

Note from Donnie to All Orinda Aquatics swimmers,

Dear Orinda Aquatics swimmers,

This is the first of our weekly newsletters and will be an introductory note to all of you. This break has provided all of us with time to reflect on our lives, our health, and what is important to us. It is imperative that we continue to focus not on what we don't have during this trying time, but what we **do** have. Hopefully, idle time and time removed from activities that may be taken for granted; school, athletics, time with friends, and random activity, allows you to appreciate the real depth that these things have in your lives, in our lives.

I shared a story with the senior group a while ago about an OA graduate who came back to a meet and leaned in to me and said, "I really miss this." I asked, "the meet?" She replied, "no, *everything*". Well, we feel the same way. We as coaches, miss *everything* – the coaching and teaching, the extraordinarily positive and dynamic interaction with all of you, the humor, competition and all that accompanies it (including chicken teriyaki bowls), and most importantly, the extraordinary way you carry yourselves as athletes, teammates, friends, and young adults in the community.

We want you to know that this is not "downtime" for us. We have been in near constant dialogue and are committed to return as even more invigorated and impassioned coaches. We will be using this time to connect, engage, and support you, to expand our awareness of swimming issues, to grow personally, and to help the organization. We have also been involved with USA Swimming and Pacific Swimming task forces.

With regard to the main emphasis of this note, you will receive a newsletter from Kati each weekend with tips, suggestions, and activities. It will also contain a look forward for the week. Throughout the week, you will receive correspondence from Ronnie and Matt. Ronnie will communicate via text with support from Marc and Dom, including articles, videos, dryland recommendations, evaluations, as well as character-related information. Matt will correspond with the Junior groups via email. In addition to a daily chore reminder!, he will send information on dryland, key articles, swimming-related information, and of course, character stuff.

We are excited to tell you that the **captains will be hosting Zoom calls** regularly with the senior group to share information on a variety of topics including; distance per stroke training, underwater development, IM/off stroke training, being a better teammate, balancing academics and swimming, etc.

From a swimming perspective, we are **reviewing the summer schedule** to try to maximize training and we will examine all meet possibilities. We are also reviewing your Argo videos, and will be sending you a swimmer review. I would like to reiterate what was addressed in the original email to OA swimmers:

1. Stay Physically Fit

Everyone has the **Bridge** login (don@orindaaquatics.org/swim7946) and should run through this workout daily. You can work up a level if it is appropriate, and repeat any segments. While Bridge may not appear "strenuous", the exercises were designed by swimming experts, for our team, with our training plan/cycles. Bridge supports mobility, flexibility, core strength, connectivity, and injury prevention. We will send more specific information, but in addition to Bridge, swimmers should do some strength work (depending on age), core work, and aerobic work, such as running or jump rope.

GOAL – return more fit than you have ever been (excluding swimming)

2. Stay Mentally Fit

This is the best time to read, or reread, your **Conquer the Pool** Handbook. This is the best publication to address the mental and emotional process for athletes. Work through the assignments and think about the message. Ronnie will reach out with direction on chapters and concepts. In addition to the book, work on honing the mental skills critical for a balanced and healthy emotional state: relaxation, visualization, and affirmation (more on this later).

GOAL – come back with a positive mindset, emotion balance, and a process-driven mentality

3. Stay Technically Fit

Watch your Argo video (with critique), and think about what you have been told for general stroke balance and for your stroke specially. Look over the OA Drill Sheets (in your swimmer handbook). Visualize yourself swimming with PERFECT technique, including perfect streamlines and underwater speed. Also visualize your races (short course and long course), including general pace, stroke length, stroke, rates, walls, underwater distance and speed, breathing pattern, etc.

GOAL – come back with a keen awareness of strokes as they are, as well as the strokes you want to create

4. Grow & Communicate

Family: As mentioned, find a new level of appreciation and gratitude for the things you have, right here and now. Begin with parents and siblings. Have conversations at a level you may have previously been too busy to have. Examples: to Parents - “So what do you do again?”, or “How can I be a better family teammate?”, “What do you want to accomplish in life”, and, “Will this affect my allowance?”; to Siblings - “what do you worry about most?”, or “How can I help you with your biggest challenge?”, and, “Can I have the rest of your dessert?”

Friends: Check in, not friends you are in regular contact with, but those you have not spoken to, or were friends with in the past, relatives, etc.

Grow: Think about a personal or emotional area of your life you would like to grow; confidence, resilience, patience, etc.

Learn: Consider watching inspirational videos or TED Talks as opposed to playing video games. Also, please reach out to your buddy.

