



Orinda Aquatics Newsletter

Spring 2017



“Integrity is choosing your thoughts and actions based on values rather than personal gain.” unknown

The following newsletter is a supplement to the weekly updates. Included is information on the topics listed below as well as a few articles that may be of interest.

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We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone.
- Ronald Reagan

OA we go...



Top: Clovis
Middle: Sectionals
Left/Above: Arizona Showcase (Junior)



Coaches Note:

As we close out the short course season, we have a great deal to be proud of and so much to be grateful for. First, the staff would like to thank our parents for their continued support of our host meet process *and* of our social calendar. Hosting meets is important for the team in so many critical ways, and it is a great source of pride for the organization, as our facility and our meet management efforts are highly regarded in Pacific Swimming. This would not be possible without the dedication and expertise of our Meet Director Renee Owyong, the support from Matt Ehrenberger, and the great work by our entire parent community. The social calendar (team activities) creates an invaluable aspect of the team dynamic with interaction, engagement, and teambuilding. Activities like rafting create lasting memories while the team banquet celebrates a year of extraordinary achievement both in and out of the pool.

We also want to thank our swimmers for their dedication to the sport, the team, and to our mission. We have seen over the past few months from both groups, a high level of athletic performance and a maturity, team commitment, and culture that is rarely seen on a pool deck. The Junior group continued its success from our December JO performance to strong swimming in Santa Rosa, Carson City, Far Westerns, and culminated with an incredible experience in Arizona. We were truly fortunate to be at a great facility, to have multiple finals opportunities, to be surrounded by Olympians (Michael Phelps booth and Jason Lezak as an awards presenter), and of course, to experience SwimJitsu!

Regarding the senior group, we ask that parents (and swimmers) see the Clovis/Sectional recaps that were emailed earlier, as well as the OA College Update. These two documents speak to the very core of the team and its broader mission and philosophy. The senior group(s) had outstanding performances in Clovis and at Sectionals in San Diego, and again at the high school championships this May. The development of the group has been truly outstanding and we have seen tremendous growth in swimmers from all groups at all levels. With our performance, the culture that exists at OA, and the academic backdrop (graduating class with a GP of 4.0), we are truly fortunate to operate in such a special environment.

I would like to conclude with a brief recap of a dinner with a former OA swimmer, Chris Leon. Chris grew up in Walnut Creek, swam for Berean Christian and joined OA as a sophomore in high school. He developed quickly and became a top North Coast swimmer and a national-level Breaststroker. Chris swam at Cal with numerous Olympians and World Record holders and was lauded by coaches for his maturity, discipline, work ethic, and team commitment. Chris is now in his mid-twenties and working for a financial services firm in Walnut Creek. At dinner I asked him how things were going. He said it was challenging but that he was consumed with succeeding and doing what was required to make that happen. He said he is the first one in the office and the last one to leave. He said he wastes no time in the office and looks for every opportunity to grow and learn, including reaching out to corporate executives at every opportunity. He said that his dream and vision one day is to run the office and to become one the most successful employees in the company. But for now, it is simply about the daily commitment of self-improvement and corporate contribution. As a coach of forty years, I sat in admiration and near awe listening to his positive and relentless attitude. I told him how proud I was of him. He looked at me and said, "Donnie, everything I do comes from swimming, from being an athlete, from being a part of Orinda Aquatics, and from you and Ronnie, which includes my work ethic, my value system, my team orientation, and *even* the importance of getting eight and a half hours of sleep a night."

At OA we saw an athlete who came to the team as a good rec swimmer and who left the sport as an Olympic Trials qualifier and a leader among world class athletes. But it wasn't just swimming that defined Chris and his values system. It was a young man open and willing to embrace the "journey", with its challenges and sacrifices, every day of his life. As Simon Sinek said, "too many young adults see the top of the mountain, but they don't see the mountain itself." Chris not only sees the top of the mountain, but has the rare and

disciplined insight to see and embrace every challenging step of the journey. This is a great reminder to stay focused on the athletic “process”, and on living with an impeccable value system. Whether or not you lead Olympians in the pool, you *will* lead an exceptional life.

On an administrative note, please find the summer workout and meet schedules on the website. Swimmers should be thinking about their long course meet plans and *convey any schedule conflicts with their coaches*. We also ask that swimmers try their best to maintain consistent training through finals, so that they are prepared for the “short” long course season.

All junior and senior swimmers should make note of the **Summers End Classic** meet (date TBD) usually held in early August. This meet allows one more opportunity for shaven short course swims, after the summer long course season, and it supports the Orinda Aquatics national scoring.

And a very sincere congratulations to Jill Jones on her recent engagement! We could not be happier for you!

We look forward to an exciting summer of fast swimming and great activities!



Board note:

The Board and the staff is here to assist with anything you might need and will make themselves available to meet with you if you would like. Please don't hesitate to reach out with a question, need, or concern.

The Board is proud to announce that Orinda Aquatics has been selected to host the **2018 Long Course Far Western Championships**. This meet is one of the premier age-group meets in the United States, attracting top teams from around the country as well as teams from outside the United States.

Questions, comments, concerns? The OA Board of Directors is here to serve you and your family. Feel free to contact any of us at:

- Jim Lennon, President - jim@jtechcm.com
- Trent McDonald, Treasurer - trent@mcdonaldcapital.com
- Jean Follmer, Secretary - jeanfollmer@yahoo.com (Committee Chair)
- Vince Castillo, Member - vcastillo@llcllp.com
- Renee Owyong, Member - r.owyong@att.net (Meet Director)
- Jon Wheeler, Member - jwheeler35@comcast.net (Facilities)



Parents Need-to-Know:

- We may have a new scoreboard in July!
- Workout and meet schedules are on the website
- Host Meets in June 10-11 OA CBA+ and JO's July 7-9
- Swimmers should attend the Summers End Classic (**if no long course championship meet**)
- Coaches are more than happy to meet if you would like to discuss your child's swimming
- Juniors in high school should be assembling college lists and meeting with their coach
- Look for the OA screening of “Swim Team” – an award-winning documentary on the New Jersey Hammerheads swimming team and athletes with Autism (date TBD)
- ALL caffeine related drinks and products and stimulants are strictly prohibited. We have discussed this with the team in the past.
- The coaches will be talking to the team about wearing swim suits appropriately.

