

April 15, 2020

Positive Thoughts

Winning is not a sometime thing; it is an all-time thing. You don't do things right once in a while. You do them right all the *time*.

Vince Lombardi

Persistence can change failure into extraordinary achievement.

Matt Biondi

Task Focus

Each day I will give you things you CAN do while training and racing are on hold. Below are activities and tasks for *Tuesday, April 14, 2020*.

- ✚ Take one of your favorite events that you dropped time in this season. Now, think about how you swam the race and think about what you must do to become faster and write it down.
- ✚ Please make sure you are consistently following the dryland program we sent out and stretching regularly.

Again, ask yourself: "How is what I am doing right now going to help me get to where I want to go?"

Mental Focus

Never Say Never

By Wayne Goldsmith

Everywhere I go, parents and coaches will tell me about some "superstar" swim kid.

You know the kid I mean: the 9-year-old who won at the state meet by 10 meters and who everyone has identified as the nation's next champion swimmer...or the 11-year-old who won all strokes over all distances at the club championships, and who is destined for Olympic success!

I hear these stories all over the globe: stories about how talented and brilliant and amazing some young swimmer is and how it's inevitable he or she will be the best in the world one day.

And my reaction is the same every time I hear these stories: chances are that this young superstar, this mega=talent, this brilliant kid will not even be swimming a few years from now.

But, somewhere in the pool is a young swimmer who will be extraordinary, who will achieve remarkable things and who will be the best of the best.

It's probably some 10-year-old boy—a little small for his age—struggling to keep up with the others, but who always seems to have a smile on his face. Or a tough, determined 12-year-old girl who never seems to win anything, but who just loves swimming with her friends and training with her coach.

The future world champion is unlikely to be the obvious young star who's winning all the races: more likely, it's one of those average kids who finds training and racing enjoyable, engaging and exciting.

The Reality of Success

I've spoken with many world record holders, Olympic medal winners and high achievers in swimming and other sports. Each of them as a "sporting success story": his or her own personal story about the journey from starting to stardom.

But of all the "sporting success stories" I've heard, this is NOT one of them:

It is always easy for me. I was an amazing athlete right from the first time I jumped into a pool.

I won everything when I was 8 years of age. Then at 10, I was brilliant and broke ten state records. At 12, I had a great year and won every event in my age group at state championships. When I was 14, I was No. 1 swimmer in my age group at nationals. And it was the same when I was 15 and 16 and 17 and 18.

I never got sick or injured or had any problems. Nothing ever went wrong for me.

At 19, I made my first national team, won every race I'd ever raced, and NOW I AM THE OLYMPIC CHAMPION!

Great story? Sounds amazing? Yep. Sure does!

BUT it's not real.

I've never met a successful athlete who had it easy every step of the way. Life—particularly a sporting life—just isn't like that.

Now, here is a "sporting success story" that is more believable:

I started swimming when I was 8. It was OK, but I was also playing football and baseball and riding my bike on weekends. I was swimming once or twice a week in summer until I was around 11 or so, but I was only doing a few meets each year. I wasn't making finals or winning medals, but I enjoyed swimming with my team when I had the chance.

When I turned 13, I took a break from swimming for a few months because I decided to try out for basketball at school, and we had a great season.

That summer, I decided to get back into the pool and train a bit more because a few of my friends had joined the swim team and were going to regular practice. We had a good relay team, and I enjoyed training with my friends.

Around 15, my backstroke really started to improve, and I started winning a few medals at school meets, club events and other races. I made my first state final at 16, but then had three months off with a shoulder problem, and I couldn't do anything but kicking practice, running and gym work. I came back to swim training later that year, but I also had a lot of exam stress at school, so I was only training five times a week.

I made nationals for the first time when I was 17, and I placed 10th, but I discovered that I'd really fallen in love with swimming and decided I'd give it all I could for the next national championships. I was really flying in training, qualified fastest for the final, but slipped on the wall and ended up fourth.

I made my first national team at 19 but screwed up my taper and didn't make the final in my first big international meet. I learned a lot from that experience, and the following year at Pan Pacs, I made my first international final.

