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SCSC MONTHLY



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COACH LOGAN ON THE VALUE OF DRYLAND FOR COMPETITIVE SWIMMERS

Dryland as it relates to swimmers and their performance has always been a hot topic in the swimming community. Ask five different swim coaches about dryland and I have no doubt their responses will differ in some regard to their beliefs and opinions on the subject.

While there is certainly not a simple answer for the "right" way to do dryland there has been plenty of research done on the topic of resistance training and its correlations to increased athletic performance.

A common misconception with resistance training for many athletes and coaches alike is that resistance training means an athlete must be performing exercises under heavy loads or weights for the exercise to be effective. While this certainly has its place, especially at the collegiate level, this is not a necessity for success in the pool.

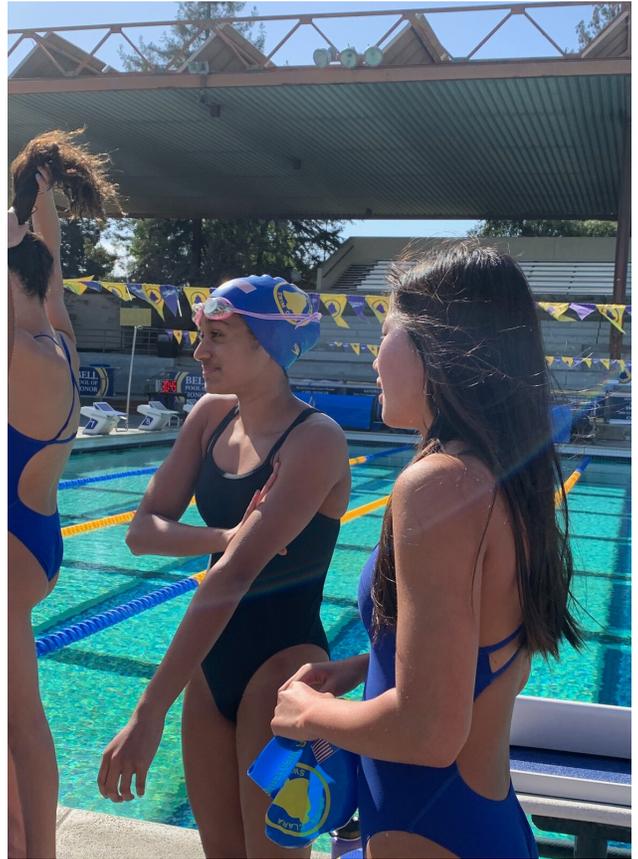


Resistance training simply refers to an exercise which elicits muscle contractions under some sort of external load.

External load can be barbells, dumbbells, or kettle bells. It can also be as simple as bands, odd objects, and even body weight movements. Especially in the times we are in now it is great to know we can still get a valuable workout that includes resistance training simply using some odd objects and body weight movements.

I personally love dryland and could talk all day long on the values of resistance training, plyometric training, metabolic conditioning, you name it and why it matter in regards to becoming a better overall athlete and swimmer.

For the sake of this article I just wanted to briefly dive into why we do dryland at SCSC and some of the training adaptations we hope to achieve as coaches for our athletes at the pool and in our *Zoom* classes.



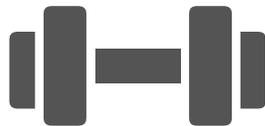
Our main goal with dryland is to teach functional movement patterns to our athletes in a safe manner that can be repeated consistently over time. When I talk about functional movement patterns I approach this from two angles.

I talk about functional movements as it pertains to life and the movement demands life requires such as picking objects up off the ground, placing them over head, sitting, standing etc.

As athletes and people we must understand how to do these movements in a safe and effective manner.

Becoming proficient in these movements effectively translates to better movement in the pool. Whether it's pushing off the wall, getting into a streamline, or maintaining a tight line in your stroke. All of these "general" movements can help translate to stronger and more efficient movement in the water.

I also describe functional movements as they pertain specifically to swimming. Especially at the senior level and above we try to prescribe very specific movements related to swim mechanics that will help increase power, speed, and stability in the water. As we improve in these general movement patterns we can begin to include these more specific exercises for our athletes. Which in turn will continue to boost performance in the water.



