

Lessons from Legends: Brian Goodell and the Power of the Mind

By Chuck Warner//Special Contributor

Sixteen-year-old Brian Goodell was exhausted and swimming miserably.

It was May 19, 1976, and there were only five weeks to the 1976 Olympic Trials. The last training set for that day was two sets of 8x100s with five seconds rest, or essentially a broken 1500. It was a time to rehearse race speed.

Brian had a goal of swimming faster than 15 minutes in the 1500, which of course meant averaging under 1:00 per 100. There had been nothing in his training lately that seemed to indicate he could perform at that level. He was fed up...ticked off...and had nothing left to lose.

On the first 100 Brian sprinted as fast as he could. The time was 1:01.4. The second was 1:00.5. The third 1:00.5 He could hardly believe what he was seeing on the pace clock and hearing from his coach, Mark Schubert. On the second round, Brian averaged under 1:00 per 100 and was fired up about his enormous breakthrough.

Warm-up was assigned at the end of practice, but when Coach Schubert left the pool deck many of the swimmers left the pool, as well-but not Brian. He kept swimming easily up and down the pool, feeling like a cross country skier 'shushing' through the snow and relishing what he had just accomplished. After 15 minutes or so, and after the entire team had left the locker rooms, coach Schubert returned to the pool deck to see who was still swimming.

Mark saw Brian. Brian stopped. The coach asked, "Haven't you gotten enough?" Brian grinned from ear to ear and said, "It's amazing the power of the mind!" Coach Schubert matched his grin.

Do you ever feel stuck in training? It's the fast sets at this time of the season that can set you up for a great rest, peak performance and perhaps a huge breakthrough like Brian's. Here are three ideas you might try to help you break through:

- While you're practicing, imagine yourself at the pool of your big meet, racing a rival. See yourself win.
- Use teammates as imaginary competitors.
- Experiment with separating your mind from your pain by singing a song with the same beat as the tempo you want to race with.

About six weeks after that training set, Brian Goodell went to the U.S. Olympic Trials and won the 400 freestyle, and the 1500 freestyle. Four and one half weeks later, he set world records in both events at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games when he won two gold medals. In September, he started his senior year of high school.

Note: The full story of Brian's preparation for Montreal is chronicled in the book, *Four Champions, One Gold Medal*.

*For more information or to order Chuck Warner's books *Four Champions, One Gold Medal* or *...And Then They Won Gold*, go to www.aretswim.com (access Books * Media), *Swimming World Magazine* or the *American Swimming Coaches Association*. You can follow Chuck Warner on twitter@chuckwarner1.*