Parent Reminders:

- Orinda Aquatics has a contractual relationship with Speedo as a team sponsor. As such, we are obligated to purchase and wear Speedo suits. We ask that swimmers and parents honor this relationship.
- Team attire (navy warm-up, red t-shirt, and team backpack) is required at all meets by all swimmers.



Swimmers Need-to-Know:

- All swimmers should know their long course meet schedules and time standards for qualifying
- Please let your coach know if you have a workout conflict.
- Make sure you have a water bottle and sun screen at practice, and all of your training equipment.
- The bulletin boards are updated with schedules, time standards, and photo's.



Key Dates/Events Reminders:

- OA CBA (host meet/team meet) June 10-11
- Rafting – June 16th
- Theme Week (Senior) - week of June 26
- A film screening of "Swim Team" - TBD
- JO's (host meet/team meet) July 7-9
- OA Team Banquet – July 17
- Waterslides – July 17th
- Summers End Classic – date TBD
- NorCal Kids Triathlon – August 26th MIRA (Jr. Group)



Welcome to the Team

- Elsa Hartley - December (Junior 1)
- Hunter Markey – January (Junior 1)
- Jalen Evans -January (Junior 2)
- Haley Park – January (Junior 2)
- Nicole Chapman – February (Senior 1-2)
- Vincent Evangelist – May (Senior 1-2)
- Kassy Gregory – May (Senior 1-2)
- Ryan Lenahan – May (Senior 3)





International

- We are very excited to welcome six swimmers from **El Salvador** who will join us for the summer. They will be hosted and supported by the Vasquez-Azpiri family. Please look for them and extend a sincere welcome.
- We also have a swimmer relocating from Australia.



College Commitments:

Orinda Aquatics continues its extraordinary representation of student-athletes at the highest level. This year's class could not have been more exemplary as athletes, as high-character young men and women, and as students (with an average GPA near 4.0).



Graduating Class of 2017

First	Last	School	
Jolen	Griffin	UCSB	Swimming
Rachel	Hendricks	Davidson	Swimming
Mackenzie	Duarte	Washington State	Swimming
Kenna	Van Steyn	Dartmouth	Swimming
Katherine	Cane	Dartmouth	Swimming
Spencer	Lekki	Carleton College	Swimming
Ryan	Teshima	Johns Hopkins	TBD
Jenna	Muller	Pacific Lutheran	Swimming
Matt	Ruegg	Puget Sound	Swimming
Justin	Lammert	Chapman	Swimming
Callan	Hoskins	Stanford	
Melanie	Moran	UCLA	
Neil	Binnie	USC	Club
Rishabh	Roy	Cal	
Jenn	Sweeney	Cal Poly	
Eli	O'Brien	Cal Poly	

Alumni/College Notes

- Steven Stumph (USC), Pac 12 Champion was also recognized as an NCAA Academic All American
- Lucy Faust (Bates) was named NESCAC Winter All-Academic
- Our three Collegiate Traithletes all placed at Nationals: Allie light and Hannah Grubbs (UCLA) and Megan Howard (Naval Academy)

- **NOTE TO PARENTS OF GRADUATING SENIORS. A graduating senior with a cumulative GPA of 3.75 (seven semesters) is eligible to become an Academic All-America. Go to NISCAONLINE for more information.**
- As mentioned, high school Juniors should begin preparing their college lists. Ronnie and Donnie will sit down with swimmers and or parents to help with this. OA has a “College Handbook” and a “College Grid” to help get you started. Also, please review all of the information on the website (under the College tab).
- Look for a college overview meeting this summer

OA Achievements/Performance

With the conclusion of this high school season, Orinda Aquatics now has forty Sectional, Futures, and National Level swimmers. We want to congratulate new Junior National qualifiers Harry Flanders (200 Fly 1:50.74), Sophia Cavalli (200 Free 1:49.76), Tony Moore (100 Breast 56.27), and Spencer Daily (100 Free 45.73). Another swim of note was Mackenzie Duarte’s 200 Breaststroke at the post-NCS Walk-On meet. Her time of 2:15.99 ranks her among the top swimmers in PacSwim and is just off Winter National qualifying. At the age-group level, Orinda Aquatics has an impressive *80+ members with Far Western Standard time.*

Virtual Club Championship National Scoring

USA Swimming calculates on a daily basis every team and swim in the nation. They produce a team score for all 3,000 clubs based on single ages and all events (two score per event/four events max per swimmer). Orinda Aquatics is now ranked 39th among the nearly 3,000 teams in the United States, and is the top scoring team for clubs under 200 members (~2,800). We are also ranked 7th in the sixteen-state Western Zone, 5th in the state of California, and 3rd in Pacific Swimming behind PASA and Santa Clara. This is a great team achievement, especially for a team of our size, and one that reflects the breadth, depth, and efficiency of our swimmers. Congratulations!

IMX Update: (USA Swimming)

The IMX program originated from the philosophy of developing all strokes and all distances as an age-group swimmer. This is a healthy and balanced way of training and perspective as opposed to fixating on one stroke or one event. Many swimmers’ best strokes and events changes throughout their careers and an early focus on IMX development will help facilitate those transitions. Check your IMX score on the USA Swimming website or on Deck Pass. The following are OA’s current IMX qualifiers.

