** How do you structure kicking within your practices?

**DF:** I try to do one-third of each practice kicking—some at steady pace and some really pushing the legs to the max. Swimming has improved in speed because of a swimmer's ability to kick both underwater and above.

**SW:** Any particular swimming aids or equipment that you favor?

**DF:** Fins, buckets and paddles on a weekly basis. We keep it pretty basic.

**SW:** What about video?

**DF:** Video is an excellent way to help swimmers improve their strokes. In the future, I believe clubs should have a stroke video person on staff working with swimmers to improve stroke on a daily basis. Working on fluid mechanics is extremely important.

**SW:** What does mid-season dryland look like for your senior swimmers?

**DF:** The goal of our weight program is to improve leg and shoulder strength and core development. We also like to blend in plyometrics, again keeping it simple.

**SW:** Mid-season in-water training for your senior team looks like...?

**DF:** We are a September-to-end-of-November endurance-based program with a taper meet in early December. Then we have a high-volume Christmas training week and more aggressive fast training from January to March with a slight three-day break for high school States. We do a full taper at the end of March.

**SW:** What has your USA Swimming Club Excellence program success allowed the Gators to do?

**DF:** Purchase more weights for our weight room, build our video taping system, add lane lines to our outdoor pool...and a few other things to help the Gators grow.

**SW:** What is your biggest concern regarding the future of competitive swimming?

- DF:**
- Performance-enhancing drugs.
  - We have to find more ways to make swimming FUN.
  - Figure out how to compete with other sports to get more people involved, and sell the health and longevity benefits.
  - Adopt single-age swimming formats. That's what the majority of the world is doing. ❖

.....

*Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach whose Collegiate School (Richmond, Va.) teams won nine state high school championships. A member of that school's Athletic Hall of Fame, he is also a recipient of NISCA's Outstanding Service Award.*



# UP & COMERS

## AGE GROUP SWIMMER OF THE MONTH

BY SHOSHANNA RUTEMILLER

### Finn Conley



[PHOTO BY SHELLY WITT]

**S**cottsdale Aquatic Club's (Ariz.) Finn Conley saw his hard work pay off this season. At the Arizona Age Group Short Course State Championships in March, Conley earned high-point honors in the boys 10-and-under division after winning events in three different strokes plus the individual medley: 50 yard free (28.16), 100 breast (1:22.16), 100 fly (1:05.81) and 100 IM (1:10.41). The 10-year-old also placed second in the 100 free (1:02.32) and 50 fly (30.08).

"Finn is an exceptional athlete," says Coach Crystal Strimple. "When Finn and another teammate decided they wanted to be sub-30 in the 50 yard freestyle, we talked about what needed to happen—and Finn dropped from a 31 to a 28!"

Conley is dedicated to what needs to get done in the pool. Coach Strimple notes that he is typically the first to arrive to practice and the last to leave. He even asked to participate in the notoriously difficult 400 IM at a recent meet—an event not typically offered to 10-and-unders. Conley raced with the 11-12-year-olds and achieved the 11-12 SCY state cut his first try!

In addition to his success in the pool, Conley is an exceptional pianist. He has interests in music, comedy and, as his mother states, "...a knack for doodling on any blank scraps of paper lying around."❖



#### WHAT IS THE BEST THING YOU DO IN SWIMMING?

*I'm good at bringing a positive and competitive spirit to our team practices. I love the meets and racing, but I love playing and being with my friends at practice. It's fun that we're all trying to be better at swimming.*

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOUGHEST WORKOUTS/SETS YOU'VE DONE?

*The hardest set that I can remember was when I was 9 and I swam with Coach McHugh at Door County YMCA (Sturgeon Bay, Wis.). I remember on Wednesdays, we swam 5x100 sprints off the block, took a short break, and then we swam 3x125 sprints off the block. My lungs burned and my body felt like it was on fire. I just wanted it to end, but now I miss it.*

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT SWIMMING?

