

Simplifying Tapering For Age Group Swimmers

By Guy Edson

Simple, We don't.

We don't taper age group swimmers because there is nothing to taper from.

Taper is effective when there is a constant but manageable significant overload of both anaerobic and aerobic work. When we reduce the stress by tapering the amount of and intensity of the work then the body super compensates with greater strength, speed, and endurance. (That's our hope!)

Age group swimmers are not little seniors. They have far different needs and different workout routines. Primary needs include stroke work, learning how to train, learning how to race, and developing an aerobic base. Aerobic yardage, while important to track and set workout goals for, is not the most important objective of age group workouts. Race pace work is done more for the mind than the body - it is learning how to pace and race. Little anaerobic adaptations are possible with age group swimmers.

So what do we do to prepare 12 and unders for important meets? First, we don't use the word "taper." Second, we don't cut back the yardage significantly. Third, we do increase race rehearsals, start, and turn work. Fourth, we talk it up.

Simple.