Emilia Barck	Jennifer Fong	Natalie Mak	Bernave Twyman
Henrik Barck	Alexis Greenberg	Christian Markey	Cristian Twyman
Vincent Castillo	Channing Hanley	Maren McDonald	Natalie Ung
Jeromy Chang	Zach Hoffman	Margaux McDonald	Amber Van Meines
Michael Chu	Sofia Holman	Rishabh Roy	Ginny Zasquez-Azpiri
Jalen Evans	Ben Kang	Mia Rusk	Sydney Zhang
Jasmine Fok	Isaac Kim	Jamie Say	
Lexi Fok	Zach Le-Nguyen	Adriana Smith	
Lizzy Follmer	Sophie Lurie	Tay Thomas	

High School

At the high school level, the OA senior group continued to excel at North Coast with **forty** final swims (16 final heat/24 consol). The men’s 100 Fly had **five OA swimmers in the top eight**, and six of the top sixteen! At the team level, Campolindo won the men’s division, just ahead of San Ramon, and Campolindo finished second in the women’s division, with Miramonte finishing third. A note on OA coaching achievement, Ronnie continues to be the most accomplished coach in North Coast history with fifteen NCS championships, and combined, Ronnie and Donnie have won the meet twenty times and have over fifty top-three finishes. At the CIF, California State Championships, Orinda Aquatics was represented by twenty-five swimmers.

Daniela Moroz – Recognized as the Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year!



Swimmer Spotlights



Orinda Aquatics – Senior Swimmer Spotlight

Andy Kang, Senior 3

Age: 16

Grade: 10th

School: Head-Royce School

Pets: A Maltese Poodle named Teddy

In which city do you live? Moraga

Previous team? I swam for a local summer recreation swim team, Miramonte Swim Club, until I was 10 years old.

Main stroke? Breaststroke and Freestyle

Hobbies (other than swimming)? Chilling with my brother and attending weekend drills for Sea Cadets

Favorite ice cream? Mint chocolate

Favorite musician/singer? Maroon 5 and Michael Jackson

Favorite class? I generally like math, but this year I am enjoying pre-calculus and chemistry.

Most positive (non-competitive) swimming experience? Creating relationships with all sorts of people is the most positive experience that has come with swimming. Starting with my summer recreation team, there were so many people who have made huge impacts on my life. I am still in touch with some of my coaches to this day, and I will never forget the summers I spent with my rec team. Making new friends and seeing them every day at the pool is something to always look forward to at practice.

What have you learned/how have you benefited, from swimming? When I was much younger, I had an anxiety problem. I would actually throw-up everywhere I went from riding the school bus or going to a swim meet. I would get anxious everywhere I went every day. It was hard and very stressful to go anywhere outside of home and I feared social events. The problem became so bad that my mom began to bring plastic bags and paper towels with her everywhere I went. I even spent a day in the hospital trying to figure out if there was a physical problem with me. Swimming played a big role in fixing this. It's kind of hard to explain, but learning the importance of perseverance and self-control from coaches helped changed my mindset. By the time I was ten or eleven, I was able to control my nerves by myself. I had figured out a mechanism to relax my body and mind when I needed to. To this day, I still get those nerves, and it sometimes stops me from what I want to do. But, most importantly, I learned to never give up in any problem that I face.

What does “putting character first” mean to you? To me, it means to differentiate from the things that you should be doing from the things that you aren't. It means making conscious decisions that are right and healthy for you. Also, it means to take care of those who are around you and making sure to surround yourself with the best people/relationships possible.

Anything unique or personal you would like to share? Thank you to everyone who support me every day, including parents, coaches and friends. I love you all.

Orinda Aquatics – Junior Swimmers Spotlight

Amber van Meines, Junior 2

Age: 13

Grade: 7th

School: JM

Pets: Two dogs (Pebbles and Blaze)

In which city do you live? Moraga

Previous Team: The Ridgewood Breakers in New Jersey

Main stroke? Freestyle

Hobbies (other than swimming)? Going on vacation to visit family in the Netherlands

Favorite ice cream? Cookies-n-Cream

Favorite musician/singer? Justine Timberlake

Favorite class? Math

Most positive (non-competitive) swimming experience? Trying out for Orinda Aquatics and making it. It's nice to work on technique and learn more.

What have you learned/how have you benefited, from swimming? Only sport that has helped me feel confident and I really enjoy working hard.

What does "putting character first" mean to you? Treat everyone kindly and put others first. Think of others before yourself.

Anything unique or personal you would like to share? California swimming is so different because I'm used to swimming indoors.

Emilia Barck, Junior 1

Age: 10

Grade: 5th

School: Camino Pablo

Pets: 5 chickens and a guinea pig

In which city do you live? Moraga

Previous Team: PSL in Pacifica- moved to Moraga three years ago

Main stroke? Backstroke

Hobbies (other than swimming)? Ice skating and piano

Favorite ice cream? Rocky Road

Favorite musician/singer? Mozart

Most positive (non-competitive) swimming experience? Previous team did a swim-a-thon fundraiser and I got to swim and have fun with my friends while supporting a cause.

What have you learned/how have you benefited, from swimming? Team work and having team spirit by cheering for friends and your team

What does "putting character first" mean to you? Being kind, positive, and helping others.

Anything unique or personal you would like to share? Has been ice-skating competitively for three years and just performed at a holiday ice skating show in Oakland.

OA Trivia

- Orinda Aquatics was founded in what year?
- Where was the original home of OA?
- How old was Matt E when he and Ronnie and Donnie first met?
- What does the "PB" in OAPB stand for?
- What does the OA logo represent?
- Who is older, Ronnie or Donnie?
- Which corporation did Marc work for before coaching?