Regardless of the functional movements I am referring to, they work with each other to create a stronger overall athlete which help lead to a better swimmer in the water.

Though we all find ourselves out of the pool right now I do find this time incredibly exciting for dryland and our ability to still continue improving as athletes. As I said earlier in the article, all we need for resistance training is our body and some odd objects that can be found around the house.

Whether it's learning coordination with new movements, learning how to stay stable under tension/loads, or simply just getting stronger, there are so many areas we can continue to improve upon during this time.

Simply look at the opportunities we still do have each day as athletes and use this time to get better. Those that take the time to improve upon their weaknesses, continue to grow as athlete, and get better in the areas we have available to us will come out of this time ready.

Swimming will take some time to get back into but you will be ready when the time comes if you accept the challenge in front of you. And you will certainly be ahead of those who didn't take advantage of the opportunities in front of them.

Trust your coaches during this time as they are providing you a formula each day to continue growing in your athletic journey. It's up to you to continue answering the call each day when it is presented. Keep chasing growth and stay hungry! Always be asking yourself, How can I get better? Where can I improve? If you're honest with yourself and continue trying to improve you may just surprise yourself when this is all said and done and you're back in the water.





THE JOURNEY TO DIVISION I SWIMMING

In the midst of Governor Newsom's statewide Shelter in Place order I meet with Greg Sifferman, Senior IV/National Team swimmer and Division I college bound athlete to talk about his process of finding the right school.

Donning a black pair of over-the-ear headphones Greg energetically and intelligently fields questions on Zoom about how he's handling the quarantine, how to start the research process, official versus unofficial visits, and what made him commit to the program at Loyola Maryland.

He's just finishing online classes as we jump on the Zoom call. "I'm in Arizona right now at my grandma's house...it's like a vacation but it's sort of like a weird vacation [with the quarantine]."

Aside from keeping up with schoolwork as his final semester of his senior year wraps up, the quarantine has not kept Greg from being social.

Luckily, Greg brought his guitar with him and takes me through all his favorite bands: Greenday, Nirvana, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Between music and school he spends time with family; his sister and Dad share the couch with him as they watch Narcos together on Netflix. Weekly FaceTime calls with his closest friends keeps him in the loop.

"We have a pool here but it's not regulation, just fun to splash around in." You can tell by the way Greg talks about the sport that he's ready to get back to swimming.

The Research Process

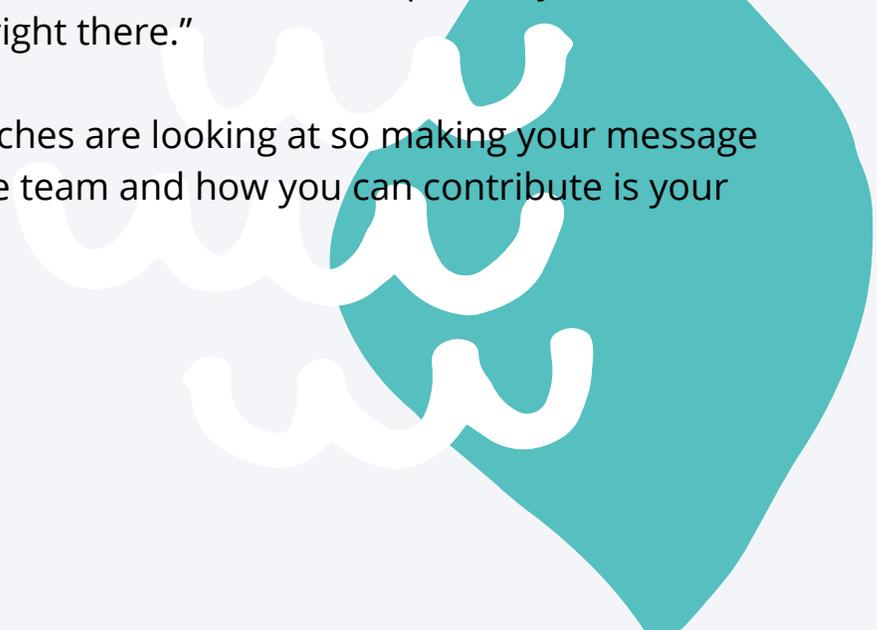
For Greg, he knew he wanted to swim for a Division I swim program. He used two websites to help him navigate through the entire process of college recruiting. The first, ncsasports.org, lets you filter schools by division, create a profile to help gain visibility for recruiters, and get advice on college recruiting. The second site, collegeswimming.com gives you meet results throughout NCAA and NAIA. It also shows team rankings and top times of individual events filtered by gender, region, and season.

