

Dear Weymouth Waves,

I hope everyone is enjoying their time off but is ready and eager to get back to getting better in the pool. I am recharging my batteries and writing season-beginning memos on the high seas, and I, too, am looking forward to seeing you all again at practices. I think we have come a long way over the last year, and I can't wait to see us improve even faster this season, as now the parts of the program are in place and as swimmers and parents understand my expectations and ways of doing things.

As my intention is exactly the same as it was last year on my arrival in Weymouth, I will reprise some of what I wrote last year introducing myself and my program:

**My aim, my goal, my vision at Weymouth is very simple: to build the best developmental swimming program in the country.**

How do we do this? We start with world-class swimming: what does it look like? What are the key 'parts'? What do you need to be able to do to reach that level? – When we find the answers, we reverse engineer: build/teach/instill/inculcate/develop those parts, relatively systematically, to give our kids the best shot at being great down the line. That process takes time, and it takes patience. Rome wasn't built in a day.

**A bird's-eye view of the basic parts of the program and the emphases for each part:**

**Technique**

- Great technique is a focus every day, all year round
- Based on motor learning principles
- Extensive use of elite athlete video, especially from underwater

**Physiology**

- IM oriented, aerobic base training focus
- Swimming fast in practice (not just in meets)
- Dryland to complement water work

**Psychology**

- Team culture of excellence, arête, sense of craftsmanship
- Mental skills training a focus all year round

Note that these three foci interact constantly. Each cannot truly be isolated. And despite swimming's being a very physical sport, psychology rules: team culture is the foundation for all that happens in the water. A great culture can result in fast swimming despite a less than stellar training program, while a poor culture can cut the legs out from under the most beautifully constructed training program. We will work very hard to build an excellent team culture.

Which leads me to the next key point: excellence, excellence as the goal of and the driver of behavior. One of the several memos attached to this email is the Credo. "Credo" is Latin

for “I believe.” The Credo is a compilation of the attitudes and beliefs that I think serve as a roadmap to excellence (or success) in whatever you do, not just swimming. I first wrote the Credo when I coached the Salt Lake Country Club summer league team back in the late 1980’s. At the time I was a big fan (and have become an even bigger fan) of Coach John Wooden of UCLA basketball fame, and I’m sure this was my attempt at taking his Pyramid of Success and doing something similar for my swimming team. It has followed me ever since, changing the name of the team but little else.

This is the most important piece of paper detailing what our program will be about. The affirmations serve as the attitudes and behaviors that Waves coaches will be teaching our swimmers every day. Underlying its affirmations is the idea of *arête* (or **areth**) -- an idea I borrowed from ancient Greece (I’ll warn you now that I am a geek) and that means, essentially, an all-encompassing excellence – athletic, intellectual, social, ethical, etc. In the end, this target is much more important than the ‘details’ of a program, such as how many yards this or that training group swims, or who is at what pool when, or how often the 11-12’s train each week.

Please read and digest the Credo. It is my flag nailed to the mast.

*A few more important items to note:*

=Coach Patti Curran has stepped down from coaching the Waves. She will still be around the Weymouth Club teaching lessons and classes, and she will still be helping us out with dryland training for our Junior groups and occasionally filling in during a crunch, but she will not be coaching any groups. I am highly appreciative of Coach Patti and her strong work here with the kids over the past year.

=Coach Eugene Karabanov, the Club’s assistant aquatics director, will be filling Coach Patti’s shoes, directly coaching the Junior B group, and assisting me with the Senior A and Senior B groups.

=I will be the primary coach for the Junior A group and the Senior A & B groups.

=(You’re coaching whom???) Which brings me to another point: the names of our training groups have changed:

<i>old AG1</i>	= new <b>Junior B</b>
<i>old AG2</i>	= new <b>Junior A</b>
<i>old Junior</i>	= new <b>Senior B</b>
<i>old Senior</i>	= new <b>Senior A</b>

=I have attached several memos to this introductory letter. One, mentioned already, is the Credo. A second is the *training schedule for the first three weeks*. These practices are very important: for you veterans, this will be the time to review the key stroke skills and set formats; for the newcomers to the Waves, you all have a lot to learn about how I think about swimming and what my expectations of you will be. We will do a lot of foundational work, watching a lot of stroke

technique videos and targeting the key skills in each stroke. You will learn a new ‘vocabulary’ for stroke skills that we will use the rest of the season/year.

=Tryout dates for those new to the team (who have not already been placed by Coach Michael):

Tues 27 Aug, 4:30 to 5 pm

Thur 29 Aug, 4:30 to 5 pm

=I am working through the meet schedule. I will publish it as soon as it is ready.

=Regarding meets and meet entries and how you all enter meets: as outlined in various registration materials already, there will be one important change this year that affects the Senior A & B training groups. It will be assumed that every swimmer from these groups will attend the meets they qualify for, and I will enter them accordingly. If you have conflicts, you must let me know and I will adjust entries. So, as an analogy with swim meet procedure, for the Junior groups, we have a ‘positive check in’: you must commit yourself and we will enter you; for the Senior groups, it is assumed you are racing and you must positively tell me otherwise.

=We will have an introductory Parent Meeting early in the season; we are working on the date and place. TBA.

=Simple Team Rules:

Come to practice

Be on time

Work hard

Pay attention

Support your teammates

=We have switched our team sponsor from Arena to TYR. We will see the benefits of this change immediately, as we prepare our first team order of suits and apparel and equipment. This change does not mean that you must burn all your old Arena gear and team uniforms, but it does mean that going forward you should purchase TYR. (Considering how often kids lose things, the transition should be pretty quick.) TYR will be supporting us strongly, and we need to show our thanks by supporting them. Sophie Rice and I will be sending out the equipment list for each group very soon.

=Accompanying memos: what we’re about, how we do things, and why

Credo

Early season training schedule

Training program memo

Training equipment memo

IMX memo

USA Swimming Motivational Time Standards (A, AA, AAA, etc.)

Happy to be back, and looking forward to a great season,

Coach Michael