1995, Sleepy Hollow, three, Polar Bears, swimmer head ("O") and swimmer arm ("A"), Donnie, Golden State Warriors

The Broader Landscape (Collegiate, USA Swimming, PacSwim)

- Two college programs were cut this year, at North Dakota and Buffalo. This adds to the future uncertainty and insecurity in NCAA Swimming. There are efforts underway to support the sport at the collegiate level through the College Swimming Coaches Association, USA Swimming, and the American Swimming Coaches Association.
- USA Swimming is currently searching for a new CEO and a new National Team Director
- USA Swimming unveils new website
- There is movement to ban “tech suits” from non-championship age-group meets. We have seen this in Southern California and in Canada. Watch for this trend to continue.
- Donnie met with the head of USA Swimming and the ASCA to discuss critical issues facing the sport
- The CEO of USA Swimming Chuck Wielgus passed away last month. Chuck was monumental in repositioning USA Swimming in the global landscape and in its growth and continued success.
- PacSwim - Jennifer Sweeney and Tay Thomas are serving on PacSwim Athlete Committees

Outreach Support: Consider a Donation

Through its mission of serving the community and the sport, Orinda Aquatics pursues a multidimensional outreach program that seeks to support the following: the swimming efforts in Swaziland Africa, teaching learn-to-swim lessons to children from areas where swimming instruction is not readily accessible, assisting clubs and newer coaches with mentorship and training equipment, offering club visits to present material on culture and character development, supporting the local Special Olympics Swim Team (The Sea Serpents), and finally on providing scholarships to those with need. In summary, they are:

- **The Swaziland National Swimming Association** - through donations that support clinics, competition, and equipment
- **Harbor House Ministries**, Oakland, CA – one-on-one learn-to-swim opportunities/teambuilding
- **Coach & Club Mentorship** (Pacific Swimming Diversity and Outreach clubs – Richmond Sailfish and Oaklantis) with needed equipment and coach development
- **Character Camps & Clinics** - throughout the United States
- **East Bay Sea Serpents**
- **Team scholarships**

All funds donated to Orinda Aquatics Outreach efforts are tax deductible and will *only* be used for the purposes described above. No funds will ever be used for operating expenses. We are passionate about the sport of swimming, about helping where we can, and about trying to make a difference in the world.

“Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare.” -- Mark Twain

Coaches Notes/Coaches Tips:

Race tip

Visualize the first lap of your race. This usually sets the tone for, and more importantly dictates, the rest of your race, including the back half and finish. Critical components are distance under water, leg drive, stroke rate, and breathing pattern. Make sure your first lap sets up a great finish. Numerically, five tenth *too fast* on the first 25 yards of a 200 can easily result in a second slower (or more) on the last 50.

Team Tip/Question:

Do you make the *lane* better? On a daily basis, evaluate (or grade) yourself with regard to focus, effort, integrity, and support. Note: If you make the lane better, you make the team better! PS: If you're not sure, you can always ask a coach!

Training Tip (you can "count" on it!)

Swimmers should know and train with under water kick counts and stroke counts for most strokes. For free, fly, and back, a swimmers can attempt to maintain a kick count for different types of sets. A stroke count can be used for free, breast, and even fly to help keep a focus on distance per stroke. The black lines that cross the pool can also be used for an underwater distance measure for fly kicks or pull downs as well as using them to measure distance per stroke, i.e., one stroke per black line, etc.

Meet tip

All swimmers should warm-up in every meet as if it was the most important meet of our life. This includes: arrival, attire, stretch out, build up, pace, dive, get to know the walls, gutters, flags, lanes lines, visibility, etc. And always warm down immediately after your race with a minimum of 500 and up to 1,500 yards. Remember, your splits won't change, but your recovery will.

Five Benefits of Using a Foam Roller

By Keenan Robinson/USA Swimming National Team High Performance Director

In honor of National Foam Rolling Day, here are five benefits of using a foam roller before and after practice from USA Swimming's National Team High Performance Director Keenan Robinson.

1. **Decreases Muscle Stiffness:** foam rolling removes local muscle tightness, but still leaves them responsive enough to train
2. **Reduced pain:** the ischemic pressure provides temporary pain relief
3. **Relaxation:** foam rolling improves the autonomic nervous system by allowing the body return to parasympathetic state(rest and digest) post training
4. **Activation:** foam rolling may modulate certain muscle tissue tone prior to training to provide an aid in the warm up process
5. **Convenient:** a foam roller is a piece of beneficial equipment(just like a great kick board and hand paddles) that a swimmer can use throughout their career and is easy to travel with

Ways to Improve

While this newsletter is focused more on the broader aspects of the team, the sport, and the culture, we wanted to include this overview. It is not intended to be a parent primer on coaching, but rather to create an overview of the many components that are integral to swimming development. This will give some perspective on the notion that "just showing up" to practice should generate results, which is naively believed by many athletes and parents. The reality is, barring physical growth, it is very possible to not move forward in any of these areas, even if an athlete "shows up" regularly. And even if some areas do develop, a swimmers may regress in other areas, therefore neutralizing a specific improvement. An example of this might be a swimmer improves in a technical area but becomes social in workout and loses training focus.

There should be an ongoing awareness and vigilance of each of these categories as to whether or not they are a strength or a weakness for the swimmer. With a broad-based, focused, and aggressive pursuit of each component, the odds of improvement are certainly in the athletes' favor.