Once you have a list of schools the next step is to see how you would fit on their team. Using collegeswimming.com, "I would compare my 200 breaststroke against the 200 breaststrokes of their team, if I was in the top three or top five how would I place at their leagues, what would that look like with me potentially being on a relay, would I be valuable to the team."

After making a list of schools, Greg started the cat and mouse game of contacting coaches. Each coach gets hundreds of emails from interested candidates and the pressure to stand out can be overwhelming.

Making sure that your subject line in the email catches the coaches attention right away is key. "I titled each one mid-distance breaststroker/freestyle so they know right off the bat what they're looking for. Because if they're thinking, 'my best breaststroker is graduating next year, I have to find another breaststroker to fill his spot' they see the email and it grabs their attention right there."

There are lots of factors coaches are looking at so making your message clear about your value to the team and how you can contribute is your main goal.

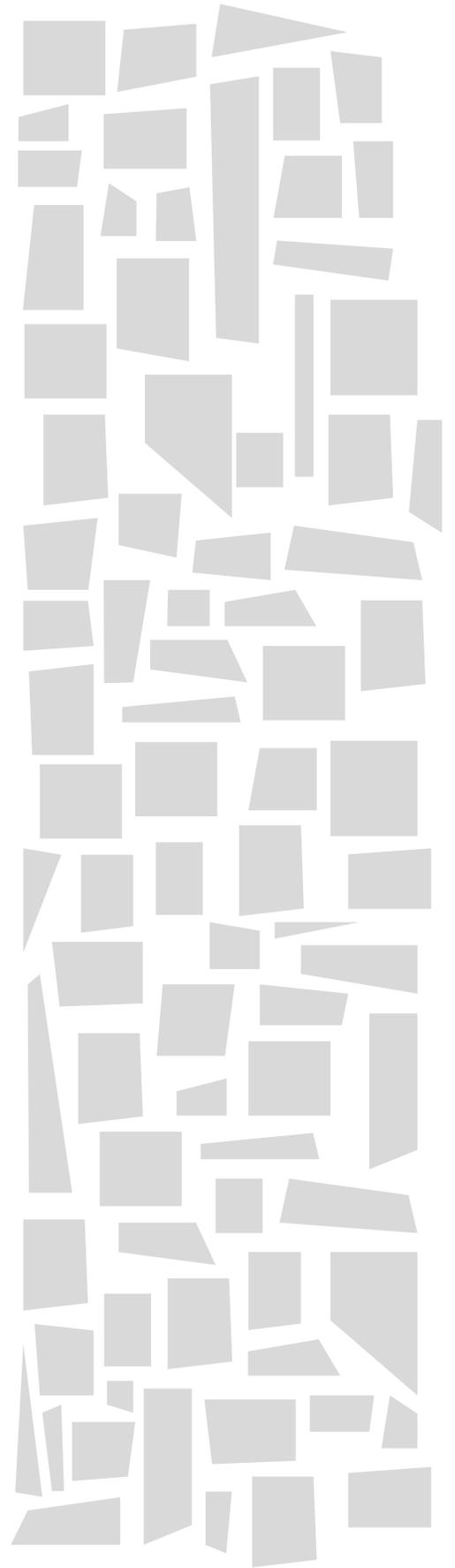


Unofficial vs. Official Visits

Unofficial visits to a school are when you visit the campus and facilities to observe campus life and get a feel for the entire swim program. "Some of these pools look way better in pictures than they do in person. Especially because I was on the East Coast all these schools were indoors." It's important to take note on your visit what the pool space is like, do you feel comfortable with the facilities, or does the indoor pool make it difficult for you to breathe.

Another thing Greg made sure to note on his visits were, how many swimmers per lane? Is the program large but with meager pool space? What's their team environment like?

