



Developing Children to be
Champions in Life through Swimming

“LANE 4” TIMES

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2013 New Year’s Marathon Swim:

As the NYEM closes, swimmers and parents are reminded to turn in any monies by Jan 10, 2014 for those monies to count towards prizes. All prizes will be issued at once, but keep in mind, some things will take longer to return, especially any embroidered or custom items (like personalized swim caps).

As of this writing, Riptides has raised nearly \$9,000 of our \$10,000 goal. Great job Riptides!

2014 MBR Winter Invite:

The next Riptides’ hosted meet is nearly upon us. The 2014 MBR Winter Invite will take place Jan 17-19 at the North Myrtle Beach Aquatic and Fitness Center. This is the last chance for swimmers to achieve a 2014 SCS short-course State Championship time standard.

The meet will be formatted similarly to the October Breast Cancer Awareness Invite... one session Friday evening, and one session each Saturday and Sunday morning. We expect this meet to be about as large as the October meet, roughly 200 swimmers. And just like the BCA Invite, we need our members to assist in volunteering for timing, concessions and hospitality. Thank you in advance for assistance.

2014 SCS short-course State Championships:

The 2014 SCS short-course State Championship is about 6 weeks away! Riptides has many swimmers already qualified to participate in this meet. The aforementioned Winter Invite is the last chance for all swimmers to make a final run at qualifying in either their first event or more events. For those already qualified, the Winter Invite serves as a final tune-up.

The State meet is one of the most important meets on our schedule. It is crucial all current swimmers of the State Team stay healthy – enough rest, proper diet, consistent training. It is also crucial that swimmers of the State Team be available to participate every day of the meet they are eligible, which also includes relays on the first day of the meet – Friday. This is a

TEAM meet and relays mean more points possible than individual events.

For our 11/Over swimmers, the meet is prelims/Finals formatted, with exception to the 11-12 200 fly, back, breast, 400 IM and 500, 1000, 1650 freestyles – those events are Timed Finals. The 10/Under events are all Timed Finals. All relays are Timed Finals as well.

If any 11/Over swimmer would like to see how fast they have to be to have a shot at returning to Finals, visit www.SC-Swimming.org and go to the TIMES page. On that page, there is a Top-10 list. The list displays the 10 fastest times in each event by age and sex. And if your name doesn’t appear on the list, the challenge is to get on the list!

Building Confidence in Sports:

By Leif H. Smith and Todd M. Kays

Sports psychology can help athletes looking to improve their confidence. You may be the strongest, tallest, most powerful athlete on the field, court, or track, but if you aren’t confident in your abilities, you’ll have trouble reaching your goals. Work on improving your confidence just as you work on developing your sport-specific skills, and your performance will soar.

Realize that confidence fluctuates. Confidence for all athletes — even at the highest level — ebbs and flows. Confidence is not all-or-nothing. It’s a state of mind that fluctuates, so don’t beat yourself up when your confidence is lower. Just focus on improving, and your confidence will follow suit.

Focus on yourself, not on others. Instead of thinking about how well your teammates or opponents are doing, think about your own performance and how you can improve. This is *your* athletic career, so you need to focus on what *you* need to do to improve as an athlete. And when you improve as an athlete, your confidence will increase.

Focus on day-to-day success. When you have success every day in training — even the smallest of successes — your confidence rises. If your confidence rises a small amount each day, just think where you'll be in one month, six months, or a year!

Concentrate on the process, not outcomes. When you focus on improving your performance — the process of improving — you become more confident because you're focusing on something you have control over. You can't control outcomes — you may play your best game ever and still lose. If you're focused on process, sure, you'll be disappointed when you lose, but your confidence will remain high, because you'll know you performed your best.

Focus on what you're doing right. Learning from your mistakes is important, but you don't want to linger on them. If you spend too much time thinking about your mistakes, your confidence will wane. When you focus on what you're doing right and correct your errors, your confidence will rise.

BIG GAME PREPARATION - 7 TIPS TO STAYING COOL & CALM IN THE CLUTCH:

by Dr. Alan Goldberg

7 TIPS TO STAYING COOL & CALM IN THE CLUTCH

The **BIGGEST** secret to you playing your best when it counts the most is learning how to keep yourself **CALM** and **COMPOSED**. If you allow yourself to get too nervous or too excited right before or during a competition, then your muscles will tighten up, you'll lose your confidence and your play will go right down the tubes! This is what it means to **CHOKES**! The athlete gets so nervous that he/she ends up performing tight and tentatively — a mere shadow of his or her normal self!

THE REAL CAUSE OF OUT OF CONTROL NERVOUSNESS

Runaway, pre-game nervousness can come from a lot of different sources: how good your opponents are; how big and aggressive they are; how important a competition is; how big the crowd is (and who in it is watching you); whether you'll play well today and win; how "excited" your coach may get; how much playing time you'll get; the court, field or arena you're playing in — the list goes on and on.

While there are many things about your competitions that can *potentially* make you nervous, the true cause of your performance-disrupting nervousness isn't any of the things that I've just mentioned above. The real cause of your out-of-control nerves is you! That's right! **YOU** make **YOURSELF** nervous!

What I'm saying here is very important — It's not

what's happening around or outside of you that makes you nervous. It's what's happening INSIDE that is the real cause of stress!