<p>1) Improve technique/efficiency</p>	<p>It is widely accepted that the fastest way to improve performance is to improve efficiency. Technically, this would be either reducing drag or increasing propulsion. As coaches, we focus first on the fundamentals of balance, timing, body position, pull and recovery lines. From there, stroke development can be as nuanced as hand pitch, elbow position, recovery angle, breathing angle/head position, and on and on. The key here is to begin with (macro) fundamentals and work into specific details. Swimmers must have a daily focus and commitment to this aspect of their swimming.</p>
<p>2) Improve endurance/effort</p>	<p>Effort becomes the foundation of the athletic process. Swimmers need to train “out of their comfort zone”. The numbers that coach’s say will never lie are heart rate and repeat times. Swimmer must know how hard they are working and what that effort produces. And beyond the effort, a mature, and disciplined swimmer, must “lock into” all of the technical components, such as stroke, turns, under water speed, etc. This is when effort is maximized and technique is established.</p>
<p>3) Improve strength/fitness</p>	<p>This comes in the form of dryland (and of course physical growth and maturity). The OA dryland program, <i>Bridge Athletic</i>, is designed by world class athletes and trainers in aquatics, with a focus on mobility, flexibility, strength, and injury prevention. The Bridge program also creates a continuum of progression from Junior to Senior groups. Proper execution of each exercise is critical.</p>
<p>4) Improve under water speed/endurance</p>	<p>The fastest a swimmer moves in the water is when they are coming off a wall. Most high level swimmers leverage this aspect of the race. Those swimmers who undulate naturally are clearly better at generating under water speed, but it is daily focus and effort that develops this part of a race. Remember, a 5,000 yard workout offers 200 opportunities work on streamlining and under water speed. This has to be a daily priority. NOTE: Underwater speed MUST BE conditioned.</p>
<p>5) Improve turns</p>	<p>There is a natural tendency for swimmers to relax into and through a turn in an attempt to gain some recovery after the preceding lap. Mature swimmers know that turns are a critical component of a race which if maximized, create a competitive advantage. The only real way to improve turn technique is through daily repetition in workout.</p>
<p>6) Improve race strategy</p>	<p>Optimizing a race strategy can often lead to better results. A slight adjustment in pace, underwater distance, breathing pattern, leg drive, or stroke rate can easily improve a 100 yard race by a half of a second, and a 200 yard race by well over a second.</p>
<p>7) Improve mindset</p>	<p>While this may be a deeper, non-swimming issue, an athlete's mindset plays a significant role not only in racing but also training. Swimmers should keep swimming (and life) in perspective and not allow anxiety or self-defeating thoughts to impair performance, or general well-being. Relaxation, visualization, and affirmations should be employed by all athletes.</p>
<p>8) Improve coach-swimmer relationship</p>	<p>This is not simply a question of general dialogue, but more an understanding and collaboration between coach and athlete on current tendencies and critical areas for development. Better dialogue can be the glue that holds all of these together. A swimmer must seek this out as the “owner” of their sport, and ask for constant feedback.</p>
<p>9) Improve attendance</p>	<p>As mentioned in the introduction, attendance guarantees nothing. An athlete with poor focus, effort, and desire, will undoubtedly drift or regress. But a swimmer committed to all of the above, with excellent attendance will in most cases, continue to develop. There is also the academic/social balance of attending practice or not. We have seen for thirty years that swimmers <i>with</i> excellence attendance are generally better students and in most cases, more grounded socially. They develop a discipline that drives not only their schedule, but their expectations as well.</p>
<p>10) Other – nutrition, sleep, etc.</p>	<p>These will certainly influence training ability and performance. While they may not be the dominant components of improved performance, they <i>can</i> affect everything, <i>and</i> there is a without question a cumulative affect (positive or negative) here.</p>

New Sponsors

Orinda Aquatics Welcomes Hero Fuel as a Partner

"If you're looking for quality fuel for your athlete on meet day, HERO is a local company that makes a nutrition bar designed specifically to fuel growing athletes when competing. Learn more at www.shopherofuel.com and use code "ORINDA" to save 15%!"

Sports Basement

Thanks to the diligent work of Kristin Thompson, OA is now in the Sport Basement **Basementeer Program**. Sports basement will donate money back to OA's Outreach Program with each purchase. More details to follow.

Kim Vandenberg's New Venture – RISEELITE (<http://riseeliteathletes.com>)

OA alum and Olympian Kim Vandenberg enters a new venture as a consultant with Rise Elite Athletes, with the mission to develop an "Olympic Mindset". From the website...

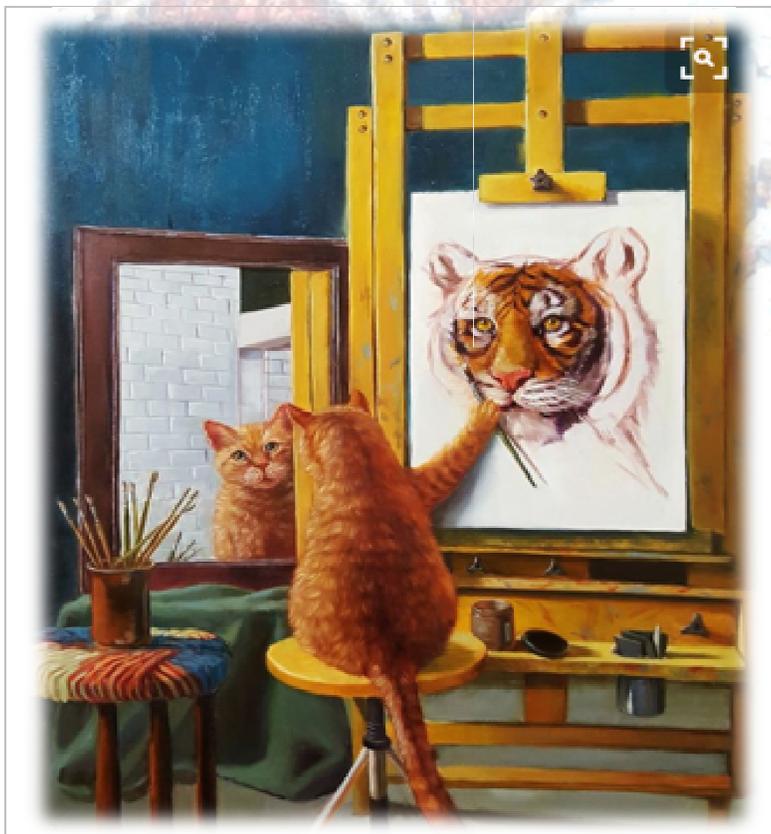
Did you know that having a MENTOR...

