

The Inequities of Swimming: Making the Most of Your Situation

by Brendan Farrar

There is no doubt that the sport of swimming continues to evolve. Swimming has taken huge steps toward the progress and success of swimmers of all abilities. From technique to nutrition, to the suits we wear and equipment we use, all of these things have a profound impact on our training and performance. Yet, rarely do we recognize and bring to light the many inequitable aspects the sport still holds.

Have you ever felt disadvantaged in any way because of your circumstances in swimming? Maybe your closest facility is a long drive, or the pool you swim in may not have enough lanes to accommodate a full group of swimmers. Possibly, you swim for the smallest team in your LSC and don't have many opportunities to stand out. Conversely, you swim for the largest team and feel invisible to others because the sheer number of teammates you have is overwhelming. Potentially, your coach has maintained a steady career, while it seems as if others have a laundry list of success stories, experiences and stats. All of these things remain prevalent in swimming today. While you try to seek the "perfect" environment, never bring yourself to the point where your circumstances become excessive excuses. Here are several reasons you should avoid unnecessary worry and make the most out of your situation.

Determination Prevails

This one is simple to phrase, but difficult to execute. If you genuinely want to see the result you seek, you will find a way to get there. Stop pondering what could be and take action in the present moment. Performance after performance, we beat ourselves up, attributing our failures to uncontrollable circumstances. Take that anger and frustration and use it to empower and elevate you to where you want to be. Do not let your circumstances loom over you like a dark, rainy cloud when you compete. When you're standing behind the block, others to your right and left don't care where or how you train, and neither should you.

Prosperity Creativity

While you may be fortunate enough to have all the fancy equipment and machines for widespread use across the team, many have to get creative with how to use their space, time, and [equipment](#). Swimming can be extremely pricy; therefore, it's an excellent opportunity to foster creativity in how you operate with your resources. Don't have power towers or items to pursue resistance training? Try filling old milk jugs with water, tying them to a rope, and fastening it around your waist (certainly not speaking from personal experience *wink*). The possibilities are endless, and your innovation is far greater than you think when it comes to everyday swimming equipment.

Diversity and Competitiveness

If everyone's training and subsequent competitive environment were the same, there would be no excitement in the sport. Swimmers' unique situations and training environments are a true testament of how success in the sport does not require the perfect pool or specific equipment. Because of the differing experiences everyone has, sharing and reflecting on the sport shows resilience through hardships and becomes a great learning experience for the future, whether that be in swimming or not.

It Never Ends

Remember the phrase, "Life isn't fair?" If you can maintain success and focus on what matters in swimming, you're setting yourself up for one of life's many lessons. There are no truly equitable areas

of our lives where people's success comes from having what everyone else has. It all comes back to hard work, passion, and overwhelming love for what you do. Sure, we can reminisce about others and what they have that you don't, but what a waste of time! Not to mention, your success story will be one to remember forever.

In short, whatever you may find inequitable throughout your swimming career is someone else's dream. Step back, take a moment to reflect, and flip the switch. Use your specific situation and circumstances to empower you through each practice and meet. You never know, your "disadvantages" may be what help you the most. It's not always because of what you use to train, but how you train. Having the capability of persevering through struggle and challenging situations will undoubtedly serve you well. Regardless if you train in a state of the art facility or swim around in a make-shift pool in your backyard, make the most out of what you have. Our sport has a long way to go, but our response to challenge and difference embodies valuable lessons such as resiliency and discipline.