*I like being in a sport where I don't get hit or have to hurt anyone. I like cheering people on and being cheered for. I like making friends.*

#### WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS YEAR?

*I am excited about racing in the 11-12 age group. I get to work with a new coach and set some new goals for the year. It'll be fun!*

#### WHO IS SOMEONE YOU LOOK UP TO IN SWIMMING... AND WHY?

*I look up to coaches who care about the team and get you fired up about the season. They have a way of making everyone excited to be swimming. I like that feeling.*

#### WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES?

*I love playing piano, drawing, playing with my cats, reading and swimming in Little Silver Lake (Wis.).*



## WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES FROM JULY 2020 TO JULY 2021?

BY ANDY ROSS



### ADAM PEATY

British Olympic gold medalist (2016, 100 breast), 8x World champion and current world record holder (50 and 100 breast)

[PHOTO BY BECCA WYANT]

I don't think any of us are surprised following the announcement that the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games have been postponed for one year. It's the right decision and the only one that could be made at this point.

As an athlete, I am obviously extremely disappointed, but this is more important and bigger than me or any of the athletes who would have been taking part. This is a matter of life or death, and we all need to do the right thing.

Now that I know, I can focus on the here and now, and as soon as it is safe to do so, continue with my training and ultimate goal to represent my country at the Olympic Games. It will happen, and when it does, we will all be stronger and be able to celebrate what is an extraordinary worldwide event together.

Thank you to everyone who has shown me so much support, and thank you to everyone who is out there providing essential services and care at such a challenging time for us all. Stay home and stay safe—we are all in this together.



### ERICA SULLIVAN

U.S. distance/open water swimmer, Sandpipers of Nevada, USC commit

[PHOTO BY BECCA WYANT]

I think we all saw it coming. It was looming over our heads for so long. It's for the best, but you can't help but be a little disappointed when news like that breaks. It was really, really stressful trying to find training time and trying to get pool space with no pools open.

But after the news dropped, the dire need for water time has gone down significantly. Now I am just trying to focus on dryland and a good weight regimen that I can do in my own house so I can stay safe.



### ZANE GROTHE

U.S. World Championships bronze medalist (2017, 800 free relay), Pan Pac medalist (2018: gold 800, silver 1500, bronze 400)

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

I've been a swimmer a long time now. What is one more year? I was hoping to continue on after 2020 anyway, so it'll just be a twist on season goals.

As far as current training goes, I will have to get crafty. Starting tomorrow (late March), Indiana goes on lockdown for two weeks. I've already been out of the water a week, too. I don't mind taking a break from swimming, but I'd really not like to be out of the water for more than a month. I'll be doing calisthenics, yoga, abs, body weight circuits and running to stay in shape the best I can.

I'm not alone, though. The swimming community is an amazing group, and we will all be coming together (not physically #socialdistancing) to help each other out. I'm ready for this adventure and for doing my part for our country to heal.



### CARSON FOSTER

U.S. national team member, Mason Manta Rays (Ohio), Texas commit

[PHOTO BY CONNOR TRIMBLE]

Obviously, it is disappointing that the Olympics isn't going to happen (this year), but I am in full support of (the IOC's decision). I know with all the stuff going on, there's more important things in the world than sports.

I think it is important for everyone to be safe and healthy, and on those same lines, it is important for it to be fair next year. And with the current situation, a lot of the countries around the world would not be able to provide a fair opportunity for a competition that comes around only once every four years.



### RYAN LOCHTE

6x Olympic gold medalist (2004-08-12-16)

[PHOTO BY CONNOR TRIMBLE]

I get to have another year of training and another year of getting better...working on my technique and getting stronger in and out of the water. I think I'm going to become an even better and faster swimmer than I am right now. ❖

# PARTING SHOT



## WHAT, ME WORRY?

Five coaches at Richmond's (Va.) Collegiate School urge on junior Kelsey Stratford, three feet away in lane 8 of the 500 yard free final at the 2015 Virginia Independent School state meet. Stratford qualified 16th in 5:32.93 and surged to 10th in 5:23.22, enabling the Cougars to win their fourth straight state title by two points (271-269) over arch rival St. Catherine's School. Pictured, from left: assistant coach Mike Peters (now head coach), Drake "Bucka" Watson (now St. Catherine's and St. Christopher's head coach), Laure Keatts, David Stillman and head coach Mike Stott. [See related story, page 38.]

[ PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, HIT-PICS LLC ]

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