INCREASES awareness: a mentor challenges you with new ways of thinking

ENHANCES skills: they can teach you new ways to increase your efficiency and give you mental skills

DEVELOPS processes: often someone with different experience has developed new ways to get results

GIVES YOU tools: your neighbor probably has different tools in their garage than the ones you have in yours. A mentor can share their shortcuts and connections with you



“The truth of your character is expressed through the choice of your actions.” unknown

“Two things define you; your patience when you have nothing, and your attitude when you have everything.” unknown

“Integrity is not something you show others. It is how you behave behind their back.” unknown

Parents Corner

“On Being an Age Group Swim Parent”

Swimmingcoach.org



A program for parents of swimming children, to understand the process and their role in it, better. There is nothing easy about being an age group swimming parent. There is no “users manual”. And if there was, it would have to be different for every child. But there are many COMMON situations and issues. After almost 50 years of coaching, I am familiar with all of them. This short, 20 minute program, will provide you with an overview of some of the most important things for you to consider if you wish your child to have a satisfying and successful career in youth sports. It’s not the “users manual” but it is a good place to start in learning how to best assist your child. All the Best, John Leonard, Executive Director, ASCA, since 1985.

Nutrition Info - Tips for Consistent Nutrition

By Chris Rosenbloom, PHD, RDN, CSSD | Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Consistent Process: When it comes to food, consistent process means eating to fuel training and competition every day. Your training will not be helped if you are under- or over-fueled. Too little food results in sluggish performance and early fatigue; too much food can divert blood from working muscles to the gut for digestion. Plan to eat mini-meals or snacks before a long practice and replenish muscle fuel and fluids after practice. A slice of turkey on a mini-bagel, a Clementine tangerine, and water may be just the thing to get you through a grueling pool and land training session. A carton of low-fat chocolate milk after practice can provide key amino acids for muscle repair, carbohydrates for muscle glycogen synthesis, and fluids. Consistent fueling will also keep hunger at bay so you won’t be starving when you get home from practice.

Consistent Mindset: Do you think of nutrition as something that your parents nag you about? Or, do you take responsibility and seek healthful foods and beverages throughout the day? Healthy food doesn’t have to mean yucky! Even at your favorite quick service restaurants, healthy options abound. It is up to you to think about food as something that can elevate your swimming, and taste good at the same time. Parents and coaches can guide a swimmer to healthy foods, but only you can eat the foods to get the benefits.

Consistent Lifestyle: Sleep, stress, and social support all contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Eating a variety of foods: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, and lean proteins, contribute nutrients that feed your brain, as well as your muscles. Try eating 3 meals and 3 snacks every day during your hardest training periods and take note of how you feel. My bet is you will feel better, stronger, and more energized than when you are eating less food. And, while dietitians always take a “food first” approach; there are times when bars or chews or shakes can add needed calories. Look for wholesome ingredients in these foods: whole grain carbohydrates, naturally occurring sugars from fruit or milk, and healthy fats from nuts or unsaturated oils.

A Coach's Plea to Parents (Letter from a Soccer coach/parent)

Alison Belbin is passing on her love of the game. So why does she get so much interference from the sidelines?

I am here, on time. My mortgage is two-weeks late; my oldest child is suffering through a medication change and trouble at school; my youngest child begged me not to leave, and my husband and I haven't looked each other in the eye for days. I spent much of the day holding my aging dog as she recovered from a seizure. But none of this matters now. I am here. I compose myself and prepare for the next 90 minutes on the field with your child. And mine; she has already leapt from the car and disappeared into the growing crowd of girls.

Sometimes you wave as you drive away, and sometimes you don't. It usually depends if we won the previous weekend and if you felt your child had been given an appropriate amount of play time. Your daughter is funny and kind and thoughtful. And tonight your daughter had a great practice. She struggled with a new skill and shook off a solid smack to her ear from a ball. And, we laughed. She also told me something that has been bothering her, asking shyly that I not tell anyone. I explained why she was subbed off last game. She nodded in agreement and asked how to get better. We hugged, she thanked me, and we moved on.

She likes a boy, she hates her thighs. Her best friend ignored her today and she still has difficult homework to get through after practice. She got her period in art class. And yet she's here with me in the freezing rain, our cleats rotting and our noses dripping. She is here because her team provides a safe shield from the outside world.

We sweat together, we celebrate together and we all feel the same sting of defeat when the bounce of the ball is not in our favor. We step on the field with the best intentions. We try. I always leave the field a better person than when I arrived. In the time it takes me to drive home, dry off and microwave my dinner, you have hastily typed an e-mail. My youngest has fallen asleep on the couch and my husband is cleaning the kitchen while I sit at the table alone, reading how you feel I've let your child down.

You believe last weekend's loss was due to my poor decisions. Your daughter would have scored the winning goal if I only had subbed her in earlier or let her play a different position. You believe they aren't playing like a team should. You watched a Premier League game and they seem so much more in tune with each other. It's a shame, I think, that you missed the girls hugging and cheering each other on tonight while you were at the coffee shop around the corner.

If we win, I'll read that it's because the more talented girls got too much playing time; that I'm too competitive; that I'm pushing them too hard; that I've managed to crush the souls of the players on the bench. If we lose, it's because I played the developing players too much; I am ruining the stronger players' chance at future glory; I'm not pushing them hard enough. What do we even do during practice anyway? I know what you've told her about me and I know what you've said about her teammates. And yet, your daughter and I both keep showing up. We keep trying. I may not do it the way you would. I may not speak to your daughter the way you would, but she needs more than one voice in her head.

I am not a professional. I am a parent who loves the game and has the desire to pass that on. I accepted the role I was offered; not for a paycheck, not for status, certainly not for praise. I accepted this role because I have been where your daughter is now. I see myself in her missteps and in her triumphs. I have felt them all and I feel them all over again through her. I, too, have been bruised by a ball, pulled muscles in tough tackles and played with a broken heart. I also had coaches who believed in me, just as I believe in your daughter.

