

## **Which Events Should Your Child Swim?**

Concern: My child will be aging up before the end of the season and she needs every opportunity to make AAA times in each event before then. The coach, however, does not want her to attend all the offered meets and does not allow the swimmers to swim all the events offered at each meet. I do not like the way the coach selects my child's meet and event schedule.

Response: Rule number one for any concern regarding decisions made by the coach is to communicate directly with the coach at your earliest opportunity. The coach may mention one or more of the following considerations:

1. Age group swimmers should have an opportunity to experience all the official events for their age group. In fact, many coaches would make a case for having intermediate to advanced age group swimmers also swim 200's of back, breast, and fly, as well as the 400 IM and distance freestyles. (Some countries offer these events in meets and tabulate national rankings!) BUT, there needs to be a balance found between the time and expense of driving to too many meets versus the long range goals of a good age group program - steady, well planned, unrushed, and enjoyable progress. Progressive coaches make opportunities in practices, time trials, and short at-home mini-meets for age group swimmers to experience all events.
2. A major push at end of an age group implies that a let down can occur when the child ages up. This discourages the steady and consistent progress that most coaches encourage in age group swimming.
3. Achievement must be viewed as career long and not dependent on the vagaries of an end of age group meet schedule. Coaches plan careers around seasonal planning, not around age group planning. The primary focus should be on end of season meet.
4. A combined and unified team effort for end of the season meets is more important than allowing individual swimmers to "peak" for mid-season meets in order to achieve time standards or rankings.
5. For all the above reasons, the coach is the person who should select each swimmer's meet and event schedule early in the season and review it with each swimmer and parent.