

# News For

# SWIM PARENTS

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## When The Coach Is Away With A Few Swimmers

by: Jim Lutz, ASCA Level 5 Coach

“Why does the head coach always go away for a week or two to meets with only a couple of swimmers, while the rest of the team is swimming in a designated “team meet”?”

When the coach is away with a few swimmers, they are most likely attending an elite, national or international swim meet. Only five percent of all registered swimmers ever reach the national level. Instead of looking at this situation in a negative way, the team should support and encourage these top-caliber swimmers because they are representing the team at an elite meet.

As a head coach I encourage our swimmers to achieve the highest level of competition possible. They are not only the fastest swimmers on the team, but they are also the role models for the younger swimmers. Every age grouper’s dream is to compete on national level and follow in the senior swimmer’s footsteps.

The majority of head coaches throughout the country are responsible for the senior swimmers. Naturally, the head coach is more familiar with the senior swimmer’s needs having worked with them throughout the entire season. During this time, the swimmer and coach develop a trusting “one-to-one” relationship. The swimmer becomes more confident with the coach’s decisions. The swimmer needs to have the primary coach as his or her support system when competing on the national level.

A head coach needs to attend these national meets regardless of the number of swimmers attending. Whether the team has one swimmer or ten at a competition, the coach with the most interactions with the swimmer should direct and be responsible for these athletes. The

swimmers should be rewarded for having made the difficult time standard for this prestigious meet by having the primary coach attend. The coach has many responsibilities and duties while at the national meet, acting as a guardian, counselor, friend, confidant and a coach. A swimmer relies on the coach's experience and knowledge to help swim the best race possible. The coach also handles all of the administrative duties and might even attend special meetings for coaches.

Seniors swimmers receive a lot of attention and recognition that might be regarded as preferential treatment. However, these swimmers have spent countless hours training to reach their fullest potential. The recognition they receive is not only beneficial to the individual but it is a credit to the entire swim program. It is the national representation by these few athletes that brings status and credibility to your program.

So if a member of your team goes to a national level meet, show that athlete how much you appreciate his/her skill and provide your full support. The athlete is representing YOUR swim team.