We're halfway through our Zoom call and Greg shares an experience during an unofficial visit to Xavier University in Ohio. "We had already met once before at Junior Nationals in Indianapolis," when the Xavier coach invited him to see the school. "He really took the time to show me around the university. I feel like I saw all of Xavier, it was crazy. There are athlete lounges all over campus that only student athletes have access to with comfy chairs, TV's, and all sorts of snacks." When he finally got to the facilities and saw the pool area he was not impressed. "Their pool is not ideal, I have total respect for the school Xavier but their aquatic facilities just weren't what I was looking for."



Official visits are when the school's athletic department pays to have you stay on campus with another member of the team to experience campus life. Travel, meals, and lodging are covered by the university.

This is where you get to interact with the team and they bring you to class with them and you can see some of the workouts they do. "The first official visit I went on was to Bucknell. Their facilities are fantastic, they probably have the best pool out of any of the universities that I visited."

The next school Greg toured was in Boston at Holy Cross. This school to him seemed more focused on academics than swimming. "The team environment and swimmers did not have swimming as a huge priority for them. It felt more like a club team than any of the other schools I visited."

Loyola, the team Greg eventually committed to, had its own share of imperfections as well. "There's something like 80 swimmers on the team so I was worried about standing out, but the swimmer who was hosting my visit assured me that if I worked hard that the team would help me reach my goals."

Remember, these are all experiences that helped him shape his final decision. None of it would be possible without being there and visiting the schools for himself.



Making the Commitment

Feeling good about committing to a school means you need to make your “must-haves” clear for yourself before you start your search. For Greg, it was a Division 1 school that financed its swim program properly, scholarship money readily available for student athletes, and strong leadership from the coaching staff that produced results as a team.

“You don’t want a huge exhaustive list of everything you want. So what’s really important to you,” says Greg. Once you figure out what is important to you in a swim program, do your research, and keep an open mind about what opportunities open up.

For any future SCSC swimmer looking to land a college scholarship, please understand that the process will be different for everyone. Greg warns us that we should approach the recruiting process with an open mind, “don’t have ideas about what each school is going to be like until you actually go there. Every school’s website is going to talk about how great the school is but when you go in and see it in person you do get a much better insight into what the school is actually going to be like.”

What matters to one person might not be the deal breaker for the next person, and finding the college that fits will take reflection and clarity as to what your goals are for your own college career.

I want to leave you with one thing that Greg said that really stuck out to me over the course of our interview, “You shouldn’t be swimming because you want to get into a great college, you should be swimming because you love to do it.”





SCSC STRONG

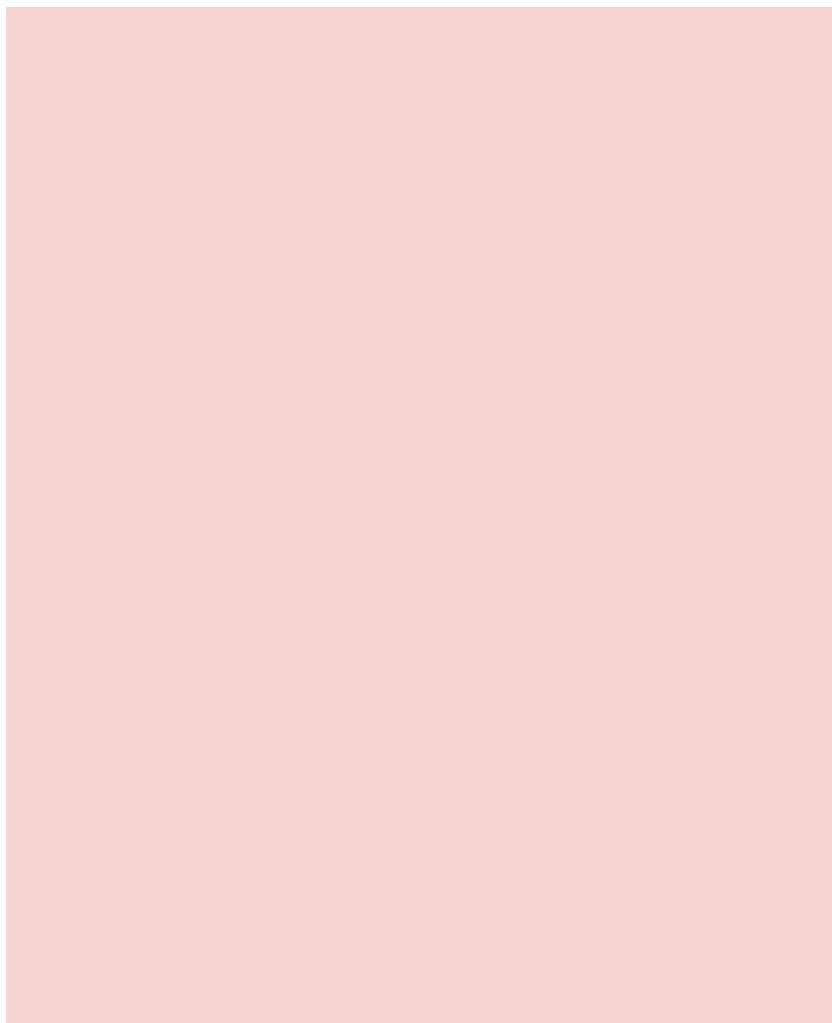
Connection is important. We want you to know that we're still a team, even when we're apart.