Knowing I had someone in my corner that challenged me and called out my excuses was the greatest reward of my years in sport. I vaguely remember the final scores of even the most important games, but I sure remember how I felt. Winning doesn't promise pride, just as losing doesn't guarantee disappointment.

One of my parents' great gifts to me was their unwavering support of my coaches. They never wrote a letter, made a complaint phone call or disrespected a coach – even when my eyes stung and I desperately needed it to be someone else's fault. It was my team, my game, my experience to have. I learned early on that my coach was neither my parent nor my friend. I admired them and sought their praise. I hated them sometimes, too. If I thought I deserved a higher standing on that team, it was up to me to earn it. My parents sure weren't going to earn it for me.

Criticizing your child's coach might simply be a reflection of your insecurities or long-held regrets as a former player. That's okay. We all have them. As adults we can understand this, but as a child, your daughter does not. She is being pulled in opposing directions between her team and her parent's opinion of her team. On her team, she is finding her identity and her place among her peers. It is here she will decide if that place makes her feel whole and satisfied, or if it makes her edgy and hungry for more. Let her discover this, on her own. Let her play. Alison Belbin lives in Nanaimo, B.C.

Dear Parents: I Want Your Kid to Fail, By Josh Levine

Yes, you read that right. I want your kid to fail, and the earlier he or she can start failing, the better. I am so convinced of the positive value of failure that I believe you, as a parent, should actually hope your child fails. Why? Because it's the only way they can truly succeed in the game and beyond.

Sports are perfect for learning how to deal with adversity and failure. The consequences are minimal compared to many circumstances our players will face as adults. And relative to those truly trying situations, the pressure to find a solution is low. It's the perfect venue to learn from mistakes, to develop a sense of responsibility, to learn how to communicate with adults, and to practice conflict resolution.

Imagine a player who experiences adversity and struggles during a long losing season but learns to battle every game despite the odds. Envision this same player, tired and exhausted from a long semester, battling through the last few hours of a college exam. And can't you see it now, this same player as an adult bouncing back after a bad week at work, when the sales numbers just didn't meet company expectations?

But for some reason, our culture doesn't embrace failure. Instead we shun it and attempt to do everything in our power to *protect* our children from it. Rather than enduring that long, losing season, we look to move homes, change associations, or find a "better" club team. We will argue better than any elite defense lawyer, debating the meaning of every word the coach spoke, instead of letting our players learn to be accountable for their own actions.

I understand some parents might say, "But the coach treated my player unfairly! I'm not a crazy parent. I've asked around. The coach made a poor decision and unfairly punished my child." First of all, I don't believe there is a coach who is completely fair. At some level, whether it's in regard to the attention they give to each player, the allocation of court time or enforcement of rules, the coach will make a decision that's unfair. But do we not face unfair situations outside of sports, and isn't it worthwhile to learn how to deal with them?

If you're a parent, I hope you at least consider this advice. There are times when a parent needs to protect their child. However, these instances are quite rare. In the majority of cases, the best solution is for the player to take control of the issue. If they are allowed and encouraged to do so, they'll learn a lot and be better athletes, students, and people as a result.



Thought of the Day

From the [2016 World Clinic Yearbook](#)

We get nowhere in life without appreciation, and appreciation breeds respect; respect for others as well as respect for your own efforts. If an athlete has to learn to appreciate (their parents, their coach, their friends, etc.), then we must teach them. I always ask parents what made them the success they are today?" And the answer is always some version of walking ten miles to school barefoot through the snow, etc., i.e., a lot of hard work. Yet many of those same parents don't want their children to experience hardship! Crazy. They see it if you point it out to them. Athletes (children in general) need hardship and challenge to grow and mature. Swimming is perfect for this.

John Leonard, ASCA

from *Teaching Life Skills to 12 and Unders in Daily Practices*

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Character Corner

An OA Swimmer's Perspective on Social Media

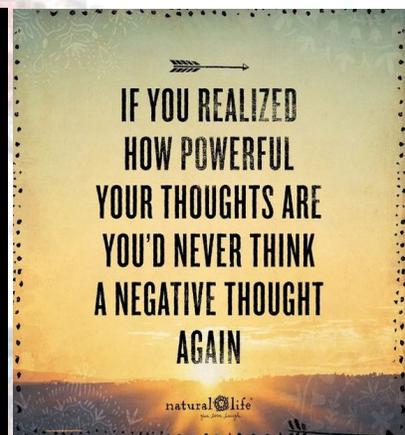
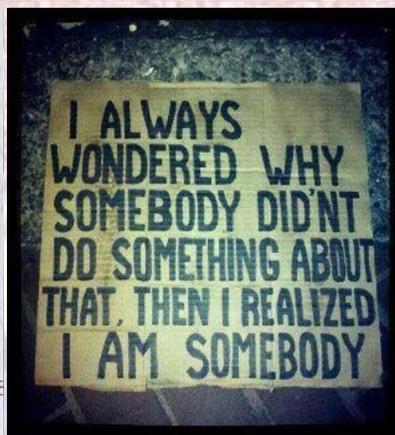
Hi Coach Ronnie,

A few weeks ago I was at the OA Senior Group meeting where the video was shown about spending time involved on phones and social media rather than talking face to face. Although that was a while ago, I didn't get to thank you for talking about times you came face to face deciding whether social media was worth it. I am one of the few people in my grade (as it seems) to not have social media. I made that decision by choice but I am constantly questioned about my decision, so that video helped reassure me that I don't need Instagram or Snapchat, although I believe that small doses, as stated in the video, can be a good basis for communication. Anyways, I was given an assignment tonight to analyze a short piece written by a reverend. Although it was written in 1995, I feel that it really reflects today's society. I thought I might share it with you because I thought it also might possibly reflect some topics you and the other coaches have discussed during meetings, and some virtues of putting Character First. I am sorry if I'm showing you something you have already seen. Here's the excerpt that we read:

The Paradox of Our Time, Bob Moorehead, Reverend from Seattle, WA 1995

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more but have less. We buy more but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness. We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less. These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom.