Heading into the Olympics, I was battling a chest infection and a knee injury, but my coach and I figured out a way to keep training while I was managing those problems. Somehow, I qualified for the Olympic Trials, I placed second in the final and made the Olympic Team.

I got to the Games and made it to the final in lane 6 after a slow semifinal. AND NOW I AM THE OLYMPIC CHAMPION!

Now that's a REAL "sporting success story"!

The important, essential qualities that led to success are not learned by experiencing easy and early victories. They are developed through experiencing easy and early victories. They are developed through experiencing failure, disappointment, frustration and, occasionally, even illness and injury and finding ways to overcome these setbacks to achievement.

Sport's greatest success stories are filled with tales of how athletes fought and struggled and battled with all kinds of difficulties and found ways to keep going.

The athletes who've won our hearts are usually the ones who NEVER had it easy: they're the ones who faced and climbed seemingly insurmountable obstacles and never gave up on chasing their dreams.

What success isn't ... and what it is:

Success isn't about talent. Everyone knows a story about some kid who was unbeatable at 8—only to be lost to the sport in their mid-teens.

It isn't about getting things easily. Nothing worthwhile ever comes that way. And it isn't about tracking along a linear pathway of progress where PRs come each and every time a swimmer jumps into a pool.

Nobody wins every time they race. No one comes first every time they compete. NO ONE!

Success doesn't come as a result of being the tallest or the biggest or the strongest or having the longest arms. It is rarely about the things you can easily see or readily measure.

It's about those qualities and characteristics that – although difficult to see or measure—are the defining aspects of success: commitment, dedication, hard work, passion, drive, resilience, courage and focus!

A Final Message to all you "Losers":

If you're 10, 11, 12, 13 years of age, and you're not winning gold medals or breaking records—relax! Don't stress out about it.

Learn from every race. Learn from everything you do. Concentrate on improving your skills and your technique. Experiment with different types of warm-up routines and pacing strategies and cool-down methods.

Winning and losing doesn't matter at your age. What matters is learning—and what's important is loving what you do.

I promise you this: if you learn from everything you do, and you fall in love with training and racing...success will eventually be yours.

Physical Challenge

Working on developing mental strength. For the next few days, we will take a look at some common stroke mistakes observed in young swimmers. This information comes from an issue of SPLASH magazine in the article by Mike Gustafson.

Freestyle:

1. **The problem:** In freestyle, swimmers often breathe too late in their stroke, which can throw off all kinds of timing with the recovery and body rotation.
The fix: "When breathing to the right, make sure the breath has begun while the right arm is still pulling through the water," says Rachel Stratton-Mills, Senior Assistant Coach at Arizona State University.
2. **The problem:** Young swimmers and older swimmers alike often pick up their heads too high in the water. A high head lowers the hips. Swimmers need to be comfortable swimming with their heads in a more neutral position, more parallel to the pool's bottom.
The fix: "Often it isn't that the head is too high, it's simply too high in relation to the rest of the body, so tighten the core to bring the hips towards the surface and create a more balanced body position, " Stratton-Mills said.

Fun and Games!

Here's the end of the Swimming Timeline:

Check out your knowledge! Did you know? Swimming has a long history of innovation in style and technique. Here's a look at historic moments in swimming that, when seen through a proper lens, sheds light on the sport we know today.

Late 2000s: Japanese swimmers intermittently mix butterfly kicking during backstroke. Shocked people around the world say, "We can still mess with stroke technique? After all these years?"

2012: Mike Gustafson unveils his new backstroke innovation: bent-arm recovery. He argues: "If the fastest angle between two points is a straight line, why do we use full-circle backstroke recovery?" He ignores coaches, swimmers, and stroke gurus who tell him this idea is "dumb" and "not fast". FINA review pending.

Look for a different type of fun in tomorrow's plan!

Motivational Moments---Enjoy!

We are all missing many things right now, but we have so much to be thankful for. Enjoy these past moments!

Greatest Sports Moments

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7W7OvETO40>