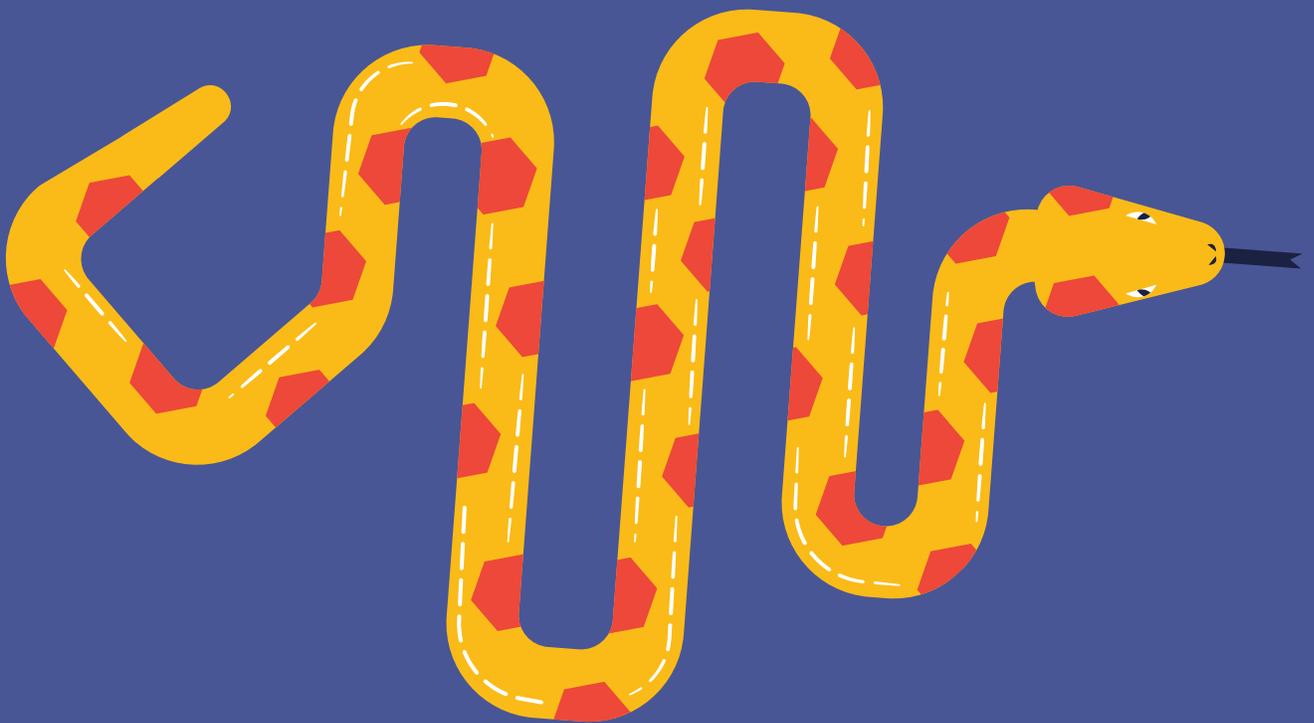






























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