GOAL - grow as a person, son/daughter, brother/sister, friend, leader/role model, and teammate

5) College Recruiting An offer to parents:

High school juniors should reach out to me or Ronnie about college questions and/or options. Perhaps the best communication would be to send an email to both of us with an overview and college considerations. We can either respond by email and/or set up a phone call. Parents should also feel free to email us with questions and/or set up a call as well. don@orindaaquatics.org or ron@orindaaquatics.org

In sum, please know that we miss you and miss being on the deck doing what we love so much. We will be in constant contact. Please feel free to reach out at any time (parents or swimmers) with ANY question.

I have also attached an essay from OA alum Kelly Noah:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m7YQNVIZIVV_8QbGNsKUI4Oh5_s8rW4ZEHxdzgC00Uk/edit?usp=sharing

note: Orinda Aquatics will be highlighted in the June issue of **Swimming World Magazine**. It will reflect very positively on the team, the great work you have done, and the example you have set.

Donnie

Message from Ronnie To The Senior Group

The Big Picture. I understand that no one really wants to talk about seeing the big picture when there is so much pain now. But really, that is our only and best option. In dealing with reality, we always have to look at how we can make the most of this situation now and for the long term.

(a story about the big picture but on a smaller scale) I coached **Kristin Lewis** at Campo from 1987-1990. If you don't know her, she went on to swim at UCLA where she was an NCAA finalist and All-American, and competed in the Olympic Trials in the 200 Fly where she made the consol final. She was a very focussed and intense athlete (swimming and soccer). During her sophomore year she got mono. For her, the prospect of missing training and possibly North Coast was crushing. She wrote a powerful letter, not necessarily to herself

or to me, but more of a statement about what she learned from it and how she would grow. I have no doubt that this sophomore year adversity made her a better collegiate athlete and a world-class swimmer. It could be and should be a lesson for all of us. ***Link to Kristin's letter***

<chrome-extension://gphandlahdpffmccakmbngmbjnjiihp/file:///home/chronos/u-e12354b3d9b0eaec63624c0f999115d9a0a5dafa/MyFiles/Downloads/Kristen%20Lewis%20note%20Campo%201998.pdf>

In addition to gaining a renewed determination to be better when we get back, we should consider how we can grow emotionally from this situation. We should learn to **value everything** we understandably take for granted - the opportunity to go to school and pursue our academics with our peers, to train and compete with an amazing group of like-minded young men and women, and to just hang out socially with our friends. We too often take for granted what we should value not just often but every day. I can tell you from personal experience that I do this. Not a day goes by that I do not express, through prayer, my genuine appreciation and gratitude for my life, my family, my home, my dog, my ability to provide food, and the amazing OA swimmers I get to coach.

As we move forward with this, there will be many emotions, some not healthy. It is important to resist the temptation to become angry or feel sorry for ourselves. I know what you have lost in terms of training and competing and how much work we have put in for so many years. I understand the disappointment as well as anyone. But first, we must look outside ourselves and our homes. There is much need and anguish in the world and we should, at the minimum, have compassion. There will be millions of individuals and families who will suffer serious health and financial distress. Part of the way this gets better is if those who can help where there is great need do so.

Regarding priorities, **the most important thing is to be safe** - for the benefit of yourself, your loved ones and the community. In thinking about social isolating, I can't help but see the analogy of a team. We are either all in or we are not. If everyone is responsible we will get through this much sooner. If some are not then it will take longer. As with a team, we are all accountable to each other and we should take it very seriously. I know you all will because you understand teamwork, responsibility and sacrifice. And, being the leaders you are, you should help anyone you know who does not understand how important this is. We are literally all in this together.

"Adjust and Adapt" Given the circumstances, what can we do? Whether this situation is short term or longer term, you will greatly minimize the effects of not training if you not only stay fit but improve your fitness more than ever. We will send dryland suggestions, in addition to Bridge. At the minimum, doing multiple rounds of push ups, pull ups (if possible), sit ups, squats, and other core exercises would be enough. Adding to that, you should do some aggressive aerobic exercising which could include running (with parent permission), jump rope, jumping jacks, burpees. Matt has written up a dryland running program for the Junior Group which is very good and can certainly be adapted for the senior group.

Organizationally, we will stay in touch through the weekly newsletter and will regularly send information such as dryland recommendations, videos and articles with topics ranging from and dryland, swim technique & training, and personal & emotional growth. Also, look for Google Docs (Google Forms) asking you to provide information on various topics such as dryland activity, Conquer the Pool reading, Argo video analysis, and general health, etc. This will allow all the coaches to keep apprised of how all the kids are doing. **If we can grow from this and become better, it will clearly define who we are now and it will prepare us for any adversity which will arise in the future.**

The coaches love you and will be here for you for support and guidance.

Ronnie