

An up & close review of the new ARC Lifeguarding Class

Written by George Young / March 06, 2012

Well, I have read the new books and watched the DVD three times. And I will state that the American Red Cross (ARC) has hit a solid Triple (in baseball terms) and almost a home run in the new class being offered. The new class has many very deep improvements and can be the cornerstone for training lifeguards to be better lifeguards. The strengths of the new material is the video scenes supplied during the training DVD which are awesome (Staywell did good and sadly for the LA Times which sold the Staywell unit, the LA Times made a mistake in my vision of investment line-ups). The DVD shows actual drowning victims which becomes so valuable in the teaching and providing awareness needs to the class. Also the DVD have several actual surveillance activities built in to it. Yes, the students actually do surveillance drills while watching the DVD. I participated, and believe it or not, I missed two important warning signs myself the first time around. Maybe I am a little rusty and all, and not lifeguarding much anymore..... but a great eye opening drill that made me rethink my skills. The new class highlights a lot on scanning techniques and dealing with challenges with scanning and being alert.

A few new techniques were introduced and one of them was the active victim front rescue. The active victim front approach looks good and I cannot wait to get in the water and play with it. Like anything, new skill requires some reviewing and practicing before one can master it. Another area that is highlighted and is extremely beneficial is the outline on filling out emergency forms. Very good advice and needed input supplied to lifeguards of all backgrounds and experience. One of the biggest changes is in the back boarding procedures. I am sure this will be topics of discussion in the aquatic field over the next year or so.

So George..... from what I read you are pretty happy with the course..... why only a triple ???

The class is solid and is an upgrade in almost every way! But agencies still need to support the new concepts and custom lifeguarding techniques to fit their facilities. It would not be fair to the ARC to ask them to produce a home run course for every pool in the world. Hitting a triple and hoping the agencies step in and bunt in the scoring run as needed.

Closing remark: If I were still a facility manager, I would be rewriting the lifeguard hand book to reflex the new surveillance and scanning suggestions laid forth in the new class! Using the new and improved methods will lead to a safer pool!