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News For

SWIM PARENTS

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When Your Child Is Disqualified

Concern: I've noticed that when some of our team's swimmers are disqualified the coach does not approach the official to question the call while at other times she confronts the official immediately. There appears to be favoritism.

Response: If this is a case of favoritism we certainly do not condone this type of coach behavior. We recommend a direct, but polite discussion with the coach at a time when everyone has had some time and distance from the situation.

If not favoritism, then the following may explain your coaches behavior:

The coach observed the infraction, was not surprised by the infraction, noted it, and talked with the swimmer about it. Coaches work with their swimmers every day and know each individual's difficulties with technique and tendency for mistakes. Coaches continually work with their athletes helping them to improve technique and correct mistakes but the results are rarely instantaneous. Swimmers take time to improve technique and eliminate mistakes. Coaches will enter a swimmer in an event even though the swimmer is only marginally capable of performing legal strokes and turns so that the swimmer gains experience. If the swimmer is disqualified, the coach uses it as a learning situation for the athlete.

In some sports it is expected that there be a confrontation between coach and official with every call but that has not been our way in swimming.

When there is a confrontation it is generally over a judgment call made by the official for an infraction that the athlete does not have a history of making, and, in the eyes of the coach, was not a good call. In this case the coach will usually ask the official for a clarification of the call and the specific rule broken. The coach will also ask the official if he was in a proper position to make such a call.