Here's what I mean: It's not the size, skill level or reputation of your opponents that makes you nervous. It's what you say to yourself about them in the days, hours and minutes leading up to the game, match or race that's the real culprit in sending your heart rate and blood pressure through the roof! **Nervousness is always caused by our inner response to the things that are going on outside of us.** But here's the good news about that: If **YOU** make yourself nervous, then **YOU** have the ability to change your inner response to calm yourself down under competitive pressure.

Most players who get too nervous to play well do so because of what they focus on and think about as the game approaches. They worry about how well they'll play, how fast and skilled their opponents are, whether their team will win or lose, what people may think or say about them, etc. Focusing on any or all of these things will guarantee that your stress level will go through the attic and your play will get stuck in the cellar! To stay calm under pressure, you must learn to go into competitions with a completely different headset and focus. I've called this proper headset a "**CHAMPIONSHIP GAME PLAN.**"

A championship game plan is a series of little mental goals that you want to bring into the performance with you. If you follow this game plan, it will guarantee that you'll stay calm and relaxed when you perform. Remember, playing your best when it counts the most is all about being loose right *before* and *during* your competitions.

#1. KEEP YOUR CONCENTRATION IN THE "NOW"

When athletes allow their focus of concentration to jump ahead to the future, or drift back to the past, the result is always an increase in their nervousness. If you want to stay cool and calm in the clutch, then you have to train yourself to keep your focus in the NOW — especially during your games, matches or races! This means that leading up to the performance, you don't want to think about and **focus on the upcoming competition and its importance.** If you want to play loose and relaxed, you must learn to keep your concentration in the now. When you're in the action, you want to focus on one present-moment play at a time.

#2. RECOGNIZE WHEN YOUR FOCUS "TIME TRAVELS" AND BRING YOURSELF BACK

It's very easy to *understand* that you need to focus in the now, but much harder to consistently *do* it! The way that you stay in the now is by immediately becoming aware whenever your focus drifts back to the past or ahead to the future, then quickly return your concentration to the now. Losing your focus won't make you nervous. What will make you

nervous is losing your focus and not bringing it back right away! It's the break in concentration that you don't immediately catch that will drive your stress level through the roof and sabotage your play.

#3. KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON YOU, YOUR JOB AND YOUR PLAY

Allowing your focus to drift to anyone or anything other than you, (i.e. your opponents, who's watching, who might be disappointed in you, how well your teammates may be playing, what the coach is thinking, etc.) will quickly make you feel nervous. Staying focused on you and your job will keep you calm and confident. This also means that whenever you perform, you want to make sure that you *DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF WITH OTHERS!*

Comparison will always make you too nervous to play at your best.

#4. HAVE FUN

Performing your best under pressure means that you have to be having fun. Fun is the secret ingredient to staying calm and doing your best when the heat of competition is turned up high. If you make a game, match or race too important, if you put too much pressure on yourself, if you get too serious, then you'll start getting nervous and your game will do a major disappearing act. When fun goes, so too will all of your game skills. If you really want to perform well, then you have to get into the game, enjoy the tournament, embrace the challenge from a tough opponent, have fun with your friends before, during and after the game!

#5. LEAVE YOUR GOALS AT HOME

One of the biggest tension-inducing mental mistakes that you can make as an athlete is to take your goals with you into the competition. For example, you think, "I want to go 3 for 4," "pitch a shut-out," "win this tournament," "score a goal," "break two minutes," or "prove to the coaches that I'm good." Focusing on such outcome goals will make you too nervous to play well and, ironically, cause you never to reach them. Instead, leave your goals at home and keep your focus in the action, on "this" play, shot, pitch or move, one moment at a time!

#6. KEEP YOUR MIND DISTRACTED BEFORE AND AFTER GAMES

Thinking gets most athletes into trouble and makes them nervous. While you can't really stop yourself from thinking, you can purposely distract yourself from it. So, in the days and minutes leading up to a big performance or tournament, keep busy. Do not allow yourself a lot of free time to think. Focus on your homework, read a book, watch a movie, listen to music, get involved in non-sports related conversations with friends and do things to keep yourself busy and distracted. "Changing the channel" in this way will help you stay calm and composed in the days and hours leading up to your BIG performances.

#7. KEEP YOUR FOCUS OF CONCENTRATION AWAY FROM THE "UNCONTROLLABLES"

There are a lot of things that happen in your sport that you do not have direct control over. Any time an athlete focuses on an "uncontrollable" (UC), they will get really nervous, lose their confidence and play badly. So make a list of all of the things about this upcoming competition that you can't directly control. For example, the officiating; the crowd; coaching decisions, (i.e. playing time); the future, such as the outcome of the game, how well you'll play, winning or losing; how you are feeling that day; other people's expectations; etc., and post the list in a highly visible place in your room. Keep in mind that these UCs are mental traps. They are lying in wait for you and every other athlete in that competition. The only way to avoid a trap is to know that it is there! If you find yourself thinking about or focusing on one of these UCs, quickly return your concentration to something in the now that you can control.

Remember, if you really want to play well, you have to stay loose and relaxed. To do this, focus on executing this CHAMPIONSHIP GAME PLAN!

Practice Changes:

Jan 4 –	No Practices , GP #4 and UGA Senior Circuit
Jan 17-19 –	No Practices , MBR Winter Invite
Jan 25 -	TBA due to GSSL Rec League meet

Birthdays:

Joel Cox – 2nd, Yianni Paraschos – 14th