Thanks for your time!



Character Focus (for teammates): Ask daily – “Who can I help? How can I help?”

Recommended Ted Talk: [The 5-Seconds rule, Mel Robbins](#)

Recommended Book: [Peak, by Andres Ericsson \(and Robert Pool\)](#)

“The book discusses how neuroscience reveals that peak performance comes from moving beyond your comfort zone and “breaking new ground” on a daily basis. It shows how to get better at things we care about.”

Recommended Movie/Documentary - [American Experience: The Boys of '36](#)

“Up against Ivy Leaguers and elite German athletes, a team of American working-class rowers inspired the world by winning gold at the 1936 Olympics.”

Recommended Show – [A Football Life \(Curtis Martin\)](#)

One of the greatest examples of resilience, humility, gratitude, and forgiveness you will ever see. He is without question a role model for every human being, athlete or not.

Recommended Article:

Three Questions That You Should Regularly Ask Yourself That Can Transform Your Life

Relevant for life and sports, MATT MAYBERRY

Asking great questions regularly can drastically transform your life in many amazing ways. Doing this also encourages you to pause and think more deeply. What's more, asking the right questions stimulates creative thinking that can inch you that much closer to experiencing a major breakthrough. I truly believe that the best of the best, those excelling at a very high level in all that they do, have formed the habit of asking better questions on a regular basis than everyone else. Tony Robbins once said, "Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers." I couldn't agree more. To get you started on the right track, here are three questions that I regularly ask myself that have provided a tremendous amount of value in my life.

1. "Where am I?"

Taking the time to ask yourself where you currently are in life is incredibly important. A huge majority of the population never even stops to analyze where they are right this moment and if that's where they truly want to be. They just continue going through the motions and living life way beneath their *full potential*. Then, all of a sudden, they get stopped dead in their tracks and realize how their unfulfilling lives are, and enter into a state of feeling sorry for themselves and playing the blame game. Please don't fall into that trap. Start asking yourself on a continual basis where you currently are in life and answer that question honestly. One of the hardest things to do is to admit that you aren't where you want to be or that you have been doing it all wrong leading up to this point. However, do you know what's even much harder to deal with? Regret. And a lot of the regret that people unfortunately experience comes directly from never taking the time to ask this simple but extremely important question.

2. "Where do I want to be?"

This question is all about digging deep within yourself and discovering what your true passions, goals and dreams really are. In this day and age, it is so easy to get sidetracked by the fast-paced and noisy world we live in, while totally forgetting about what we truly want for our lives, personally and professionally. One of the best ways to constantly make sure that you are moving in the right direction is to get in the habit of asking yourself where exactly you want to be.

3. "How am I going to get there?"

All three of these questions are vitally important to ask yourself, but this last question can exponentially change the game for you. This question also happens to be the one that most people end up never asking because it requires a whole lot of work and actually getting up and doing something after you take the time to answer it. Everything that I have ever been able to accomplish in my life has been a direct result of constantly asking myself this particular question, writing down every possible thing I can think of, and then taking massive action to execute everything that I wrote down.

Asking the above three questions and taking the time to write out the answers on a regular basis has changed my life in so many ways; and I fully believe it can do the same for you. I don't just challenge you to ask yourself these questions, but to actually think long and hard about your answers and then write them out. When we set aside time to write everything out, we start to see things we never would have seen before. Asking great questions puts you on the right path to start receiving great answers.

NOTE: In addition to these questions, three questions that every swimmer should ask their coach (AND know the answers to) are:

- 1. How is my work ethic and focus?**
- 2. How is my team commitment and contribution?**
- 3. What are the most critical areas for me to improve in?**

"The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything but they make the most of everything."

Sam Cawthorn

Emails

Don and Ron, it was right around this time last year that we visited you at Orinda Aquatics from Canada. The impact that you have had on our club is visible daily and we have totally turned things around from where we were at this point last year. I am most appreciative. I also wanted to pass along some of our recent success in that one of my swimmers and myself qualified for the Canadian National Youth team attending World Juniors this summer. Although it isn't measurable, I believe the emphasis on character development in our club played a role in this success. I hope things are going well with you and that our paths will cross sometime in the future. Take care, Tina Hoeben, KISU Swim Club, Canada

Hi Donnie and Ronnie! I was just thinking about you guys the other day and wanted to give you an update about my life! Sophomore year is going strong, I have decided on a communications major and environmental studies minor at UW. Earlier this fall I was elected the President of my sorority Gamma Phi Beta and I started that role this January! I have traveled to Whistler and Vancouver in Canada and been to Real leadership Conference in Orange County for Gamma Phi with my exec team. I am currently in St. Louis for Real Leadership Academy which is the Presidents academy for all the Gamma Phi Presidents. I manage the 140 members in our chapter and live with 100 of them in the house, and have never been so mentally challenged in my life. But already it has been the most rewarding experience, making connections and **learning to lead with humility and respect**. I have learned so much about leadership and **upholding our values which are love, labor, learning and loyalty**. *Values-based living comes so easily to me because I was able to learn so much from Orinda Aquatics. Hope the team is as close-knit as ever.* All the best, Margaret Hunger, University of Washington

"The struggle you are in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow." unknown

"Miracles start to happen when you give as much attention to your dreams as you do to your fears."

kushandwizdom



Conclusion: An OA Swimmer's View on Character

The following was written by an OA Senior swimmer when the group was asked to write something unique or personal about themselves:

“I love everything about the topic of “character first”. I can’t imagine living any other way.”



Thank you for your membership, your ongoing support, and for your contribution to making this team extraordinary.

The Orinda Aquatics Coaching Staff